



Vermont Worksite Wellness Resource

CREATING A HEALTHIER WORKSITE

Vermont Worksite Wellness Resource



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The Vermont Department of Health can help.

We're here to assist you as you get started with creating or expanding your worksite wellness program. For additional information, contact your local Health Department office.

Call us toll-free or fill out our online contact form: HealthVermont.gov/about/contact

This guide can also be found online at the Vermont Department of Health website:

HealthVermont.gov/wellness/worksite-wellness

About This Guide

The purpose of the *Vermont Worksite Wellness Resource: Creating a Healthier Worksite* is to guide you through steps to design and sustain a wellness program that fits the scale and culture of your organization. Our focus is on promoting physical and mental health, reducing risk factors associated with chronic conditions and supporting preventive care and lactation.

Contact Information for Local Offices of Health

Barre District Office

5 Perry Street, Suite 250
Barre, VT 05641
888-253-8786 or 802-479-4200

Middlebury District Office

156 South Village Green, Suite 102
Middlebury, VT 05753
888-253-8804 or 802-388-4644

Springfield District Office

100 Mineral Street, Suite 104
Springfield, VT 05156
802-289-0592 or 802-289-0600

Bennington District Office

324 Main Street, Suite 2
Bennington, VT 05201
802-447-3531

Morrisville District Office

63 Professional Drive, Suite 1
Morrisville, VT 05661
802-888-2587

St. Albans District Office

27 Federal Street, Suite 201
St. Albans, VT 05478
888-253-8801 or 802-524-7970

Brattleboro District Office

232 Main Street, Suite 3
Brattleboro, VT 05301
802-809-1078

Newport District Office

100 Main Street, Suite 220
Newport, VT 05855
800-952-2945 or 802-334-6707

St. Johnsbury District Office

107 Eastern Avenue, Suite 9
St. Johnsbury, VT 05819
800-952-2936 or 802-748-5151

Burlington District Office

128 Lakeside Avenue
Burlington, VT 05401
888-253-8803 or 802-863-7323

Rutland District Office

300 Asa Bloomer State Office Building
88 Merchants Row
Rutland, VT 05701
888-253-8802 or 802-786-5811

White River Junction District Office

118 Prospect Street, Suite 300
White River Junction, VT 05001
888-253-8799 or 802-295-8820



Section 1: getting started

Why Worksite Wellness?

For much of the week, most Vermonters spend more than one third of their day working. The programs, policies and environments at worksites significantly influence the overall health of employees and their families throughout the life course. Worksites can also have a positive impact on the health of the communities in which they are located.

Worksite wellness strategies cover a wide range of topics, from reducing injury at work to supporting mental health. Worksites can also play an important role in helping to reduce risk factors associated with chronic conditions.

It is crucial to recognize that health is highly complex and unique to the individual. Health is, oftentimes, dependent upon factors such as one's access to nourishing food and safe spaces for movement. These are referred to as social determinants of health. Additionally, worksite wellness strategies should strive to reflect employees' cultural needs.

Worksite Wellness and the Bottom Line

Employers also benefit financially from prioritizing worksite wellness and honoring employees' health. Lost productivity, presenteeism, absenteeism and direct medical expenses are costly for employers.

- Lost productivity due to absenteeism costs employers an estimated \$1,685 per employee (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)).
- Lost productivity costs due to poor presenteeism (where employees are at work but not able to perform fully because of sickness or stress) is estimated to cost more than \$150 billion per year (Harvard Business Review).
- Employed adults miss more than 164 million hours a year due to dental issues (Surgeon General).

Worksite Wellness to Reduce Chronic Conditions

It is easier for employees to meet their personal health goals when they have a supportive work environment. However, competing priorities and limited resources can make it difficult for employers to know where to begin and how to make an impact. Focusing on improving just three risk factors can reduce the prevalence of chronic conditions and improve quality of life.

3-4-50 signifies 3 risk factors – lack of physical activity, poor diet, and tobacco use – that are associated with the development of 4 chronic conditions – cancer, heart disease and stroke, type 2 diabetes, and lung disease – that contribute to more than 50 percent of deaths in Vermont.

Together, businesses, schools, cities and towns, and health care providers can create and shape an environment that supports healthy options and makes them more accessible where Vermonters live, work, learn and play.

Worksites can take simple steps to support employee health and wellbeing. We invite you to become a 3-4-50 partner by implementing worksite wellness strategies that address chronic conditions. Visit HealthVermont.gov/3-4-50/businesses to learn more and sign-on!





5 steps to worksite wellness

If you are just starting to implement worksite wellness strategies, you can follow these five steps to establish a strong foundation for your worksite.

This resource will discuss each of these steps in more detail, provide tips on engaging and motivating employees, and provide the components of comprehensive worksite wellness.

Step 1: Form a Wellness Team

- Identify the individuals, or individual based on your worksite's capacity, that will lead wellness programs and gain leadership support.
- Develop a comprehensive vision and mission that will guide wellness programs suitable and accessible for all employees.

Step 2: Assess Your Worksite

- Assess your worksite to identify any gaps in existing policies and programs.
- Assess the needs and interests of your employees.

Step 3: Identify Strategies

- Identify strategies from the Vermont Department of Health's Core Outcomes for Healthy Worksites to implement over the next 6–12 months (see Section 2).
- Develop an implementation plan that includes:
 - A timeline
 - Specific goals and objectives
 - Methods of communicating the strategies to your employees

Step 4: Implement

- Implement your selected strategy or strategies, while remembering that even small steps are valuable.

Step 5: Evaluate

- Evaluate your program by assessing employee participation and satisfaction.

Step 1: Form a Wellness Team

Leadership support is the backbone of successful employee wellness strategies. Organizational leadership is crucial for obtaining financial resources, linking your wellness goals to business outcomes, and implementing policy and environmental changes.

If you haven't already gained leadership support, this is the first task. It is important to inform and engage leadership about your worksite wellness vision. Making your case can involve communicating the benefits of employee wellness promotion—including the vision, outcomes, and assessment or employee feedback.

Form a wellness team to ensure representation and input from all areas of the organization, as feasible, and to share the work. Recruit wellness team members who represent diversity in age, culture, gender expression, sexual orientation, and disability status, as well as from all areas of the organization, such as:

- Leadership
- Organizational and development
- Employee Assistance Program providers
- Food service
- Maintenance
- Finance
- Human resources
- Individual departments
- Marketing and public relations
- Sales
- Board members
- Safety
- Insurance providers
- Occupational health

A wellness team can:

- Assess the health risks and current lifestyle behaviors of employees through health interest or needs surveys.
- Assess current policies and environmental factors that may affect employee wellness.
- Evaluate existing resources and gaps in services.
- Plan and implement the wellness program.
- Conduct financial planning for implementation of the wellness program.
- Establish and enhance relationships with other community organizations and government agencies to partner on shared goals—for example, encouraging active transportation in partnership with an environmental group to promote physical activity and decrease pollution.

What is the vision and mission of your company's wellness initiative?

As you begin the steps to identify wellness strategies, it is important to have a broader vision and mission for your wellness initiative to help guide your strategies and accomplish a broader purpose. If your organization has an organizational mission statement, aligning the vision and mission of the wellness initiative can create a pathway for leadership and employees to understand and support the strategies you want to implement.

Step 2: Assess Your Worksite

Conduct an assessment of the organization and its employees before implementing strategies to ensure they meet their needs. This can include the physical and cultural environment, policies, health benefit design, and current health promoting policies and programs.

The organizational assessment:

- Determines your worksite's strengths.
- Considers employees throughout the life course.
- Draws attention to areas in need of improvement.
- Highlights opportunities to cultivate an increasingly supportive worksite.

Take an organizational assessment online, or download a PDF version, at HealthVermont.gov/wellness/worksite-wellness

The employee assessment includes items such as:

- Employee interests
- Employee needs
- Quality of work life

See the sample templates in section 3

Step 3: Identify Strategies

Once the assessments are complete, use the information gathered to identify one or more strategies to promote employee wellness. The next section of this resource provides examples of many core outcome strategies for healthy worksites.

After identifying strategies, develop an implementation plan that includes:

- A timeline.
- Specific goals and objectives.
- Methods of communicating the strategy to your employees.

Creating Goals and Objectives

Goals are broad statements that describe what is to be accomplished. Objectives state the expected amount of change in behavior, attitude, knowledge, or condition—to whom and by when. Objectives should:

- Have measurable language such as “increase” or “decrease.”
- Clearly identify the behavior, attitude, condition, or knowledge to be changed.
- Establish the timeframe within which an activity takes place.
- Determine the magnitude of the anticipated change as feasible.
- Determine how change will be measured.

Make your objectives SMARTIE: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time sensitive, Inclusive, Equitable

For example:

Goal 1: Our worksite will promote an active lifestyle.

Objective 1: By year 1, a policy will be in place allowing flextime for physical activity in a way that is accessible for all employees.

Objective 2: By year 2, maps of nearby recreation paths will be provided to all employees including options appropriate for all employees’ needs.

Step 4: Implement

Three key considerations in implementing your selected strategies are awareness, accessibility, and inclusion.

Awareness

Make sure that employees know about any changes or any new offerings available to them. See page 11 for more information on communicating with employees.

Accessibility

Ensure details about the selected strategies and any relevant resources are easily accessible for all employees. For example, if your strategy requires computer access (such as signing up for a wellness challenge or accessing a wellness portal), but some employees do not have computer access during the workday, create an alternative option. This could include signing up by calling a contact on the wellness team or ensuring a mobile phone option is available.

Inclusion

Ensure that opportunities to participate are available to all employees, regardless of age, cultural or religious practices, gender expression, sexual orientation, or disability status.

In certain cases, a selected strategy might focus on one part of the population more than another. For example, a breast cancer awareness campaign might target employees who need breast cancer screenings. Promote inclusivity to the greatest extent possible.

Some examples:

- Provide alternative options for employees to participate in physical activity challenges.
- Make sure selected activities are sensitive to diverse cultural and religious beliefs.
- Provide translated, large-print, or other adapted versions of written materials.
- Look for resources on creating accessible gardens when developing a plan for a worksite garden.
- Include the opportunity to verbally receive information about programs, policies, or awareness campaigns rather than relying on digital or written communication only.

Step 5: Evaluate

Worksites should plan to evaluate any implemented strategies. It is important to assess whether strategies are effective in accomplishing the established goals and objectives and whether they align with the broader vision and mission. It is also important to assess how employees and management experience new activities, policies, and programs. Assessing any return on investment is important to sustain management's commitment to supporting employee health and wellness.

Evaluation can help identify successes and areas for improvement, as well as advise next steps.

A few ways to evaluate wellness strategies are:

- Tracking participation rates in offered activities.
- Employee surveys to look at changes in behavior.
- Employee surveys to look at employee satisfaction.
- Medical claims analysis to look at changes in health outcomes.
- Productivity metrics, such as measuring absenteeism.

Engaging Your Employees

Communication

Employee engagement in your wellness activities may be one of the biggest obstacles you will face. A written communication plan can help you achieve many of your goals and objectives. If employees do not know what you are offering or how it can benefit them, they will not participate.

A communication plan can:

- Increase awareness
- Increase knowledge
- Reinforce attitudes
- Maintain interest
- Provide cues and motivation for action
- Demonstrate simple skills
- Build social norms

Communication channels can include:

- Media
- Newsletters
- Direct mailings
- Company website
- Social media
- Emails
- Text messages
- Podcasts
- Meetings

Also consider:

- **Status updates:** Provide regular status updates to employees.
- **Messaging:** Use culturally responsive communication, including messages that address the overall value and purpose of the wellness program to the organization and the employee.
- **Recruitment:** Include staff members with marketing and communication skills to be part of the wellness team.

Employee Readiness

Employees will likely be in varying states of behavior change when you begin to implement your wellness strategies. Some may already be practicing health-promoting behaviors, while others might not be thinking about making changes. Information from employee interest surveys can help determine employees' capacity to make changes, as well as what strategies will be most likely to be accepted.

Below are the five stages of the Stages of Change Model, also known as Transtheoretical Model. People may move from one stage to another in order, or they may move back and forth between stages until they sustainably adopt a behavior. Moving to an earlier stage is not a failure, but an important part of the behavior change process. The stages of change are:

Precontemplation: An individual is not thinking about changing their behavior in the near future.

Contemplation: An individual is beginning to think seriously about changing their behavior in the next six months.

Preparation: An individual tried to change a behavior at least once in the past year and is thinking about trying again within the next month.

Action: An individual is taking real steps to actively change their behavior. This is the stage where an individual is most likely to move back to an earlier stage.

Maintenance: An individual has changed their behavior for more than six months and is now maintaining the change.



Motivation

Some factors to help employees stay motivated include:

- **Time:** Try to integrate worksite wellness activities into employees' existing schedules (e.g., provide time off for accessing preventive care or health screenings).
- **Access:** Make sure activities are accessible (e.g., host them on-site or provide transportation).
- **Knowledge:** Provide information on the benefits of participating in an activity and additional related resources.
- **Cost:** Whenever possible, make sure activities are free.
- **Incentives:** If possible, provide incentives for participation, such as prizes.

State and federal laws may be applicable to the use of financial incentives tied to health status. Make sure to research and comply with any laws. Two specific laws to research before using financial incentives are the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Affordable Care Act (ACA). For more information, review resources provided by the Public Health Law Center (<https://www.PublicHealthLawCenter.org/>).



Types of Worksite Wellness Activities

A comprehensive worksite wellness initiative will include all the following components: Awareness, education, behavior change, and policy and environmental change. Depending on your worksite's needs, resources, and vision, you may choose to initially focus on one or two components and slowly work toward a comprehensive worksite wellness program over time.

Awareness

Awareness interventions bring health topics to light that employees may not have considered. They highlight key facts and health-promoting behaviors. Examples include:

- Activity, movement, or stretching challenges
- Preventive health screenings

Education

Education interventions are more formal than awareness programs and can include classes, presentations, or written materials. Education programs can get more in-depth on a particular topic and can provide skill-building activities. Examples include:

- On-site or virtual cooking classes
- Strength training guides

Behavior Change

Behavior change interventions include evidence-based programs, activities, and information designed to support employees in adopting behaviors that will lead to better health. These programs can take more time or resources but can be more effective than awareness or education interventions alone.

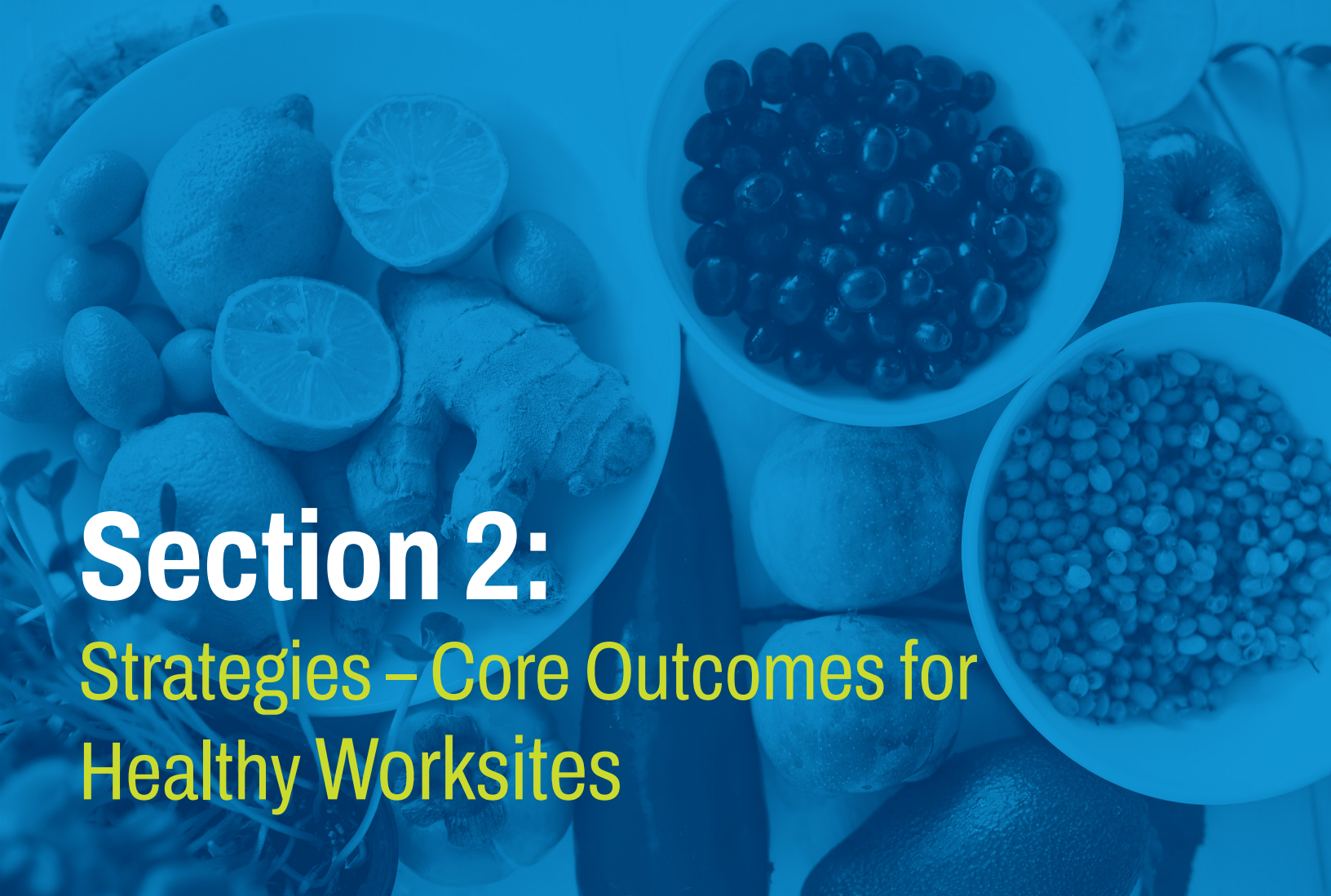
Examples include:

- Chronic condition self-management programs
- Tobacco cessation classes

Policy and Environmental

Policy and environmental interventions are often the most effective because they ultimately impact the highest percentage of employees, more than any other intervention alone. These changes take more time and planning, and they require a strong communication plan. Examples include:

- Tobacco- and vape-free campus policy
- On-site bike racks, showers, or exercise facilities
- On-site gardens or Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) deliveries
- Break areas with refrigerators and microwaves for employees to bring their own food



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://www.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://www.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://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:
HealthVermont.gov/local

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/

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

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)



Section 3:

Toolkit

Employee Interest Survey

Directions

1. Distribute the employee interest survey to all employees.
2. Designate a location and date for employees to return surveys anonymously.
3. Collect all completed surveys.
4. Tally the responses for each question on all surveys.
5. The response items with the most checkmarks will give you an indication of your employees' interests.
6. Share the results with employees so that they know their feedback was heard and taken seriously.

Employee Interest Survey

Survey

Thank you for completing this survey. Your responses will give us insight into the types of activities that interest you. Participation in this survey is voluntary, and you do not need to respond to any question(s) that you do not wish to answer.

The survey should take about five minutes to complete. We will use the information you provide to incorporate policies and environmental changes into our worksite to help support your individual health efforts.

1. Which of the following topics would be of interest to you, if offered at the worksite? (Check all that would be of interest.)

- Tobacco- and vape-free worksite
- Nutritious food and beverages at meetings
- Flexible work schedule for self-care
- Flexible dress code for physical activity
- Strategies for inclusion and accessibility
- Other: _____
- Not interested in any of the above

2. Which of the following supports would be of interest to you, if offered at the worksite? (Check all that would be of interest.)

- Company garden
- Discounted gym membership
- Tobacco cessation assistance
- Farmers market at work
- Walking paths around worksite
- Bicycle parking
- Affinity groups for employees
- Socialization opportunities
- Not interested in any of the above
- Other: _____

3. How would you prefer to receive information about employee health activities? Check one:

- Bulletin boards
- Email
- Text
- Memo
- Newsletter
- Other: _____
- Not interested in receiving information about health activities

4. Are you interested in participating in planning health programs and/or activities?

- Yes No

(Optional) If yes, please provide your name and phone number so that we may follow up:

Name

Phone

Activity Prioritization Tool

Instructions

Rate each of the recommendations identified in the Worksite Wellness Assessment on the following aspects: Importance, cost, time, commitment, and reach. Rate each on a scale of 1–5 using the chart below. Higher scores should indicate priority items to implement.

Importance: How important is the recommendation?

1 = Not at all important, 3 = Somewhat important, 5 = Very important

Cost: How expensive would it be to plan and implement the recommendation?

1 = Very expensive, 3 = Moderately expensive, 5 = Not expensive

Time: How much time and effort would be needed to implement the recommendation?

1 = Extensive time and effort, 3 = Moderate time and effort, 5 = Low time and effort

Commitment: How enthusiastic would employees be about implementing the recommendation?

1 = Not enthusiastic, 3 = Moderately enthusiastic, 5 = Very enthusiastic

Reach: How many employees will likely be affected by this recommendation?

1 = Very few employees, 3 = Some employees, 5 = Most or all employees

#	Recommendation	Importance	Cost	Time	Commitment	Reach	Points/Ranking	Comments

Action Plan Worksheet

Recommendations: Describe the strategies selected from the Activity Prioritizing Tool.

Activities: List the activities required to meet the recommendation.

Time: How much time and effort would be needed to implement the recommendation?

Materials, Resources, and Personnel: List the individuals who will do the work, as well as resources and tools to get the job done.

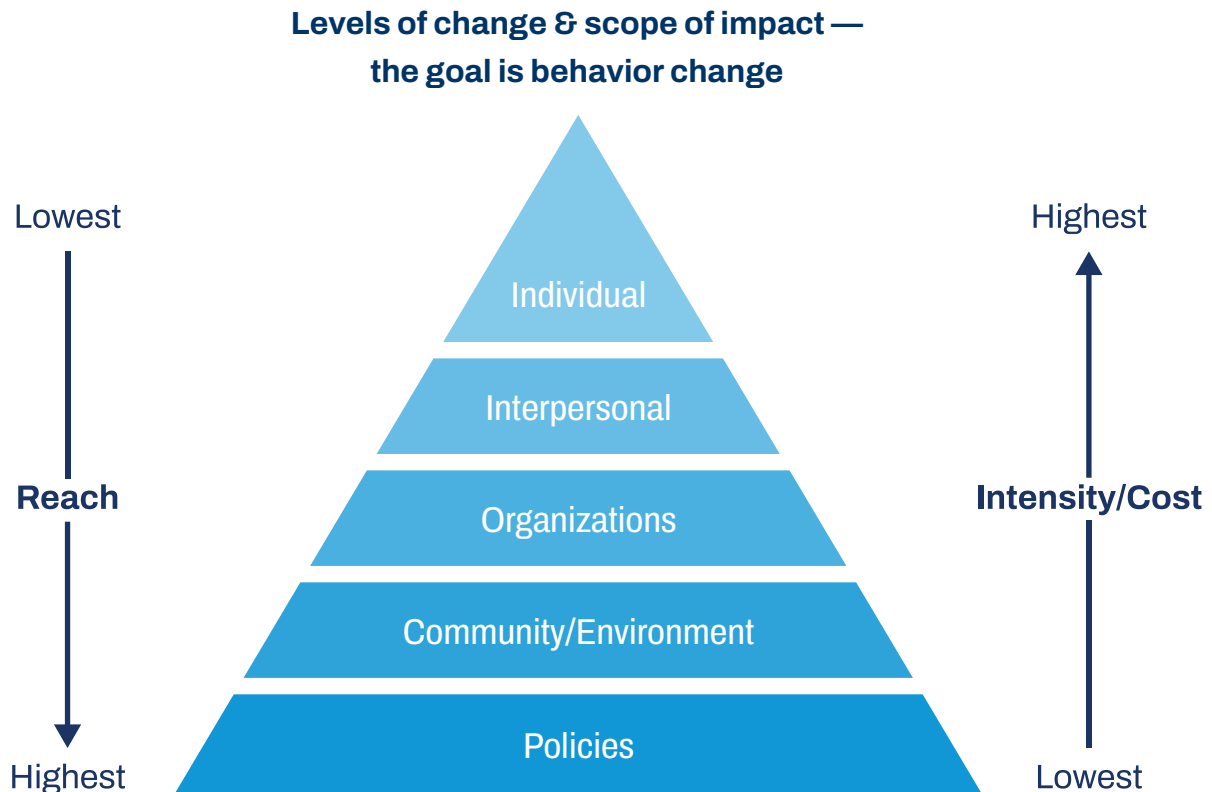
Time Frame: When will implementation begin? How long will it take to finish?

Evaluation: How will you measure your successes and/or obstacles?

Recommendation	Activities	Materials, Resources, and Personnel	Time Frame	Evaluation	Comments

Ways to Create a Supportive Environment

- Make health-promoting decisions the norm.
- Implement policies that encourage positive behavior change, e.g., a policy that provides breaks to lactating employees.
- Create policy and worksite environmental changes that require the least number of resources and reach the greatest number of people.



Cultural Support Components

The cultural support components of an employer-sponsored wellness program are:

Leadership

- Leadership endorses and supports the wellness program.
- Leadership is involved in employee communications, creating incentives and other aspects of the program, and creating a corporate vision/mission statement that acknowledges the value of a supportive, health-promoting worksite culture.

Champions

- A wellness committee, champion and/or ambassador approach is implemented to help design and advance the wellness program throughout the organization.
- An organized network of employees serving as wellness champions, a wellness committee with representatives from across the organization, and volunteers who support wellness events are identified.

Environment

- A work environment supports employee engagement in healthy lifestyle behaviors and supporting the whole person at work. Examples include providing nourishing food options, opportunities to socialize with colleagues, and lactation rooms.

Policies

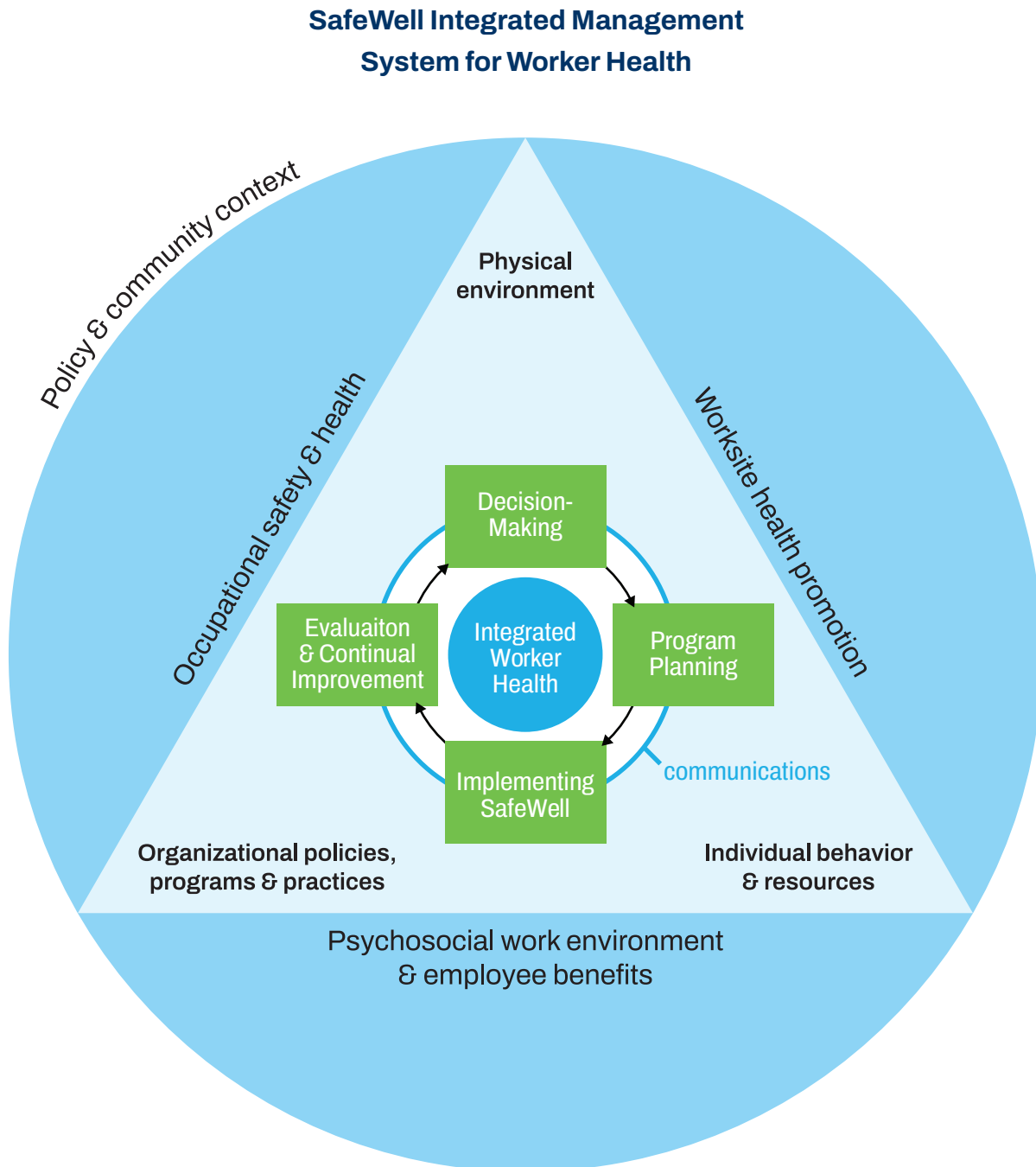
- Organizational policies support a healthy worksite. Examples include tobacco- and vape-free campus, flextime to participate in wellness programs or attend to caregiving responsibilities, evidence-based chronic condition prevention and self-management programs, and access to healthy food options.

Health benefits

- Coverage and access are offered or available for preventive services, and for acute and chronic healthcare services for all employees. Examples include 24/7 access to a nurse hotline, preventive healthcare coverage, and chronic condition self-management classes.

Safety and Employee Assistance Programs

Consider integrating safety and employee assistance programs into your wellness program. Below is an example of how worksite health promotion, occupational health and safety programs, and employee assistance programs can be integrated to maximize employee wellness.



Evaluation Tools and Measures

Sample Process Objectives	Year One	Year Two	Change
Number of staff enrolled and participating (participation rates)			
Observation or counts (e.g. track number taking a movement break at noon)			
Participant satisfaction (via survey, focus groups, interviews, etc.)			
Policy or environmental changes/tracking (use Worksite Wellness Assessment Checklist and compare list of policy or environmental changes from initial site assessment with later follow up at one year, two years, etc.)			

Sample Outcome Objectives	Year One	Year Two	Change
Pretest/posttest surveys can measure changes in attitude, knowledge, and current health-promoting behaviors from initial assessment to completion of a specified program or campaign			
Quizzes: test of knowledge on various topics			
Vending items being chosen (coordinate with vendor to track selections)			
Cafeteria menu options			
Health indicators/reduced risk factors. Complete a comparison of company aggregate screening measures such as blood pressure, cholesterol, etc. before and after a specified program or campaign			
Corporate costs and return on investment (the expense side, or what it costs to run your wellness program, can be fairly easy to quantify. However, computing savings from reduced healthcare claims, lost work days or absenteeism may be harder to calculate. Work with your human resources and benefits contracts to determine what can be measured and then set a baseline figure to compare against later)			

Sample Worksite Policy Template: Food Policy

PURPOSE: Worksites play an important role in the food environment. Worksites that promote a nutritious food environment contribute to honoring the health of employees, respond to increased consumer demand for nourishing food, and help strengthen local food systems.

[Company Name] is committed to providing a work environment that promotes nutritious eating and supports employees in making nutritious food choices in and outside of work.

POLICY STATEMENT: *[Company name]* will promote employee wellness and support nutritious food options. *[Company name]* will provide food and beverage options that meet the Vermont Department of Health's Nutrition Guidance for Worksites (see appendix) whenever food or beverages are served or sold on company grounds or at company events: *[Select one or more options]*

- Food and Beverage Standards will be adhered to at meetings and company sponsored events in accordance with Vermont Department of Health's Vermont Food Standards:
[HealthVermont.gov/wellness/physical-activity-nutrition](https://healthvermont.gov/wellness/physical-activity-nutrition)
- Food and Beverages Standards will be adhered to in vending machines in accordance with Vermont Department of Health's Vermont Food Standards.
- Food and Beverages Standards will be adhered to in cafes or cafeterias in accordance with Vermont Department of Health's Vermont Food Standards.

SCOPE: This policy applies to all employees, interns, and volunteers of *[Company Name]*. *[Company name]* will ensure that wellness opportunities are provided for all employees, regardless of age, cultural or religious practices, gender expression, sexual orientation, or disability status.

SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES: The following activities will be provided to employees to further support nutritious food choices: *[Select one or more activities]*

- Refrigerators, microwaves, and break areas will be accessible for employee use.
- Access to free, safe water will be available throughout the day.
- Vending machines and staff cafeteria(s) will:
 - Use competitive pricing to make nutritious options more affordable.
 - Use signs or symbols to make nutritious options stand out and have nutrition information available for foods and beverages.
- Local food initiatives will be supported:
 - Employees will have access to, an ideally discounted, on-site Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program.
 - Whenever possible, local food will be offered in cafeteria(s) and at catered meetings and events.

Signature:

Date:

Developed by the Vermont Department of Health

Sample Worksite Policy Template: Physical Activity Policy

PURPOSE: Regular physical activity can help reduce the risk of chronic conditions and improve mental wellbeing, as well as productivity at work. The National Physical Activity Guidelines encourage adults to engage in a minimum of 2.5 hours of moderate physical activity per week.

[Company Name] is committed to providing a work environment that promotes equitable, accessible physical activity and supports employees in meeting Physical Activity Guidelines.

POLICY STATEMENT: *[Company name]* will support employee wellness and provide opportunities for employees to be physically activity while at work, specifically:

- Managers and supervisors will encourage employees to use breaks and lunch periods for physical activity, if desired and feasible for the employee's position.
- Employees may request a flexible schedule to engage in physical activity, including an alternate start or end time to the workday to accommodate physical activity before, during, or after work.
- Employees will be encouraged to engage in active meetings, including taking walking or rolling meetings, providing activity breaks during meetings, and allowing for standing, moving, or stretching during meetings.

SCOPE: This policy applies to all employees, interns, and volunteers of *[Company Name]*. *[Company name]* will ensure that wellness opportunities are provided for all employees, regardless of age, cultural or religious practices, gender expression, sexual orientation, or disability status.

SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES: The following activities will be provided to employees to support the implementation of this policy: *[Select one or more activities]*

- Bike racks will be provided on-site, and employees are encouraged to get to work through active or sustainable means of transportation.
- Functional on-site fitness equipment will be accessible for employees at no cost.
- Ergonomic assessments will be offered to employees at no charge.
- Active workstations, such as standing desks or treadmill desks, will be offered to employees at no charge.
- *[Company Name]* will subsidize membership to *[fitness center's name]* for employees, their domestic partners, and dependent children.

Signature:

Date:

Developed by the Vermont Department of Health



(This policy is part of the [QUIT@WORK](#) toolkit.)

Sample Worksite Policy Template: Tobacco- and Vape-Free Policy

It is the policy of *[insert company name]* to provide a tobacco- and vape-free environment for all employees and visitors. This policy covers the smoking of any nicotine or tobacco products, including vaping, and the use of smokeless or “spit” tobacco, and applies to both employees and non-employee visitors.

Definition

Vermont law requires that there will be no smoking of tobacco products within the facilities at any time. If smoking occurs outside the building, it must be at least *[insert distance]* feet from the main entrance to ensure that the smoke does not enter the building. All materials used for smoking, including cigarette butts and matches, must be extinguished and disposed of in appropriate containers.

(For a tobacco- and vape-free building and grounds) There will be no smoking of nicotine or tobacco products, including vaping, within the facilities or on the grounds at any time.

There will be no smoking in any *[insert company name]* vehicles at any time.

There will also be no nicotine or tobacco use in personal vehicles when transporting persons on *[insert company name]*- authorized business, or if the vehicle is parked on company premises.

Procedure

1. Visitors will be informed of this policy with signs and it will be explained by their host.
2. *[Insert company name]* will help employees who wish to quit smoking by providing information about Vermont’s quit smoking services.
3. Any violations of this policy will be handled through the standard disciplinary procedure.
4. For questions about Vermont’s Smoking in the Workplace law, or to file a complaint with the Department of Health, call (toll-free) 1-866-331-5622.



Sample Worksite Policy Template: Lactation Policy

Employer Name:

Date:

It is our policy to encourage all of our pregnant and postpartum employees to consider breastfeeding or chestfeeding their infants and children as a means of promoting the health of both child and parent. We encourage and support employees in their efforts to combine working and lactation.

1. This worksite lactation support policy recognizes that breastfeeding/chestfeeding is the most healthful, natural and economic method of infant nutrition. It is our policy to support the needs of lactating parents when they return to work.
2. Parental leave planning will address the transition from full-time parental leave to full-time work and the impact that this may have on lactation.
 - Parental leave is sufficient to establish lactation, generally 6-8 weeks.
 - Options include: a combination of full-time and part-time parental leave, a flexible work schedule to accommodate lactation needs, break times to use a pump at work.
3. Lactating employees are allowed a flexible schedule for nursing or pumping. The time allowed will not exceed the normal time allowed for lunch and breaks. For time above and beyond normal lunch and breaks, sick/annual leave must be used or the employee can come in earlier, leave later or take a shorter lunch.
4. An appropriate room will be provided where lactating employees can:
 - a. Nurse an infant brought in during lunch or breaks.
 - b. Express milk to be stored for later use.
 - The room will be a private area for feeding an infant or pumping milk located in an area where a crying infant will not be disruptive to other employees.
 - The room will have accessible electrical outlets for electric pump use and a sink close by with a clean, safe water source for hand washing and rinsing out pump equipment.
 - The room will contain a comfortable chair with arms for nursing, a nursing stool could be optional, a table or desk and a chair for pumping.
5. If needed, a signup sheet will be posted to ensure that all those needing the room will have the opportunity to use it.
6. A small refrigerator will be available for safe storage of human milk. Lactating employees will provide their own containers and milk stored in the refrigerator will be clearly labeled with name and date. Those who use the refrigerator shall be responsible for keeping it clean.

A sample detailed lactation policy can be found here:

[HealthVermont.gov/sites/default/files/document/hdpd-sample-lactation-support-policy-detailed.pdf](https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/document/hdpd-sample-lactation-support-policy-detailed.pdf)



Appendix:

Nutrition Guidance for Worksites

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Healthy Eating Guidelines for Worksites

Why offer nutritious foods at meetings, conferences, and seminars?

The physical and social environment of the worksite influences health-related behaviors. Work is where many people spend most of their time; therefore, food available at work frequently determines what they eat throughout the day. Worksite gatherings can promote nourishing food choices by following the recommendations put forth by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans by offering more fruit and vegetables, non- or low-fat milk products, whole grains, and foods lower in saturated fat and sodium.

General Guidelines:

- Emphasize fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy and lean protein sources.
- Include a vegetarian option with meals and snacks.
- Offer seasonal and local foods when possible.
- Serve low-fat or skim milk with coffee and tea.
- Offer water with meals and snacks.
- If registration forms are used, provide space to indicate food allergies, cultural accommodations, or other dietary requests.

Whole Grains Tip:

When buying whole-grain products, the first or second ingredient must list “whole” before the grain (e.g. whole wheat, whole oats, whole corn meal, whole rye). Wheat, rye, pumpernickel, 12-grain and multi-grain breads are not necessarily whole grains.



Sample Food and Beverage Standards for Meetings and Events

Food Requirements

All meetings and events are required to implement the following criteria:

- All foods offered should be low in sodium:
 - Side dishes should have no more than 200 mg of sodium,
 - Soups should have no more than 480 mg of sodium, and
 - Entrees should have no more than 600 mg of sodium per serving.
- All meal items are free of artificial trans-fat or partially hydrogenated oils and low in saturated fats (less than 10% per serving),
- When using oils, use varieties high in unsaturated fats, such as olive, canola, corn or other fats that are liquid at room temperature,
- Meals should have enough non-starchy vegetables to cover at least half of the plate (examples of starchy vegetables include, but are not limited to, potatoes, corn, peas, and winter squash),
- Preference should be given to seasonal and locally grown or produced foods, which many organizations define as within 250 miles of the purchaser,
- Include options, and label them, that provide an alternative for those with religious needs (kosher or halal, for example) or food allergies which may include milk, eggs, fish, shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, soybeans, and sesame,
- Offer a variety of non-fried protein foods such as fish, seafood, lean meats and poultry, eggs, legumes (beans and peas), nuts, seeds, and soy products,
- Include a fruit option, without added sugar, which can be served raw, canned, frozen, or dried,
- Include whole grains whenever grains are served,
- Make half or reduced size portions of sandwiches or entrees available,
- If snacks are provided, choose baked, low-fat or low sodium (less than 200 mg sodium per serving) items, and
- If dessert is desired, provide a choice of whole fruit, fruit salad or applesauce with no added sugar or low-fat or fat-free, low-sugar yogurt.

Beverage Requirements:

- Have free water that is safe to drink available and promote its availability, and
- Offer 100% juice, 1% or fat-free milk and milk alternate that are unflavored and calcium fortified, or beverages with <40 calories per serving.

Menu Ideas for Meetings and Events:

- Fruit pieces or whole fruit – offer seasonal, local fruit whenever possible,
- Yogurt that is low-fat or fat-free and low in added sugar,
- Breakfast sandwiches with eggs and low-fat cheese on a whole grain English muffin,
- Breakfast bagel with lox, low-fat cream cheese, and assorted vegetable toppings on a whole grain bagel,
- Breakfast burrito with egg, black beans, and salsa on a whole wheat tortilla,
- Small muffins or large muffins cut in half (look for whole grain muffin options),
- Whole grain bread or whole grain English muffins,
- Whole grain, unsweetened cereal served with fat-free or low-fat milk (Cheerio's, Shredded Wheat, Oatmeal),
- Mini whole grain bagels or larger bagels cut in half,
- Hard-boiled eggs,
- Granola or granola bars that are low in added sugar,
- Low-fat or whipped cream cheese spread,
- Non-fat or low-fat milk,
- Coffee, tea, 100% juice, or
- Single serving spreads, such as peanut butter, jam, jelly, low-fat cream cheese or trans-fat free spread.

Lunch Ideas:

- Broth-based, low sodium soups with vegetables,
- Half- sandwiches or wraps:
- Whole grain bread with roasted or grilled tofu, lean meats, low-fat cheese or a variety of vegetable toppings,
- Chicken gyro on a whole wheat pita with lettuce, tomato, and tahini sauce, or
- Vegetable sandwiches or wraps on whole grain wraps:
 - Southwestern bean and vegetable,
 - Tomato and basil,
 - Roasted vegetables, or
 - Hummus.

- Mixed green salad,
- Hummus,
- Hard-boiled eggs,
- Whole or cut fruit,
- Whole grain pasta or rice salad made with oil-based or low-fat dressing,
- Whole grain rolls or challah,
- Bean salad,
- Kebabs prepared with lean meats and assorted vegetables,
- Protein salads with low-fat mayonnaise (egg salad, tuna salad, chicken salad, chickpea), or
- Low sodium or baked chips or air-popped popcorn.

Sample Food and Beverage Standards for Vending Machines:

There should be an assortment of healthier food choices with a focus on fruits, vegetables, whole grains, protein, and dairy products. At least 75% of the food items must meet all of the following criteria:

- Have as the first ingredient a fruit, vegetable, dairy product, or protein food; Be a whole grain-rich grain product; or be a combination food that contains at least $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of fruit and/or vegetable; and
- No more than 200 calories per item,
- No more than 10% of calories from saturated fat, with the exception of:
 - Reduced-fat cheese and part-skim mozzarella,
 - Nuts,
 - Seeds,
 - Nut butters, and
 - Dried fruit with nuts or seeds with no added sugar.
- 0 grams of artificial trans-fat or partially hydrogenated oils, and
- No more than 200 mg of sodium per package.
- The quantity of candy, desserts, baked goods, or items with any form of sugar as the first ingredient should be reduced.
- Preference should be given to seasonal and locally grown or produced foods, which many organizations define as within 250 miles of the purchaser,

Beverage Requirements:

- Have free water that is safe to drink available and advertise its availability,
- At least 50% of available beverage choices (other than 100% juice and unsweetened fat-free or low-fat milk) must contain <40 calories per 8 fluid ounces,
- If milk is offered, offer milk and milk alternative (calcium fortified soy, almond, or oat beverages) that are low-fat or fat-free with no added sugar, and
- If juice is available, offer 100% juice with no added sugar.

Offering Seasonal and Local Foods at Meetings and Events

Why use seasonal and local foods?

- It supports our local community, economy, and agriculture, and protects Vermont's farmlands.
- It is better for the environment. Seasonal foods do not need artificial heat and light to create year-round growing conditions. Traditional systems of local farming are often small and diverse, enriching the quality of the soil. Additionally, fewer fossil fuels are burned on foods that travel short distances from farm to table and don't require as much packaging for transport.
- Food in season can be less expensive, especially if you buy in bulk or purchase "seconds" (produce that is cosmetically damaged, but otherwise just fine).
- Local foods require less travel time; they'll be fresher and are grown for taste, not durability on the road.

Remember to ask catering services to use local foods. Most hotels and conference centers will accommodate when asked. Here are some simple-to-serve, easy-to-find local items:

- Milk
- Cider
- Cream for coffee
- Yogurt
- Cheese
- Fresh vegetables (in season)
- Garden salad (in season)
- Fresh fruit (in season – apples most of the year)
- Local beef, chicken, turkey, pork, lamb, sausage, lunchmeat
- Honey (as tea sweetener and spread) and maple syrup
- Butter
- Herbs (garnish, salad, seasoning)

For more detailed information on substituting local ingredients into common meeting and event menus, visit [Agriculture.vermont.gov](https://agriculture.vermont.gov) or call (802) 828-2430.

The Vermont Fresh Network can also be a great resource for chefs and customers who want to do more with local foods. Their mission is to connect local farmers with local restaurants. You can find out more and search their membership at VermontFresh.net.

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Available at: <https://www.DietaryGuidelines.gov/resources/2020-2025-dietary-guidelines-online-material>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2021)
Food Service Guidelines
Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/food-service-guidelines/index.html>

Weight Inclusive Considerations

The way we discuss and address health in our society is constantly evolving. It is our shared responsibility to remain responsive to this evolution as it relates to our work and the initiatives we support in worksites across Vermont.

Employers are encouraged to honor and respect body size diversity. Employees benefit from health-promoting behaviors within and outside of the worksite, regardless of body size. It is important that employers evaluate worksite wellness initiatives for inadvertent weight stigma. Weight stigma is a form of discrimination based on a person's body weight.

Below are considerations as you develop worksite wellness strategies:

There Are Social Determinants of Health

The environment in which we live, work, learn, and play can affect our health status. Even when someone has the desire to practice certain lifestyle behaviors, their social and living environments can either make it difficult, or seemingly impossible, to achieve their goals.

Focus on Lifestyle Behaviors

When people focus on eating a variety of nourishing foods, being more active, and managing their stress, their mental and physical health can improve – even if their weight doesn't change. Focusing solely on weight perpetuates bias that may actually impede someone's ability to achieve health-promoting behavior change.

All Bodies Deserve Respect

Every person, regardless of body size, deserves compassion and respect. It is important to create an environment in which all bodies feel welcome. This includes using photos of people of all body shapes being physically active, eating nourishing foods, and having a good time; and developing health initiatives that focus on lifestyle behaviors instead of body weight.

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Acknowledgements

Invest EAP

Department of Labor's Project WorkSAFE

Department of Health's Local Health Offices

Department of Health's Division of Environmental Health

Department of Health's Office of Health Equity Integration

Department of Health's Division of Family and Child Health

Department of Health's Division of Health Statistics and Informatics

Department of Health's Division of Immunizations and Infectious Disease

Department of Health's Division of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

