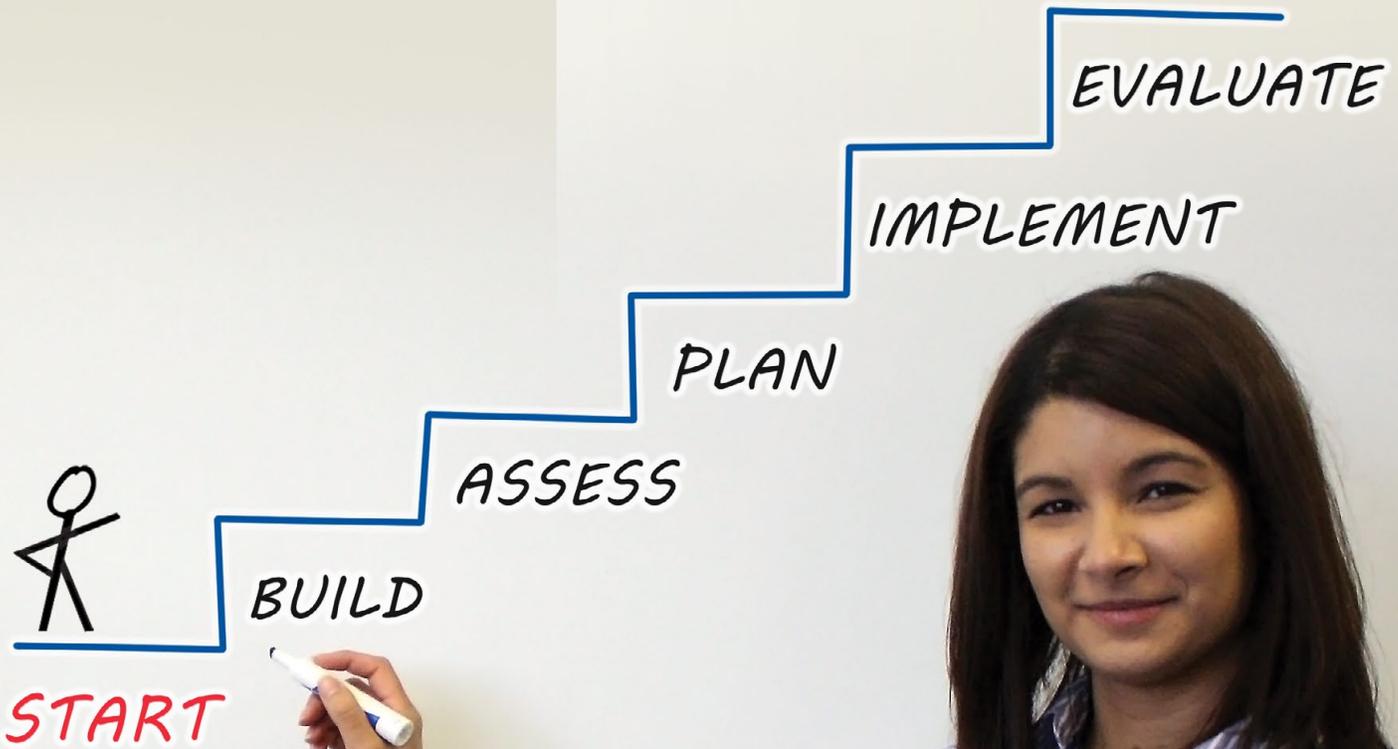


**NEBRASKA**  
WORKSITE  
WELLNESS

# Toolkit

[www.worksitewellness.ne.gov](http://www.worksitewellness.ne.gov)



Department of Health & Human Services



*In partnership with:*





# STEP 1:

## BUILD THE FOUNDATION

### Step 1 Action Items

1. Obtain support from senior management
2. Designate an individual to administer wellness programs
3. Form a wellness committee
4. Begin marketing the wellness program

If you struggle to obtain sufficient support from your leadership, consider the ideas below:

- ▶ Create a “pilot” wellness program that will allow managers to experience some of the elements and activities that you are planning to include in your wellness program. Positive feedback and outcomes from your pilot wellness program can be used to justify the development and implementation of a full wellness program.
- ▶ Utilize a [leadership survey](#) to help you assess changes in leadership attitudes as a result of your pilot wellness program.
- ▶ Call on supportive senior managers to convince more hesitant leadership team members of the benefits of a wellness program and the resources needed to create one.

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### 1. Obtain support from senior management

Senior management support is essential to the development and sustainability of any wellness program. The support of senior leadership:

- ▶ *Allows for the integration of wellness into the organization.*
- ▶ *Provides necessary financial resources to support the wellness program.*
- ▶ *Offers opportunities to implement policies that support health.*
- ▶ *Helps share success stories within the company.*
- ▶ *Links health promotion objectives to business outcomes.*

Ideally, the senior leadership will make wellness part of the overall strategic planning process. Incorporating wellness into the organization’s strategy will motivate management to support the objectives and initiatives of the wellness program. All levels of management should participate in wellness programming. This can be accomplished by including wellness goals and responsibilities in management job descriptions and/or performance objectives.

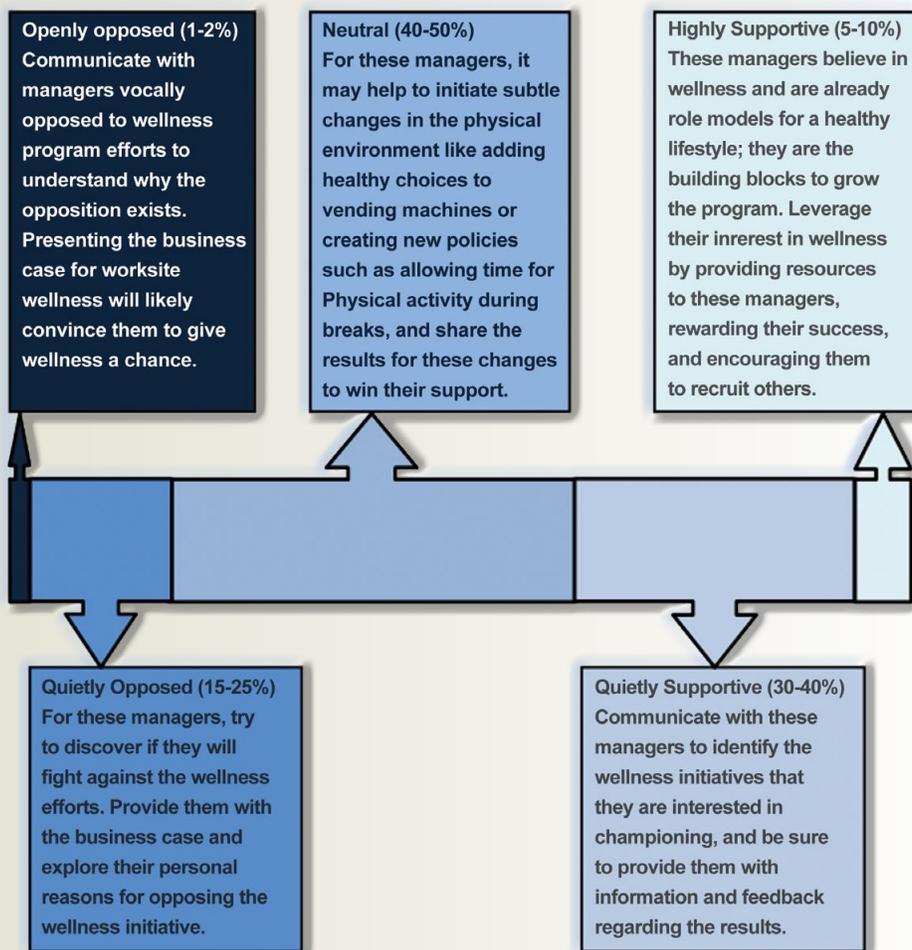
#### *How to request support:*

- ▶ *Provide senior management with a summary of the “[Business Case for a Wellness Program](#).”*
- ▶ *Outline and discuss the financial resources and support needed to develop the program.*
- ▶ *Work with leadership to establish goals and expectations for the wellness program.*
- ▶ *Request the commitment and participation of senior management.*

*SENIOR MANAGEMENT SUPPORT IS ESSENTIAL TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY OF ANY WELLNESS PROGRAM.*

## Creating support

If there is an initial lack of support from leadership, concentrate on engaging one person at a time to gradually build support for a wellness program. Research has shown that the attitudes that managers hold towards wellness tend to lie along a continuum ranging from openly opposed to highly supportive potential champions.



- ▶ Tailor your approach to the attitudes of the managers. Be sensitive to their personal experiences regarding wellness.
- ▶ If you have a limited budget, start with lower cost options for your wellness efforts, implementing more activities in later years once you gain support.

**BUILD**



# STEP 1:

## BUILD THE FOUNDATION

### 2. Designate wellness coordinator

#### *Special considerations for small businesses*

A small business may not have the resources to designate a wellness coordinator or form a wellness committee. Instead, get started by identifying a wellness champion. The wellness champion does not have to be the healthiest employee, but should be well-respected by the other employees at the worksite and possess the ability to motivate others to succeed. In addition, the wellness champion should participate in wellness efforts and encourage others to participate as well.

A full or part-time wellness coordinator may be designated to manage the wellness program. A wellness committee is still necessary to help share some of the duties required to carry out wellness efforts, but having a qualified person responsible for the program increases the likelihood that the program will be effective.

The wellness coordinator will be the face of the wellness program, lead the wellness committee, and serve as a point of contact for employees regarding the wellness program. When choosing a wellness coordinator, ensure that this person has the time and ability needed to invest in the wellness program. If there is not an appropriate person currently on staff, consider hiring a wellness coordinator or contracting with a third party to help execute the program.

### 3. Form a wellness committee

A wellness committee is a team of employees who formally meet and plan activities to promote good health for themselves and for their coworkers. The wellness committee should focus on planning activities and events, recruiting coworkers to participate in the program, and evaluating the wellness program.

#### *Benefits of wellness committees:*

- ▶ *Committees create ownership*
- ▶ *Committees help spread out the workload*
- ▶ *Committees inspire creativity and provide great ideas*

#### *Wellness committee responsibilities:*

- ▶ *Collect wellness-related data about the worksite and from employees*
- ▶ *Establish wellness program goals and objectives*
- ▶ *Participate in the wellness program budget process*
- ▶ *Establish and implement wellness programs activities*
- ▶ *Participate in wellness program activities*
- ▶ *Represent coworkers' ideas and concerns*
- ▶ *Act as the eyes, ears and voice of the wellness program*
- ▶ *Help create a healthy organizational culture*

Check out the North Carolina [Health Smart Worksite Wellness Toolkit's Committee Workbook](#) for more information on forming a wellness committee.

## Considerations when defining a wellness committee

**Structure** – Develop either a formal structure with bylaws and elected positions or an informal structure.

**Leadership** – If a wellness coordinator is not leading the wellness program, clearly define a committee leader who:

- ▶ *Is connected with the organization's strategic direction and has the ability to integrate it with the vision for the wellness program,*
- ▶ *Is willing and able to communicate about the wellness program to employees at all levels within the organization, and*
- ▶ *Has mentorship skills and the ability to empower others.*

**Member selection** – Committee members can volunteer or senior leadership can appoint members. Being active and healthy should not be a requirement; inviting skeptical employees may provide a future opportunity to engage other employees who are hesitant to participate in wellness efforts.

**Diversity** – The committee members should represent all levels of the organization (senior management, representation from all shifts, human resource personnel, information systems representatives, safety coordinators, marketing and communications staff, union representatives and healthcare professionals). The involvement of decision makers is particularly important for moving the initiative forward.

**Size** – Committee size depends on the size of the organization and the scope of the wellness program, but should be large enough that at least a majority of the committee members will be able to attend regular committee meetings.

**Commitment** – Senior management should communicate expectations for participation in committee meetings and wellness program activities. Establish clear roles and responsibilities for each committee member, and routinely recognize committee members for their efforts.

**Frequency** – How often to meet will depend on the goals of the committee, and may increase over time, at certain times of the year, and at different stages of program development. The committee should meet quarterly at a minimum, but once a month is typical. Only meet when there is a significant agenda.

**Term length** – Set alternating 1 or 2-year terms for committee membership so others can have the opportunity to participate.

## Wellness champions

In very large companies or organizations with multiple locations, it may be necessary to recruit wellness champions to communicate with employees on a more personal level. The champions can help provide motivation, information and support for employees who are participating in wellness activities, as well as provide a mechanism for feedback to the wellness committee.

## Nebraska Case Study

When the State of Nebraska launched the [Wellness Options Program](#), it became one of the first states to offer an integrated wellness program tied to health plan coverage. Each year, Wellness Champion Award recipients are selected for their involvement, actions and efforts that contribute toward achieving wellness goals, promote and support wellness in their work areas and lifestyles, and demonstrate a positive attitude that inspires and motivates others. In addition, the 'Wellness Wall of Fame' recognizes wellness program participants who are making some pretty amazing lifestyle changes resulting in significant health improvements. Participants whose stories are posted on the "Wall of Fame" receive a picture with and personal letter from the Governor, and attend the Governor's Annual Wellness Award Luncheon.



# STEP 1:

## BUILD THE FOUNDATION

### 4. Begin promoting the wellness program

*"Our wellness program is far greater than a simple benefit. It is a key aspect of our strong employee culture. We have seen tremendous return on our efforts through more engaged employees, higher retention and overall involvement from the employees and their families."*

- Lindsay Cosimano,  
Chief Marketing Officer,  
[CQuence Health Group](#),  
Omaha, Nebraska

As with any initiative, communication is essential to the success of a wellness program. Ensure that employees are receiving clear and consistent messages regarding the wellness program. These messages should emphasize that employees are the most important asset to the organization and the potential benefits for employees who participate. Effective communication demonstrates the importance of wellness to the organization and encourages program support and participation. When promoting the wellness program, be sure to communicate frequently using simple messages and remember that communication includes not only words, but actions as well. Using multiple modes of communication, such as email, intranet, posters, bulletin boards, table cards, correspondence to the home, one-on-one promotion, and in-person meetings will increase the likelihood that the message will reach all employees.

#### *Leverage leadership support*

Although the wellness committee will be responsible for most of the communication regarding the wellness program, messages from senior leadership can help encourage participation in the wellness program. A communication process in which management is provided with wellness committee minutes or conducting regular management update meetings may be necessary to confirm that all levels of management understand and continue to support the wellness program.

#### *Brand the program*

Creating a name and logo for the wellness program will help employees recognize the elements of the wellness program. Some organizations may have the internal resources to develop a brand. If not, create a contest encouraging employees to create a name and logo for the wellness program. This can also boost interest in wellness efforts that may lead to higher participation in the future. Another option is to leverage the existing company brand by altering the current logo slightly. This strategy emphasizes a connection between the wellness program and the organization's overall strategic goals.

*A CULTURE OF  
WELLNESS IS ONE  
IN WHICH THE  
HEALTHY CHOICE IS  
THE EASY CHOICE.*

## Build the Foundation Checklist:

- Obtained support from senior management*  
*COMMENTS:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Designated an individual to administer wellness programs*  
*COMMENTS:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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- Formed a wellness committee*  
*COMMENTS:* \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_
- Marketed the wellness program to employees*  
*COMMENTS:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### *Nebraska Case Study*

Fremont Area Medical Center in Fremont, has assembled a committee of “experts” in their respective fields, including dietitians, exercise specialists, marketing and communications representatives, human resources staff and administration. The committee has worked hard to provide a variety of ways to motivate and educate employees on their journey toward better health. They have found that administration, management and staff need to understand the importance and direction of the wellness program to encourage participation.