



mspWellness Micro-Grant Program Overview

February 7, 2022





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mspWellness 2022 Micro-Grant Application

What is workplace wellness?

Workplace wellness is any workplace activity or company policy that is designed to support or encourage healthy behavior, wellbeing, and safety in the workplace. Workplace wellness initiatives improve employee health outcomes.

Why focus on wellness?

Employees are an organization's most valuable asset. Creating healthy work environments and encouraging healthy behaviors can have a positive impact on employee wellbeing and job satisfaction.

Worksite wellness programs can:

- Control or reduce your organization's health care costs
- Improve productivity
- Reduce employee absenteeism
- Lower employee turnover
- Attract and retain top talent
- Reduce workers' compensation costs, illness, and disability

Companies of all sizes can create healthier work environments. Workplace wellness programs do not need to be complicated and expensive to have positive results; even the smallest changes to workplace policies and environment can have a huge impact and improve your bottom line. For every \$1 invested in workplace wellness, \$6 is saved on medical and absenteeism costs*

mspWellness Micro-Grants

To support workplace wellness, we are excited to release mspWellness micro-grants! These micro-grants are designed to be a catalyst for the implementation of programs that increase employee wellbeing. Micro-grants will be awarded to businesses and organizations who submit proposals that focus on changing workplace policies, systems, and environment to support employee wellness. The changes could be focused on inspiring healthy eating, encouraging active living, supporting new mother, tobacco-free living and/or overall wellbeing.

These micro-grants are funded by the Minnesota Department of Health Statewide Health Improvement Partnership grant (SHIP). They will be administered by the Minneapolis Health Department and awarded by the Minneapolis Regional Chamber. The purpose of the micro-grants is to provide workplaces with funding and technical assistance for health focused activities and programs that benefit the wellness of employees.

How Can the Micro-Grants Be Used?

Projects should implement a workplace policy, systems or environmental change that is related to a worksite wellness strategy listed below. Funds cannot be used for one-time, unsustainable projects.

Organizations are encouraged to propose projects that reflect their own expertise, experience, and knowledge of their workforce.

Workplace wellness strategies that could be funded:

- **Tobacco-free worksite:** commercial tobacco-free environments and cessation support.
- **Healthy eating:** Increase fruit and vegetable consumption, decrease sodium, added sugar, and saturated fat by addressing vending/healthy snack station, catering, and/or cafeteria food.
- **Breastfeeding Support:** Accommodate and support nursing mothers.
- **Physical Activity:** Increase access to facilities and opportunities for physical activity and active transportation.
- **Mental Well-Being:** Organizational activities that address employee mental health and well-being.

Eligibility

Business and organizations are eligible to receive a micro-grant if:

- They are located in Minneapolis and/or have a presence (branch) in Minneapolis.
- Have minimum of 10 employees and fewer than 100 employees.

To impact communities with the greatest health disparities, priority will be given to the following workplaces:

- Workplaces with majority of adults over the age of 45. These employees enter an age where preventable chronic diseases are more apparent.
- Industries that have historically offered lower wages (and/or may not offer health care benefits) such as hospitality, retail, service, some manufacturing, and care-provider industries.
- Workplaces that employ a significant number of limited or non-English speaking workers and/or workers who have limited education.
- Workplaces that employ a population with a high percentage of workers who are experiencing health disparities identified through local or county-specific data.

Application Information

Micro-grant awards will range from \$500-\$1,000 per organization. There are a limited number of grants available, so this is a competitive process. Proposals should include:

- Project Name
- Workplace Description
- Project Focus Area
- Project Description
- Proposed Worksite Policy, System or Environmental Change
- Employee Communication Strategy
- Evaluation Strategy
- Project Budget Information

Application Deadlines and Award Notification Information:

The deadline to submit a micro-grant application is **Friday, March 4 at 4pm CST**. The online application form can be found [here](#). A copy of the entire application is available for review [here](#).

Award notifications will be made on Tuesday, March 15 and project work will begin on Friday, April 1st. All projects will need to be completed by Friday, September 30, 2022. Organizations unable to complete projects in the established time frame must re-pay the award.

Proposal Evaluation

Proposals will be reviewed by representatives of the Minneapolis Health Department and Minneapolis Regional Chamber. The representatives will objectively review and score each application submitted based on an established criterion that allows them to rank the applicants. Some examples of criteria include, but are not limited to:

- Eligibility Requirements
- Quality, thoroughness, and clarity of proposal
- Proposed workplace Policy, System or Environmental change impact
- Employee communication strategy
- Creativity of the proposal

What to Expect

Micro-grant recipients will receive support throughout the implementation process. Attendance at a virtual onboarding meeting will be required. Grantees will also commit participating in two meetings to share the status of the proposed project and discuss any challenges or necessary support. Worksites will also be asked to complete a post program survey.

The following is a listing of key program milestones.

Application Posted	February 7, 2022
Info session: 11:00-11:30AM Zoom Meeting Link	February 18, 2022
Info Session: 11:00-11:30AM Zoom Meeting Link	February 25, 2022
Proposals due by	March 4, 2022 at 4 pm CST
Estimated Applicant selection	March 15, 2022
Recipient Onboarding Session	March 23, 2022
Estimated services start date	April 1, 2022
1:1 Meeting with Minneapolis Health Department and Chamber	Week of June 1, 2022
1:1 Meeting with Minneapolis Health Department and Chamber	Week of August 1, 2022
Estimated services end date	September 30, 2022

Source: * Baicker, K, Cutler, D, Song, Z. Workplace Wellness Programs Can Generate Savings. *Health Affairs* 29, no.2 (2010):304-311

Examples of Micro-Grant Projects

Funding of projects must be related to a workplace policy, systems or environmental change that is related to a worksite wellness strategy.

Policy, systems or environmental (PSE) changes create conditions that can influence positively the way people move through and actively engage with and within their lived environments.

The mspWellness micro-grants aim to support sustainable projects that will last beyond the life of the grant funding. Funds cannot be used for one-time, unsustainable projects.

Definition of PSE

- **Policy Changes**
 - Create or change a written statement of an organizational position, decision, or course of action.
- **System Changes**
 - Focus on instituting processes or procedures at the system level that ensure a healthier workplace.
- **Environmental changes**
 - Include changes to the physical or built environment.

The ideas below are only for example and are not meant to be exhaustive. Organizations are encouraged to propose projects that reflect their own expertise, experience, and knowledge of their workforce.

Healthy Eating Goal: Increase access to healthy foods and beverages	
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and maintain abundant healthy food choices across the organization which includes: healthy snack station(s), vending, food at meetings and events, cafeteria offerings, foods brought to work for potluck events.
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation and maintenance of a healthy snack station(s) offering only healthy options • Removal of soda/sugar sweetened beverages • Update, maintain food vending options with at least 50 percent healthy • At least three fruit selections offered daily in cafeteria • Always serve healthy food/beverage choice(s) at meetings and events • Implement healthy catering booklet that guides managers/staff when ordering food for meetings and events
Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a RFP/contracts for vending services • Create a pricing structure that encourages health food purchases • Provide a catering guide that feature food service providers that have healthy menu options

Physical Activity	
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map walking routes that are near the worksite • Support bike commuters • Create a space for physical activity
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees can combine breaks for physical activity time • Modify any dress codes to accommodate more physical activity • Encourage walking meetings • Implement a flexible work schedule that allows for physical activity
Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage managers to develop flexible schedules to accommodate physical activity before/during/after work • Promote safety practices that reduce on-the-job injuries • Provide active transportation/commuting reimbursements

Tobacco-free Worksites	
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a worksite completely commercial tobacco-free including all buildings, grounds and vehicles
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a commercial tobacco-free worksite policy that also includes electronic cigarettes • Post commercial tobacco-free worksite signage • Create enforcement protocols
Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide free cessation medications • Include a pharmacy benefit that fully covers over-the-counter (OTC) quit medications and prescription quit meds with no (or minimal) copay or deductible

Breastfeeding Support	
Environment	Creation and maintenance of a mother's room Ideal features – Private, pleasant, clean space that locks from inside; chair; table; hospital-grade breast pump; electrical outlet; nearby water source; nearby storage for milk
Policy	Develop a policy that supports breastfeeding mothers that includes the creation of a lactation room, information about FMLA leave, and engage management in the support of new mom's
Systems	Include information about the availability of the mother's room in employee orientation, create a reservation system for use of the space.
Wellbeing	
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimize opportunities for physical activity and healthy eating in the workplace • Increase opportunities for social connectedness and belonging both virtually and in person • Offer a quiet room/space
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimize support for employee health by addressing: sick leave, PTO time, flex time, remote working, continuing training and education, family support programs etc. • Optimize employee performance and job satisfaction through supervisor trainings that address support of employee work load, job fit, clear expectations, positive culture, etc.
Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host staff development opportunities that help management with ideas for coaching, and an understanding of causes of stress in the workplace • Include successful support of employees and workplace wellness during annual performance evaluations for management



mspWellness Micro-Grant Eligible Program Expenses

The mspwellness micro-grant program is designed to help worksites develop and implement wellness initiatives. This often involves training, communications, purchasing items to launch programs, including resources for employees, adaptations and additions to physical environments and acquiring equipment that support healthy eating and physical activity.

Before submitting your proposal and micro-grant application, please review the examples of what expenses are considered eligible and which are not, based on program guidelines.

If you are considering a purchase and you are unsure if it is allowable, please contact the mspWellness Team mspwellness@mplschamber.com

Examples of eligible expenses:

- Breakroom modifications: microwave, microwave lids, over toaster, fridge, storage shelf, can opener, utensils, plates, bowls, cups, cutting board, knives, reusable and insulated bags, table, small potted herbs, pots and pans, food storage containers, white board/bulletin board, basic clock, tablecloth, and water bottle filling stations.
- Giving garden: seeds, soil, transplants, pots, garden shovel, wheelbarrow, garden gloves, storage shelf, organizers, produce bins, box planters, locks, binder (for record keeping).
- Nursing mother supports/ wellness space: lamp, armchair, ottoman, table, storage units, rug, lamp, bookshelf, divider, blinds, mini fridge, white board, bulletin board, breast pump, mirror, and door lock.
- Physical activity/space: desk cycle bike pedal, standing desk (must be portable, located in a public space and total cost should not exceed \$500), yoga mats, yoga balls, free weights, storage shelf, signage, jumping ropes, foam roller, balance board, bike rack and bike repair kit.
- Communications pieces: must be linked to a PSE change to be an allowable expense: printed communication materials (posters, fliers, newsletters, brochures, fact sheets, displays, mailed communications and postage).



Examples of ineligible expenses:

- Professional service providers related to space modification or, movers, installers, plumbers, electricians, painters, designers
- Repair or maintenance work of existing equipment
- Professional health care providers: message therapists, chiropractors, dieticians, yoga instructors, personal trainers
- Purchase of memberships or subscriptions for your organization or employees: Gyms or fitness centers, publications like magazines, newspapers or online newsletters, memberships for Weight Watchers, Noom, or food-based weight loss programs and delivery services.
- Break room supplies water filter systems, coffee machines and supplies, examples of healthy snacks, and condiments as well as over the counter medicine, ice maker
- Outdoor equipment: Fertilizer and pesticide, benches in wellbeing-gardens, along walking trails, green space maintenance equipment, permanent directional signage, or right-of-way designations.
- Equipment and technology: Massage chairs, televisions, iPad or tablets, computer, phones, electronic pedometers, watches and breast pumps.