



Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Branch—Worksite Program

Starting a Wellness Committee

There are two keys to any successful wellness program: the right people and the right tools. Before you can get working, you'll need to form a team. This small group of people will work together to share their talents and ideas. They will help build a culture that supports wellness. This tool is needed since staff involvement is vital for the success of the program.

STEPS TO SUCCESS

1. Decide who will be the Wellness Coordinator.
2. The Wellness Coordinator forms a committee.
3. Get buy-in from management.
4. Together, figure out the needs of your worksite. Set goals.
5. Evaluate your program. Make changes as they are needed.

TOOL TIPS

Find Your Coordinator

This person will lead meetings and guide the program. This may be you, or you may be looking for someone. Whoever it is, this person should be able to:

- be a good role model for living healthy.
- get people excited about the program.
- be a good leader.
- work well with all different kinds of people.
- assign duties to team members.
- work with the group to determine “next steps.”

Form a Committee

The Wellness Committee should meet regularly. You may choose to hold regular meetings once a month. During busy times, you might meet once a week. Keep meetings simple and fun. Here are some steps to get your committee started:

Invite People to Join

A strong committee will include people from different shifts and departments. It could include managers, line workers, and janitorial staff. Each will be able to bring different viewpoints and ideas.

Create a Mission Statement

Your mission statement is just a sentence or two. It will state the purpose of the committee.

SAMPLE MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of our Wellness Committee is to establish and maintain a worksite that provides support for a healthy lifestyle.

Assign Duties

You don't want one person doing all of the work. Some duties might include:

- **Sponsor.** This will be a person in management who can help get plans approved. They'll also help you get money when you need it.
- **Coordinator.** He or she will lead meetings and keep people excited about the program.
- **Committee member.** There may be many members acting in this role. They will share their ideas and support program activities as needed.

Get Buy-In From Management.

You need the support of those who make the big decisions. Get management on your side. Meet with them one-on-one. Let them know what you want to accomplish. Get their feedback. You might put together a presentation for the management team. Be sure to include the following details:

- What the committee can do
- How they can do it
- People who support the wellness program
- The resources needed
- Why a wellness program is good for business

IN AGRICULTURE:

Your Wellness Committee could include farm owners, operators, or managers as well as crew supervisors.

Set Goals

A wellness program needs a destination. You've made a good start by creating a mission statement. Now it's time to get specific. If you haven't yet, complete the *Check for Health* survey. This will help you understand the wellness needs of your site. Use the results to set some goals.

This is where the action happens! The *California Fit Business Kit* has a number of tools to get you started. They can be adapted to fit your needs. Choose some tools to implement. Define what success will look like at small levels and in the long term. With every success, celebrate!

Evaluate Your Program

Once a year, or so, you should step back and take a look at what you've accomplished. Also note what you have not yet accomplished. Look at the goals you set a year earlier. What went well? What could be done better? You may choose to ask committee members to evaluate the program. Alternatively, conduct an employee satisfaction survey. Use the results to make any changes necessary to improve the program. A great program will be one that continues to learn and grow.



IN AGRICULTURE:

Agricultural businesses can have different management structures. We encourage employers and employees to adapt these suggestions to best fit their organization. If you have a small workforce, your farm's workgroup may become your wellness committee. It is important to engage members of the workforce from the beginning. These may be crew leaders or members of your crews with seniority but who still have a close relationship to the other workers. Keep in mind that for a wellness program to work, employees at all levels need to buy into it. Creating an environment in which employees take ownership throughout the process and feel that their input is valued, is essential to a successful Wellness Committee and ultimately to the success of the program.

TAKE IT FURTHER

- Keep employees in the loop. Post meeting notices and minutes. They may have questions or suggestions.
- Regularly add new members to the committee. Include members of groups you want to target. They'll bring new energy and ideas to the group. Make it fun and rewarding.
- Survey employees to learn their interests. What kinds of health efforts interest them? Maybe it's joining a worksite sponsored soccer team, or being a part of a lunchtime walking group. Maybe they'd like to have healthy snacks available in the cafeteria. A wellness program is about behavior change. People are more willing to change if they are able to give input.

- Give your committee a fun name and logo! You'll be able to brand your activities.
- Keep a connection with management. Let them know about your successes.
- Work with management to build health into the business plan. This will help sustain the program for the future.
- Invite employees to submit their personal health accomplishments. For instance a photo of someone running a 5k, or a favorite healthy recipe. Include these items in a newsletter.

RESOURCES

Visit our website at

www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Pages/WorksiteProgram.aspx for:

- sample wellness policies, meeting minutes, interest surveys.
- detailed guides to starting a Wellness Committee.
- printable handouts.
- more information.

The *Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Branch* focuses on fruit, vegetable, and healthy beverage consumption and physical activity promotion. The *California Fit Business Kit* does not address tobacco, alcohol, mental health, or other issues of importance in worksite wellness. Here are some resources your wellness committee may find helpful:

- California Tobacco Control Program: www.cdph.ca.gov/tobacco
- The Partnership at Drugfree.org: www.drugfree.org
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Mental Health page: www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth
- As needed, you may want to contact your Employee Assistance Program provider.



This material was produced by the California Department of Public Health's Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Branch with funding from USDA SNAP-Ed, known in California as CalFresh. These institutions are equal opportunity providers and employers. CalFresh provides assistance to low-income households and can help buy nutritious food for better health. For CalFresh information, call 1-877-847-3663. For important nutrition information, visit www.CaChampionsForChange.net.

