

# ESTABLISHING A WORKPLACE WELLNESS INITIATIVE



A TOOLKIT FOR MINNESOTA EMPLOYERS





# WHY WORKPLACE WELLNESS?

In the United States, adults spend nearly half their waking hours in the workplace.<sup>1</sup>

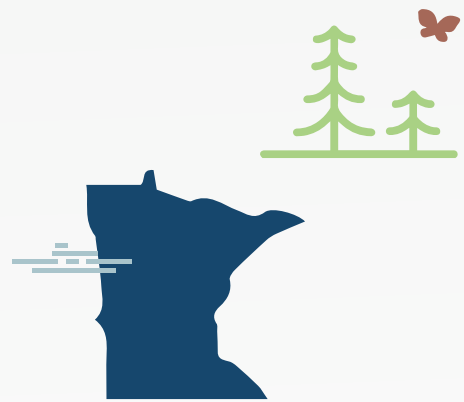
<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) single-year estimates.

A well-designed workplace wellness initiative offers an organizational structure and physical environment that supports employee health and encourages positive lifestyle behaviors. Some benefits to employers in offering a comprehensive workplace wellness initiative include:

- Decreased absenteeism and employee turnover
- Improved productivity
- Improved time and stress management for employees
- Increased employee recruitment and retention
- Bolstered employee morale and commitment to the company
- Enhanced organizational image

## ABOUT WORKPLACE WELLNESS IN MINNESOTA

Workplaces in communities across Minnesota have joined together through the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) to establish workplace wellness initiatives. This toolkit will guide you through the process of developing, implementing and evaluating a comprehensive workplace wellness initiative. Included are topics of concern in Minnesota: physical activity, nutrition, commercial tobacco, and well-being.



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## CREATING A

# CULTURE OF HEALTH

## THE ENGINE BEHIND SUSTAINABLE BEHAVIOR CHANGE

The Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) focuses on policy, systems and environmental (PSE) changes. Focusing on PSE changes will provide the foundation that helps a workplace create a culture of health.

A culture of health is one in which individuals and their organizations are able to make healthy life choices within a larger social environment that values, provides and promotes options that are capable of producing health and well-being for everyone regardless of background or environment.

Here are just a few examples:

- **Policy change:**  
Employer adopts a commercial tobacco-free grounds policy, which greatly influences tobacco users to make a quit attempt and protects others from secondhand smoke.
- **Systems change:**  
Employer creates a process to purchase healthy options for their snack station or vending machines.
- **Environmental change:**  
Employer makes refrigeration available so fruits and vegetables can be properly stored and easily accessible to employees, or the employer includes healthy choices in vending machines that meet certain nutritional standards. This allows for increased support and opportunities for improved nutrition in the workplace.

Certainly individual responsibility serves an important role in one's health status. Even more important is how our community supports or does not support healthy decisions by individuals. For example: an employee can choose to ride a bike to work each day, but does the environment itself support an active commute? Are there bike lanes or bike paths that are adequately marked and connected to key points in the community? Are there bike racks available for employees to lock their bikes up when they are at work?

This toolkit will recommend best practice strategies.



Implementing strategies that support making healthy choices possible will affect all employees and lay the foundation for a sustainable, comprehensive workplace initiative.



# OVERVIEW

Workplace wellness promotes an environment that supports healthy lifestyles for employees and their families through policy, systems, and environmental changes.

Here is a list of startup and sustainability practices that can help employers build a sustainable program that can have an impact on all employees:

## 1. SECURE LEADERSHIP SUPPORT

This step is critical to the success of any wellness program. Getting management actively involved in the program will help to model healthy behavior to all employees.

## 2. CONVENE A WELLNESS COMMITTEE

Creating a culture of wellness should involve employees throughout the organization. Gather a diverse group of employees to become wellness “champions.” Having a team will show the organization’s commitment to wellness. Let the creativity flow with employee input.

## 3. CONDUCT ASSESSMENTS

This is crucial. It will help justify the program, determine what employees want from the workplace wellness program and monitor wellness participation. If done well, assessments help ensure the sustainability of wellness program efforts.

## 4. CREATE AND IMPLEMENT THE PLAN

The operating plan is the foundation of the program. Be sure to add timelines, budgets, work assignments, marketing, evaluation, and the overall mission of the program. Clearly stated and measurable goals will keep the program on track.

## 5. EVALUATE

After implementing a wellness program, take time to evaluate participation, satisfaction levels, behavior changes, and productivity. A well-documented evaluation can help identify areas for improvement or justify a budget increase. Sample tools and evaluations are available in this section.



# STEP ONE:

## SECURE LEADERSHIP SUPPORT



Get the program off to a good start by helping management realize the benefits of workplace wellness and ask them to vocalize their support.

An owner or manager can also be appointed to serve on the wellness team alongside other employees so there is ownership at every level of the organization.

### TOP MANAGEMENT SUPPORT:

- Helps obtain support for your workplace wellness initiative
- Communicates the importance of workplace wellness
- Sets an example. A top manager doesn't need to run a marathon, but should embrace a healthful lifestyle by participating in wellness events offered by the company and taking part in community wellness events.



# STEP TWO:

## CONVENE A WELLNESS COMMITTEE



Form a strong workplace wellness team and keep team involvement fresh and fun.

Make it official by creating a team name, motto and logo. Consider having an annual team retreat or in-service to plan for the next year. Continue to bring new members onto the team as well as consider term limits.

### These tips from the Wellness Council of America will ensure a successful team:

- Have workplace wellness written into team members' job descriptions. This will ensure workplace wellness is a defined duty in their workloads.
- Promote the wellness team throughout the organization. Doing so helps employees see that workplace wellness is a priority and the team is there to help with their wellness goals. It also inspires participation and team involvement.
- Develop a team with strong leadership. The team will need vision, energy, a spirit of inclusiveness and a genuine desire to help others. The team leader should be someone who can create agendas, handle conflict, set priorities, motivate others, meet goals and deadlines and communicate throughout the organization.
- Add diversity to the team. Try to include representation from all different functional areas, experience levels, and fitness levels. A larger organization could have a team of 14-20 people. A small organization may do well with four to seven people. A very small organization might have a team of two to work together.
- Meet regularly. Face-to-face meetings are best.
- Communicate often. Educate the organization on the wellness team's priorities and let others know how to get involved; it helps employees embrace the wellness program.
- Participate in continuing education about workplace wellness.

Secure Leadership Support

Convene Wellness Committee

Conduct Assessments

Create and Implement Program

Evaluate

# STEP THREE:

## CONDUCT ASSESSMENTS/COLLECT DATA



This step is important because it helps the wellness committee determine where to allocate resources.

Look at information on the overall picture of the organization in regard to health and wellness and employee interests. Here are some possible data collection methods:

### **The SHIP Employer Wellness Assessment (SEWA) – Organizational data**

The SEWA includes different topic areas and is designed to give an overall picture of how workplace wellness efforts are progressing. It includes questions based on many key evidence-based and best-practice strategies and interventions that are part of a comprehensive wellness approach specific to topic areas.

The questions are scored based on the level of impact the strategy has on the intended health behavior outcomes and the strength of the scientific evidence supporting the impact.

Your local public health SHIP staff will send you an e-mail with a link to fill out your SEWA when you start working with SHIP and again after you go through the first several months of implementing your workplace wellness program. Taking the follow-up SEWA allows an employer to track their progress.

## ADDITIONAL DATA RESOURCES

### **Health screenings**

Employers may choose to provide health screenings to help employees understand their health numbers and health risks. Community partners like local public health or clinics and hospitals may provide screenings such as blood pressure, blood values, and other testing. There is usually a cost to doing the health screening.



## ADDITIONAL DATA RESOURCES (CONT.)

### Medical and safety claims analyses

Larger companies may be able to request a medical claims analysis from their health insurance carrier, their insurance broker, or a third-party administrator.

Although this data may be more difficult to obtain, it includes important information on health care claims and pharmaceutical costs. There may be other data available to the organization such as disability claims, safety records or worker compensation data that could shed light on employee health concerns. Confidentiality is paramount when using these data, and data should only be reported in aggregate form.

### Employee interest survey

Assess employees' and managers' interests by conducting an employee interest survey. It is important to ask employees what they would like to see in their wellness program, what are the best ways to communicate program information and what they view as valuable.

Surveys should be collected anonymously. It is important to instruct employees not to put their name on the survey and make sure someone other than a supervisor collects the surveys once they are completed.

Confidentiality is paramount when using this data and should be reported only in aggregate form.

Secure Leadership Support

Convene Wellness Committee

Conduct Assessments

Create and Implement Program

Evaluate

# STEP FOUR:

## CREATE AND IMPLEMENT THE PLAN



After the data has been collected, it's time to develop a plan.

Creating the plan will take some time. One of the biggest mistakes employers make when starting a workplace wellness program is not taking the time to thoughtfully plan what they are going to do.

Collecting the information listed in Step 4 will help guide the planning phase by informing the committee of both the needs and the wants of the employees.

### Here is what should be included in the plan:

- Goals and objectives of the wellness program.  
Both long term (3 years) and short term (1 year)
- Timelines of what needs to be accomplished: roles and responsibilities –  
Who is going to do what?
- An itemized budget
- Marketing and communication strategies –  
How will employees know what is happening?
- Evaluation – What is and is not working?

Once the plan is created, it is important to show leadership and get approval before implementation. The plan lets leadership know resources are being allocated appropriately and there is a plan to evaluate wellness program progress. Keeping leadership informed at all times is important to continue to receive leadership support. *See next page for Action Plan Worksheet.*



# ACTION PLAN WORKSHEET

**BUSINESS NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

## GOALS: What do we want to accomplish?

<p>Example:</p> <p>Offer healthy food and beverages at all staff functions.</p>	<p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>4. _____</p>
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## ACTION STEPS: What activities need to happen?

<p>Example:</p> <p>a) Discuss at wellness committee level</p> <p>b) Get buy-in from leadership</p> <p>c) Provide list of what constitutes healthy to responsible staff</p>	<p>1a. _____</p> <p>1b. _____</p> <p>2a. _____</p> <p>2b. _____</p> <p>3a. _____</p> <p>3b. _____</p> <p>4a. _____</p> <p>4b. _____</p>
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## ACTION PLAN WORKSHEET (CONT.)

### LEAD PERSON: Who will lead each goal?

Example:  Wellness Coordinator, Manager, Wellness Champion	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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### STAKEHOLDERS: Who will be involved and/or impacted?

Example:  Staff	<hr/> <hr/>
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### MEASUREMENT: How is progress measured?

Example:  Taste tests.  Survey staff to find out healthy preferences before and after.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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### TIMELINE: List start dates for goals.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

### COMPLETE? "Yes" when done

GOAL 1 _____
GOAL 2 _____
GOAL 3 _____
GOAL 4 _____

# STEP FIVE:

## EVALUATE



Evaluation helps track progress and determine what is most effective for wellness programming. It also helps secure continued resources from leadership.

### Here are some elements that should be measured:

- Participation – Include returning and new participants. Are efforts reaching all or a few employees? Are they reaching the intended audience?
- Participant satisfaction – This can be done in the employee needs assessment survey and after each initiative. This can inform the committee if employees feel good about the initiative and the messages that are being communicated.
- Changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors – Show that employees are learning about health and making healthier choices
- Risk reduction – Through the health screenings, learn the risk factors affecting employees
- Physical environment and corporate culture
- Productivity – Review absenteeism, turnover, and morale statistics
- Return on investment – This is a challenging measurement that may require some help. It can include a change in health care costs, workers' compensation, disability claims, absenteeism, productivity, and other measures important to the organization.

Looking at the culture, along with return on investment, can show the value on investment of the wellness initiative. Many organizations are realizing that cultural changes can affect softer measures, such as productivity, absenteeism, employee retention, and job satisfaction.

Secure Leadership Support

Convene Wellness Committee

Conduct Assessments

Create and Implement Program

Evaluate





## STRATEGIES TO **SUPPORT HEALTHIER EMPLOYEES**

Companies can help employees be healthier by making changes that help workers reduce commercial tobacco use and increase access to and opportunities for physical activity and healthy eating at work.



# COMMERCIAL TOBACCO USE



The negative health effects of commercial tobacco use are well known. Smoking is the leading cause of preventable U.S. deaths each year, and the associated diseases and health care costs are significant. In fact, 480,000 Americans and 6,312 Minnesotans die each year as a result of smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke.<sup>1</sup>

Smokers incur more medical costs, see physicians more often and are admitted to hospitals for longer periods than non-smokers. In Minnesota, \$3.2 billion per year is spent on healthcare costs. Smokers miss 2.6 more days than non-smoking peers. The average smoker takes two 15 minute smoke breaks per day in excess of regular break time. Healthcare expenses of a smoker can be eight percent higher than for a non-smoker.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to direct health affects to commercial tobacco users, other employees are affected by secondhand and third hand smoke. Committing to a commercial tobacco-free workplace/ground and promoting cessation will help all employees be healthier.

## Tobacco cessation best practices

- Create policy prohibiting commercial tobacco use anywhere on the property and in company vehicles, including the use of vaping products.
- Provide prompts/posters to support a no commercial tobacco use policy, including signs indicating this is a tobacco-free workplace.
- Provide counseling through an individual, group or telephone program, including a program on site and programs provided through an insurance provider.
- Promote cessation tools like over-the-counter and prescription medication available to employees through your insurance provider. The American Lung Association has published *Making Your Workplace Smoke-Free and Commercial Tobacco-Free*.

<sup>1</sup> US Department of Health and Human Services (2014) *The Health Consequences of Smoking – 50 Years of Progress Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids* (2015) *The Toll of Tobacco in Minnesota*<sup>2</sup> *Making Your Workplace Smoke-Free and Commercial Tobacco-Free*

<sup>2</sup> *Making Your Workplace Tobacco Free*, American Lung Association. Available at [https://action.lung.org/site/DocServer/MN\\_Making\\_Your\\_Worksite\\_Tobacco-Free\\_2021.pdf](https://action.lung.org/site/DocServer/MN_Making_Your_Worksite_Tobacco-Free_2021.pdf)

# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



The benefits of regular physical activity are numerous, yet the majority of Americans don't get the recommended 150 minutes of moderate activity per week. In Minnesota, nearly one-third of adults do not get enough activity per week to meet the recommendations.<sup>3</sup>

The good news is regardless of its size, setting and location, the workplace can help employees be active. When employers provide support for employees to be active, employees are more likely to incorporate activity into their workday. In fact, many employers believe creating a culture that encourages physical activity can help recruit and retain employees and have a wide range of benefits.

The table and policy example on the next page can be used as a framework for developing sustainable changes in the physical environment.

## Here are questions to consider:

- What policy changes need to be addressed or added?
- What system changes need to be addressed?
- What issues within the work environment need to be added or revised?
- What are the steps to accomplish the PSE change?
- What is the timeline, and who is responsible for following through?



Many employers believe creating a culture that encourages physical activity can help recruit and retain employees and has a wide range of benefits.

<sup>3</sup> CDC *Physical Activity Guidelines for Adults*

# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: BEST PRACTICE WORKSHEET

This worksheet will organize your physical activity plan.

Best Practice	System Change	Environment Change	Policy Change	Timeline	Notes
Offer breaks and flexible work hours to allow for physical activity during the day	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____
Post motivational signs to promote fruits and vegetables	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____
Map out trails or walking routes	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____
Provide bicycle racks in safe, convenient, and accessible areas	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____
Start employee activity clubs	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____
Provide outdoor exercise areas such as fields and trails	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____
Provide an on-site exercise facility	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____

# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: BEST PRACTICE WORKSHEET (CONT.)

This worksheet will organize your physical activity plan.

Best Practice	System Change	Environment Change	Policy Change	Timeline	Notes
Allow for use of facilities outside of normal working hours	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____
Start an employer provided bike share initiative	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____
Adopt a flexible dress code to allow employees to feel comfortable walking or biking during breaks	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____
Negotiate a discount for employees at a local fitness center	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____
Promote physical activity opportunities in the community (local races and events)	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____

# SAMPLE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY POLICY

## Policy: Workday Flexibility: Promotion of Physical Activity

**Purpose:** To provide a work environment that promotes and is supportive of physical activity.

### General Information

(ORGANIZATION) recognizes the benefits of regular exercise for its employees and the organization as a whole. Physical activity is essential for good health and contributes to individual positive well-being. The workplace is an important setting in which employees can increase their levels of physical activity to benefit their health and protect against illness. This is particularly important for employees holding sedentary positions. As a way to encourage overall health and physical fitness, (ORGANIZATION) will permit, to the extent possible, its employees with workday flexibility to encourage physical exercise.

Activities and events sponsored or supported by (ORGANIZATION) can include opportunities for physical activity by:

- Building physical activity breaks into meetings, conferences and events such as stretch-breaks, icebreakers or other activities
- Identifying physical activity opportunities such as maps with walking routes and local attractions; recreational and exercise facilities; organizing walking groups and other group activities
- Supporting schedules to allow physical activity including workday flexibility when possible
- Providing encouragement from leadership to engage in physical activity throughout the day.

### Guidelines for Workday Flexibility

Working with their department management, employees may be permitted to adjust their workday in order to engage in health promotion activities such as physical activity during the day, yet maintain their expected number of work hours.

Staffing and work demands are very different among departments. The extent of workday flexibility for exercise may not be appropriate for all departments and employees. Therefore, the employee and department director must mutually agree to the individualized flexible workday plan.

Factors that need to be considered when evaluating the feasibility of a flexible workday plan include appropriate office/department coverage, minimum staffing levels, vacations, sick leave, other unplanned absences and peak workloads. Department directors are encouraged to support flexible work schedules to the extent possible; however, providing flexibility in the workday should not disrupt the normal workflow of the department.

Failure of the employee to adhere to these guidelines may cause the employee to lose the opportunity to participate in a workday flexibility plan.

# POTENTIAL LIABILITY ISSUES

## Response from Public Health Law Center

### Potential liability for employers if employees are injured while participating in employee wellness activities

(such as walking in a neighborhood near the workplace during paid breaks, or riding employer-owned bicycles to off-site meetings).

Potential liability may arise through a claim for workers compensation or personal injury. Employer liability for a workers compensation claim is limited because of an exception in the Minnesota law for voluntary wellness activities. Employer liability for a personal injury claim is also limited because workers compensation is the only remedy available for an employee who is injured in a situation “arising out of or in the course of employment” and because of the high standard that an employee would have to meet to prove a personal injury claim. For example, an employee is not required to prove that the employer was negligent under workers compensation, but would have to prove the employer’s negligence in a personal injury case. Although the likelihood of employer liability under either workers compensation or personal injury is small, the outcome of any claim will depend on the specific facts of the situation. An employer who is considering adopting a wellness program should have its attorney review the specifics of the program for liability and other legal issues.

A Minnesota employer must pay workers compensation benefits when a personal injury or death of an employee arises out of or in the course of employment. However, the law creates a specific exception for employee wellness programs. That section states:

**Injuries incurred while participating in voluntary recreational programs sponsored by the employer, including health promotion programs, athletic events, parties and picnics, do not arise out of and in the course of the employment even though the employer pays some or all of the cost of the program. This exclusion does not apply in the event that the injured employee was ordered or assigned by the employer to participate in the program. Minnesota Statute 176.021, subdivision 9.**

Therefore, as long as participation in the wellness program is voluntary, the employer will not be required to pay workers compensation benefits, for example, to an employee who is injured while taking a walk through the neighborhood during a paid break. Even if the employer provides a map of the area showing a suggested route, it is unlikely that the employer would be liable if an employee were injured. The result might be different, however, if an employee is injured while taking a “walking meeting.” In that situation, it would be more likely that the injury occurred in the course of employment.

If an employee is injured while riding an employer-owned bicycle to an off-site meeting instead of driving, the employer may have workers compensation liability because the employee is riding the bike in the course of his or her employment. The employee is traveling to the off-site meeting for the employer’s benefit, not the employee’s benefit. The fact that the employee had the choice to drive his or her own car and chose to use the employer’s bicycle should not make a difference. If the employer makes the bicycles available for employees to ride as part of the wellness program unrelated to any employment duties, any injuries that occur would be exempt from workers comp coverage. However, the employer could be liable for personal injury if it made bicycles available to its employees that it knew to be defective and an employee were injured in an accident because of the defect.

### Equipment Use

If using the treadmill at work is a voluntary wellness activity that an employee does on their own break time then liability is not assumed by the employer. If it’s a required function of their job then it’s different. There are also other things the employer could do to minimize any potential liability. The following information is from the bike share document from the Public Health Law Center. If employers got in the habit of doing the last three around any equipment used it would greatly reduce any risk.

Q: How can the owner or operator of a bike share program limit its liability?

A: There are numerous ways that the owner or operator of a bike share program can limit its liability, including:

- Purchasing insurance
- Requiring users of the program to sign waivers releasing the program from liability for injuries
- Keeping the bikes well maintained
- Educating users about use of the bike
- Providing safety training

**The Public Health Law Center provides information and technical assistance on issues related to tobacco, obesity and public health. The Public Health Law Center does not provide legal representation or advice. This content should not be considered legal advice or a substitute for obtaining legal advice from an attorney who can represent you. If you have specific legal questions, we recommend that you consult with an attorney familiar with the laws of your jurisdiction.**

## COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

It is important to communicate at least quarterly about opportunities for physical activity in the workplace.

### COMMUNICATIONS PIECES SHOULD:

- Set a positive and fun tone
- Come from leadership when possible
- Use a variety of channels (intranet, newsletter, break room bulletin board, e-mail)
- Focus on the immediate benefits of physical activity (increased energy, reduced stress, feeling better).

Be honest with employees about why this plan is being implemented and make sure employees understand this is a benefit, not a job requirement.

## EVALUATING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Here are some ideas of how to determine if the efforts toward getting employees more active is working:

TYPE OF MEASUREMENT	METHOD
Percentage of decrease in sedentary time	Employee self-report through survey
Percentage increase of physical activity opportunities available	Physical activity opportunity numbers (before and after changes)
Usage and participation in physical activity opportunities	Usage numbers (before and after change)
Percentage increase in promotion of physical activity opportunities	Promotions (before and after change)
Employee satisfaction with physical activity opportunities	Employee interest survey
Creation of a physical activity policy and regular quality assurance checks on the commitments outlined in the policy	Human resources and leadership



# NUTRITION



Healthy eating is easier and more fun when shared with family, friends, and coworkers.

The worksheet and policy example on the following pages can be used as a framework for developing sustainable changes in your food environment.

## Questions to consider:

- What policy changes would need to be addressed or added?
- What system changes need to be addressed?
- What issues within the work environment need to be added or revised?
- What are the steps to accomplish the PSE change?
- What is the timeline and who is responsible for following through?

Most employees spend at least eight hours a day at work, which means they may consume at least one meal and two snacks at the workplace and may have access to many eating opportunities like cafeterias, vending, treats in the lunchroom, candy or snack dishes throughout the office, food at meetings, or options nearby. Workplaces can play a role in supporting employees in making nutritious food choices.

## NUTRITION: BEST PRACTICE WORKSHEET

The following worksheet can help organize your nutrition plan:

Best Practice	System Change	Environment Change	Policy Change	Timeline	Notes
Provide protected time and dedicated space away from the work area for breaks/meals	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Post motivational signs to promote fruits and vegetables	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Increase the percentage of appealing, healthful food options in vending machines	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Use competitive pricing to make healthier choices economical	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Advertise nutritious options	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Provide nutritious food options in meetings	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Implement catering guide for meals that are catered in	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Businesses with cafeterias, plan nutritious menus	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

## NUTRITION: BEST PRACTICE WORKSHEET (CONT.)

The following worksheet can help organize your nutrition plan:

Best Practice	System Change	Environment Change	Policy Change	Timeline	Notes
Ensure that water is available throughout the day for all employees	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
Offer kitchen equipment (fridges, microwaves, stoves)	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
Offer local fruits/vegetables at the workplace	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
Provide on-site gardening, fruit orchards or farmers market	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
Provide a healthy snack station for employees	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
Include access to a dietitian as part of your health benefits	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
Include employees' family members in a campaign promoting fruit and vegetable consumption	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
Focus on product placement in vending machines, cafeteria	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
Pricing options so that healthier is more affordable	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____

# SAMPLE NUTRITION POLICY

## Healthy Food Environment Procedure

### I. PURPOSE

(ORGANIZATION) is committed to providing a healthy food environment for all employees, members, and visitors.

The purpose of this procedure is to outline guidelines for providing a healthy food environment to encourage and support healthy eating by employees, members and visitors.

The food environment includes vending machines, healthy snack stations and break rooms as well as meetings, events and celebrations where food and beverages are served.

### II. PROCEDURE

Employees are responsible for knowing, understanding and communicating to caterers, the healthy food environment procedure for their location and should contact their manager if they have questions. Employees are encouraged to select healthier options while considering who will be in attendance and maintaining variety for those who frequently attend events.

#### A. Catering Guidelines

1. Limit high carbohydrate items served at meals. (Example: Avoid serving pasta salads, sandwich, cream-based soup at one meal)
2. Offer whole grain bread and pasta options.
3. Choose broth-based soups rather than cream-based soups.
4. Offer meal plate consisting of half fruits and/or vegetables.
5. Offer healthy snack options such as trail mix, veggies, fruit, meat and cheese.
6. Offer healthy morning options. (Example: yogurt, granola, fruits, smaller portioned size muffins)
7. Offer water at meal times. Consider offering individual iced tea/lemonade packets in addition to soda at meals at manager's discretion. Avoid serving sodas at break times.
8. Offer smaller dessert portions.

#### B. Healthy Snack Guidelines

1. Offer low sugar trail mix options. (Examples: dried nuts and fruits)
2. Offer smaller servings of meats and cheese. (1 ounce)
3. Offer whole grain crackers, granola bars, bagels, popcorn, pretzels, English muffins.
4. Offer portioned sizes of fresh fruits and vegetables or whole fruits.
5. Offer healthy condiments: peanut butter, jelly, honey, hummus, and low calorie dip.
6. Offer individual servings of yogurt and granola.

#### C. Vending Machine Guidelines

1. 50% of the vending machine choices should be higher value foods. (Examples: nuts, granola bars, gum, etc.)

# COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Continue to communicate your options for healthier eating in the workplace on a regular basis.

**ALL COMMUNICATIONS SHOULD:**

- Set a positive tone
- Come from leadership when appropriate like the launch of new policy or guidelines around healthy eating
- Use a variety of channels (intranet, newsletter, bulletin board, e-mail)
- Reinforce the benefits of healthy eating

# EVALUATING CHANGES IN THE FOOD ENVIRONMENT

How do you determine if your efforts to get employees to eat more healthfully are working?

TYPE OF MEASUREMENT	METHOD
Percentage of employees who eat healthfully	Employee self-report through survey
Percentage of employees who have changed their eating habits as a result of PSE work	Employee self-report through survey
Percentage of healthy food available in vending	Information of selected choices provided by vending company
Sales of healthy food in vending machines	Sales information provided by vendor
Sales of healthy food in cafeteria	Sales information provided by vendor
Sales of healthy food from snack station	Healthy items sold from snack station

# BREASTFEEDING



Employers who provide lactation support can see a 3:1 return on investment. In fact, \$13 billion in direct health care costs would be saved annually if 90 percent of women were able to breastfeed for at least six months.<sup>4</sup> In Minnesota, parents are encouraged to breastfeed for at least one year.

Many Minnesota parents work outside of the home. The benefits of supporting breastfeeding in the workplace are:

**Parents reduce their risk of:**

- Breast and ovarian cancer
- Type 2 diabetes
- Postpartum depression

**Their babies reduce risk of:**

- Ear, skin, respiratory and stomach infections
- Diarrhea
- SIDS
- Obesity
- Type 1 and 2 diabetes
- Asthma
- Leukemia

Providing accommodations for nursing parents is the law both at the federal and state level. Workplaces must provide time for parents to express milk and a private place that is not a bathroom stall. For more information on state and federal laws, see the links below:

*[FLSA Protections to Pump at Work | U.S. Department of Labor \(dol.gov\)](#)*

*[Pregnant workers and new parents | Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry \(mn.gov\)](#)*

<sup>4</sup> *United States Breastfeeding Committee Workplace Accommodations to Support and Protect Breastfeeding*

# BECOMING A BREASTFEEDING FRIENDLY WORKPLACE

Use this checklist to help in the process of becoming breastfeeding friendly.

STEP 1: Written policy or guideline	
<p><b>Process:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Addresses support for breastfeeding parents</li><li>• Provides adequate break time to express milk</li><li>• Provides a process for educating all staff about the policy – <i>including supervisors and managers</i></li><li>• Provision for a place to express milk that complies with the law</li></ul>	<p><b>Notes:</b></p>
STEP 2: Support	
<p><b>Process:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Employer provides opportunities for breastfeeding parents to receive support and encouragement</li><li>• The employer maintains a list of local breastfeeding resources</li></ul>	<p><b>Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can include message boards in the lactation room, internal support groups, information about the local coalition or support in the community</li></ul>
STEP 3: Time	
<p><b>Process:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Employers must provide time for parents to express milk in accordance with state law</li><li>• Written policy must reflect this – it is the law</li></ul>	<p><b>Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It may be necessary for the employee to work with their supervisor if additional time is needed outside of regular break times</li><li>• Employers cannot require employees to make up any extra time needed outside of already scheduled breaks to express human milk</li></ul>
STEP 4: Place	
<p><b>Process:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Workplaces must provide a private room with a lock that is not a bathroom stall</li><li>• The space should be within a five minute walk from the employee’s work station</li></ul>	<p><b>Notes:</b></p> <p>The room should provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A chair</li><li>• Flat surface like a table</li><li>• Electrical outlet</li><li>• Pumping equipment</li><li>• Access to refrigeration or communication about how employees need to store their milk if no fridge is available (bring their own cooler bag)</li></ul>

# SAMPLE BREASTFEEDING POLICY

## Policy for supporting breastfeeding employees

In recognition of the well documented health advantages of breastfeeding for infants and mothers, (ORGANIZATION) provides a supportive environment to enable breastfeeding employees to express milk during work hours.

This includes a company-wide lactation support program administered by (ORGANIZATION).

(ORGANIZATION) subscribes to the following workplace support policy. This policy shall be communicated to all employees at the time of hire, when an employee makes an inquiry about or requests parental leave, and be included in new employee orientation training.

## COMPANY RESPONSIBILITIES

Breastfeeding employees who choose to continue providing their milk for their infants after returning to work shall receive:

- **Milk expression breaks.** Breastfeeding employees are allowed to breastfeed or express milk during work hours using their normal breaks and meal times.

For time that may be needed beyond the usual break times, employee's compensation will not be reduced. (ORGANIZATION) may not require the employee to use PTO, vacation, or sick time for any additional time (time outside of normal breaks and mealtimes) needed, nor may they require employees make up any extra time needed beyond normal breaks and mealtimes.

- **A place to express milk.** A private room (not a toilet stall or restroom) shall be available for employees to breastfeed or express milk. The room will be private and sanitary, located near a sink with running water for washing hands and rinsing out breast pump parts and have an electrical outlet. If employees prefer, they may also breastfeed or express milk in their own private offices, or in other comfortable locations agreed upon in consultation with the employee's supervisor. Expressed milk can be stored [in general company refrigerators/in designated refrigerators provided in the lactation room or other location/in employee's personal cooler].
- **Education.** Prenatal and postpartum breastfeeding classes and informational materials are available for all parents and their partners.
- **Staff support.** Supervisors are responsible for negotiating practices that will help facilitate each employees' infant feeding goals. It is expected that all employees will assist in providing a positive atmosphere of support for breastfeeding employees.



## SAMPLE BREASTFEEDING POLICY (CONT.)

### EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Communication with supervisors.** Employees who wish to express milk during the work period shall keep supervisors informed of their needs so that appropriate accommodations can be made to satisfy the needs of both the employee and the company.
- **Maintenance of milk expression areas.** Breastfeeding employees are responsible for keeping milk expression areas clean, using anti-microbial wipes to clean the pump and area around it. Employees are also responsible for keeping the general lactation room clean for the next user. This responsibility extends to both designated milk expression areas, as well as other areas where expressing milk will occur.
- **Milk storage.** Employees should label all milk expressed with their name and date collected so it is not inadvertently confused with another employee's milk. Each employee is responsible for proper storage of her milk using [company provided refrigerator/personal storage coolers].
- **Use of break times to express milk.** When more than one breastfeeding employee needs to use the designated lactation room, employees can use the sign-in log provided in the room to negotiate milk expression times that are most convenient or best meet their needs.

### BREASTFEEDING FRIENDLY WORKPLACE DESIGNATION

The Minnesota Department of Health recognizes employers for best practices in providing support for breastfeeding employees. The Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace designation is an award given out to workplaces who are committed to providing supporting for nursing employees.



Learn more about the designation at <https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/breastfeeding/recognition/workplaces.html>

# COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Once the policy and supports are in place, it is important to communicate your organization’s support for nursing parents through a variety of different channels and through management acknowledgment. Supervisors should be made aware of the policy and the role they play in supporting breastfeeding employees. Providing policy information at new employee orientation will also be a valuable introduction.

## EVALUATING BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT

TYPE OF MEASUREMENT	METHOD
Number of employees using the lactation room/space	Signup sheet
Satisfaction: Does the space provide what is necessary to help employees express milk?	Survey of employees who have or are using the room



# WELL-BEING



Well-being can be more than individual behavior. By paying attention to employees, their work concerns and their environment, employers can help their teams feel supported, engaged, and more productive.

Creating an atmosphere and culture of well-being is a slow process, involving building strong relationships between management and staff, listening to employee concerns, and together, working to build an environment consisting of respect, belonging, and trust.

*“ It shouldn’t hurt to come to work. ”*

In fact, paying attention to employee well-being can bring energy, stronger relationships, meaningful work and satisfaction to all. So how can a work environment refresh employees and offer ways to be resilient and bounce back from setbacks?

## BUILD RESPECT AND TRUST

Consider the ways to lay a foundation of respect and trust. Management practices can include offering a clear mission and purpose to employees, open communication, including employees in planning, and providing space for people to bring their authentic selves to work.

Psychological safety is the ability to be able to share ideas and provide feedback without fear or belittling. By disclosing their mistakes and concerns, managers can model openness and safety. Open communication allows for deeper conversations and self-disclosure.



## INVOLVE EMPLOYEES

Creating an open atmosphere can bring more and even better ideas. When employees feel involved and have a sense of purpose, they perform better, and want to work harder.

*“ If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together. ”*

## THE WORK ENVIRONMENT

Working in safe, pleasant conditions can provide more enjoyment in coming to work. Daylight spaces, quality lighting, safe equipment, break rooms, and a calm environment allow people to decompress and be their best during the day.

Consider what simple changes could be made to the environment to create a place for employees to enjoy a meal or have a casual meeting.

How can work areas become more friendly?

*“ Happiness inspires productivity. ”*

## THE JOB AND WORKLOAD

Employers may benefit from looking at the organizational culture and learn about what impacts employees' stress at work.

Consideration of employees' workload can be altered more easily in some work environments. Seasonal work, end-of-year deadlines, and rush projects may not be adjusted and can create difficulty for employees. Personal and family issues can also enter into the workday, distracting employees from work.

Employers can provide resources through their benefits offerings, such as employee assistance programs, childcare resources, financial planning services, and legal services. They can also offer mental health treatment for employees and family members. Reducing the stigma of mental health needs can support the use of these programs and should be advertised often.

## WELL-BEING: BEST PRACTICE WORKSHEET

Use the following worksheet to organize your plan around well-being.

Best Practice	System Change	Environment Change	Policy Change	Timeline	Notes
Encourage use of your Employee Assistance Program (EAP)	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
Look at work design around workload ambiguity	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
Provide family friendly policies for sick time, childcare, eldercare	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
Evaluate new employee on-boarding; add wellness program offerings, EAP, active living, etc.	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
Regularly update managers on new policies and procedures	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
Train managers to recognize an employee in crisis	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
Build skills to manage employees for optimal health, productivity and engagement	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
Provide a quiet room for employees to decompress	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____

## WELL-BEING: BEST PRACTICE WORKSHEET (CONT.)

Use the following worksheet to organize your plan around well-being.

Best Practice	System Change	Environment Change	Policy Change	Timeline	Notes
Provide mental health and substance abuse benefits through insurance provider	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____
Encourage employees' input in planning work related tasks	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____

## SAMPLE WELL-BEING POLICY

(ORGANIZATION) recognizes that addressing health and well-being can lead to healthier and happier employees and that safeguarding employee health and well-being is an important part of our organizational culture and identity.

(ORGANIZATION) defines well-being as the experience of overall health. It encompasses good mental, physical, financial and social health. The aim of this policy is to create a workplace culture where employees feel comfortable to talk, seek help and support, and where well-being is recognized and embedded into (ORGANIZATION)'s working practices.

(ORGANIZATION) is committed to being recognised as a responsible employer, that supports the well-being of all its employees. (ORGANIZATION) recognizes that its employees may encounter, throughout their lives, events that may affect them in the workplace including those related to their health, personal or domestic situation as well as work-related problems. The policy will provide a framework within which (ORGANIZATION) will encourage and facilitate working practices and services that support employee well-being

The policy acknowledges the importance of providing a workplace that addresses the health and well-being of its employees. The policy and ensuing activities represent our commitment to a healthy and effective workforce.

When applying this policy, (ORGANIZATION) will follow the following principles: (below are some suggestions)

- Recognize that health is more than just the absence of illness and injury
- Supportive and engaging work has benefits for individuals, families and wider society, beyond chronic disease risk reduction
- Recognize that the workplace culture and environment contributes significantly to individuals ability to make healthy lifestyle choices, including emotional well-being
- Leadership is committed to providing all employees with a safe, healthy and supportive environment in which to work
- Leadership is well positioned and will act as advocates and role models of workplace health and well-being
- Commit to providing a supportive workplace culture where healthy lifestyle choices are valued and encouraged
- Recognize the voluntary nature of participation within health and well-being related activities
- Commit to providing employees with access to safe and appropriate health and well-being information, activities and services; following recommended good practices and quality service providers.

# SAMPLE WELL-BEING POLICY (CONT.)

## RESPONSIBILITIES

(Add and remove as required to tailor to policy and workplace requirements)

### **Employees have a responsibility to:**

- Understand this policy and seek clarification from management where required
- Consider this policy while completing work-related duties and at any time while representing (ORGANIZATION)
- Support fellow employees in (ORGANIZATION)'s aim of providing a safe, healthy and supportive environment for all employees
- Seek opportunities for involvement and advancement of ideas and planning where able and willing.

### **Managers have a responsibility to:**

- Ensure that all employees are made aware of this policy
- Actively support and contribute to the implementation of this policy, including the principles, objectives and procedures
- Manage the implementation and review of this policy.



# WORKPLACE WELLNESS

# RESOURCES

## General resources

- American Heart Association - [http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/WorkplaceHealth/Workplace-Health\\_UCM\\_460416\\_SubHomePage.jsp](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/WorkplaceHealth/Workplace-Health_UCM_460416_SubHomePage.jsp)
- American Lung Association Corporate Wellness Resources - <http://www.lung.org/support-and-community/corporate-wellness/>
- CDC Healthy Workplace Resources - <https://www.cdc.gov/workplacehealthpromotion/index.html>
- CDC Total Worker Health - <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/twh/totalhealth.html>
- Wisconsin Department of Health Services - Workplace Wellness Resource Kit - <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/physical-activity/worksite/kit.htm>
- Workplace California Fit Business Kit - <https://takeactionca.cdph.ca.gov/pages/california-fit-business-kit-tools.aspx>

## Breastfeeding support resources

- MDH Breastfeeding-Friendly Workplace Award - <http://www.health.state.mn.us/breastfeedingfriendly>
- Minnesota Breastfeeding Coalition - [Minnesota Breastfeeding Coalition \(mnbreastfeedingcoalition.org\)](http://MinnesotaBreastfeedingCoalition.org)
- Department of Labor and Industry, Pregnant Workers and New Parents: <http://www.dli.mn.gov/newparents>

## Healthy food resources

- Dietary Guidelines for Americans - <http://health.gov/DietaryGuidelines/>
- American Heart Association Health Food and Beverage at Work Toolkit - [http://www.heart.org/en/about-us/-/media/Healthy-Living-Files/Foodscope/Healthy\\_Workplace\\_Food\\_and\\_Beverage\\_Toolkit.pdf](http://www.heart.org/en/about-us/-/media/Healthy-Living-Files/Foodscope/Healthy_Workplace_Food_and_Beverage_Toolkit.pdf)
- Guidance for Healthy Eating at Work - [http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/downloads/healthy\\_worksite\\_food.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/downloads/healthy_worksite_food.pdf)
- Health and Sustainability Guidelines for Federal Concessions and Vending Operations - [Health and Sustainability Guidelines for Federal Concessions and Vending Operations \(cdc.gov\)](http://www.cdc.gov)

## RESOURCES (CONT.)

### Well-being resources

- NIOSH Stress at Work - <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/99-101/default.html>
- Eat Smart Move More Manage Stress Toolkit - <http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/Worksites/Toolkit/Manage%20Stress/Manage%20Stress%201-17-12.pdf>
- Senior LinkAge Line: The Senior LinkAge Line is a free service, offered by the State of Minnesota, which makes it easy for older adults and their families to find community services or plan for their future - <http://seniorlinkageline.com/>
- Minnesota 2-1-1: United Way 2-1-1 provides free and confidential health and human services information for people in Minnesota - <https://www.211unitedway.org/>

### Tobacco resources

- American Lung Association Toolkit - [https://action.lung.org/site/DocServer/MN\\_Making\\_Your\\_Worksite\\_Tobacco-Free\\_2021.pdf](https://action.lung.org/site/DocServer/MN_Making_Your_Worksite_Tobacco-Free_2021.pdf)

### Professional organizations

- American College of Sports Medicine - <http://acsm.org/>
- Health Enhancement Research Organization (HERO) - <http://hero-health.org/scorecard/>
- National Wellness Association - <http://www.nationalwellness.org/>
- Wellness Council of America (WELCOA) - <https://www.welcoa.org/>

### Physical activity resources

- Bike Friendly America - <http://bikeleague.org>
- Map your walking route - <http://www.mapmywalk.com>
- Map your bike route - <http://www.mapmyride.com>



