



STEP 1:

HOW TO GET  
STARTED

## STEP 1: GETTING STARTED

**What is the hardest part of developing a worksite wellness program: Getting Started! Where do you begin and what do you do?** Once an organization decides they want a worksite wellness program, the first question is often “What kinds of things should we do?” Before you have that discussion, you should lay the groundwork and get more information. A summary of what to do would include the following items, all of which are very manageable if you take them one step at a time.



**Understand  
Costs and  
Describe the  
Value to  
Management**

**Get Senior Level Support**



**Enlist a Diverse  
Set of Staff for  
the Worksite  
Committee**

**Convene a  
Wellness Committee**



**Final  
Thoughts**

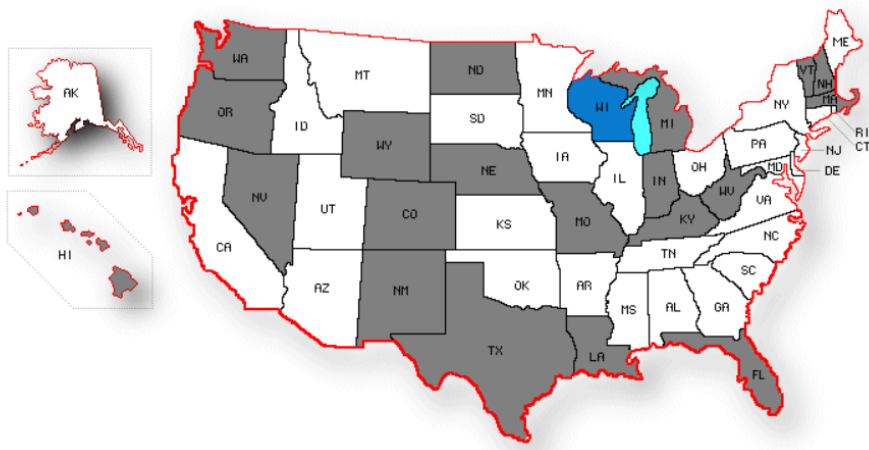
- ❖ Small businesses can succeed in providing wellness.
- ❖ The Wellness Council of WI is a great resource.
- ❖ Avoid jumping directly into strategies and follow all six steps in the kit in planning for a successful program.

## Why should I use this kit?

Original development of the Wisconsin Worksite Wellness Resource Kit involved pulling the best resources and ideas from various sources and then compiling and organizing them in one place to lay out a process for worksites to follow. Does it work? Adoption of the concepts and content of the kit by at least 21 other states indicates the answer is yes. The fourth version of the kit includes new resources and ideas that have developed since the previous version.

**Wisconsin Worksite Wellness Kit – Other States Using the Kit**

- - Wisconsin
- - Other State Users



# MANAGEMENT BUY-IN

## Management Buy-in

### Gain Support from Management

Support from all levels of management is key to the success of your wellness program. To ensure the support of management, inform managers about the program early on and encourage them to participate. Communicate clearly and often the goals and benefits to the company and participants. You need to direct sufficient resources and staff time to developing and implementing your wellness program if you want it to be successful. Consider setting an annual meeting with the executive team and managers to review the wellness program results from the previous year and to preview what the program is going to look like going forward.

If you are an outside coordinator not affiliated with the business, it may be worthwhile to list your responsibilities and the responsibilities of the worksite at the beginning. See Appendix H, the coordinator's guide, for more information and a sample memorandum of understanding.

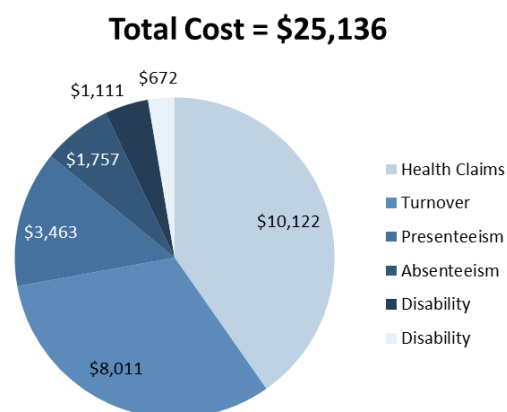
Management will likely want to talk cost. The take home message that will be emphasized throughout this kit is that happy, healthy employees will be more productive and will have less need to utilize healthcare. However, to address the cost issue, here is additional background to address cost savings and a summary of potential costs of establishing and maintaining a wellness program.

### Rationale

#### The cost of doing nothing may be more expensive than funding a wellness program

Worksites tend to focus on healthcare costs as their primary reason to start or enhance a wellness program. Although those costs are a significant factor, that misses the potential cost savings that having healthy, happy employees can contribute to an employer. The lost productivity "cost" related to turnover of personnel alone is almost as great as healthcare costs when you consider how long it takes to hire and then train staff to reach the level of the former employee. Employees tend to stay longer when they feel appreciated, which is one of the auxiliary effects of a good wellness program.

Worker health care costs are more than health plan costs.



Source: Goetzel, JOEM, data with presenteeism added to Mercer Employer Survey results

# COST

## WHAT IS IT GOING TO COST?

Worksite wellness programs do have a cost. However, when you look at all the related costs, the return of \$3.27 on medical costs for every dollar spent on wellness programs and that absenteeism costs fall by about \$2.73 for every dollar spent, it is really an investment in reducing costs (*Baicker* 2010). Here are some of the costs and an estimate of their cost.

**Staff Time:** Building a successful worksite wellness program requires resources, including staff time and finances. Some larger organizations may spend 20 hours per week for three to six months preparing all the steps prior to launching a worksite wellness program. Once the program is up and running, there should be some dedicated staff time to support the activities.

Although many organizations can build a successful wellness program by assigning roles and responsibilities to wellness committee volunteers, having some amount of dedicated staff time will greatly increase your chances for a successful program. When deciding on whether to hire an onsite wellness employee for your company, consider the following:

- ❖ The size of the organization
- ❖ The impact you would like the wellness program to have on employees
- ❖ The type of wellness culture being created by the company and
- ❖ The value that a well-run wellness program will bring to employees and the organization.

Although there is no specific formula for staff resources needed for a set number of employees, a general recommendation (Chapman 2007) is:

<u>Number of Employees</u>	<u>Internal Staff (FTEs)</u>
≤ 25	0.1 FTE
≤100	0.4 FTE
≤250	0.8 FTE
≤500	1.0 FTE
≤1,000	1.5 FTE
≤5,000	2.5 FTE
≥5,000	Add staff as needed

**Programming Costs:** Monetary costs can fluctuate widely, and will depend on whether the employer pays all costs, the employees pay all costs, or the costs are shared. Cost is affected by whether the program components are done by staff or through a vendor. In any case, national experts estimate the cost per employee to be between \$150 and \$300 per year for each employee for an effective wellness program that should produce a return on investment of \$450 to \$900. A sample of expenditures for various levels of programs would be:

Program Type	Program Characteristics	Cost per Employee/Year
Education and Awareness	A minimal to moderate program: activity centered, little focus on risk, voluntary, limited resource allocation, unsure employee engagement, no evaluation	<\$50
Traditional Program	A medium to fairly comprehensive program: activity centered and results oriented, some focus on risk, voluntary, reasonable resource allocation, some incentives offered, conducts some outcomes/evaluation	\$50-\$200

Comprehensive Health and Productivity Management	A comprehensive program: results oriented, focus on risk and productivity, extensive budget and staffing resources, multi-faceted programming, incentives offered and outcomes driven	\$200+
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The program costs above do not include the cost of biometric screening, health coaching or benefits based incentives. These are not automatically included because they are the most expensive parts of any wellness program. An estimated cost for those options is:

Wellness Options:	Cost per Employee/Year
Biometric screening (blood draw and analysis)	40-\$75
Health coaching (6 sessions)	\$140-\$165
Benefits-based incentives	\$200-\$800 per employee per year

<https://www.wellsteps.com/blog/2017/08/08/employee-wellness-program-cost/>

Keep in mind that the return on investment will likely be greater with more comprehensive programs, so the higher cost will also generate a greater return on investment due to lower health care costs and greater productivity. Ideally, your budget is based on all the strategies you want to implement in your wellness program. Realistically, your budget will often times be set and you will have to figure out what you can do with the amount allotted. A sample budget worksheet is available in Appendix H. The sample will give you ideas on some of the things that you might want to do and set aside budget dollars to implement.

## WELLNESS COMMITTEE

### DEVELOPING A WELLNESS COMMITTEE

#### Assembling Your Wellness Team – Forming an Onsite Wellness Committee

The Wellness Committee is responsible for promoting the worksite wellness program, planning activities, recruiting team leaders, and conducting the evaluation. The size of the committee will depend on the size of your company and the scope of the program or activities, with many companies having somewhere between 8-15 members. The committee should include staff that represents various employee shifts and departments such as management, union representatives, human resources or administrative assistants. There is no minimum or maximum size, but the committee should be large enough to represent the diversity of your workforce (age, gender, race, etc.) and should have representation from all locations if you have more than one facility. If you already have a wellness or health promotion committee or other groups interested in taking on this role, involve them on the committee. Committee members can focus on recruitment, activities, events, rewards/incentives, and evaluation.

#### Designate a Coordinator

Management or the Wellness Committee should identify a Wellness Coordinator to manage the program. Although the Wellness Committee and others can share some of the responsibilities, having the right person coordinating efforts increases the likelihood that the program will be well managed and delivered. **The coordinator's time and ability will affect the level of success for the wellness program. It is essential that some or all of the coordinator's time be dedicated to the wellness program and that**



**those responsibilities are included in their job description. If this is not possible, then the company should consider contracting with an outside party to provide programming.** Local healthcare organizations and YMCAs often provide this service. Check with your local contacts to see if this is an option.

### **Committee Meetings**

The Wellness Committee should meet on a regular basis, at a minimum on a bimonthly or quarterly basis. The committee may meet more often during peak times when planning or implementing activities or programs. The frequency of meetings will depend on what the committee plans to accomplish.

### **Revitalizing the Committee**

Regularly add new members to the committee and include members of groups that you want to target. Consider term limits for members to allow for new representation and new ideas. If you have great committee members, you can always provide an option to reapply. Maintain a connection with management and report successes. Make it fun and rewarding.

### **Appoint or Recruit Team Leaders**

Effective delivery of many wellness initiatives is often dependent on a leader that is close to the participants. Depending on the structure of your organization, you may want to develop smaller teams that have leaders or “captains” to help provide motivation, information, and support to the program participants. Leaders have a major impact on whether the participants have a positive experience. A team leader can be the point of contact or messenger for information shared between the program participants and the Wellness Committee and vice versa. It is important that the team leader is creative, enthusiastic, and committed to the program. The team leaders do not have to be the most active and healthy staff members. However, it is more important that they have the skills to help motivate their team members to success.

## **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Small Businesses**

You do not have to be a large company and your wellness program does not have to cost a lot (although more spending on some key strategies may be worthwhile). There are ways to get significant impact from low-cost strategies, particularly in smaller companies. There is a misconception that small businesses cannot really do much to improve worksite wellness. The truth is smaller businesses have an advantage in implementing some of the easy policy and environmental strategies that large companies struggle with because of a larger bureaucracy and perceived legal issues. Small businesses have the ability to be more nimble and can often achieve quick implementation of key strategies because only one person has to make the decision to make it happen. For a full list of strategies that may fit best in smaller worksite settings, go to the [Small Business Worksite Wellness Strategies](#) document

### **Other Resources - WELCOA of Wisconsin**

The Wellness Council is the only nonprofit organization in Wisconsin dedicated exclusively to helping employers design results-oriented wellness programs to maximize the health and productivity of their most valuable asset — their employees. The Wellness Council of Wisconsin currently serves over 400 members representing 430,000 employees statewide. The Wellness Council of Wisconsin is the local affiliate of the national organization, Wellness Council of America (WELCOA). WELCOA, [www.welcoa.org](http://www.welcoa.org), is one of the most respected resources for workplace wellness in America. With a membership in excess of 3,200 organizations, WELCOA is dedicated to improving the health and well-being of all working Americans. Visit [www.wellnesscouncilwi.org](http://www.wellnesscouncilwi.org) to learn more about the Well Workplace process.

### **A Final Thought on Start-up**

After you have laid the groundwork to develop a wellness program, take the time to plan the components that will result in a quality program. Many people want to jump into programming at this point, but following all the steps will ultimately make your program more successful. Taking into account your employee needs and interests and using proven strategies increases your likelihood for success significantly.

