

WORKPLACE WELLNESS

Provided by 1706 Advisors



Creating an Incentive Program

A well-crafted incentive program motivates your employees to take steps toward improving their health—resulting in a positive return on investment (ROI) for you. To design an effective wellness incentive, consider the following steps.

1. Determine what employee actions you want to increase or decrease with the use of an incentive. To determine which incentives to use, consider the behaviors that you want to encourage and the incentive values that have the greatest potential for driving those behaviors.
2. Determine what may be preventing the adoption of the desired actions, behaviors or modifications.
3. Select the rewards that you want to offer. They should be feasible based on your existing wellness program, while also producing the greatest behavioral change among your employees.
 - Incentives should be consistent with your work culture and appeal to a wide audience.
 - Employees should value your incentives.
 - Awards must be large enough to motivate employees to act.
4. Develop guidelines for achieving incentives—exactly what must an employee do to earn a particular award?
5. Create a communication plan to introduce and promote your incentive program.
 - The rules of the incentives must be clear and easy to understand.
 - Senior management should strongly endorse the program by participating themselves and encouraging others to do the same.
 - Remind employees of the incentives through frequent, ongoing communication.

- Put your incentive program into action and evaluate its effectiveness at least annually. Based on the results, revise your program as necessary.

**Keep in mind there are a number of legal compliance issues involved in designing a wellness program, including the type of incentives that can be offered under a wellness program. To avoid noncompliance, employers should have legal counsel review their wellness programs before they are rolled out to employees.*

Possible Wellness Program Components

Stress Management

The following incentives can increase the number of employees completing stress management training:

- Hold training sessions on company time.
- Offer a “door prize” for session attendees with a drawing held at the end of the session.
- Provide an additional 20 minutes of lunchtime for attendees.

Tobacco Cessation

The incentives below can promote smoking cessation:

- Restrict smoking and tobacco usage at your worksite.
- Offer a “performance-based” bonus for quitting smoking.
- Offer a seminar on the health effects of smoking and using tobacco products.
- Provide a prize for employees who abstain from smoking for a year after joining the program (extra day of vacation, discount on health premiums, etc.).

Healthy Weight Management

The following incentives can encourage participation in weight management programs:

- Provide a food diary to employees where they can keep track of cravings, triggers and daily caloric intake.
- Offer a seminar on the health advantages of a well-balanced diet.
- Keep track of the small victories, such as exercising five days per week or eating five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily. Provide small weekly rewards or accumulate “points” toward a larger reward.

Hypertension Screenings

Use the incentives below to encourage employees to participate in blood pressure screenings:

- Provide on-site screenings on company time.
- Invite employees’ spouses to get screenings at no cost.
- Provide gift certificates to employees who participate in the screenings.

Cholesterol Screening

The following incentives can increase participation in cholesterol screenings:

- Provide on-site cholesterol screenings at no cost.
- Offer a cash reward for employees who participate in cholesterol screenings.

Physical Activity and Exercise

Use these incentives to encourage employees to be more active:

- Offer early registration discounts to employees who sign up for the program within a specific amount of time.
- Allow participating employees to flex their hours to make room for exercise in their daily routines.
- Offer free items such as gym bags, water bottles, sweat towels and T-shirts to participating employees.
- Provide a cash incentive for employees who maintain an exercise routine for at least six months.

Encouraging Self-care

The following incentives can increase the use of self-care methods and increase participation in employee health education workshops:

- Permit employees to waive benefit surcharges if they attend wellness seminars on self-care techniques. Common self-care topics include managing minor medical conditions, using home treatment options and diagnostic tests, and managing chronic health issues.
- Provide a health plan premium discount to those who attend health education workshops.

For more information on administering incentives in your workplace wellness program, contact 1706 Advisors today.