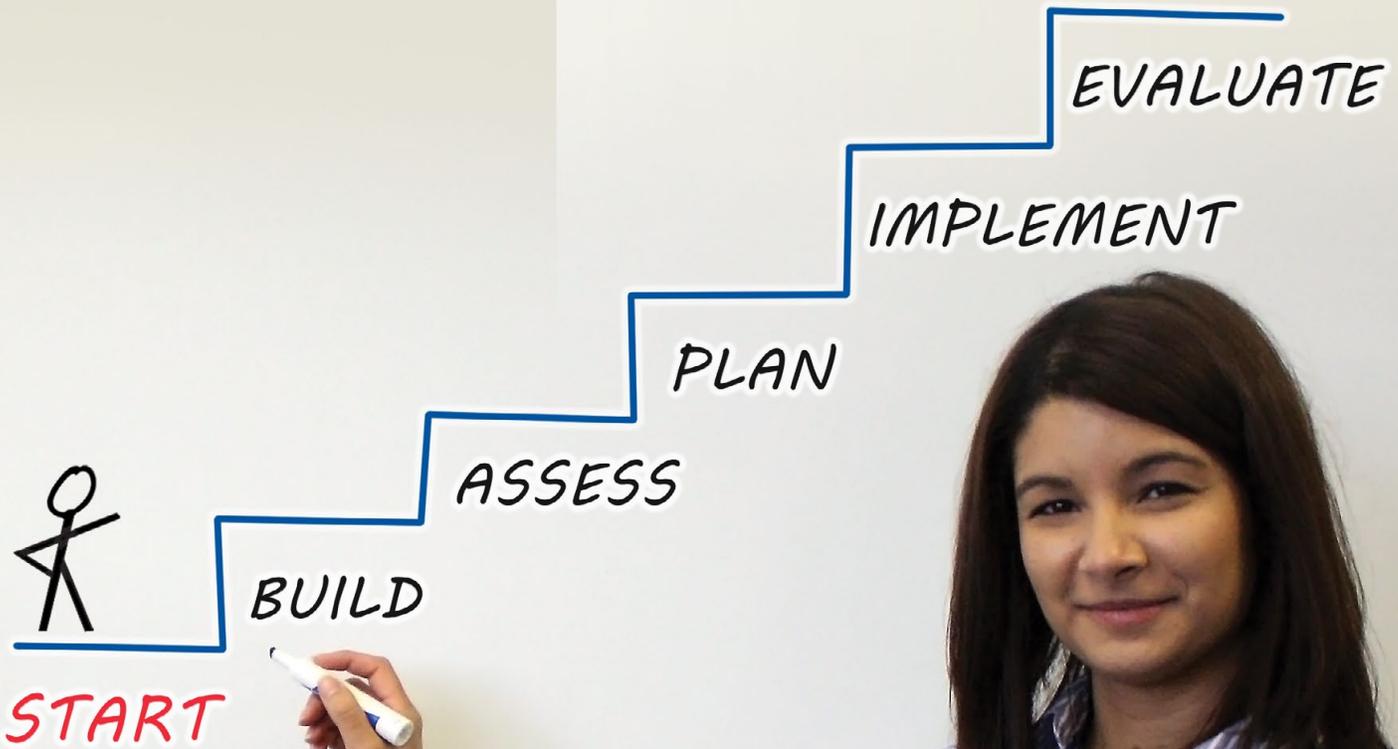


NEBRASKA
WORKSITE
WELLNESS

Toolkit

www.worksitewellness.ne.gov



Department of Health & Human Services



In partnership with:





STEP 5: EVALUATE THE PROGRAM

STEP 5 Action Items

1. Evaluate the process
2. Measure outcomes
3. Communicate the results

Focus on what you need to know: information that will help you determine the effectiveness of your current program and improve your program in the future.

Consider partnering with other organizations for evaluation, such as local universities, hospitals, etc.

Evaluating the program will provide a clear indication of whether or not the program's goals and objectives have been accomplished. It can also illustrate how the program can be modified or adapted to better meet employees' needs and increase the program's potential for success. Evaluation results describe if the program has helped to change the attitudes, behaviors, and health risks of employees. Providing good evidence of the program's effectiveness can help:

- ▶ *Legitimize the program*
- ▶ *Earn additional support from management and employees*
- ▶ *Ensure program sustainability*
- ▶ *Leverage future funding*

Evaluation methods and timing

There are many methods available to collect information that will help to evaluate the program's components and impact. The specific method used should be based on the program's objectives and resources. When possible, use standardized methods to collect information, which will allow objective measurement of change over time. These methods include surveys, web-tracking, tracking forms and records and analyzing policies. Other methods that provide helpful information include direct observation, focus groups, interviews, analysis of audio/photographs/videos and diaries. These methods can be more time-intensive and are subjective, but can provide information that standardized methods are not able to capture.

Another important component of evaluation is determining when information should be collected. Some elements of the program should be evaluated on an ongoing basis, such as participation and satisfaction. Other aspects can be evaluated on an annual basis or every other year, such as Health Risk Assessments, health screenings, productivity assessments, health care claims and organizational culture.

Measuring both the process and the outcomes allows you to evaluate the success of different elements of your program, providing a complete picture of the program's impact.

Understanding the presence of barriers to participation allows you to modify your program in ways that may improve engagement and participation in the future.

1. Evaluate the process

Evaluating the process relies on feedback from employees and leadership about the acceptance of the wellness program. The purpose is to assess whether the elements of the program were completed as intended. If results suggest that program objectives were not met, evaluating the process can help determine which program component was not implemented as expected and the reasons why.

Opportunities offered

Evaluate opportunities offered by keeping track of the number of brochures that were distributed, the number of newsletters sent or read, hits on the wellness program website, or the number of posters around the worksite. Or use internal documents and records to track the number of health fairs, educational classes, seminars, lunch-and-learns or health screenings that took place.

Participation

Participation is an important step in determining the effectiveness of the program, as it is difficult to help employees who are not taking advantage of the activities provided. Measure participation rates in program activities (lunch-and-learns, programs, challenges, etc.) by comparing the number of employees invited versus those that participated, by tracking the number of visits to the wellness program's page on the company website, or by pulling a report from your interactive wellness platform.

Satisfaction

Employee satisfaction or other feedback is important when considering how to improve the program. Use focus groups, email questionnaires, paper surveys or simple conversations to assess satisfaction. Also, take this opportunity to ask non-participants why they are not choosing to participate and/or what program changes might motivate them to participate.

Policy, benefit, and environment changes

The presence (or absence) of these changes is an important measure of the future success of the wellness program, as they provide the support necessary for employees to sustain positive changes in their health habits. To assess these changes, compare a list of policies, benefits or environmental supports from the initial data collection with later assessments after implementing the program for a year or two.

EVALUATE





STEP 5:

EVALUATE THE PROGRAM

2. Measure outcomes

Typically, the best sources of outcome data are your Health Risk Assessment and/or health screening results, but you can also implement quizzes and short surveys to help you evaluate the outcomes of your wellness program.

The purpose of outcome evaluation is to assess changes in attitudes, behaviors (both short term and sustained over time), and health risks. It can be more difficult to perform outcome evaluation than process evaluation since the results can take longer to compile, but the information gathered from this type of evaluation is extremely valuable. Outcome evaluation relies on the presence of baseline data for a well-defined group of people to compare with data gathered after implementing the program.

Change in attitude

Changes in attitude may be observed as the culture of the organization becomes more wellness-oriented. These improvements can be assessed by utilizing a Health Risk Assessment or other survey.

Change in knowledge

Increased knowledge about health-promoting behaviors, the consequences of unhealthy behaviors, and health conditions is a step in the right direction for employees as they work through the process of changing their lifestyles. When providing educational materials or sessions such as lunch-and-learns, use pre- and post-quizzes or surveys to determine the effectiveness of these activities.

Change in behavior

Health Risk Assessment data or observation of behaviors can be used to measure changes in behavior. Examples include counting the number of employees walking during breaks or the number of employees who choose the healthy option provided at company meetings. Another option is to work with providers such as vending machine companies, weight loss instructors or others to track changes in behavior over time.

Change in risk levels

Health Risk Assessment or health screening results may identify individuals who are at high risk for developing chronic diseases. A comparison of the results of these assessments year after year may demonstrate that the wellness program helps high-risk employees to lower their risk and supports low-risk individuals to prevent them from becoming high-risk.

Special Considerations for Small Businesses

Absenteeism can impact and cost a small business a great deal in lost productivity. It is easy to evaluate if your company tracks sick leave by comparing sick leave taken by participants and non-participants in the wellness program.

For example, if you offer a free flu shot to your 100 employees, you could compare the absenteeism during the flu season of the 42 employees who received the flu shot and the 58 who did not. If the employees that received the flu shot were absent an average of two fewer days per year than the employees that did not receive the flu shot, then you could calculate ROI based on the cost of sick leave.

Alternatively, if you offer a time-bank as a benefit to your employees, you can use self-report to measure absenteeism savings. Another method to assess absenteeism could be to compare leave taken by smokers versus non-smokers. You could then calculate the savings incurred when an employee stops using tobacco.

Change in health outcomes

Health screening results can measure changes in cholesterol, blood pressure, body mass index (BMI) and other health outcomes. Remember that it is not appropriate to identify or release individual employee information when conducting health assessments. Therefore, results from everyone who participates will be provided in aggregate form, and only changes that occur within the group can be observed. Or, a reduction in the number of employees who are diagnosed with specific diseases, including short-term illnesses like the common cold or influenza, as well as chronic diseases like diabetes and heart disease may be observed through health insurance claims.

Absenteeism

If baseline absenteeism data was collected, the program can be evaluated by measuring absenteeism again or comparing different groups of employees, such as those who participated compared to those who did not.

Productivity

If baseline productivity data was collected, measure productivity again—using the same method(s)—to assess any improvements resulting from wellness efforts.

Return on investment

With careful planning, an important outcome for any wellness program can be measured: return on investment (ROI). While it is fairly easy to calculate the costs associated with a wellness program, it is more difficult to quantify the savings. Wellness can have positive effects on many employee-related costs. In addition, often an expense in one area can lead to a savings in another area, such as a reduction in emergency room visits following the implementation of a self-care program. By working with human resources and benefits staff within the organization, it may be possible to track changes in health insurance and workers compensation claims as a result of implementing the wellness program. Another option is to measure changes in absenteeism and productivity by comparing participants in the program versus employees who do not participate to determine ROI. In addition, there are several published [ROI calculator tools](#) available online that will estimate ROI for wellness programs.



STEP 5: EVALUATE THE PROGRAM

3. Communicate the results

Nebraska Case Study

After evaluating findings from previous years, [Gallup](#), in Omaha, knew that they already had many active associates but still had about 40% of employees who were typically inactive. To offer something for everyone, they fused elements of social and physical well-being by hosting an event that allowed employees to either walk on a 2-mile route or a separate 5K course including distractions such as a costume contest, social stop, conversation, music and recognition. The active employees got a chance to compete and push hard. Meanwhile, the opportunity for the less active employees to have fun and exercise was a great success, with some employees training to jog the course and even bringing friends to the event.

After completing the evaluation, compile the results into a brief report to share with leadership and employees, highlighting progress towards reaching the goals outlined in the wellness plan. The evidence-based process for worksite wellness is cyclical: Once there is sufficient leadership support for a program, the steps outlined in this booklet should be followed on a regular basis, so the results gained from evaluation can be used to improve upon the wellness program and achieve even greater results in the future.

Evaluate the Program:

- Opportunities offered

COMMENTS: _____

- Participation

COMMENTS: _____

- Satisfaction

COMMENTS: _____

- Change in policies, benefits and environment

COMMENTS: _____

Measured Outcomes:

- Changes in attitude

COMMENTS: _____

- Changes in knowledge

COMMENTS: _____

- Changes in behavior

COMMENTS: _____

- Changes in risk

COMMENTS: _____

- Changes in health outcomes

COMMENTS: _____

- Absenteeism

COMMENTS: _____

- Productivity

COMMENTS: _____

- Return on investment

COMMENTS: _____

- Communicated the Results

COMMENTS: _____

"I am amazed at how worksite wellness has become a national pastime. There's a lot that we've got to learn and a lot of things that we've got to accomplish. It just says to me that we've come a long way but we've still got a long way to go. And it will be fun to see what happens in the next ten years."

- William M. Kizer, Sr., founder and inspiration for worksite wellness in America and the [Wellness Council of the Midlands](#), Omaha, Nebraska