



Developing an Employee Wellness Program

What is an employee wellness program?

An employee wellness program, also called a “worksites wellness program”, is a program that promotes and supports the health, safety, and well-being of its employees.

Why develop an employee wellness program?

- A wellness program may improve staff health, morale, and productivity.
- Supporting staff to make healthy lifestyle choices will help them to be better role models for WIC participants.

What are some components of an employee wellness program?

A wellness program may include some or all of the following components:

- Wellness newsletter
- Health risk assessments
- Health screenings
- Workshops on wellness issues
- Walking groups
- Health fairs
- Healthy potlucks and healthy snacks for meetings and breaks
- Physical activity breaks
- Fitness classes
- Smoking cessation classes
- Incentives such as water bottles, insulated lunch bags, tote bags, stress balls, pedometers, and cookbooks

How do you start an employee wellness program?

Here are the basic steps to getting a program started:

1. **Develop an advisory committee** that represents the interests of employees, management, and labor unions (if applicable).
2. **Conduct a needs and resources assessment.**
 - Determine employee needs, interests, concerns, and schedules. (One approach is to have staff brainstorm ways to help employees be more active and eat healthier at work.)
 - Identify available space and facilities, including local community facilities.
 - Determine employer liability under existing health insurance, property owners' insurance, workers' compensation to pay, time frames, and relevant skills.
 - Identify relevant partner organizations.
3. **Develop program components and activities** based on the findings of the needs assessment.
 - Determine if services will be provided by agency personnel, consultants, or local community agencies.
 - Partner with other health-related non-profit organizations to broaden program offerings.
 - Develop a written document of program components and expected outcomes.
 - Develop formal policies for administering program.
 - Develop an evaluation plan for the program. (Specify how impact will be measured. Include cost, participation rate, employee satisfaction, employee behavior changes, and impact on participant education.)
4. **Include incentives** (employee release time or items such as pedometers and water bottles) to encourage employee participation.
5. **Notify employees** of the program through flyers, e-mails, payroll stuffers, and posters.
6. **Implement** the program.
7. **Evaluate** the program.