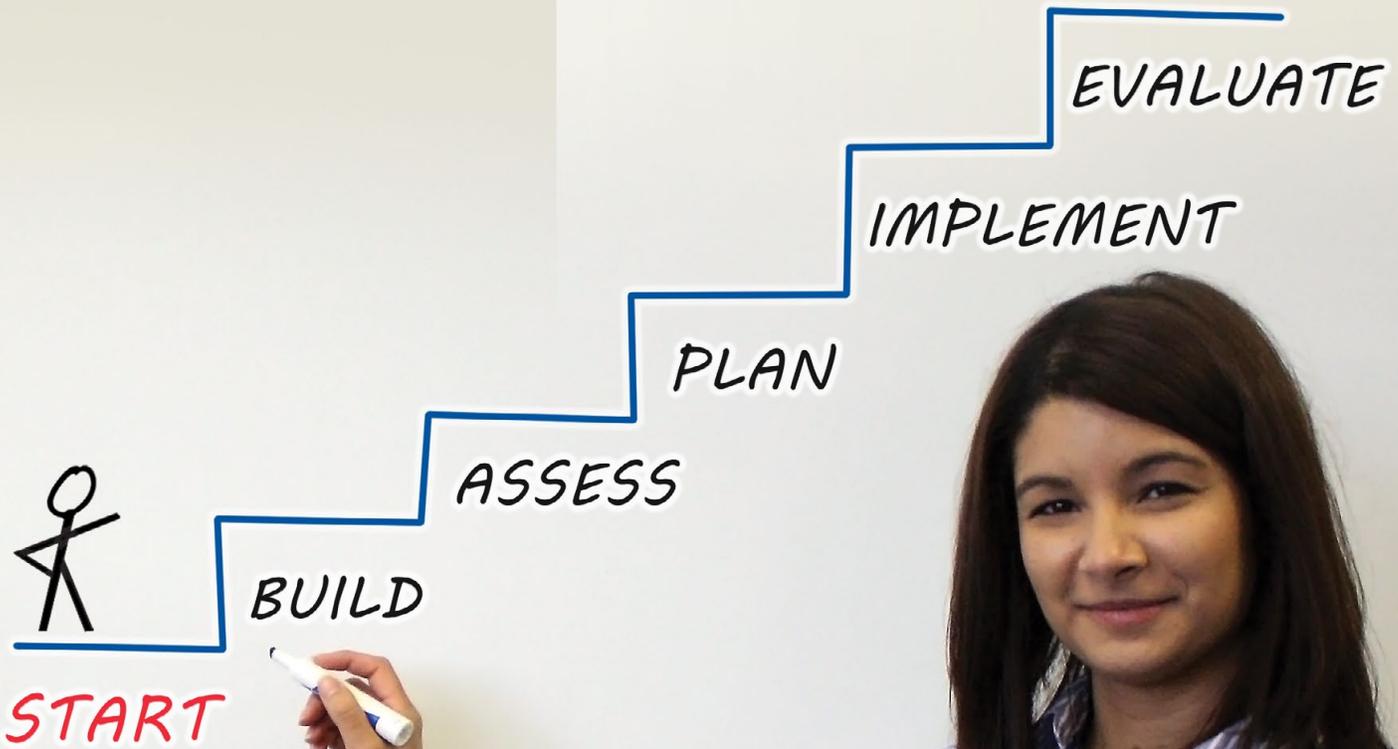


NEBRASKA
WORKSITE
WELLNESS

Toolkit

www.worksitewellness.ne.gov



Department of Health & Human Services



In partnership with:





STEP 4:

IMPLEMENT THE PLAN

STEP 4 Action Items

1. Select and implement programming to meet objectives
2. Offer policy and/or benefit options that support wellness

When selecting activities, make sure they align with the needs and interests of your employees, using the data you have collected as the basis for choosing the most appropriate activities.

Special considerations for small businesses

Small businesses have an advantage because communication can be much easier when there are fewer employees through word of mouth.

Once the objectives for the wellness program have been developed, the next step is to choose the activities that will help achieve them. Activities will fall into one of three strategies:

- ▶ *Programming*
- ▶ *Policies*
- ▶ *Benefits*

Addressing a health behavior through a combination of strategies versus a single strategy leads to a greater effect on the behavior.

Communication

Communication is an essential aspect for successful implementation of any chosen strategy or activity. Employees must be aware of the activities that the wellness program includes in order to participate, so frequently communicate about upcoming wellness opportunities through a variety of methods. When moving forward with the wellness program, satisfied participants can be a great way to advertise the program as they share their experiences with their coworkers.

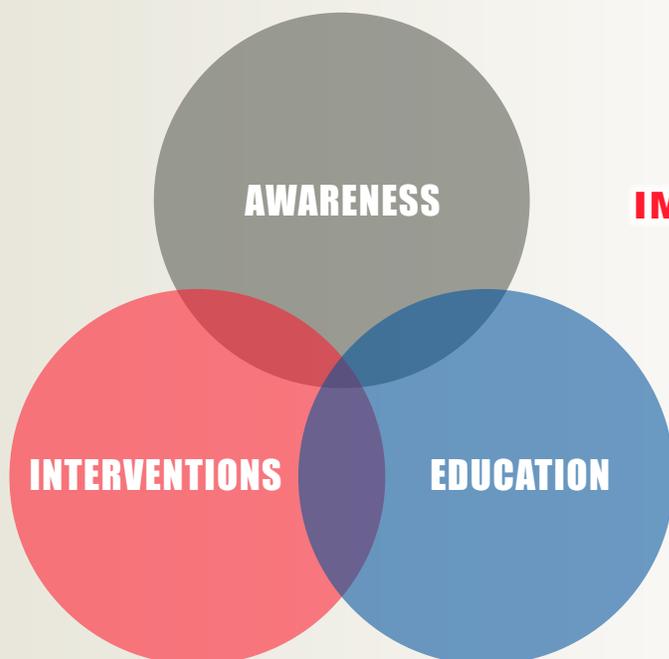
Programs that address attitude, skill building, self-management, and social support can improve employee participation and foster long-term change by positively impacting organizational culture. These elements can be built into any of the three levels of programming.

Remember to keep activities interesting, engaging and fun.

1. Select and implement programming

Wellness programs that incorporate all three levels of programming—awareness, education and interventions—tend to be more successful than programs that only address one or two levels, because multi-level programs support the natural process of behavior change. However, workplaces that are just beginning to implement wellness may want to start with awareness and/or education activities to build momentum before moving on to interventions.

- ▶ **Awareness** – Promotes wellness by making employees more aware of their behaviors and ways to improve their health.
Examples include: Distribution of printed materials, lunch and learns, health fairs, etc. Health Risk Assessments and health screenings also raise awareness while delivering important data.
- ▶ **Education** – Provides opportunities for employees to learn more about specific wellness topics of interest.
Examples include: educational classes, webinars, etc.
- ▶ **Interventions** – Encourages employees to make and maintain positive behavior change.
Examples include: tobacco cessation, on-sight weight management, ongoing wellness incentive scorecard, etc.



IMPLEMENT





STEP 4:

IMPLEMENT THE PLAN

Special considerations for small businesses

Start with activities that can impact a large number of your employees to build support for your wellness program, such as a healthy recipe exchange potluck or a walk during the lunch break.

"Wellness is something we do with and for team members . . . It's not something we do to them."

– Tonya Vyhldal,
[WorkWell](#) Program Director
Lincoln, Nebraska

Considerations when selecting programming

- ▶ **Know the Employees** – When considering interventions to implement, keep the demographic characteristics of the employees in mind. The average age, gender and education level of employees in the organization should influence the interventions selected. For example, an organization with mainly women in their 50s may include walking groups and weight loss support groups, while an organization consisting of mostly men in their 20s and 30s might want to offer a fitness challenge or competition between departments. In addition, common barriers to participation such as child care needs, shift work, break time and cost to employee should be addressed when possible.
- ▶ **Diversification of Delivery** – Due to different preferred methods for learning, some programming options will work for some employees, while other options will be more effective for others. Therefore, it is important to diversify the delivery of the wellness initiative by providing various opportunities for building awareness, education and behavior change. Independent learners may prefer printed information, self-study materials, web-based programs, or self-administered programs. More participatory learners may benefit more from lunch and learns, personal coaching (which can be offered by telephone, online, or in person), or support groups. Other employees may benefit from experiencing the impact of policy changes before deciding to make a change in their own lifestyle.
- ▶ **Other Factors** - Other factors to consider when selecting interventions include: potential impact on multiple health risk factors, budget restrictions, time restrictions, and management expectations for the program.

View a list of topic-specific [programming](#) and [resources](#) available at the state and national levels.

Programming ideas

The table below provides examples of programming based on the amount of resources available to dedicate to wellness efforts:

LOW RESOURCE <i>(Awareness / Education)</i>	MEDIUM RESOURCE <i>(Awareness / Education)</i>	HIGH RESOURCE <i>(Behavior Change)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Largely paper-based program <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> Posters promoting health <input type="checkbox"/> Health information pamphlets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Health fair as a program kick-off <input type="checkbox"/> Preventive wellness screenings <input type="checkbox"/> Confidential Health Risk Assessments <input type="checkbox"/> Lunch and Learns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Health care coverage for prevention and rehabilitation of chronic disease <input type="checkbox"/> Weight management, nutrition, and physical activity counseling as a member benefit in health insurance plan <input type="checkbox"/> On site fitness opportunities, like group classes or personal training

When choosing programming, consider partnering with other organizations to offer activities to employees. Local health departments, hospitals, health clubs and colleges may be able to provide certain interventions such as screenings, classes and incentive campaigns. The local county extension office and local chapters of service agencies such as the American Cancer Society, March of Dimes and the American Heart Association can be great resources as well. In addition, coworkers may already have knowledge about specific health issues or experience with specific activities that they are willing to share with other employees. Finally, the local wellness council [WorkWell](#), [WELCOM](#), and the [Panhandle Worksite Wellness Council](#) offers many services and resources, including consultation regarding all aspects of a wellness program.



STEP 4:

IMPLEMENT THE PLAN

Increasing participation

Organizations that have already been implementing a wellness program should strive to achieve an overall participation level of at least 70%. Accomplish this goal by making an effort to provide key components of the program to groups of employees that may be more difficult to reach, such as:

- ▶ Part-time and non-benefit eligible employees
- ▶ English as a second language employees
- ▶ Physically and/or mentally challenged employees

Another option is to motivate spouses, family members and retirees (especially if they are covered by the benefit plan) to participate as a way to encourage support for employees' health while they are at home.

Using incentives

Offering rewards for healthy behaviors demonstrates an organizational commitment to wellness. Incentives can motivate individuals to participate by creating interest in the wellness program. Providing incentives can also improve completion of or attendance at program activities and help individuals change or adhere to healthy behaviors.

Many organizations provide incentives for participating in specific or important program activities (such as a Health Risk Assessment or health screening). In the first few years of the wellness program, offer incentives for participation in other program activities as well, such as providing lunch for attendees at a "lunch and learn" educational session instead of asking employees to bring their own lunch. Many advanced wellness programs provide incentives when employees meet specific goals or maintain a healthy behavior. These types of programs are "results-based" or "outcomes-based," rather than "participation-based" programs in which employees receive incentives for participating in activities regardless of their results.

When offering incentives, try to avoid rewarding individuals for being the "best" or doing the "most." This strategy may promote excessive behavior, discourage those who are most likely to benefit from participating and can create elitism. The best designed incentive programs are based on goals that are attainable by most individuals, and allow all participants who achieve the goals to receive an incentive.

Remember that incentives do not have to cost the organization a great deal of money. Recognition, acknowledgment from upper management, and special privileges are examples of excellent intangible or low-cost incentives that can be provided within a limited budget. Once the leadership has determined what can be provided in terms of incentives, utilizing employee input in the process of selecting specific incentives can help avoid wasted time, money and effort.

If you already provide incentives for employees who reach specific goals, you may want to reevaluate the criteria for employees to earn incentives each year. This will continually challenge them to improve their health, leading to additional reductions in unhealthy behaviors.

Specific incentive ideas include:

FREE OR LOW COST	MODERATE COST	HIGH COST
<input type="checkbox"/> Certificates	<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment tickets	<input type="checkbox"/> Health insurance premium discounts or lower deductibles
<input type="checkbox"/> Public recognition in employee newsletter or at company events	<input type="checkbox"/> Company-branded sweatshirts, gym bags or gym towels	<input type="checkbox"/> Contributions to a Healthcare Spending Account (HSA)
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal commendation from management	<input type="checkbox"/> Health and fitness magazines, books or videos	<input type="checkbox"/> Travel opportunities (weekend getaways, cruises, flights)
<input type="checkbox"/> Special privileges (time off, casual days, designated parking spots, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Cash or gift certificates	<input type="checkbox"/> Home fitness equipment
<input type="checkbox"/> Company-branded trinkets (mugs, water bottles, key chains, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Healthy lunches	<input type="checkbox"/> Health club memberships
<input type="checkbox"/> Company-branded T-shirts or hats		



STEP 4:

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2. Offer policies and benefits that support wellness

Special considerations for small businesses

Smaller businesses typically have an easier time creating a supportive environment than larger businesses. For example, policies can usually be changed more quickly in small businesses due to a lack of barriers compared to larger organizations. If your small business does not already have formal policies in place, implement informal policies to initiate a cultural shift towards wellness.

To get started, offer one or two policies or benefit options that support wellness. If you are able, offer group health insurance to your employees. If insurance is difficult for your company to provide, a health insurance subsidy is recommended as an alternative.

Educational materials, activities and challenges create awareness and help generate interest in behavior change. However, the implementation of policies and benefits to create an environment that supports healthy behaviors are what help sustain those changes over time. In addition, these types of changes have the ability to reach and impact all employees, potentially providing a greater return on investment than individual-focused activities.

Policies

Policies that support wellness can lead to healthy reactions to the psychological and physical demands of daily living and help improve overall outlook on life. A policy can be a written rule or simply a common practice and can be either informal or formal.

- ▶ *Informal policies may or may not be written but are publicly supported and widely communicated to employees during staff meetings or other ongoing opportunities. Participation in and compliance with informal policies is voluntary. For example, an informal worksite policy could be to keep employees informed of opportunities to learn new skills that may help them live healthier lives in the workplace and at home.*
- ▶ *Formal written policies often result from successful informal policies. Formal policies are written rules or guidelines that outline a plan of action and are applicable to all employees. Examples of formal policies that support wellness are:*
 - *Tobacco-free campus policy*
 - *Provision of cessation classes and insurance discounts to support non-tobacco use*
 - *Flexible work hours to accommodate physical activity, annual checkups, etc.*
 - *Alcohol and drug policies such as pre-employment screening, substance abuse counseling and rehabilitation*
 - *“Don’t come to work sick” policy*

[View a list of recommended policies, benefits and environmental changes that support wellness.](#)

If you already have a wellness program and are looking for additional strategies to continue to nurture an environment that supports wellness, consider the following ideas:

- ▶ New hires are introduced to the wellness program at employee orientation.
- ▶ Supervisors support and enforce policy.
- ▶ Supervisors encourage and reward employees for engaging in the wellness program.
- ▶ Supervisors allow flex time to support healthy lifestyles and/or allow participation in wellness programs on company time.
- ▶ Supervisors are visible and actively participate in the corporate wellness program.
- ▶ Wellness becomes the norm and not the exception in all aspects of business.

Benefits

Many advanced wellness programs have begun to link wellness to employee benefits. For example, to encourage participation in the wellness program, some organizations discount health insurance premiums for those who participate in specified wellness initiatives. Other companies have gone further, requiring improvement in health outcomes for employees to earn a premium discount. Other ways to design the employee benefit package to support wellness are to:

- ▶ *Reduce or eliminate co-pays for annual preventive screenings and exams.*
- ▶ *Provide pharmaceutical coverage for nicotine replacement therapy*
- ▶ *Lower co-pays for disease management drugs.*
- ▶ *Provide consumer-driven health accounts to engage employees in making responsible health choices.*

When considering these kinds of “value-based” benefit plan design offerings, choose benefits that have the ability to address the areas of greatest need as shown in the organization’s data. New benefits should include opportunities to reduce barriers to medical and/or prescription compliance or decrease medical costs (for example, by promoting self-care to reduce unnecessary emergency room use). Examine the current benefit plan for these or other wellness-promoting elements that are offered to employees. Then promote the benefits that the plan includes to maximize what the plan already provides.



STEP 4: IMPLEMENT THE PLAN

Nebraska Case Study

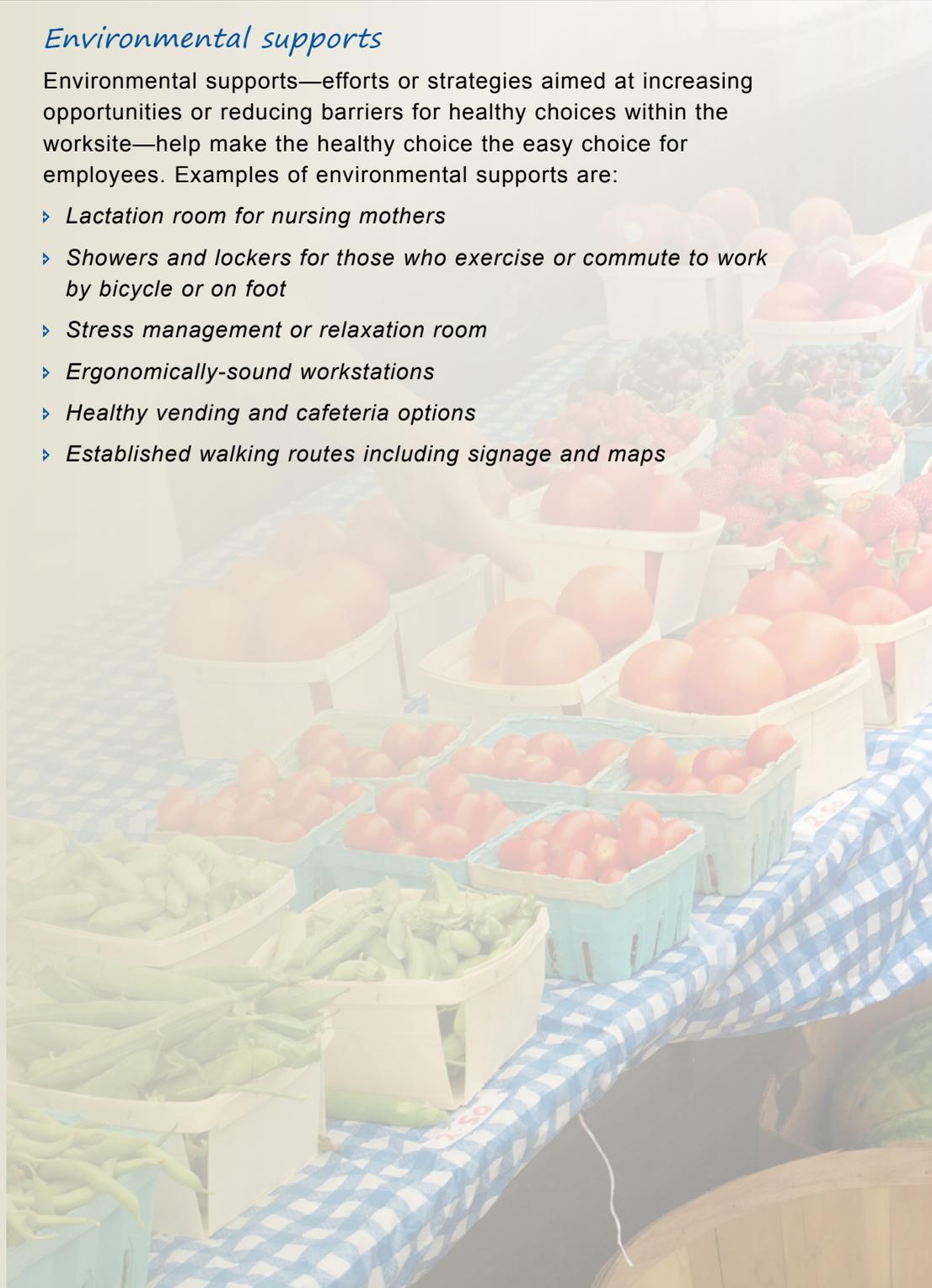
At [Box Butte General Hospital](#) in Alliance, the “Eat Right Menu Campaign” was initiated to market and promote the existing menu of lighter foods that are more nutritious and healthier than other cafeteria food options. “Eat Right” stickers were also posted on healthier options in the vending machines, salad bar, and the carry out server. In addition, “Wellness Bingo Black Out” was implemented to encourage and incentivize employees to utilize the “Eat Right” menu and labeled foods.

These activities raised awareness of what employees were eating and provided information about healthy choices. They learned that making healthy choices the “easy choice” for employees encouraged them to start eating healthier more frequently.

Environmental supports

Environmental supports—efforts or strategies aimed at increasing opportunities or reducing barriers for healthy choices within the worksite—help make the healthy choice the easy choice for employees. Examples of environmental supports are:

- ▶ *Lactation room for nursing mothers*
- ▶ *Showers and lockers for those who exercise or commute to work by bicycle or on foot*
- ▶ *Stress management or relaxation room*
- ▶ *Ergonomically-sound workstations*
- ▶ *Healthy vending and cafeteria options*
- ▶ *Established walking routes including signage and maps*



“It’s one of the best benefits we can give to our employees and to our own future. It just makes sense.”

– Harold Krueger, CEO
[Chadron Community Hospital](#)

Implement the Plan Checklist -

- Selected and implemented programming to meet objectives

COMMENTS: _____

- Offered policy and/or benefit options that support wellness

COMMENTS: _____

