



# 5 steps to worksite wellness

**If you are just starting to implement worksite wellness strategies, you can follow these five steps to establish a strong foundation for your worksite.**

This resource will discuss each of these steps in more detail, provide tips on engaging and motivating employees, and provide the components of comprehensive worksite wellness.

## **Step 1: Form a Wellness Team**

- Identify the individuals, or individual based on your worksite's capacity, that will lead wellness programs and gain leadership support.
- Develop a comprehensive vision and mission that will guide wellness programs suitable and accessible for all employees.

## **Step 2: Assess Your Worksite**

- Assess your worksite to identify any gaps in existing policies and programs.
- Assess the needs and interests of your employees.

## **Step 3: Identify Strategies**

- Identify strategies from the Vermont Department of Health's Core Outcomes for Healthy Worksites to implement over the next 6–12 months (see Section 2).
- Develop an implementation plan that includes:
  - A timeline
  - Specific goals and objectives
  - Methods of communicating the strategies to your employees

## **Step 4: Implement**

- Implement your selected strategy or strategies, while remembering that even small steps are valuable.

## **Step 5: Evaluate**

- Evaluate your program by assessing employee participation and satisfaction.

## Step 1: Form a Wellness Team

Leadership support is the backbone of successful employee wellness strategies. Organizational leadership is crucial for obtaining financial resources, linking your wellness goals to business outcomes, and implementing policy and environmental changes.

If you haven't already gained leadership support, this is the first task. It is important to inform and engage leadership about your worksite wellness vision. Making your case can involve communicating the benefits of employee wellness promotion—including the vision, outcomes, and assessment or employee feedback.

Form a wellness team to ensure representation and input from all areas of the organization, as feasible, and to share the work. Recruit wellness team members who represent diversity in age, culture, gender expression, sexual orientation, and disability status, as well as from all areas of the organization, such as:

- Leadership
- Organizational and development
- Employee Assistance Program providers
- Food service
- Maintenance
- Finance
- Human resources
- Individual departments
- Marketing and public relations
- Sales
- Board members
- Safety
- Insurance providers
- Occupational health

### **A wellness team can:**

- Assess the health risks and current lifestyle behaviors of employees through health interest or needs surveys.
- Assess current policies and environmental factors that may affect employee wellness.
- Evaluate existing resources and gaps in services.
- Plan and implement the wellness program.
- Conduct financial planning for implementation of the wellness program.
- Establish and enhance relationships with other community organizations and government agencies to partner on shared goals—for example, encouraging active transportation in partnership with an environmental group to promote physical activity and decrease pollution.

## What is the vision and mission of your company's wellness initiative?

As you begin the steps to identify wellness strategies, it is important to have a broader vision and mission for your wellness initiative to help guide your strategies and accomplish a broader purpose. If your organization has an organizational mission statement, aligning the vision and mission of the wellness initiative can create a pathway for leadership and employees to understand and support the strategies you want to implement.

## Step 2: Assess Your Worksite

Conduct an assessment of the organization and its employees before implementing strategies to ensure they meet their needs. This can include the physical and cultural environment, policies, health benefit design, and current health promoting policies and programs.

### The organizational assessment:

- Determines your worksite's strengths.
- Considers employees throughout the life course.
- Draws attention to areas in need of improvement.
- Highlights opportunities to cultivate an increasingly supportive worksite.

Take an organizational assessment online, or download a PDF version, at [HealthVermont.gov/wellness/worksite-wellness](https://HealthVermont.gov/wellness/worksite-wellness)

### The employee assessment includes items such as:

- Employee interests
- Employee needs
- Quality of work life

*See the sample templates in section 3*

## Step 3: Identify Strategies

Once the assessments are complete, use the information gathered to identify one or more strategies to promote employee wellness. The next section of this resource provides examples of many core outcome strategies for healthy worksites.

### After identifying strategies, develop an implementation plan that includes:

- A timeline.
- Specific goals and objectives.
- Methods of communicating the strategy to your employees.

## Creating Goals and Objectives

Goals are broad statements that describe what is to be accomplished. Objectives state the expected amount of change in behavior, attitude, knowledge, or condition—to whom and by when. Objectives should:

- Have measurable language such as “increase” or “decrease.”
- Clearly identify the behavior, attitude, condition, or knowledge to be changed.
- Establish the timeframe within which an activity takes place.
- Determine the magnitude of the anticipated change as feasible.
- Determine how change will be measured.

Make your objectives SMARTIE: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time sensitive, Inclusive, Equitable

For example:

Goal 1: Our worksite will promote an active lifestyle.

Objective 1: By year 1, a policy will be in place allowing flextime for physical activity in a way that is accessible for all employees.

Objective 2: By year 2, maps of nearby recreation paths will be provided to all employees including options appropriate for all employees' needs.

## Step 4: Implement

Three key considerations in implementing your selected strategies are awareness, accessibility, and inclusion.

### Awareness

Make sure that employees know about any changes or any new offerings available to them. See page 11 for more information on communicating with employees.

### Accessibility

Ensure details about the selected strategies and any relevant resources are easily accessible for all employees. For example, if your strategy requires computer access (such as signing up for a wellness challenge or accessing a wellness portal), but some employees do not have computer access during the workday, create an alternative option. This could include signing up by calling a contact on the wellness team or ensuring a mobile phone option is available.

## **Inclusion**

Ensure that opportunities to participate are available to all employees, regardless of age, cultural or religious practices, gender expression, sexual orientation, or disability status.

In certain cases, a selected strategy might focus on one part of the population more than another. For example, a breast cancer awareness campaign might target employees who need breast cancer screenings. Promote inclusivity to the greatest extent possible.

Some examples:

- Provide alternative options for employees to participate in physical activity challenges.
- Make sure selected activities are sensitive to diverse cultural and religious beliefs.
- Provide translated, large-print, or other adapted versions of written materials.
- Look for resources on creating accessible gardens when developing a plan for a worksite garden.
- Include the opportunity to verbally receive information about programs, policies, or awareness campaigns rather than relying on digital or written communication only.

## **Step 5: Evaluate**

Worksites should plan to evaluate any implemented strategies. It is important to assess whether strategies are effective in accomplishing the established goals and objectives and whether they align with the broader vision and mission. It is also important to assess how employees and management experience new activities, policies, and programs. Assessing any return on investment is important to sustain management's commitment to supporting employee health and wellness.

Evaluation can help identify successes and areas for improvement, as well as advise next steps.

A few ways to evaluate wellness strategies are:

- Tracking participation rates in offered activities.
- Employee surveys to look at changes in behavior.
- Employee surveys to look at employee satisfaction.
- Medical claims analysis to look at changes in health outcomes.
- Productivity metrics, such as measuring absenteeism.