

At-a-glance: Tips for engaging municipality employees

The employees that manage our cities and municipalities are often faced with stressful and demanding work environments. Therefore, it can be challenging to engage these employees in well-being programs due to widespread work locations, lack of access to online resources, varying work schedules or shift work, and a lack of discretionary time at work and/or at home. The benefits of engaging this workforce in well-being initiatives may include increased productivity, enhanced safety, reduced health risks, lower health care costs and better recruitment and retention. Employees may also be more resilient in the workplace when they feel valued and supported by their employer. Here are some tips to engage municipality employees.¹

Solicit employee input

Drive employee engagement by listening to, learning about and understanding your employee population. Start by sending out a survey or holding employee meetings to help identify what employees want in a well-being program. Here are some examples:

- Which well-being programs and/or activities would you be interested in participating in?
- Which health topics would you like to learn more about?
- What would motivate you to participate in a well-being program?
- How would you like to see your employer create a healthier worksite environment?

Leverage multiple communication channels

Providing clear communication of your well-being program may increase awareness with employees, and therefore increase engagement in the programs. Start with leadership promotion; have the Mayor, Council Leader or even board members promote the well-being program and show their support of the program along with directors. Once you have established leadership support, consider the following communication strategies to continue to promote your well-being program:



Promote during department or safety meetings – Include department leaders in your messaging and use safety meetings to promote or incorporate well-being messaging and updates.



Send postcards to employees' homes – Involving the spouses may improve communication and offer support and motivation for the employee to participate in the program.



Create a Well-being Champion network – Getting employees involved in the promotion of the programs may create more comradery and excitement among colleagues.



Provide easy access to resources and program information – Post well-being program information in common areas such as on bulletin boards, in break rooms, and on television monitors, etc. and consider providing access to computers for those who work in the field and need online program information.

Destigmatize mental healthcare

Providing access to mental health support should be a priority for employers. As behavioral therapy tools become more readily accessible and people are becoming more comfortable speaking about their mental health, promoting tools and resources is important.¹ To cultivate mental well-being in the workplace, start with the following actions:

- Identify an executive champion to be an advocate for mental well-being efforts
- Promote anti-stigma campaigns
- Allow flexible work schedules to seek care during work hours
- Share employee mental health success stories
- Engage in open dialogue regarding mental health (prevalence, education, support, resources, etc.)
- Offer ongoing mental health education and training
- Train management to recognize the signs of mental health issues and how to best support employees

Keep it simple

When building your well-being program, keep it simple. Consider the following examples as ways to do that:

- Keep the offerings simple and offer the activities during different hours to align with shifts
- Hold a wellness event and allow employees to attend during work hours allowing for more participation
- Offer half day PTO to complete preventive care
- Start with the basics such as a “know your numbers” campaign, PCP promotion and/or preventive care compliance
- Provide an onsite Kiosk or a designated area for employees to access tools and resources.



Prioritizing the health of our municipality workers and their families may have a widespread effect beyond the organization into the larger community they serve, creating a community of health and well-being.



¹ Well Steps Blog: Effective Employee Wellness Solutions. <https://www.wellsteps.com/blog/2022/04/01/city-wellness-programs/>. 2024. Accessed October 2024.