



Section 2:

Strategies – Core Outcomes for Healthy Worksites

Nutritious Food

Why This is Important

Eating nutritious food improves overall wellbeing, helps us focus throughout the day, and can help reduce the risk of developing chronic conditions. Employers play an important role in promoting nutritious eating and making sure nutritious food and beverages are available to employees at meetings and events, and in vending machines and cafeterias.

How to Support This Outcome

Education and Awareness:

- Offer nutritious food and beverages at meetings and events (see the appendix for additional information regarding Nutrition Guidance for Worksites).
- Include employees' family members in campaigns that promote nutritious eating (for example, communications could encompass how to include children, partners, and other family members).
- Provide information about food resources in your community (as feasible dependent upon location of on-site, hybrid, and remote employees).

Behavior Change:

- Host an on-site nutrition education opportunity.
- Encourage nutritious eating by supporting local food initiatives on-site by:
 - Offering an on-site Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program (discounting the cost of a CSA program can make this strategy more effective).
 - Organizing a worksite garden—consider accessibility to make sure the garden can be accessed by individuals of all abilities.
 - Providing local food in the cafeteria.
 - Exploring opportunities with local farms for a mobile or on-site farmers' market.

Policy and Environmental Change:

- Provide refrigerators, microwaves, and break areas.
- Provide access to free water available throughout the day.
- Adopt a food and beverage policy, or written guidelines, for meetings and events.
- Create food and beverage guidelines for cafes and vending machines.
- Support breaktime policies by encouraging a culture where staff regularly take their lunch break.
- Encourage nutritious options from vending machines and cafeterias by:
 - Using competitive pricing to make nutritious options more affordable in vending machines or cafeterias.
 - Implementing vending machine and cafeteria standards to increase the percentage of nutritious options that are available.
 - Using signs or symbols to make nutritious options stand out and make nutrition information available for foods and beverages.

Supporting Remote and Hybrid Employees:

- Offer a virtual option for cooking classes or demonstrations.
- Encourage work-life balance by stepping away from the computer, or task at hand, to enjoy lunch even if an employee works at home.
- Allow employees to submit wellness challenge information via digital forms, rather than physical forms.

Considerations for Employers of All Sizes

Worksites vary in staff capacity and physical layout and in many cases, it is not feasible to furnish an employee breakroom with kitchen appliances, host a cooking class or demonstration, or operate an on-site cafeteria. It is important to meet employees where they are and listen to their needs and interests – for example, providing a lunchbox and ice pack for employees who spend most of their workday on the road.

Where to Go for Resources

- Get worksite garden support at Vermont Community Garden Network: [VCGN.org](https://www.vcgn.org)
- Find a CSA program: [NOFAVT.org](https://www.nofavt.org)
- For healthy vending tools: [CDC.gov/nutrition/food-service-guidelines/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/food-service-guidelines/index.html)
- Vermont **2-1-1** (dial 2-1-1)
- Food access resources: [HungerFreeVT.org/GetFoodHelp](https://www.hungerfreevt.org/get-food-help)
- Healthy Living Workshops: [MyHealthyVT.org](https://www.myhealthyvt.org)
- Wellness Beyond Weight: [Wellable.co/blog/nutrition-tracking-in-wellness-programs/](https://www.wellable.co/blog/nutrition-tracking-in-wellness-programs/)
- Vermont Department of Health's Vermont Food Standards for meetings and events: [HealthVermont.gov/wellness/physical-activity-nutrition](https://www.healthvermont.gov/wellness/physical-activity-nutrition)

For more info:

The Vermont Department of Health is here to help. Contact the district office near you:

[HealthVermont.gov/local](https://www.healthvermont.gov/local)

See the sample nutrition policy in section 3 and nutrition guidance in appendix

Smoke- and Vape-Free Lifestyle

Why This is Important

Tobacco and nicotine use continues to be a leading cause of preventable death in Vermont. Thirteen percent of adults currently smoke cigarettes, six percent use e-cigarettes, and three percent use smokeless tobacco products. Some groups of employed adults – including those working in construction, transportation, materials moving, buildings and grounds cleaning, and maintenance-related occupations – use tobacco at higher rates, as do people living in Vermont experiencing health inequities and access to care issues.

The prevalence of adult smoking has decreased over the last decade, in part due to policies supporting tobacco- and vape-free worksites. Worksites can continue to play an important role in reducing tobacco and nicotine use by creating supportive environments that support the right to breathe clean air and provide prevention information and education along with tobacco cessation resources.

How to Support This Outcome

Education and Awareness:

- Educate and provide resources on the harmful impact of smoking, vaping, and nicotine exposure, and the health benefits of quitting.
- Provide educational information and resources (from trusted resources such as CounterBalance, ParentUp, and the CDC) to parents, guardians, and adult influencers on the dangers to learning, the body, and the brain associated with youth vaping.
- Promote tobacco cessation resources, such as 802Quits, to employees who need support by phone, online or text. It's free and it works.
- Promote use of My Healthy VT resources.
- Request free educational materials to display at your worksite.
- Use the Quit@Work toolkit. This toolkit offers specific guidance and tools for creating a healthier worksite.

Behavior Change:

- Encourage physical activity or relaxation breaks as alternatives to smoking breaks.
- Host on-site, online, or other tobacco cessation counseling.
- Offer incentives or challenges to encourage individual or group quitting.

Policy and Environmental Change:

- Implement a tobacco- and vape-free property policy with signage.
- Develop guidelines for participation in tobacco cessation activities during the workday.
- Ensure that tobacco cessation counselling and medication are offered through the organization's health insurance.
- Become a 3-4-50 worksite.

Supporting Remote and Hybrid Employees:

- Encourage physical activity or relaxation breaks as alternatives to smoking breaks.
- Educate on the harms of secondhand smoke and vape emissions.
- Promote the use of My Healthy VT and 802Quits resources.

Considerations for Employers of All Sizes

Smoking is not only the leading cause of preventable death in the United States, it also leads to diminished overall health, increased absenteeism from work, and increased health services utilization and cost.

Worksites, schools, cities, towns, and health care providers all play an important role in shaping the health of people living in Vermont. Our common goal is to make the health choice the easy choice where we live, work, learn, and play. Regardless of your business size, you can promote healthy choices and reduce tobacco use amongst employees by implementing the simple strategies listed in this toolkit.

Where to Go for Resources

- Visit 802Quits for free individual tobacco cessation support, resources, and quit tools. Translation services are available: [802Quits.org/](https://802quits.org/)
- Visit My Healthy VT for information on upcoming in-person or online tobacco cessation workshops: MyHealthyVT.org/workshop_dates/?cat=4
- Your Office of Local Health can provide resources and support developing and implementing smoke- and vape-free policies: HealthVermont.gov/local
- Your community coalition can also provide resources and support: HealthVermont.gov/wellness/tobacco/our-partners
- Become a 3-4-50 worksite: HealthVermont.gov/wellness/3-4-50-prevent-chronic-disease

- Request free educational materials: [802Quits.org/health-professionals/order-materials/](https://802quits.org/health-professionals/order-materials/)
- Order free signage:
HealthVermont.gov/sites/default/files/document/hpdp-tcp-smoke-free-sign-order-form.pdf
- Quit@Work Toolkit:
HealthVermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/HPDP_Quit%40WorkToolkit.pdf
- Secondhand Smoke: HealthVermont.gov/wellness/tobacco/secondhand-smoke
- Health Benefits of Quitting:
[802Quits.org/home/reasons-to-quit-tobacco/health-benefits-of-quitting/](https://802quits.org/home/reasons-to-quit-tobacco/health-benefits-of-quitting/)
- CounterBalance: CounterBalanceVT.com/
- ParentUp: ParentUpVT.org/
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
CDC.gov/tobacco/basic_information/index.htm

For more info: The Vermont Department of Health is here to help. Contact the district office near you:
HealthVermont.gov/local

See the sample tobacco/vape policy in section 3



Daily Physical Activity and Movement

Why This is Important

People who are physically active have a reduced risk of heart disease, diabetes, dementia, and some types of cancer. Physical activity also supports emotional health and stress reduction. All these benefits contribute to a happier and more productive employee, which can save an organization money.

It is important to consider the diverse physical abilities of employees, and to make sure that any physical activity program is inclusive of all employees. Employees should be encouraged or required to consult with a physician and/or sign a consent form before beginning any exercise program offered at a worksite.

How to Support This Outcome

Education and Awareness:

- Promote daily physical activity, movement, or stretch breaks.
- Build wellness activities into events.
- Offer incentives for active commuting, unique to employees' individual needs.
- Create a physical activity challenge with appropriate activities for all employees.
- Offer incentives for participating in active activities.
- Enter local fitness activities held during work hours, such as 5K fun runs, as a company team.
- Include family members in activities that promote physical activity.

Behavior Change:

- Offer free or discounted fitness opportunities.
- Provide space to be physically active.
- Start a bike or snowshoe sharing program.
- Provide fitness equipment on-site for employees to use.
- Support physical activity breaks and active meetings (e.g. walking or rolling meetings).
- Provide maps of trails or walking paths in the area.
- Provide discounts for fitness classes, gyms, or health clubs.
- Make sure on-site support is available for employees of all physical abilities, providing adaptive equipment and opportunities.

Policy and Environmental Change:

- Develop a wellness break policy.
- Adopt a physical activity policy.
- Create guidelines for flexible work schedules to allow physical activity.

Supporting Remote and Hybrid Employees:

- Offer virtual fitness opportunities or group stretch breaks.
- Share information about home-based physical activity that doesn't require the use of equipment.
- Allow flexible time for employees to step away from their workstation, wherever that might be located, to engage in daily physical activity and movement.

Considerations for Employers of All Sizes

Providing space for employees to be physically active or offering free fitness opportunities might not be realistic options for many employers due to financial constraints or worksite configuration. You can tailor employee surveys to reflect feasible options for employees to maintain regular physical activity, and allow these surveys to guide worksite wellness strategies that work best for both the employer and employees.

Where to Go for Resources

- Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation area maps and trails: [FPR.vermont.gov/recreation/trail-maps-and-guides](https://www.fpr.vermont.gov/recreation/trail-maps-and-guides)
- Walk With Ease: [Arthritis.org/health-wellness/healthy-living/physical-activity/walking/walk-with-ease/wwe-about-the-program](https://www.arthritis.org/health-wellness/healthy-living/physical-activity/walking/walk-with-ease/wwe-about-the-program)
- Active Commuting Resources:
 - Go! Vermont: [ConnectingCommuters.org](https://www.connectingcommuters.org)
 - Local Motion: [LocalMotion.org](https://www.localmotion.org)
- Races and Physical Activity Challenges in Vermont:
 - Run Vermont: [RunVermont.org/event-calendar](https://www.runvermont.org/event-calendar)
 - Governor's Council on Physical Fitness & Sports and Vermont Corporate Cup: [VermontFitness.org](https://www.vermontfitness.org)
 - Vermont Senior Games: [VermontSeniorGames.org](https://www.vermontseniorgames.org)
 - Come Alive Outside Physical Activity Challenges: [ComeAliveOutside.com](https://www.comealiveoutside.com)
 - Vermont **2-1-1** (dial 2-1-1)

For more info: The Vermont Department of Health is here to help. Contact the district office near you: [HealthVermont.gov/local](https://www.healthvermont.gov/local)

See the sample physical activity policy in section 3

Family-Friendly



Why This is Important

Family-friendly workplaces are fundamental to the well-being of employees and their families. They support healthy community objectives such as age-friendly environments, thriving children and economic stability for families.

Family-friendly policies and practices are also wins for employers by reducing costs associated with turnover through employee retention and supporting recruitment efforts. While there are many types of family-friendly policies and practices, we focus on two specific categories here – breastfeeding-friendly workplaces and support for caregivers and parents.

How to Support This Outcome

Become a breastfeeding-friendly workplace.

Active support from the worksite and management is essential for an employee's successful transition back to the workplace. Employers also benefit significantly from supporting lactating employees through decreased employee turnover, and reduced absenteeism and health care costs.

Support caregivers and parents.

The majority of people will participate in caregiving at some point, either in caring for their own children, spouse, or other family members. Supporting employees who are caregivers or parents has benefits beyond employee wellness. Family-friendly work policies have been recognized as a core approach to preventing child abuse and neglect (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Injury Prevention). Policies and practices that support caregivers can promote gender equality. They also support healthy aging.

Education and Awareness:

- Understand the laws protecting an employee's right to express milk in the workplace or university.
- Apply for Breastfeeding Friendly Employer Project recognition.
- Share community resources for older adult care or provide discounts for older adult care.
- Share resources, make referrals, or provide discounts for childcare.
- Provide educational opportunities on family-related topics, such as parenting, older adult care, emotional support for caregivers.

- Translate resources and work with organizations that support Black, Indigenous and people of color in Vermont to provide culturally appropriate education and support.
- Provide lactation education through flyers, classes, or other venues.

Behavior Change:

- Invite family members to organizational events.
- Inform all staff of the lactation support policy and provide training for supervisors.

Policy and Environmental Change:

- Develop a written policy of support for lactating employees.
- Provide a clean, private space (that is not a bathroom) for expressing milk.
- Identify a multi-use room that can be scheduled for milk expression breaks or identify a dedicated lactation room.
- Provide adequate time for lactating employees to express milk in a private space free from intrusion.
- Make arrangements with local childcare centers to reserve spots for employees' children.
- Allow flextime for caregiving and childcare needs.
- Allow employees to telework.
- Ensure managers are trained to support employees.
- Consider an Infants in the Workplace policy for positions that allow it.
- Ensure leave policies support the caregiving needs of employees, for example:
 - Offer paid parental leave for new parents.
 - Offer family medical leave to care for family members.
 - Offer a set number of days for emergency leave for medical or other emergencies.
 - Allow the use of paid sick leave for family care.
- Make sure leave policies are clearly explained in new employee orientation and all employees know how to apply for leave.
- Provide support for filling out forms when needed. Employees that are English Language Learners or have a disability may need support.
- Offer on-site childcare.
- Allow children at the worksite.

Supporting Remote and Hybrid Employees:

- Policy should include provisions to provide for milk expression breaks or provide flextime for hybrid and remote workers.

Considerations for Employers of All Sizes

Employers of all sizes can establish a breastfeeding friendly workplace. Most essential is a policy to support lactating employees and to train supervisors and staff regarding the laws and accommodations needed for lactating employees. Creative solutions can be found in many industries.

Where to Go for Resources

- Breastfeeding-Friendly Employer Project:
[HealthVermont.gov/wellness/worksite-wellness/promote-family-friendly-workplace](https://www.healthvermont.gov/wellness/worksite-wellness/promote-family-friendly-workplace)
- For caregivers:
 - Let's Grow Kids: [LetsGrowKids.org](https://www.LetsGrowKids.org)
 - Child Care Resources for Families (for employees who need help finding and paying for child care):
[LetsGrowKids.org/client_media/files/CC%20Resources%20for%20Families.pdf](https://www.LetsGrowKids.org/client_media/files/CC%20Resources%20for%20Families.pdf)
 - Explore community-based adult day services: [VermontAdultDay.org](https://www.VermontAdultDay.org)
 - AARP: [aarp.org/work/employers/caregiving-resources/](https://www.aarp.org/work/employers/caregiving-resources/)
- For Employers:
 - Supporting Nursing Moms at Work: Employer Solutions:
[WomensHealth.gov/supporting-nursing-moms-work/resources](https://www.WomensHealth.gov/supporting-nursing-moms-work/resources)
 - Child Care Benefits for Employers: [LetsGrowKids.org/child-care-benefits](https://www.LetsGrowKids.org/child-care-benefits)
- For Employees:
 - Breastfeeding at Home, at Work, and in Public:
[WomensHealth.gov/breastfeeding/breastfeeding-home-work-and-public](https://www.WomensHealth.gov/breastfeeding/breastfeeding-home-work-and-public)
 - Pumping and Milk Storage:
[WomensHealth.gov/breastfeeding/pumping-and-storing-breastmilk](https://www.WomensHealth.gov/breastfeeding/pumping-and-storing-breastmilk)

For more info: The Vermont Department of Health is here to help. Contact the district office near you:
[HealthVermont.gov/local](https://www.HealthVermont.gov/local)

See the sample lactation policy in section 3



Preventive Care

Why This is Important

Many of the strategies in the other outcome areas promote chronic condition prevention through environments, policies and programs that promote healthy behaviors. Worksites can also support and encourage employees in accessing preventive care.

Worksites can also help limit the spread of vaccine preventable diseases and illness by encouraging employees to stay up to date on routine immunizations. Immunizations strengthen the body's natural defense, which can be particularly helpful at keeping employees healthy during the fall when COVID-19, Influenza, and RSV are prevalent.

How to Support This Outcome

Education and Awareness:

- Use educational flyers, emails, or other channels to share about the importance of preventive care including cancer screenings, oral health, asthma management, cognitive screenings, and staying up to date on adult vaccinations.
- Promote cancer screenings at the worksite with national awareness months.
- Promote free or low-cost screening services for under-insured or uninsured eligible employees through the You First Program.
- Promote oral health, including dental cleanings and healthy beverage and food consumption.
- Provide information about immunization resources in your area.
- Provide employees with health education in the worksite setting.
- Run seasonal vaccine campaigns encouraging employees to get vaccinated.

Behavior Change:

- Provide on-site or virtual education on cancer screenings, asthma management, hypertension, diabetes prevention and management, and oral health.
- Offer vaccination clinics on-site or share information on area clinics open to the public.
- Provide stickers for vaccinated employees to create a social vaccination norm.
- Identify peer advocates for vaccine promotion.

Policy and Environmental Change:

- Offer paid sick leave and encourage employees to stay home when sick.
- Offer paid leave for vaccination appointments or vaccine side effects.
- Allow employees flexible time to access preventive care services, including vaccination appointments or vaccine side effects.
- Display vaccine brochures and/or posters in community spaces (such as cafeterias, bathrooms, etc.).
- Offer points or rewards through the wellness program for vaccination, particularly respiratory virus vaccines.

Supporting Remote and Hybrid Employees:

- Offer virtual education or chronic condition self-management workshops to include all remote and hybrid employees in worksite wellness programming.
- If offering an on-site vaccination clinic, allow the same time frame for remote and hybrid employees to access vaccinations at local, to them, clinics open to the public.
- Provide flexible scheduling when hosting worksite vaccination clinics.
- Leverage technology to communicate with and educate remote and hybrid workers.

Considerations for Employers of All Sizes

Dependent upon the nature of operations, location of employees, and layout of the worksite, on-site educational opportunities and vaccine clinics might not be feasible options for all employers. An alternate to hosting vaccine clinics for smaller employers would be to identify community vaccinators and share information with employees. By cultivating a worksite culture that promotes self-care and the importance of preventive care, regardless of the size of the employer, employers can help limit the spread of infectious illnesses and equip employees with the information and time they need to access preventive care.

Where to Go for Resources

- Vermont Department of Health's You First program: [YouFirstVT.org](https://www.youfirstvt.org)
- Cancer awareness calendar: [AACR.org/patients-caregivers/awareness-months/](https://www.aacr.org/patients-caregivers/awareness-months/)
- Vermont Department of Health's Cancer Program: [HealthVermont.gov/wellness/cancer](https://www.healthvermont.gov/wellness/cancer)
- Vermont Department of Health's Oral Health Program: [HealthVermont.gov/wellness/oral-health](https://www.healthvermont.gov/wellness/oral-health)
- Vermont Department of Health's Immunization Page:
[HealthVermont.gov/disease-control/immunizations](https://www.healthvermont.gov/disease-control/immunizations)
- Vermont Alzheimer's Disease and Healthy Aging Program:
[HealthVermont.gov/wellness/brain-health-dementia](https://www.healthvermont.gov/wellness/brain-health-dementia)
- CDC Immunization Schedules: [CDC.gov/vaccines/schedules/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/index.html)

- CDC Promoting Vaccination in the Workplace:
[CDC.gov/flu/business/promoting-vaccines-workplace.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/business/promoting-vaccines-workplace.htm)
- My Healthy VT Self-Management Workshops: [MyHealthyVT.org](https://www.myhealthyvt.org)
- For information on other chronic disease education opportunities, contact your local area hospital or insurance provider.
- Vermont **2-1-1** (dial 2-1-1)

For more info: The Vermont Department of Health is here to help. Contact the district office near you:
[HealthVermont.gov/local](https://www.healthvermont.gov/local)

Safety



Why This is Important

Worksites should take measures to comply with Vermont Occupational Safety and Health Administration (VOSHA) regulations and go above and beyond what these standards require. This will ensure the safety and health of their employees and help prevent injury in order to improve morale, production, and decrease workers compensation premiums.

How to Support This Outcome

Education and Awareness:

- Request a free, confidential, no-penalty Project WorkSAFE consultation at your facility to help identify hazards and receive assistance in improving safety. Services include safety audits, chemical exposure assessments, noise monitoring, written program development and evaluation.
- Educate employees on state laws and best practices related to safe driving and develop worksite policies on seatbelt and cell phone use when using a vehicle for work purposes.
- Provide information on risk factors for injuries, such as proper body mechanics to prevent musculoskeletal disorders.
- Provide information on community resources for arthritis and chronic pain self-management.
- Create a system for employees to report near-miss or good catch incidents. These events include incidents in which no property was damaged, and no personal injury was sustained, but where, given a slight shift in time or position, damage or injury easily could have occurred.
- Engage in educational opportunities offered by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Training Institute.

Behavior Change:

- Offer opportunities for physical activity and employer lead stretch breaks.
- Offer health promotion programs such as nutrition, physical activity and tobacco cessation.
- Engage employees in improving safety culture including participating in safety committees and job hazard analysis.
- Offer ergonomic assessments to employees to ensure workspaces reduce the risk of injuries and chronic pain.
- Maintain proper housekeeping practices throughout your facility. This is especially important for walking and storage areas.

Policy and Environmental Change:

- Review OSHA required programs, policies, and procedures annually to identify areas for improvement.
- Model programs and templates for most programs can be found by contacting Project WorkSAFE.
- Evaluate your organization's disability management and return-to-work policies to support employees returning to work after injuries.
- Prohibit individuals from manually lifting and handling objects heavier than 50 pounds on their own. Avoid manually lifting, lowering, and handling loads which require non-neutral postures. Use team lifting techniques or powered equipment when manually handling materials greater than 50 pounds or when manual lifting requires non-neutral postures.

Supporting Remote and Hybrid Employees:

- Provide a virtual option for education and training opportunities to include all remote and hybrid employees in worksite wellness programming.
- Offer work-from-home ergonomic self-assessment materials to remote and hybrid employees.

Considerations for Employers of All Sizes

Although OSHA does not require small employers (under 10 employees) to maintain most written programs, training and education requirements apply to all sizes of employer. The concepts and practices of promoting safety and health culture can be promoted by employers of any size.

Where to Go for Resources

- Vermont Department of Labor's Project WorkSAFE: Call **1-888-SAFE-YES** or visit [Labor.vermont.gov/workplace-safety/project-worksafe](https://labor.vermont.gov/workplace-safety/project-worksafe)
- Vermont Department of Labor's RETAIN (return-to-work support and resources): [Labor.vermont.gov/vt-retain](https://labor.vermont.gov/vt-retain)
- National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) resources on ergonomics, diseases, injuries, occupation and industry-specific resources, hazards and exposures, emergency preparedness, chemicals and other safety and prevention topics: [CDC.gov/niosh/](https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/)
- Total Worker Health webinar series and resources: [CDC.gov/niosh/twh/default.html](https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/twh/default.html)
- Vermont Safety and Health Council: [VSHC.net](https://www.vshc.net)
- OSHA Training Institute New England safety and health training and education [OSHAEdNE.com](https://www.oshaedne.com)
- Prevent Falls: [HealthVermont.gov/emergency/injury-prevention/prevent-falls](https://healthvermont.gov/emergency/injury-prevention/prevent-falls)

For more info: The Vermont Department of Health is here to help. Contact the district office near you: [HealthVermont.gov/local](https://healthvermont.gov/local)

Indoor Air Quality

Why This is Important

We spend about 90% of our time indoors, making it very important to ensure good indoor air quality (IAQ). Poor IAQ can lead to symptoms like headaches, fatigue, dizziness, nausea, trouble concentrating, and irritation of the eyes, nose, throat and lungs. Some exposures, e.g., to asbestos and radon, can even lead to cancer, and other serious health conditions, after many years.

Poor IAQ can cause and trigger asthma. In Vermont, of the more than 61,500 adults who have asthma, an estimated 34,900 are employed for wages or are self-employed, in addition to about 820 youths of working ages 16 and 17 (BRFSS 2021). Of these working Vermonters with asthma, about 53% (or 32,500) report that their current or former work caused or exacerbated their asthma. On average, adults with work-related asthma miss more than 10 days of work per year due to their asthma (ACBS 2021).

There are many easy, low-cost things employers can do to improve the indoor air quality in their worksites.

How to Support This Outcome

Education and Awareness:

- Use educational flyers, emails or other channels to share about the importance of preventive care and screening for chronic or preventable health conditions.
- Provide tobacco, vaping, and marijuana cessation educational flyers, including 802Quits.
- Educate employees on safer cleaning products and how to use them safely.
- Establish an environment where asthma control practices and programs are supported and valued.

Behavior Change:

- Encourage all employees to visit their primary care provider for annual well care visits.
- Train employees on asthma triggers and the impacts of individual behaviors (e.g., wearing scented products; using tobacco/vaping products on worksite grounds) can have on indoor air quality and health within the worksite.

Policy and Environmental Change:

- Prohibit tobacco, e-cigarettes, and marijuana use on all company property at all times (including all buildings, facilities and grounds).
- Establish and enforce a no-idling policy on company grounds.
- Establish and enforce a policy for a fragrance-free worksite.
- Establish and enforce a policy for using cleaning products that are safer for health and the environment. Purchase cleaning products that are third-party certified through EPA's Safer Choice, ECOLOGO or Green Seal.
- Use safer disinfectants like those certified by EPA's Design for the Environment or those that contain safer active ingredients like hydrogen peroxide, citric acid, ethanol, lactic acid or isopropanol. Avoid bleach and quaternary ammonium compounds.
- Establish a policy and train employees on proper procedures for reporting and responding to exposures, injuries or illnesses in the worksite.
- Establish policies and procedures for working safely during extreme weather events that may impact air quality, including wildfires, flooding, and extreme heat or cold.
- Establish and use integrated pest management (IPM) techniques to control pests.

Supporting Remote and Hybrid Employees:

- Provide a virtual option for educational opportunities and workshops.
- Distribute written information in a digital format to include those who work offsite.

Considerations for Employers of All Sizes

Whether an organization is small or large, taking simple actions can benefit the health of all workers and reduce asthma-related adverse impacts, including missed workdays. Here are two key actions employers can take:

- Have your heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system inspected and maintained annually or according to manufacturer recommendations.
- Request a free, no penalty consultation from Project WorkSAFE.

Where to Go for Resources

- Vermont Department of Health's Asthma Program: [HealthVermont.gov/wellness/asthma/asthma-triggers-secondhand-smoke](https://healthvermont.gov/wellness/asthma/asthma-triggers-secondhand-smoke)
- 802Quits: [HealthVermont.gov/wellness/tobacco/quit-tobacco-nicotine](https://healthvermont.gov/wellness/tobacco/quit-tobacco-nicotine)
- Radon: [HealthVermont.gov/radon](https://healthvermont.gov/radon)
- Mold: [HealthVermont.gov/mold](https://healthvermont.gov/mold)
- Vermont Department of Health's Envision Program: [HealthVermont.gov/envision](https://healthvermont.gov/envision)
- Informed Green Solutions (IGS): [InformedGreenSolutions.org/toolkit](https://informedgreensolutions.org/toolkit)
- EPA Indoor Air Quality: [EPA.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq](https://epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq)

- EPA's Safer Choice: [EPA.gov/SaferChoice](https://www.epa.gov/saferchoice)
- ECOLOGO: [UL.com/resources/ecologo-certification-program](https://www.ul.com/resources/ecologo-certification-program)
- Green Seal: [GreenSeal.org/splash/](https://www.greenseal.org/splash/)
- Quaternary Ammonium Compounds Factsheet:
[TURI.org/TURI_Publications/TURI_Chemical_Fact_Sheets/Quaternary_Ammonium_Compounds_Fact_Sheet](https://www.turi.org/TURI_Publications/TURI_Chemical_Fact_Sheets/Quaternary_Ammonium_Compounds_Fact_Sheet)
- Vermont Department of Health's Division of Environmental Health:
AHS.VDHEnvHealth@vermont.gov
- Vermont Department of Labor's Project WorkSAFE:
[Labor.vermont.gov/workplace-safety/project-worksafe](https://labor.vermont.gov/workplace-safety/project-worksafe)
- Vermont's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (VOSHA):
[Labor.vermont.gov/vermont-occupational-safety-and-health-administration-vosha](https://labor.vermont.gov/vermont-occupational-safety-and-health-administration-vosha)

For more info: The Vermont Department of Health is here to help. Contact the district office near you:
[HealthVermont.gov/local](https://www.healthvermont.gov/local)



Mental Health-Friendly

Why This is Important

Many employed adults are affected by mental health conditions that interfere with their personal and professional success and wellbeing. Depression, anxiety disorders, social isolation, attention problems, and alcohol and substance misuse are among some of the mental health conditions that affect an employee's ability to succeed and have negative impacts on their physical health. Work-related stress is also a major issue for many employed adults, contributing to poor physical and emotional outcomes, as well as decreased productivity and job satisfaction.

Creating a worksite culture and environment that supports the emotional wellbeing of all employees benefits employers as well. Psychologically healthy and safe worksites that support employee health can reduce turnover and absenteeism, lower health care costs, and increase productivity.

How to Support This Outcome

Education and Awareness:

- Share education on personal stress management.
- Promote an Employee Assistance Program or local mental health resources.
- Provide education on mental health and substance misuse.
- Provide employee orientation on worksite policies and support for mental health and substance misuse recovery.
- Provide employees with information on the mental health benefits offered through the organization's insurance.

Behavior Change:

- Offer workshops on emotional and mental health topics.
- Offer intergenerational social activities.
- Provide supervisory training on increasing support for employee wellbeing.
- Provide free or subsidized lifestyle coaching, counseling, or self-management programs.
- Provide Mental Health First Aid training to employees and supervisors.

Policy and Environmental Change:

- Have a policy that supports employees staying at home or returning to work after mental health related injury or illness.
- Allow employees to access support services during working hours.
- Ensure a safe environment for employees to share concerns about work-related stressors.
- Create and maintain a dedicated quiet space for relaxation.

Supporting Remote and Hybrid Employees:

- Provide supervisor training on managing remote or hybrid teams.
- Ensure education and awareness materials are accessible for remote employees.

Considerations for Employers of All Sizes

Employers of all sizes can create psychologically safe and healthy worksites through the strategies listed within this core outcome.

Where to Go for Resources

- Vermont Department of Health's Alcohol and Drugs Program: HealthVermont.gov/alcohol-drugs
- Recovery Vermont: RecoveryVermont.org/
- Invest EAP: InvestEAP.org
- Mental Health First Aid at Work: MentalHealthFirstAid.org/population-focused-modules/workplace/
- United Way of Northwest Vermont Mental Health Toolkit for Employers: UnitedWayNWVT.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Mental-Health-Toolkit-Updated.pdf?utm_campaign=mental-health-toolkit
- US Surgeon General's Framework for Workplace Mental Health and Wellbeing: HHS.gov/SurgeonGeneral/priorities/workplace-well-being/index.html
- Vermont **2-1-1** (dial 2-1-1)

For more info: The Vermont Department of Health is here to help. Contact the district office near you: HealthVermont.gov/local



Age-Friendly

Why This is Important

One in four Vermonters are 60 years or older (approximately 183,000 adults) and by 2030, that ratio is expected to increase to 1 in 3. In a 2022 survey of older Vermont adults, 70% of adults 65 years and older who are currently working said they would like to continue working for as long as possible. Over a quarter (27%) of adults 60 years and older who are employed also provide regular care for a friend or family member with a health condition or disability or for a child under 18 years of age. Vermont's changing demographics present our state with an opportunity to capitalize on the diverse knowledge, experience and skills of older adults and ensure that every older Vermonter may engage in their community and contribute to its vibrancy. Yet, national data on workers 50 years and older shows that nearly all believe older adult discrimination is common in the workplace and one-third report hearing a negative comment in the workplace about older age.

How to Support This Outcome

Education and Awareness:

- Curate and promote trainings to reframe aging and make the business case for age diversity.
- Provide opportunities for intergenerational social engagement.
- Include employees' family members in campaigns that promote health and wellbeing.
- Promote available respite options for family care partners.

Behavior Change:

- Provide training for managers that addresses age discrimination (refers to the unfair treatment of employees or job applicants based on their age, whether they are considered too young or too old. This type of discrimination can occur at any stage and aspect of employment, including recruitment, hiring, promotions, training, compensation, and termination.)
- Create a culture of inclusivity with employee “-isms” trainings.

Policy and Environmental Change:

- Revise hiring practices to ensure qualified candidates of any age are considered for employment without bias.
- Allow flextime for caregiving needs.
 - Ensure leave policies support the caregiving needs of employees.
 - Offer family medical leave to care for family members.

- Offer a set number of days for emergency leave for medical or other emergencies.
- Allow the use of paid sick leave for family care.
- Be sure new employee orientation reviews, leave policy, opportunities for self-care, and medical benefits.
- Share resources for medical decision making and advance care planning.
- Expand recruitment criteria to attract older workers.

Supporting Remote and Hybrid Employees:

- Use multiple channels—such as e-mail, webinars, training videos, and phone conferences—to communicate about the job, the organization, the wellness program, and other benefits.
- Create a challenge so remote employees can participate on a team and monitor physical activity through an online tracking system.
- Use blogs and other social media to share examples of healthy living stories of remote employees and provide inspiration.

Considerations for Employers of All Sizes

There is evidence that mixed age teams in the workplace are more productive than teams of workers of the same age. Customers appreciate seeing long-time workers and feel that their presence sends the message that the business values its workers, its customers, and its community. Older workers bring a lot to the table: experience, know-how, reliability, work ethic, professionalism, and loyalty, among other valuable qualities.

Where to Go for Resources

- Vermont Department of Health’s Age Strong Vermont:
HealthVermont.gov/wellness/brain-health-dementia/age-strong-vermont-our-roadmap-age-friendly-state
- AARP Age-Friendly Network:
Aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2014/an-introduction.html
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Clearing Up Myths About Older Workers While Understanding and Supporting an Aging Workforce:
blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2023/09/25/older-workers/
- National Center to Reframe Aging’s Changing the Conversation Toolkit:
Learning.ReframingAging.org/
- Vermont Ethics Network: VTEthicsNetwork.org/
- United States Department of Labor’s National Employ Older Workers Week:
DOL.gov/agencies/eta/seniors/national-employ-older-workers-week

For more info: The Vermont Department of Health is here to help. Contact the district office near you:
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Inclusive and Accessible



Why This is Important

When an employer or organization is intentional about creating accessible and inclusive work environments, it initiates a sense of belonging among their employees. This contributes to a positive increase in employee engagement, morale, and retention. Staff feel like their lived experiences and values are respected and appreciated. Accessible and inclusive worksites also provide an opportunity to reduce implicit biases and assumptions that could negatively impact employees and eventually, the company's work and progress.

How to Support This Outcome

Education and Awareness:

- Be intentional about the use of inclusive language in the workplace.
- Explore glossaries with inclusive language guidelines and adaptable tools for reducing bias in the workplace such as the purple flag (see suggested TED Talk resource for more information).
- Participate in continuous culturally responsive and trauma responsive trainings.
 - Learn more about the diverse identities of your employees, customers, students, patients and the communities you serve.
 - Take the Harvard Implicit Bias Test.
 - Collaborate with a community partner or organization providing the training you are interested in.
- Learn about weight inclusive practices and approaches to wellness.
- Consult with experts such as disability advocates, architects and engineers to help design accessible spaces.

Behavior Change:

- Normalize asking employees about their accessibility needs and be prepared to meet them.
- Become a sponsor or mentor for new employees who are from communities that have been marginalized.
- Listen to the concerns mentioned by employees with lived experiences and address them in a way that is culturally responsive.

Policy and Environmental Change:

- Develop better policies to implement the Equal Opportunity Employer declaration.
 - Update policies on addressing discrimination in the workplace with input from employees with lived experience.
 - Prioritize language access by translating policies and training materials for multilingual staff and offer professional interpretation services during meetings, performance reviews, etc.
 - Incorporate bias-free hiring practices during recruitment and interviewing processes.
 - Create an Employee Transition Policy for employees who undergo gender transition during employment.
 - Provide gender neutral restrooms.
 - Honor religious practices by providing a private room for prayer and flexibility to step away to pray.
 - Offer food options without pork during office potlucks.
 - Avoid having potlucks during religious times of fasting such as Ramadan.

Supporting Remote and Hybrid Employees:

- Ensure all training courses and materials are available virtually.
- Develop an online webpage or shared folder to store training materials.
- Assign an online moderator during hybrid meetings.
 - This helps balance both in-person and virtual participants.
 - It is easier to keep track of the meeting chat and incorporate ideas from online participants.
- Confirm your meeting platform allows participants to turn on closed captioning.

Considerations for Employers of All Sizes

In order to create an accessible and inclusive work environment, employers have to be willing to undergo a culture shift. This is something that takes time and requires persistence, dedication, and continuous learning. Be prepared and willing to meet staff and people served where they are and accommodate the needs they have expressed. Do not be afraid to ask for help when unsure. There are many resources available to support employers and their organizations.

Where to Go for Resources

- American Psychological Association's Inclusive Language Guide:
[APA.org/about/apa/equity-diversity-inclusion/language-guidelines](https://www.apa.org/about/apa/equity-diversity-inclusion/language-guidelines)
- Harvard Implicit Bias Test: [Implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/TakeATest.html](https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/TakeATest.html)
- TED Talk – How to Reduce Bias in Your Workplace: [YouTube.com/watch?v=VEP7_BeXH64](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VEP7_BeXH64)
- The WELCOA Institute's Training – Developing a Weight-Inclusive Wellness Approach:
Institute.WELCOA.org/courses/weight-inclusive-wellness-approach/

- Arizona Health Zone’s The Language of Health:
AZHealthZone.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/style-guide-language-of-health.pdf
- Human Rights Campaign Foundation – Workplace Gender Transition Guidelines:
TheHRCFoundation.org/professional-resources/workplace-gender-transition-guidelines
- Green Mountain Self-Advocates – Resource Library: GmsaVT.org/resource-library
- Pride Center of Vermont – Education: PrideCenterVT.org/education
- Vermont Professionals of Color Network – Jobs Board: VTpoc.net/jobs-board/
- Turner Consulting Group – Bias-free Hiring Quick Reference Guide:
Wmich.edu/sites/default/files/other/u102/2018/Bias%20Free%20Hiring%20-%20Quick%20Ref%20Guide.pdf
- State of Vermont Office of Racial Equity – 2023 Language Access Report:
RacialEquity.vermont.gov/language-access
- State of Vermont Office of Racial Equity – Equity Toolkit:
RacialEquity.vermont.gov/equity-toolkit
- Vermont Language Justice Project - VTLanguagejustice.org
- Vermont Center for Independent Living: VCIL.org
- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics – Religion member interest group:
Rmig.EatRightPro.org/home
- Recruitee – 9 Steps to Create an Inclusive Workplace Culture:
Recruitee.com/articles/inclusive-workplace-culture
- Harvard Business Review – 5 Strategies for Creating an Inclusive Workplace:
Hbr.org/2020/01/5-strategies-for-creating-an-inclusive-workplace
- U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission – Language Access Plan:
Eeoc.gov/equal-employment-opportunity-commission-language-access-plan-accordance-executive-order-13166
- University of Connecticut – Rudd Center for Food Policy and Health:
UConnRuddCenter.org/research/weight-bias-stigma/

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See the weight inclusive considerations in appendix

Other Topics of Interest

Although not encompassed within the Core Outcomes above, below are potential other topics of interest. Employers are encouraged to think creatively and holistically about employee wellness based on employees' feedback and unique interests.

Climate-Friendly Worksites

An increasingly common topic of discussion is how employers can do their part to conserve our environment.

- Install sensor lights.
- Encourage employees to carpool.
- Provide employees with information related to public transportation options in the surrounding area.
- Go! Vermont resources: [ConnectingCommuters.org/](https://www.connectingcommuters.org/)

Volunteerism

Encouraging employees to serve their community not only reflects well on the employer, but also elevates employees' sense of belonging and overall wellbeing.

- Meals on Wheels: [AgeWellVT.org/giving-back/volunteer/](https://www.agewellvt.org/giving-back/volunteer/)
- State of Vermont Volunteer: [Vermont.gov/volunteer#gsc.tab=0](https://www.vermont.gov/volunteer#gsc.tab=0)
- Local food shelf
- Vermont Foodbank: [VTFoodbank.org/give-time/volunteer](https://www.vtfoodbank.org/give-time/volunteer)
- Vermont State Parks: [VTStateParks.com/volunteering.html](https://www.vtstateparks.com/volunteering.html)
- NOFA-VT: [NOFAVT.org/volunteering-nofa-vt](https://www.nofavt.org/volunteering-nofa-vt)
- Outright Vermont: [OutrightVT.org/volunteer](https://www.outrightvt.org/volunteer)
- United Way Volunteer Connection: [UnitedWay.org/get-involved/volunteer](https://www.unitedway.org/get-involved/volunteer)