

Workplace Wellness Program



District Personnel Instruction No. 20B-9

Effective Date	Expiration Date	Related DPM Chapters
April 18, 2016	Retain Until Superseded	20B

Overview

The District government recognizes the benefits to both agencies and employees of workplace wellness programs that promote and support employees’ health and wellness. District employees benefit from wellness programs on and off the job. Through wellness programs we can reduce risks associated with serious health conditions; work with employees to manage stress and job burn-out; reduce absenteeism and on-the-job injuries; and address chemical dependency and abuse issues. In addition to these benefits for employees, positive benefits are likely to extend to the families of employees resulting in better health for our communities. This instruction provides general information on establishing an agency-level wellness program.

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Agency Wellness Programs Required

Each agency head has the responsibility to create a Workplace Wellness Program (Program) within his or her agency. Such programs will be developed in partnership with the Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of Human Resources (DCHR). At a minimum, agency Programs must address the primary components of a healthy lifestyle including: healthy eating, physical activity, tobacco cessation, and stress management. DCHR has developed a Workplace Wellness model to assist agencies in the establishment of their programs.

Workplace Wellness Model

Administration of Workplace Wellness Program

DCHR in collaboration with DOH will provide guidance and assistance to agencies in the development of a comprehensive Program for employees. DCHR will also provide workplace wellness materials to agencies to assist in the development of their Program. In addition, and when available, resources will be provided on DCHR’s District Employee Wellness webpage at <http://dchr.dc.gov>.

Components of the Workplace Wellness Program

A Workplace Wellness Program shall include the following components:

1. Wellness Leader

Each agency head shall designate a Wellness Leader at the management level of the agency, who has direct access to the agency head. In collaboration with management and employees, the Wellness Leader is responsible for creating a workplace wellness infrastructure; overseeing the development and implementation of employee wellness policies and committees; communicating to employees about the agency's wellness program components to encourage and increase participation; and providing on-going assessment and monitoring of program effectiveness.

2. Wellness Committees

Each agency shall establish a wellness committee comprised of employees who represent a cross section of the agency's population. Wellness committees should meet on a routine and formal basis to develop and implement wellness strategies to encourage healthy behaviors and a health-friendly work environment. The committees should also advocate for necessary policy changes to effectuate these goals. Multiple committees may be necessary depending on the size and number of locations of the agency.

3. Committee Chair(s) and Members Responsibilities

Committees should elect a wellness chair or co-chair(s) to conduct meetings and lead activities. Committee members may need as much as four (4) hours a month and the wellness chair(s) as much as six (6) hours a month to plan and implement the agency's strategic wellness plan. As appropriate, these activities should be included in an employee's performance plan.

Each agency must submit the name of their Wellness Leader to Candice Ahwah-Gonzalez, DCHR's Associate Director for Benefits and Retirement Services, at candice.ahwah-gonzalez@dc.gov, no later than **May 31, 2016**.

Workplace Wellness Program Guidelines

Creating an Employee Workplace Wellness Infrastructure

- 1. Measurable Wellness Goals:** Should be included in each agency's strategic plan and in employee work plans, as appropriate.
- 2. Financial Resources for Wellness Activities:** The Program should utilize available resources within the District government and healthcare providers' contractual wellness obligations as much as possible. In addition, agencies should provide fiscal support, to the extent possible, for wellness committee and activities.
- 3. Computer Access:** To the extent possible, agencies should make computers and email accounts available to employees in order to facilitate health education, increase participation in employee wellness surveys and access to Employee Assistance Programs, DCHR resources, and incentive programs.
- 4. Communication and Promotion:** Agencies leadership and management should promote their wellness initiatives, as well as the District's Health Plan Open Enrollment services and benefit changes, Employee Assistance Program, the DC Quitline, Ergonomics Programs, and other wellness-related programs available to employees. New employees should receive information about the District's

Workplace Wellness healthy living initiatives and the agency's Program during orientation.

5. **Quality and Accessibility:** Agencies should have a plan for routinely monitoring the quality of wellness programs provided and employees' access to programs across all worksites. The Wellness Leader is responsible for designing the evaluation plan and discussing the findings with the agency employees. This is to ensure that all employees receive the same level of services and supervisory support.
6. **Liability Issues:** The agency shall address liability issues based on the nature of the wellness activity. Workplace wellness activities usually occur outside of work hours; for example, before and after work or at lunch time. Participation in wellness activities is voluntary; and therefore, the District government is not liable for injuries sustained to employees during their participation in these activities. As a general rule, any injury that occurs while in a non-pay status is not compensable. A non-pay status is defined as before work, after work, and non-paid time during the normal work day. Agencies should inform employees of the above information. Sample liability release forms and signage language are available from the DCHR's Wellness Coordinator.
7. **Facility Use and Activity Space:** Agencies that host wellness activities on government property should obtain approval from the Department of General Service (DGS) for the use of the space.

Supporting Employee Participation in Wellness Activities

District government policy allows health service providers to provide programs; such as, a weight management program or offer other voluntary wellness programs to employees at the worksite with the appropriate permissions from the agency head and the DGS during non-work hours, during lunch hours, or before or after the official work day.

Ways to Increase Levels of Physical Activity in the Workplace	
Activity Space	<p>Designation of space for wellness activities; including, exercise, in District government-owned and leased office space is permissible and encouraged.</p> <p>Providing opportunities for employees to exercise at their desks and offices.</p>
Employee Fitness Discounts	<p>As of January 1, 2016, employees who are District residents are able to obtain DC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) fitness center memberships free of charge; non-resident District employees, may obtain memberships at a reduced rate. For more information, please visit DPR's website at http://dpr.dc.gov/page/dpr-fitness-centers.</p>

Ways to Increase Levels of Physical Activity in the Workplace	
Fitness Education	In partnership with wellness-related vendors, DCHR will provide various opportunities throughout the year for agencies and employees to participate in fitness and other related educational opportunities; including, seminars, classes, events, etc.
Wellness-related Vendors	Can provide a weight management program or offer other wellness programs to employees at the worksite.

Healthier Food in the Workplace

Vending and Food Services

Agencies are encouraged to make available healthy snacks or foods at meetings (when snacks or foods may be legally provided), catered events, and vending machines. For example, provide at least 15 to 20 percent healthier snacks in vending machines and offer options that meet healthy dining and snacking criteria. Clear identification of healthy snacks is strongly encouraged.

Food Storage and Preparation

Agencies should ensure that food preparation and storage (e.g. sinks, refrigerators, microwaves) areas are available to encourage and support employees in bringing healthy lunches and snacks to work.

Increased Water Consumption

Agencies should promote the availability and consumption of water throughout the day.

Nutrition Education

In partnership with wellness-related vendors, DCHR will provide various opportunities throughout the year for agencies and employees to participate in nutrition and other related educational opportunities, including seminars, classes, events, etc.

Lactation Support

Agency workplace wellness programs shall also include guidance on creating space for nursing mothers in District government buildings, please review the Office of Human Rights' Breastfeeding Guidelines at <http://www.dcregs.dc.gov/Gateway/FinalAdoptionHome.aspx?RuleVersionID=2920202>.

Reducing and Managing Stress

Reduction and Managing Stress Training

Agencies should provide training on how to reduce, prevent, and cope with stress in the workplace annually to managers and supervisors to improve their supervisory skills, and reduce conflict and stress in the workplace. This training should also be offered to employees who want to improve their time management and stress reduction skills.

Breaks and Lunch Time

Agencies should ensure that employees are taking their required lunch and rest periods for appropriate breaks from repetitive and stressful work functions during the work day to help prevent stress and injury.

Supporting Tobacco Cessation Programs

Tobacco-free Workplace

In accordance with the District law, all District-owned building and property (i.e. vehicles) and buildings leased by the District government are tobacco-free properties.

Tobacco Cessation Programs

Tobacco Cessation Programs are available through the DC Quitline, the Employee Assistance Program, and DC Employee Health Plan providers, as follows:

1. **DC Quitline** at <http://doh.dc.gov/service/smoking-cessation-programs>, or 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669);
2. **Employee Assistance Program Services:**
 - a. *Online resources through the website at www.inova.org/eap;*
 - b. *Community resources to support groups and programs in the employees' local areas;*
 - c. *An assessment visit with a counselor at no cost. Follow up visits, if needed, will be billed through the employee's health insurance; or*
 - d. *Telephone support at 1-800-346-0110.*
3. **District Health Plan Provider services (for members whose primary health insurance is with DCEHB or FEHB):**
 - a. *An online smoking cessation program and information;*
 - b. *Education and support from Health coaches; and*
 - c. *Pharmaceutical and counseling benefits are covered.*

Reporting Requirement

Agency Wellness Committees will be responsible for the submission of the following surveys to the DCHR Wellness Coordinator:

DCHR/DOH Workplace Wellness Survey

By **June 30, 2016**, each agency must complete this survey that will provide baseline information on the wellness offerings at worksites District-wide and their ability to incorporate additional wellness elements. Beginning in 2017, this survey will need to be completed by **September 30th of each year**.

Workplace Wellness Implementation Evaluation.

By **January 21, 2017**, each agency must complete this survey that will gauge agency success and challenges in worksite wellness program implementation and allow for increased support for agency wellness committees; as well as, critical feedback to determine best practices and identify problems.

Complete Annually the End-of-Year Workplace Wellness Survey.

Beginning **September 30, 2017**, each agency must complete annually this survey which will allow DCHR to compare agency baseline data from the initial Workplace Wellness Survey with program improvements after one (1) year of implementation.

American Heart Association's Fit-Friendly Workplace Designation

Agencies must be able to obtain an American Heart Association (AHA) “Fit-Friendly” Workplace designation within two (2) years of the implementation of the workplace wellness program. Each agency wellness committees should submit a plan to DCHR by **September 30, 2016** on how they will implement solutions to meet AHA criteria.

Authorities and Applicability

Authorities

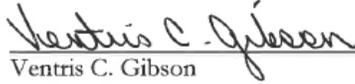
- a. D.C. Official Code §§ 1-541.01 and 1-620.07(4); and
- b. Title 6B, Chapter 20B (“Health”) of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations.

Applicability

The provisions of this instruction apply to those District government agencies which are subordinate to the Mayor’s personnel authority. Other personnel authorities or independent agencies may adopt any or all of these procedures to provide guidance to employees under their respective jurisdictions.

Additional Information

For additional information concerning this bulletin, please contact the Department of Human Resources, Benefits and Retirement Services, by calling (202) 442-9700 or by sending an e-mail to dchr.benefit@dc.gov.



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Director