

# WORKPLACE WELLNESS

Your guide to implementing simple and effective wellness initiatives in the workplace.



# WORKPLACE WELLNESS & YOU

Have you been interested in workplace wellness but didn't know where to start? The [Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce \(SPACC\)](#) has partnered with [Saint Paul/Ramsey County Public Health \(SPRCPH\)](#) to bring you an understandable and easy to implement way of incorporating workplace wellness with your staff.

SPACC and SPRCPH are here to show you how easy and effective workplace wellness programs can be. Beyond helping with the physical and mental health of your coworkers in the short term, the long term benefits of these programs include lower health insurance costs and higher staff productivity. Check out the information in our toolkit on how you can get started today with a workplace wellness program. Be sure to [look at our website](#) for information on our micro grants – another way that SPACC and SPRCPH want to partner with you in taking barriers away from healthy living.



# FORMING YOUR WELLNESS COMMITTEE

Starting a Wellness Committee may seem daunting at first, but after reviewing our guide you can see how easy it can be!

**Step One:** Create a team of wellness champions and make sure to get support from upper management. Many worksite wellness committees start with a dedicated group of employees but end up faltering due to lack of buy in from the executive level. Make sure to reach out to all staff to make sure to get a good blend of representation, especially if you are a mid-sized company. If you are small, your wellness committee could be you and one other person – do what makes sense for you and your organization.

**Step Two:** Take a look at the options we provide and decide which options makes sense for your workplace. Maybe you already have a nursing mother's room but it's being under-utilized. You can turn that room into a wellness room and incorporate a physical activity station! Survey your entire staff – most of the time people know what they want and how you can make healthy living more accessible during the workday.

**Step Three:** Now you have the committee, the upper management buy in and the idea! The next step? Get the word out to all employees on how you are going to encourage healthy living! Make sure you advertise the project and market it to all employees – take the time to talk about your initiative!

**Step Four:** Make sure you have all of these structures in place to sustain the wellness initiatives. If you think that one area might be lacking, go back and make sure you have a solid foundation. Continue to market and advertise your program to staff even after it's taken off the ground. Create a program that can become part of your institution so current and future employees can be healthy at your workplace!

# TOBACCO CESSATION

Minnesotans have become known for our innovative techniques to help smokers quit tobacco use but that doesn't mean smoking has been eradicated from all workplaces. The good news is currently there are more non-smokers than current smokers in Minnesota. Below are some tips and resources you can use for yourself or employees to encourage quitting smoking.

1. Download the [QUITPLAN guide](#) for easy steps on how to quit smoking.
2. Do you think it might be hard to get buy in from employees? [This Minnesota employer conducted a survey](#) and determined that the majority of consumers would be in favor of restricting tobacco use on site. You can conduct a survey at your workplace!
3. Place signage at your workplace to encourage tobacco cessation. When employees see that you care about promoting a clean air work environment they will take notice. You can either create your own or [print off a free version here](#).
4. Quitting smoking can save money! [This calculator](#) can show your colleagues just how much.
5. Reach out to your healthcare provider for information on additional smoking cessation resources and options through your healthcare plan.



# BREAST FEEDING SUPPORT

Do you have nursing mothers or women of childbearing age on your staff but nowhere for them to pump? Did you know according to state and federal law you must provide a space other than a bathroom for nursing mothers to express breast milk? Breast feeding is beneficial to your business because it saves on health care costs, lowers absenteeism and encourages higher retention rates. Below are some easy tips to support the nursing mothers in your workplace.

1. Breast feeding is healthy for you and your baby! [See the Minnesota Department of Health's website](#) for reasons why breast feeding is good for you and should be supported by employers as a health care initiative.
2. Creating a place other than a bathroom for nursing mothers is the law. [Check out the MN State Statute here](#) on requirements you must meet at your workplace.
3. Short on space at your workplace? [Check out the national Office of Women's Health website](#) on how to maximize your space to support nursing mother employees.
4. Get recognized by MDH for your breast feeding support! [Fill out the application here](#) and become a designated breast feeding friendly workplace.



# HEALTHY EATING

Healthy eating doesn't have to stop at home – workplaces can encourage employees to make good choices for work lunches and snacks. Below are some tips on how to encourage healthy eating in your workplace.

1. Create a community garden! Don't be deterred by lack of space – [many businesses have come up with creative ideas](#) on how to integrate a garden space into their workplaces. When fruits and vegetables are readily available to staff, employees are more likely to make healthy choices at lunch and snack time.
2. Does a garden sound like too much work or not feasible for your workplace? [Have employees share a Community Supported Ag Farm \(CSA\) box](#) with healthy and locally grown options!
3. Not sure where the closest farmers market is? [Check out this handy guide](#) on where to find local produce and healthy foods in your area. Who knows, there might be one located near your workplace!



# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The thought of making physical activity a priority for staff might seem out of reach for your workplace but it is easier than you think. By incorporating the support of walking meetings, gym memberships and a space for employees to have a time set aside for physical activity you can increase the health and wellbeing of staff.

1. Do you support and promote walking meetings for your staff? You can make access to physical activity even easier by creating a walking map of safe areas around your workplace. [MDH has a great guide for how to map out your walking path.](#)
2. A dedicated space for employees to exercise might sound crazy to you but think about pairing it with a nursing mother's room. Promote the use of the room for overall wellness in addition to nursing mothers support. [Start small by finding yoga mats, small hand weights and other easy to store exercise equipment](#) that can be used in all offices spaces.
3. Think about [encouraging alternative forms of transportation](#) for employees rather than the traditional car commute. By making [bike racks](#) easily accessible and offering programs to encourage using public transit you will see employees making strides in healthy living.
4. Think about encouraging your employees to [join a local health club](#). Make it a priority to seek health insurance programs that offer reimbursement for memberships to employees that regularly use the facility. You can also incorporate dedicated time in the work day for employees to use a health club if there is one located nearby.



Visit [Move MN](#) for more resources.

Incorporating wellness into your worksite is easy! If you are still stumped on how to get your workplace wellness committee running please contact us – we would be happy to work with you on starting a program that makes sense for your business. Don't hesitate to get creative!

The Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce partners with St. Paul/Ramsey County Public Health to give Ramsey County businesses micro-grants to take away the cost barrier for worksite wellness. Contact us today to see how you can apply for a micro-grant for your business!

**Contact us for more information.**

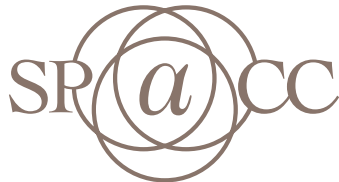
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