



Needs Assessments

Prevention Campaign Fact Sheet



Vision of the National Prevention Strategy: Working together to improve the health and quality of life for individuals, families, and communities by moving the nation from a focus on sickness and disease to one based on prevention and wellness.

A needs assessment can help identify where to begin the planning process for a worksite health & wellness program or what to focus on next. This tool can be used to assess employee needs and interests, the workplace environment, and available resources. This fact sheet describes different types of needs assessments relevant to planning worksite health & wellness programs.

EMPLOYEE INTEREST SURVEYS

Employee interest surveys are a cost-effective way to assess the health attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and interests of employees. These surveys can also be useful in the development of policies and programs.

When designing employee interest surveys, the following things should be considered:

- Employee health needs information may be available through other sources, such as Health Risk Appraisals, so your employee survey may not need to address these types of questions.
- This is an opportunity to learn what health topics are on employees' minds and their perception of what should be included in your worksite health and wellness programs.
- Do you want employee feedback on health topics that leadership believes are important for the agency's strategy?
- Who is the employee audience?
- Employees want assurance their responses will be confidential. Develop a communication plan explaining how the survey will be analyzed and used.
- Engage strategic partners across the agency and obtain guidance from agency experts, such as labor relations, general counsel, or any data or survey analysis teams.

HEALTH RISK APPRAISALS

Health risk appraisals (HRAs) (sometimes also referred to as health risk assessments) are systematic approaches to collecting information from individuals that identify risk factors, provide individualized feedback, and link the person with at least one intervention to promote health, sustain function and/or prevent disease. HRAs are available online via a computer at home or work, kiosks at work, paper-and-pencil, personal interviews, and phone interviews. When choosing a delivery mode, agencies should consider which method will provide access to the most employees. An HRA can be the single point of entry to an agency worksite health promotion program and serve as a participation tracking tool. For more information, please see OPM's fact sheets on Common Screenings and How to Conduct Screenings available on the MAX Community of Practice site.

COST CALCULATORS

Cost calculators can help planners of worksite health & wellness programs explain the costs of health conditions and behaviors of employees to the agency, as well as the cost to administer the program. Analyzing data on health care costs and on-the-job injuries can help identify health conditions and injuries that should be targeted for intervention programs.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT AUDIT

The physical environment can influence employees to practice healthy behaviors (e.g., walking up and down stairs), or unhealthy behaviors (e.g., eating unhealthy foods). An audit of the physical environment can help a worksite assess how the physical environment is helping to keep employees healthy. These audits can be narrow or broad and should always be tailored to the worksite. For more information, see CDC's page on Environmental Audits. The Health and Sustainability Guidelines for Federal Concessions and Vending Operations may also be a useful resource when developing a physical environment audit for a Federal workplace.

ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH SURVEY

A healthy work environment is one where employees at all levels feel supported, a sense of community exists, and a vision is shared. An organizational health survey (may also be considered a culture audit) will assess the agency's policies and traditions that support and encourage wellness. These surveys may also assess if there are clear goals and objectives that are connected to the agency's mission and identify any cultural aspects of the organization that could impact program strategies. The Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FedView survey) is a tool developed by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) that measures Federal employees' perceptions of whether, and to what extent, conditions characterizing successful organizations are present in their agencies. Reviewing the survey results provide valuable insight into employee perceptions and cultural aspects of an agency.

EMPLOYEE DEMOGRAPHICS

Understanding employee demographics can help structure a comprehensive worksite health & wellness program and can easily be obtained from agency human resources offices. Demographics, such as age, gender, and position, can help planners hone in on topics that may be important for employees. OPM's FedScope is a good resource for agency demographic information.

(All information adapted from Workplace Health Promotion-Assessments, 2013; Healthier Worksite Initiative – Needs Assessment, 2010; Utah Dept of Health - Building a Healthy Worksite: A Guide to Lower Health Care Costs and More Productive Employees)

RESOURCES GUIDANCE FOR WORKSITE HEALTH WELLNESS COORDINATORS

OPM's Health & Wellness Evaluation Page

This website describes Federal resources that can be used to evaluate worksite health & wellness programs. Agencies are encouraged to use those that best meet the needs of their agency.

FedScope

This online tool allows customers to access and analyze the most popular data elements from OPM's Enterprise Human Resources Integration-Statistical Data Mart (EHRI-SDM). Customers include Federal government agencies, researchers, the media, and the general public.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Healthier Worksite Initiative – Needs Assessment

Worksite health & wellness coordinators can find information on the basics for creating and using a needs assessment. The site includes helpful tips and resources that a practitioner can use.

HHS CDC Workplace Health Promotion – Assessment

This site provides many resources and tools to assess worksite health & wellness programs.