



2024 mspWellness MICROGRANT

Community Partner Funding Award

PROGRAM OVERVIEW



Building Healthier
Communities



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2024 Microgrants Program Overview

What is workplace wellness?

Workplace wellness refers to any activities within an organization that facilitate, support, or promote employee wellbeing. Workplace wellness initiatives aim to improve employee physical and mental health.

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 or expensive to have positive results; even small 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.¹

About mspWellness

mspWellness is a partnership between Minneapolis Regional Chamber (MRC), Minneapolis Health Department (MHD), and Hennepin County Public Health. This collaborative group focuses on providing employers of all sizes with resources, technical assistance, and programming to cultivate a culture of health within their organizations.

¹ Source: Baicker, K, Cutler, D, Song, Z. *Workplace Wellness Programs Can Generate Savings. Health Affairs* 29, no.2 (2010):304-311

***m*spWellness Microgrants - Community Partner Funding Award**

*m*spWellness launched the *m*spWellness Microgrant Program in 2022. The program provides financial and technical support to employers on the creation and implementation of policies, programs, and physical spaces to improve employee health and wellbeing. 2024 is the third year that funding is being provided through this program.

Businesses can apply for up to \$2,000 to implement an employee wellness project. Microgrants will be awarded to businesses and organizations that propose projects which identify strategies to support employee wellbeing through organizational policies, practices, systems, and/or environments.

Eligible project areas include inspiring healthy eating, encouraging physical activity and active modes of transportation, supporting breastfeeding employees and work, commercial tobacco-free workplaces, and improving mental and social health or overall wellbeing.

These microgrants are funded by the Minnesota Department of Health's Statewide Health Improvement Partnership grant (SHIP). They will be administered by the Minneapolis Health Department and awarded by the Minneapolis Regional Chamber. Because this funding originates from the Minnesota Department of Health, there are specific reporting requirements outlined below. By applying for an *m*spWellness Microgrant, you agree to adhere to the requirements outlined in this document, if approved for the program.

How can the microgrants be used?

Projects should implement a workplace policy, system and/or physical environment change that is related to a worksite wellness focus area listed below. Funds must be used for projects that are sustainable and can be continued beyond the funding period. Focus areas are:

- **Breastfeeding Support:** Providing a supportive, private environment for chest/breastfeeding individuals.
- **Tobacco-free Worksite:** Committing to become a tobacco-free workplace/grounds and/or promoting cessation.
- **Healthy Eating:** Improving the eating environment and supporting employees in making nutritious food choices while at work.
- **Physical Activity:** Increasing access to facilities and opportunities for physical activity and active transportation.
- **Wellbeing:** Incorporating changes to support employees' mental and social health.

Organizations are encouraged to propose projects that reflect their own experience, knowledge and understanding of their employees' needs and desires.

Eligibility

Business and organizations are eligible to participate and receive a microgrant if:

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

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.
- Workplaces/organizations that serve populations experiencing health disparities identified through local or county-specific data.

Funding Requirements

- Projects have at least one of the focus areas described above.
- A designated project lead must connect with mspWellness staff to finalize the project, employee communication plan, timelines, budget, and evaluation plan. The project lead must be able to carry out general business practices for accounting, record keeping, timely invoicing and reporting.
- Evaluation and reporting are required. See below for program documents requirement. Organizations will receive support with evaluation.

Application Information

Microgrants will be awarded for up to \$2,000 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 and description
- Specific need/challenge to be addressed by project
- Plan for continuation of project beyond funding
- Employee engagement and communication plan
- Project budget

Application Deadlines and Award Notification Information:

The deadline to submit a microgrant application is **Monday, February 19, 2024, at 4pm**. The online application form can be found [here](#). A copy of the entire application is available for review [here](#).

Award notifications will be made during the week of **April 1st, 2024**. Project implementation will begin at the end of April. All projects will need to be completed by Monday, September 30th, 2024. 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 and funding requirements
- Quality, thoroughness, and clarity of proposal
- Specific employee wellness needs the project will address
- Project continuity beyond funding
- Employee communication strategy
- Creativity of the proposal

What to expect as grant recipient?

- Microgrant recipients will receive support throughout the implementation process.
- A virtual onboarding meeting will be required (April 9th, 2024)
- Grantees will also commit to participating in two meetings to share the status of the proposed project and discuss any challenges or necessary support.
- Grantees will evaluate the project using two surveys provided by the Minneapolis Health Department. Evaluation packet will be provided on the recipient onboarding session.
- Grantees will also be asked to provide receipts and other reporting items by September 30th, 2024. See next section for specific requirements.

Program Documents Requirement

The following documentation is required for reporting purposes per the Minnesota Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) of the Minnesota Department of Health.

If you are selected for the Microgrant program, after your application is approved, you will meet with the mspWellness program manager to create and review a scope of work specific to your project. Within the scope of work, you will agree upon the appropriate documentation to demonstrate the changes you made during your project.

In addition to the documentation outlined in your scope of work, there are three evaluation requirements: a midpoint evaluation survey, a final program evaluation survey, and an employee survey.

Timeline

The following is a listing of key program milestones

Activity	Date
Application Posted	January 9th, 2024
Info session I 10:00-10:30AM Registration Link	January 24, 2024
Info Session II: 1:00-1:30PM Registration Link	February 5th, 2024
Proposals due by	February 19, 2024 at 4 pm CST
Estimated Applicant selection	Week of April 1, 2024
Recipient Onboarding Session	April 9, 2024
1:1 Meeting with Minneapolis Health Department and Chamber for technical assistance completed by	April 19, 2024
Project implementation's kick off by	April 29, 2024
1:1 Meeting with Minneapolis Health Department and Chamber	Week of August 19, 2024
Projects completely implemented by	September 30, 2024
Evaluation forms and final survey due	September 30, 2024

Examples of Wellness Projects

A proposed project must be directly connected to changes on the workplace’s policies, systems, and/or physical environments (PSE). PSE changes create conditions that can positively influence employees to make healthy choices.

In addition, workplaces applying must commit to continuing the proposed project beyond this microgrant funding. Funds cannot be used for one-time, unsustainable projects.

Definition of Policy, Systems, and Environmental Changes:

- **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 to support 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.

BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT	
Environment	Lactation room: Locks from inside, chair, table, breast pump, electrical outlet, clean, near water source, place to store milk.
Policy	Breastfeeding support policy that includes lactation room, FMLA leave, and management role in supporting nursing individuals.
Systems	Promote breastfeeding education programs. Peer Support – provide dedicated time for parents to connect about breastfeeding and other parenting topics.

WELLBEING	
Environment	Create a “Quiet room” or space for relaxation, meditation, or prayer. Create physical indoor or outdoor spaces for employees to interact and provide a sense of community connection.
Policy	Develop policies that address employee safety, flexible work schedules, job demands, sick leave, parental leave of absence, etc. Provide resources for employees to increase their resilience and stress management skills.
Systems	Promote a campaign to reduce mental health stigma in your organization. Assess and address primary causes of job stress at work.

HEALTHY EATING	
Environment	Provide a dedicated space employees to eat during breaks. Install vending machines with healthy options or create a healthy snack station.
Policy	Provide protected time from the work area for breaks and lunch.
Systems	Offer appealing, low-cost, healthy food options in vending machines, at snack stations and break rooms. Contracts for food/vending services focused on healthy nutrition.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY	
Environment	Provide bike racks, showers, lockers and condition an existing room/space for physical activity.
Policy	Create a policy that offers flexible work hours to allow for physical activity during the day.
Systems	Provide exercise and physical fitness messages and information to employees. Incorporating physical activity into the workday by promoting biking and walking. Adopting stretching breaks.

COMMERCIAL TOBACCO-FREE LIVING	
Environment	Become a commercial tobacco/vape/chew-free workplace in buildings, grounds, and vehicles.
Policy	Create a policy that prohibits commercial tobacco, vaping and chew use anywhere on worksite property.
Systems	Ensure that tobacco cessation medications – both over-the-counter and prescription – are covered as health insurance benefits. Promote Quit Partner, Minnesota’s free way to quit nicotine, including smoking, vaping, and chewing. Provide cessation counseling through an individual, group, or telephone program on-site.

Eligible Program Expenses

The *mSPWellness* Microgrant Program, Community Partner Funding Award, is designed to help worksites develop and implement wellness initiatives. This often involves training, communications, and purchasing items to launch programs. Items that may be purchased include resources for employees, adaptations and additions to physical environments, and equipment that supports healthy eating and physical activity.

Before submitting your proposal and microgrant 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 at mSPwellness@mplschamber.com

Examples of eligible expenses:

- Health eating projects: microwave, microwave lids, over toaster, fridge, storage shelf, can opener, utensils, plates, bowls, cups, cutting board, knives, reusable and insulated bags, coffee maker, table, stool, cookbooks, small potted herbs, picnic blankets, pots and pans, food storage containers, white board/bulletin board, basic clock, and tablecloth.
- 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, cleaning brush, storage units, organizers, rug, lamp, bookshelf, books, divider, blinds, pillows, mini fridge, white board, bulletin board, blanket, and basic clock, hospital grade-multi-user breast pumps.
- Physical activity/space: desk cycle bike pedal, standing desk (must be portable), yoga mats, yoga balls, free weights, storage shelf, signage, jumping ropes, foam roller, and 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), letters that are part of a larger outreach effort and signs.

Examples of ineligible expenses:

- Professional service providers related to space modification, movers, installers, plumbers, electricians, painters, designers
- Repair or maintenance work of existing equipment
- Employee salaries, benefits (insurance), or contract support
- Professional health care providers: message therapists, chiropractors, dieticians, yoga instructors, personal trainers
- Gift cards, cash incentives, event tickets
- 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, food, snack, and condiments as well as over the counter medicine.
- Outdoor equipment: Fertilizer and pesticide, benches, 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.