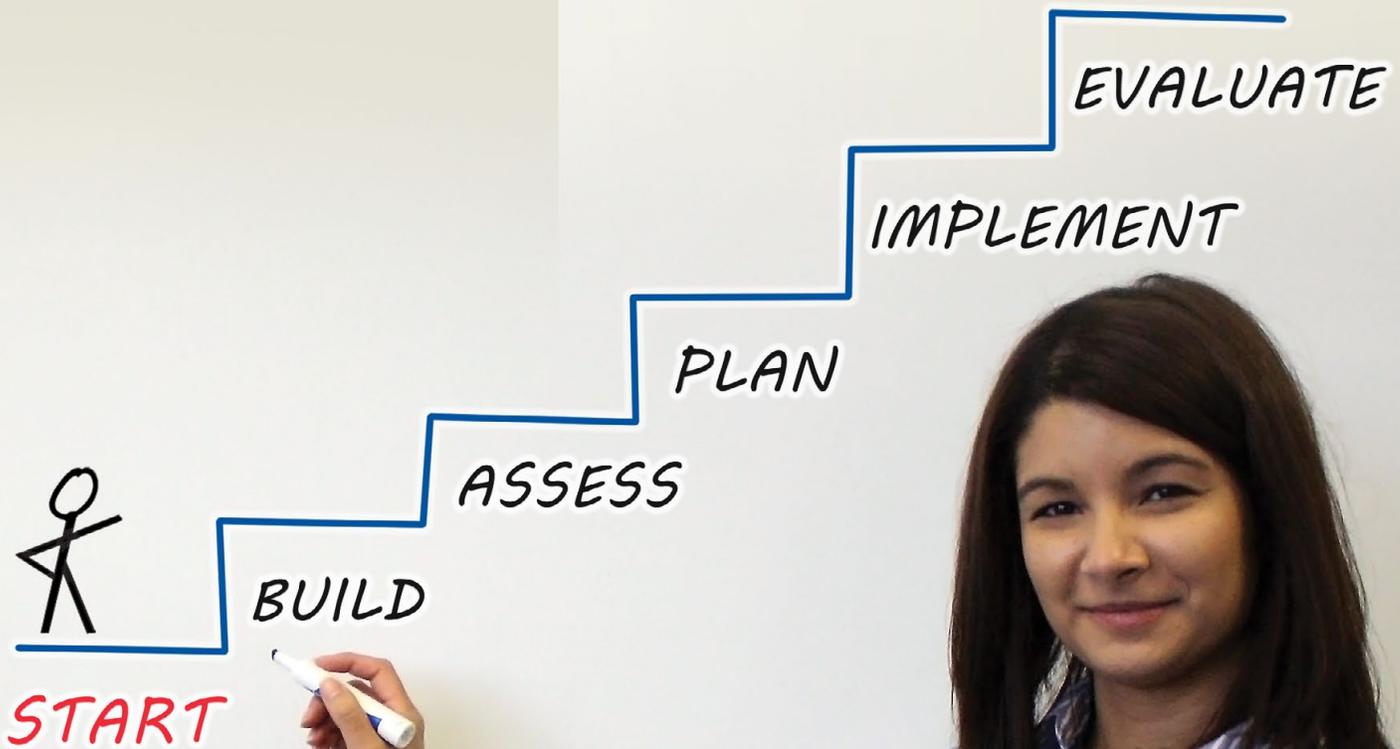


NEBRASKA
WORKSITE
WELLNESS

Toolkit

www.worksitewellness.ne.gov



Department of Health & Human Services



In partnership with:





STEP 2:

ASSESS THE WORKSITE

STEP 2 Action Items

1. Collect data
2. Communicate the results

Tips for data collection and use

- › If you are just starting a wellness program at your worksite, focus on gathering the information that is easiest to collect.
- › Use multiple data sources – a single tool that will collect all the necessary information does not exist.
- › Commit to honesty in analyzing data.
- › Remember that all the information gathered is confidential.
- › Protect the individual's privacy at all costs.
- › Use incentives to drive participation.
- › Commit to collecting data at least once every other year.
- › Keep it simple.
- › Identify overlaps between worksite needs and employee interests when possible.

Data is essential to the development of an effective wellness program because they identify health risks and employee interests. Assessing the worksite's needs and interests before determining which programs or interventions to offer ensures that the program will make the most efficient use of time and budget. In addition, this information establishes a baseline to use to set goals and measure progress and change over time, so collect data at least every other year to allow for comparison.

Important data to collect will fall into one of two categories:

- › **Interest data** allow identification of what employees want to obtain from the wellness program. When collecting data from employees, participation is highly important.
- › **Needs data** help determine what the program must address to make an impact in the health of employees.

Obtaining responses that are representative of the entire organization's interests and needs allows creation of a wellness program that is widely appealing and effective. Ideally, data will show that risk areas with high need are also of high interest to employees. However, employee interests may not always match up with needs observed by data from a Health Risk Assessment or health care costs. In such cases, it may be prudent to address these needs even without the interest of the employees.

1. Collect data

It is important to collect as much data as possible, with the understanding that not all data sources may be available. As the program becomes more advanced, work to include more of the following data sources to ensure that the program is addressing all of the organization's needs.

Interest data

Employee interest data identifies what employees want to obtain from a wellness program. Gathering interest data provides an opportunity to communicate goals and engage employees in the development of the wellness program. Without input from employees, valuable resources can easily be wasted by planning activities that employees will not utilize. Interest data can be collected through several venues. Many Health Risk Assessments include a section on employee interests, but [interest surveys](#), focus groups, emails or even one-on-one discussions can also provide opportunities to obtain interest data. Regardless of the method used to collect interest data from employees, there are five key elements to address:

- ▶ *What are the primary health interests of employees and/or spouses?*
- ▶ *What barriers would prevent employees from participating in a wellness program?*
- ▶ *Are employees willing to contribute to the cost of a wellness program?*
- ▶ *What time of the day is the best to schedule program activities?*
- ▶ *What is the preferred teaching/learning method?*

Needs data

Demographic information

As with any successful campaign, it is important to understand the intended audience. Each of these characteristics can dramatically alter the wellness activities a company can or should offer:

- ▶ *Percent male/female*
- ▶ *Average age*
- ▶ *Education level*
- ▶ *Race/ethnicity breakdown*
- ▶ *Language breakdown*

Nebraska Case Study

As part of its “Healthy U” Wellness Program, the [University of Nebraska Foundation](#) in Lincoln, develops each year’s wellness program activities based on data. Their data sources include health screening and Health Risk Assessment data, the previous year’s program results, and goals for the upcoming year. In addition, employees are asked to choose a health objective each year based on their individual health screening results. They have found that program objectives based off of employees’ personal goals and aggregate data allow them to address areas that are not only universally important, but also impact individual lives.

ASSESS



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Best practices when offering an HRA:

- ▶ Give employees ample opportunity to complete the HRA – a two-week timeframe is recommended.
- ▶ Communicate frequently about the HRA using a variety of methods.
- ▶ Ensure employees that data will be collected in aggregate form and will not be shared with their supervisors.
- ▶ Make the process as easy as possible for employees by allowing them time during the workday.
- ▶ Offer an incentive for completing the HRA.
- ▶ Allow spouses to complete the HRA.
- ▶ Encourage HRA participants to share their personal report with their healthcare provider.

How to choose an HRA:

Your local wellness council [WorkWell](#), [WELCOM](#), and the [Panhandle Worksite Wellness Council](#) can provide assistance with choosing the right HRA for your organization, as well as all aspects of creating or improving a wellness program.

Health risk assessment

A Health Risk Assessment or Appraisal (HRA) is considered the primary data collection tool for wellness program development. An HRA is a survey that will identify the areas of risk in the health of employees such as tobacco use, low physical activity levels, poor nutrition, high stress and low rates of preventive screenings. An aggregate report will depict the responses of all participating employees grouped together. Ensure that all employees understand that their personal information is completely private and that they cannot be punished by any responses they provide on the survey so that the information they provide is as accurate as possible. Base the priorities and goals of the wellness program on the data and information gathered from this assessment. In addition, an HRA can assist individuals in determining their positive health behaviors, gaps in service or benefits, readiness for change, and areas for improvement by providing an individual report.

Which HRA to use depends on the organization's needs and resources, but most importantly, an HRA should be offered at least every other year or every year if possible to get an accurate picture of the company's health. In addition, HRAs are most useful when the organization's results can be compared from year to year, so choose an HRA wisely, and try to use the same survey each year.

HRA results will categorize employees from low risk to high risk, and all levels in between. All groups are important to address in a wellness program. Too often, businesses focus on only the unhealthy or high risk employees; however, a mature wellness program offers programs to address all risk levels. Low risk individuals should be rewarded for being healthy and encouraged to remain at that level. At the same time, high risk individuals need encouragement and the opportunity to improve their personal health.

Health screening data

Health screenings provide an opportunity to obtain more objective data on the health risks of the organization while providing awareness and education to its employees. Health screenings are an essential component of a wellness program if the leadership is interested in “results.”

Recommended screenings:

- ▶ Blood pressure
- ▶ Cholesterol (total, HDL, and LDL)
- ▶ Height and weight
- ▶ BMI or waist circumference
- ▶ Glucose

Other screenings available:

- ▶ Body composition
- ▶ Flexibility
- ▶ Pulmonary (lung) function
- ▶ Full blood chemistry profile

Health screenings can sometimes be processed through health insurance as preventive care to reduce or eliminate the costs of the screenings. Another option would be to ask a local public health department, local health system, college or university to perform a health screening at a lower cost. Health screening vendors will often perform the screening onsite as a convenience to the employees. In addition, many vendors use the results from the health screening to assign a “health score” to each employee, which can be tracked over time. Often, a health screening vendor will also conduct a follow up meeting with employees to explain the results, and offer health coaching to those employees whose results require action. If planning to offer a health screening, schedule the screening to occur before the HRA and allow time for the employees to receive their results, as many HRAs ask participants to enter health information such as blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose, etc. In addition, before the screenings occur, ask the vendor to provide aggregate results for the employees who choose to participate. Very small organizations may not be able to receive aggregate information due to [HIPAA](#) restrictions, but the employees will still benefit from the opportunity to have the screenings performed onsite.

Common barriers to collecting HRA and screening data:

Despite your best efforts, you may end up with a lower participation rate in your HRA or your health screening than you anticipated. There are several factors that may contribute to low participation:

- ▶ More than 500 employees
- ▶ Multiple shifts
- ▶ Multiple worksite locations not within walking distance
- ▶ Multiple languages
- ▶ More than 70% male
- ▶ Government organization
- ▶ 501c3 organization
- ▶ More than 30% of workforce does not have access to a computer
- ▶ No health or wellness professional employed onsite

Worksites with any of these characteristics may need to provide additional incentives, offer a longer window of time or more opportunities for the employees to participate. Worksites may also want to communicate the benefits of these assessments more frequently to get enough participation in data collection efforts to be representative of the entire organization’s needs and interests.



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Health care claims describe only approximately 30% of an organization's employees, so use this information in addition to (and not instead of) HRA results to ensure that all risk areas are addressed.

Health care costs

Many employers want to provide wellness programs to help reduce increasing health care costs. Before starting a wellness program, identify the total cost of health insurance each year. Also note the total cost of health insurance per person, and how much the employer and the employee each contribute to the total. Other information to assess includes the deductible, co-pay, and out of pocket maximum per person, as well as the total claims cost, the cost of prescriptions, and utilization of doctor's office visits. This information can be obtained from the human resources department or the health insurance provider.

Absenteeism

Small improvements in wellness can lead to quick reductions in absenteeism. When first starting the program, collect baseline information on the absenteeism of employees to compare with absenteeism data measured later, after engaging in wellness. If a time bank is one of the benefits provided to employees—limiting the ability to track sick leave—then use self-report to assess what proportion of missed work was due to illness or injury.

Performance

Baseline information on the productivity of employees can also be collected. Positions for which it is easy to quantify productivity, such as the number of items produced on an assembly line or the number of recruiting calls made, allow for comparability before and after starting a wellness program. However, since productivity varies by individual, position and organization, using a [standardized tool](#) can help to measure and describe productivity across the entire organization.

Health culture audit/health climate analysis

A [culture audit](#) or health climate analysis measures employee perception of management's and co-worker's commitment to health and wellness. A culture supportive of health and wellness is essential to the long-term success of a wellness program, and tracking improvements in culture over time provides realistic expectations for improvements in outcomes from year to year.

Other data sources

A review of reoccurring themes from these sources, combined with health risks and interest data, will help determine target wellness program areas:

- ▶ Accident and safety records
- ▶ Worker’s compensation claims
- ▶ Short and long-term disability claims
- ▶ Management surveys
- ▶ Employee retention data
- ▶ Physical environment audit (workstation ergonomics, heating and ventilation conditions, stairwell access, cafeteria setup, etc.)

Summary of data sources

The table below summarizes helpful data sources that may be available when developing a wellness program:

DATA SOURCE	COST	SOURCE	FREQUENCY
Basic Program:*			
Interest Survey	No to low cost	In house or vendor	At least every other year
Demographic Information	No to low cost	Human Resources	At least every other year
Health Risk Assessment	No to medium cost	In house or vendor	At least every other year
Advanced Program:**			
Health Screenings	Medium to high cost	Vendor	At least every other year
Health Care Costs	No cost	Insurance provider	At least every other year
Absenteeism	No cost	Human Resources	At least every other year
Optional:			
Productivity	No to low cost	In house or vendor	As needed
Health Culture Audit	No to low cost	In house or vendor	As needed
Environmental Audit	No to low cost	In house or vendor	As needed
Management Survey	No to low cost	In house or vendor	As needed
Employee Engagement Data	No cost	Human Resources	As needed
Accident/Safety Records	No cost	Human Resources	As needed
Worker’s Compensation Claims	No cost	Insurance provider	As needed
Disability Claims	No cost	Insurance provider	As needed

*Data sources required for the Sower level of the [Governor’s Wellness Award](#).

**Additional data sources for the Growers level of the [Governor’s Wellness Award](#).



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2. Communicate results

Special considerations for small businesses

Many of the data sources listed in this chapter are typically inaccessible for a small business. To get started, collect data on employee interests and health risks by providing an HRA to employees. Due to company size, aggregate HRA reports may not be possible to protect the privacy of the employees. Free, paper-based HRAs are available online. Though small organizations are usually not able to obtain as much data as a large organization, it is typically easier in small firms to achieve high levels of participation for an HRA, as wellness committee members can personally encourage other employees to take it. If conducting a health screening to assess biometric data is not feasible in the first year of the program, then make an effort to add this benefit in a future year.

After collecting and analyzing data, it is important to communicate the results with the rest of the organization. Provide an executive summary to management, answering these five questions:

- › **Why** was the data collected?
- › **Who** was the target group and how many responded?
- › **How** (HRA, culture audit, etc.) and when was the data collected?
- › **What** did the data suggest?
- › **What** do the results mean in dollars and cents?

In addition, provide a summary to all the employees, including the same information provided to management, but excluding the explanation of costs associated with the results. After communicating the results, use the data that was collected to guide the development of program activities, or employees may not be willing to take another survey again. One way to combine sharing and using the results is to draft a letter from the senior leadership discussing the data collected, the new wellness plan, and invite employees to become involved.



Assess the Worksite Checklist - Collected data on:

- Employee interests

COMMENTS: _____

- Demographic information

COMMENTS: _____

- Health risks

COMMENTS: _____

- Health screening data

COMMENTS: _____

- Health care costs (if available)

COMMENTS: _____

- Absenteeism

COMMENTS: _____

- Communicated the results

COMMENTS: _____

“Wellness truly is a core pillar at [Union Bank & Trust](#) and it starts with our CEO and cascades throughout the entire organization. Our metric, driven wellness focus has created positive and measurable results. Participating in our wellness initiatives is not a hope we have, it is an expectation. In order to stay on the cutting edge we choose our partners carefully and [WorkWell](#) has been a constant ally in our mission to serve our associates and families wellness needs.”

- Chad Thies,
First Vice President,
Human Resources,
Union Bank & Trust,
Lincoln, Nebraska