

Consultations Assist Worksite Wellness Programs in Indiana

SUMMARY

Since 2013, the Wellness Council of Indiana has received funding through the Indiana State Department of Health, Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity (DNPA) to provide onsite consultation services and support to Indiana organizations who seek guidance in evolving their worksite wellness initiatives. Companies receive strategic advice, best practice scenario coaching and assistance in developing operational plans for the management and execution of a workplace wellness strategy. An emphasis on physical activity, nutrition and tobacco cessation aims to equip organizations to combat the ever-increasing cost of chronic disease by successfully cultivating a culture of wellness.

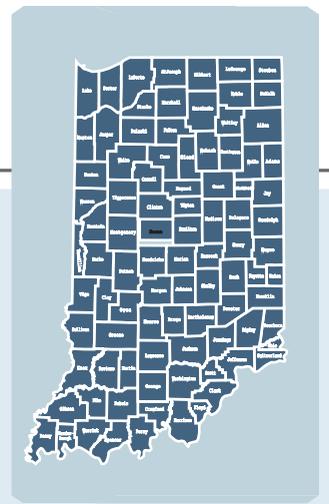
To date, 40 organizations throughout the state have received consultations, ultimately impacting roughly 27,946 Hoosier employees. Consultations have taken place in 23 counties, spanning northern, central and southern Indiana. Industries include school systems (including higher education), manufacturing, construction, retail, sports/entertainment, transit systems, not-for-profits and for-profit corporations.

CHALLENGE

The first challenge of the consultations is recruiting the appropriate businesses to take part in the consultations. We seek a diverse group of organizations who represent a variety of industries, sizes, locations and employee demographics to best impact as many employees as possible. It takes strategic forethought to identify and consult with organizations from across the state. Employee well-being is not limited to the Indianapolis area, nor is it limited to just the larger cities in Indiana. Companies of all sizes and industries around the state can benefit from these consultations.

Over the past four years, we have had challenges in delivering consistent guidance to these organizations. We have had a change in consultation facilitators, and while each organization receives the same compilation of vetted toolkits, policy templates and guidelines, we want to ensure we provide consistent and clear messaging throughout funding cycles.

The final challenge occurs if the “wellness contact” leaves the organization. In some organizations, the success of a wellness initiative falls on the shoulders of one or two individuals, but when that person’s responsibilities within the company change or he or she leaves the company, top leadership is faced with a decision to 1) hire someone to replace the lost position or 2) let wellness efforts fall by the wayside. Unfortunately, in many cases, “wellness” leaves the organization when the contact does. This makes reporting and follow-up more difficult as time goes on.



YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS KEY

For more information about the Wellness Council of Indiana’s ACHIEVEWELL process, visit <https://www.wellnessindiana.org/project/achievewell/>. More information about DNPA can be found at <http://www.dnpa.isdh.in.gov>. This project is supported by the State Public Health Actions to Prevent and Control Diabetes, Heart Disease, Obesity, and Associated Risk Factors and Promote School Health cooperative agreement (DP13-1305).

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SOLUTION

In addition to reviewing submitted applicants, the Wellness Council of Indiana actively seeks out organizations who could benefit from the group's services.

To address continuity, the Wellness Council of Indiana developed a set of six questions for organizations to consider before meeting. By doing so, it was possible to frame the physical activity and nutrition policy conversation around their overarching wellness strategy and vision. The questions are as follows:

1. What is your vision for your wellness program?
2. What is the decision-making process within your organization?
3. What is your timeline?
4. Who is your audience for your program?
5. What are your key drivers?
6. What are your wellness-related concerns?

RESULTS

- Can we preface these results? Are they from an annual survey?
- 100% of survey respondents reported that space is available for employees to store their healthy lunches and snacks. This is crucial to establish a healthy food environment in the workplace.
- Additionally, approximately 84% of survey respondents reported that wellness events are held on company time. This is encouraging, as time is often reported as a major obstacle to taking part in healthy behaviors. Approximately 27% of these organizations reported that there was a formal written policy regarding flex time for physical activity.
- Most of the surveyed organizations reported that there were not showers or lockers available for employee use, but some stated that accommodations could be made depending on space availability.
- Most of the organizations (90%) could not report that employees could safely walk or bike to work. Wellness champions cannot change the location of their organization to a more bike/walk-friendly location, but they can support those who wish to pursue active transportation by including bike racks, promoting bike and walking safety and allowing flex time for active commuters.
- This same concept applies to the food environment around the workplace. Roughly 68% of organizations reported healthy eating options near the workplace. Many of the organizations who responded "no" were interested in learning how to promote a healthier food environment through healthy vending, catering and meeting offerings.

U.S. Department of Health and Human
Services
Centers for Disease Control and
Prevention
NCCDPHP

Contact CDC

<http://www.cdc.gov/cdc-info/requestform.html>

Website

<http://nccd.cdc.gov/nccdsuccessstories/>

The findings and conclusions in this success story are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position of the funding agencies or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

SUSTAINING SUCCESS

These consultations are not meant to be "one and done" meetings where organizations are evaluated on their current wellness efforts. Instead, the council wants to help organizations develop action items to translate the topics discussed in the consultations into a blueprint for a sustainable wellness initiative. The Council hopes that by providing regular touchpoints and follow-ups, it is able to provide a consistent impact in the future. The consultation is only the beginning for organizational wellness efforts.

The council will continue to focus on recruiting organizations from southern and western Indiana to ensure comprehensive state coverage. Additionally, the six discussion questions listed above will be provided to each organization to establish a clear framework for the consultations. Follow-up meetings will be conducted six months after the initial meeting, if the client organization wishes.



Indiana State
Department of Health