



Administrative Policy No. 9.09

Subject: DSHS Employee Wellness Program

Information Contact: DSHS Human Resources

Authorizing Sources: [Executive Order 13-06](#)
[RCW 41.04.362](#) State Employee Wellness Program
[WAC 292-110-010](#) Use of State Resources
[WAC 296-27-01103](#) Determination of Work Relatedness

Effective Date: November 19, 2007

Revised: January 22, 2025

Approved by: Original approved by Wendy Long
Senior Director, Human Resources Division

Purpose

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is committed to the ongoing health and well-being of its employees through the creation, development, and maintenance of a wellness program for DSHS employees. This policy establishes the employee wellness program, the rules governing its operations, and the roles and responsibilities of the people who design and implement the program.

Background

DSHS recognizes the health and wellness of employees is extremely important in the workplace. Employee wellness programs can encourage employees to engage in regular exercise, maintain a healthy diet, avoid harmful habits, engage in preventive health care, reduce the impact of stresses in daily life, and tend to their physical, mental, personal, and emotional needs.

These efforts enhance each employee's ability to serve customers, because improved health of employees can result in:

- Improved health and wellbeing
- Improved morale
- Increased productivity
- Lower injury rates
- Decreased absenteeism

- Increased employee engagement
- Reduced stress
- Improved recruitment and retention.

Scope

This policy applies to all DSHS programs and employees.

Additional guidance

Administrative policies:

- 13.08 purchased goods and services
- 13.10 central contract services
- 18.18 outside employment
- 18.91 use of resources

Washington wellness

Definitions

Headquarters (HQ) wellness team: A team of representatives from each administration, appointed by their assistant secretaries or the secretary's office, and chaired by the wellness coordinator, designated by the human resources division (HRD) senior director that develop wellness activities.

Program wellness team: A group of employees supporting the employee wellness program within a single administration or division.

Worksite wellness team: A group of employees who work in a single DSHS building or set of adjacent buildings that organize wellness activities for employees at that location. Teams may be sponsored by the official safety and health committees for each DSHS building or may form independently.

Normal working hours: The assigned core hours customarily worked by an employee, excluding break and lunch periods.

Preventive health care: Health care directed toward preventing disease or reducing the severity or consequences of disease.

Preventive health care strategies: Include immunizations, health screenings, lifestyle counseling, environmental changes, and following medical advice and procedures reducing risk factors.

Wellness support group: Two or more employees who regularly support one another to reinforce health and wellness behaviors.

Wellness activity: Includes teaching, learning, planning, promoting, or participating in regular or special events associated with health and wellness.

Wellness participant: A DSHS employee participating in a DSHS sponsored wellness activity on state time, or in a wellness activity occurring at a DSHS facility, including those who are teleworking.

Policy

A. Wellness team responsibilities

1. Wellness teams will:
 - a. Promote and encourage health screenings, health risk assessments, and wellness activities for all DSHS employees.
 - b. Encourage and support program and worksite wellness teams and activities throughout DSHS.
 - c. Work cooperatively with the statewide wellness initiatives.
 - d. Identify models and opportunities for local and enterprise-wide wellness initiatives and activities.
 - e. Identify community partners and state resources in implementing wellness initiatives and activities.
 - f. Freely distribute information about statewide and internal wellness initiatives, creative programs, and best practices throughout DSHS.
 - g. Provide feedback to the Washington wellness program; and
 - h. Develop objective measures to assess program effectiveness.

B. Use of state resources for employee wellness

1. Employees may use their work computers during normal working hours in support of employee wellness initiatives. Use must comply with [administrative policy 18.91 use of resources](#).
2. Approved computer uses for employee wellness include:
 - a. Visiting the Washington state [wellness](#) website, and DSHS wellness website;
 - b. Periodically completing a well-being assessment through the [SmartHealth](#) website;
 - c. Joining and tracking activities to earn the specified total points in SmartHealth before the given deadline to earn a wellness incentive.

C. Funding, authorized expenditures, and contracting for employee wellness services

1. Wellness activities do not require DSHS contracts if they meet all the following conditions:
 - a. Take place in DSHS facilities.
 - b. Are developed by DSHS employees.
 - c. Occur during non-work time; and
 - d. Are paid for by the participants directly.
2. Wellness activities officially sponsored by DSHS **and** paid for with DSHS funds must comply with the ethics law (see DSHS administrative policy [18.64](#) standards of ethical conduct), relevant state laws, DSHS policies and regulations for purchase of goods and services and outside employment.
3. Funding for wellness activities may come from participant payments, grants, donations, DSHS authorized fund-raising activities, agency budgets, and the industrial insurance retrospective rating program.
4. A non-exclusive list of authorized expenditures for wellness program activities include any of the following:
 - a. Awards to promote participation.
 - b. Honoraria or gifts of not more than \$50 in lieu of contractor fees to persons who are not DSHS employees.
 - c. Wellness products and services from the Health Care Authority.
 - d. Contractor fees for wellness services; and
 - e. Educational materials, such as wellness-related DVDs, games, and literature.

D. Employee wellness program roles and responsibilities

1. The DSHS secretary designated the senior director of the human resources division as the employee wellness executive sponsor, who must:
 - a. Make DSHS executive decisions on wellness-related issues and policies; and
 - b. Seek input from DSHS's executive leadership team.
2. The DSHS employee wellness coordinator is appointed by the human resources senior director and must:
 - a. Represent DSHS on the Washington wellness coordinators group.
 - b. Serve as communication and organizational liaison between the Washington wellness program and the agency.
 - c. Chair the HQ wellness team.
 - d. Coordinate wellness activities through the HQ wellness team; and
 - e. Work within the department to enable, support, and encourage staff to develop worksite wellness teams in each building occupied by the department.

3. HQ wellness team members must:
 - a. Lend statewide leadership, expertise, and support to educate DSHS employees on evidence based healthy lifestyle models and on wellness-related programs and activities.
 - b. Design and organize communications to inform employees of state, DSHS, program, and worksite wellness related programs and activities; and
 - c. Organize wellness teams or other structures for sponsoring wellness within their programs, if they represent programs.
4. Worksite wellness teams are encouraged in DSHS facilities.
 - a. A building level appointing authority must approve the creation and makeup of those teams.
 - b. If these teams develop, they may assume responsibility for communication and sponsorship of building level wellness activities, particularly in those buildings that involve several DSHS programs.
5. Program or worksite wellness teams sponsoring wellness activities must:
 - a. Ensure compliance with state personal and purchased service contracting guidelines, when department funds are used to contract for paid wellness services.
 - b. Ensure compliance with Parts B, C, and D of this policy for activities they sponsor.
 - c. Ensure prior approval is obtained from an appointing authority for wellness activities planned during normal working hours.
 - d. Inform the program wellness representative or the wellness coordinator of the wellness events or activities they sponsor; and
 - e. Ensure that employees are not engaging in exercise programs as part of a wellness activity during working hours.