



Implementing a Successful Wellness Program:

Steps and Resources



NEW HAMPSHIRE
Local Government Center

LGC Mission

New Hampshire Local Government Center (LGC) will provide programs and services that strengthen the quality of its member governments and the ability of their officials and employees to serve the public by being a catalyst for dialogue and action, an advocate on issues, an advisor on problems, a provider of benefits and risk management services, an educator/trainer in skills and a resource for information.



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Introduction



This booklet will provide you with an easy-to-use guide to assist with the implementation of your wellness program—whether it is a walking program or a wellness workshop series. The seven simple steps suggested offer a framework for implementing a program.

This information has been prepared for schools, municipalities, counties, worksites and communities throughout the State of New Hampshire by the New Hampshire Local Government Center.

Checklist for Well-Planned Programs

Identify the following:

- ✓ Program goals and objectives
- ✓ Timeline*
- ✓ Target audience
- ✓ Target audience's current level of wellness
- ✓ Policies and culture of group
- ✓ Where the program will be offered
- ✓ A good time to schedule the program
- ✓ Level of management support for the wellness initiative
- ✓ Budget
- ✓ Program cost and materials needed

*Chart out when you will implement your ideas. These steps will help you plan all aspects of your program.



Step

1

Define and Identify Participants

Before you offer your program, it will be helpful to survey your audience and management to make sure you are meeting the needs of everyone to the best of your abilities.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- Who is your target audience?
- What is the gender and age of the group?
- What is the group's current knowledge of wellness?
- What are the needs and interests of the group?

By doing this, you can gain valuable feedback, raise group awareness and personalize your presentation for the group.



Step

Step

Establish a Supportive Wellness Culture

Some simple ideas to get started include the following:

- ✓ Work with or establish a safety and wellness committee.
- ✓ Find out what the culture and policies at your workplace are relative to wellness.
- ✓ Provide healthy information on bulletin boards or in staff rooms.
- ✓ Make water, juice and healthy snacks available in vending machines.
- ✓ Encourage staff to take 10–15 minute stretch breaks daily.
- ✓ Designate walking routes at the worksite.

This is a process that has to be developed over a period of time. Come up with a plan and start small, constantly building on the effort. Encouraging broad-based participation in the planning stage helps with employee buy-in.

A photograph of three people in an office setting. On the left, a woman with blonde hair and glasses is partially visible, looking towards the center. In the middle, a young woman with long blonde hair is smiling broadly and gesturing with her hands. On the right, an older man with glasses and a brown suit is also smiling. The background is a bright, out-of-focus office environment.

Work with Decision Makers to Ensure Success

Step 4

Research indicates that implementing worksite wellness programs both decreases absenteeism and increases productivity in the workplace. Establishing a relationship with key decision-makers early on in the planning process will increase the likelihood of its success.

The following steps can help you get going:

- ✓ Schedule a meeting with the decision-makers of the organization.
- ✓ Explain the employee benefits of an onsite wellness program.
- ✓ Enlist decision-maker support and commitment to the development of the program.
- ✓ Encourage decision-maker promotion of the wellness program to all employees.

Overcoming Barriers to Participation

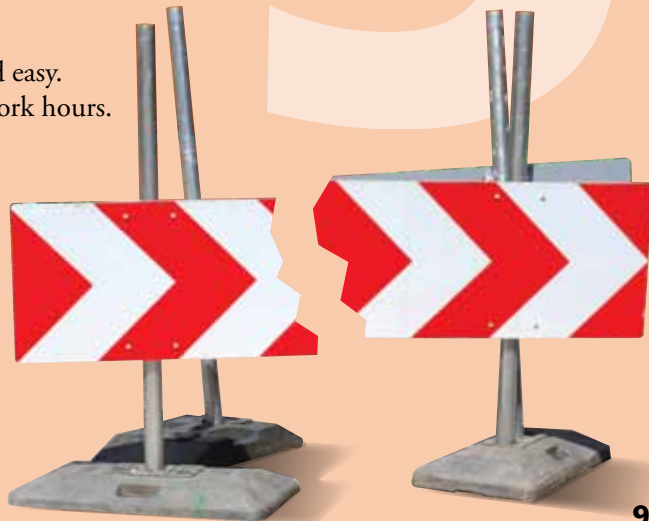
Step

5

Ask individuals what will enable them to participate. Get some personal feedback. Try to find out the barriers as best you can, and ask management to offer some suggestions to overcome the identified barriers. Listen, educate and communicate accurate information.

Here are some additional tips for boosting wellness program participation:

- Keep registration simple and easy.
- Schedule program during work hours.
- Offer education credits for attendance.
- Make presentation **FREE** or low cost.



Program Commitment for Success

To have a successful program you must be dedicated to your purpose. It will take time and a well thought-out plan to prepare for your program.

Organize a team of interested individuals who can assist with implementation of the program. Find out each team member's talents and what they like to do; delegate tasks accordingly.

Encourage team members to talk up the program to friends and coworkers. Positive words from knowledgeable team members are more valuable than posters or flyers you create!

Show that you care about employees and their health. If this is communicated effectively, employees will be more open to receiving your information.

Verify the following before offering your wellness program:

- ✓ Room availability
- ✓ Time is being given to employees to attend
- ✓ Input and representation is secured from all sectors—including management and support staff

Communicate for Success

Step

6

There are many creative ways to market a wellness program effectively. Approaches vary with the makeup of your particular workplace. Some worksites find paycheck stuffers work better than posters or that e-mail invitations net more response than bulletin boards. Whatever vehicle you choose, communicate excitement to your employees—what’s in it for them—and a sense of fun.

Suggested to-do items:

- ✓ Start publicizing programs at least three weeks in advance.
- ✓ Make phone calls, send e-mails, hang posters and send out paycheck stuffers.
- ✓ Communicate in daily announcements.
- ✓ Send out personalized invitations.
- ✓ Be creative; use fruit, balloons, buttons and flowers for visuals.
- ✓ Create a health-related newsletter that promotes the program and offers tidbits of health information.
- ✓ Clearly identify the personal health benefits of attending the program.





Step

Use Incentives

Incentives can help get people to the program, but their effect can be short-term. Experiencing the added health benefits of new behavior is the ideal motivator. Try offering an incentive that lasts a while and serves as a reminder of how it was earned.

Here are some incentive ideas to consider:

- Call local vendors for gift certificates or discounts on incentives.
- Purchase low-cost items (e.g., mini massagers, T-shirts and pens).
- Offer one grand prize to entice participants to enter a drawing.
- Provide certificates of participation.
- Recognize person of the month with a designated medal or award.
- Recognize outstanding individuals in a monthly/quarterly newsletter.

Additional Resources

Remember:

- You can only reward people for participating in a wellness program—not for their health status—per the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996. For more HIPAA information, visit: www.cms.hhs.gov/HIPAAGenInfo.
- Your employer group's New Hampshire Local Government Center (LGC) Health Management Representative can provide you with a multitude of workplace wellness programs. Visit www.nhlgc.org for more details or call 800.852.3358 and ask for the LGC's Health and Risk Management Department.
- Visit the Wellness Council of America website at www.WELCOA.org for additional information on how wellness improves the workplace.

The LGC Can Help!

Did you know that, as a member of the LGC's HealthTrust, you have a valuable wellness resource devoted to your school or municipality? Your LGC Health Management Representative can provide the following programs and services to help create and supplement your wellness program:

- Health and wellness presentations on Fitness, Nutrition, Back Care and a variety of other topics
- Interactive, instructional health and safety demonstrations
- Guidance through the *WELLDollars* grant application process
- Assistance and some materials for setting up incentive programs
- Suggestions for additional resources
- Brainstorming help
- Consulting/participation in your wellness committee
- Participation/assistance with health/safety/benefits fairs



Fit Facts





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