

SUPPORTING HEALTH & WELLNESS IN THE WORKPLACE

Mayor's Health & Fitness Council

Partner Certification Application User Guide



Developed by **Cristina Garcia, RDN, IBCLC**
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INTRODUCTION

The Partner Certification Program is a mutually beneficial workplace wellness recognition program for Austin/ Travis County-based organizations of all types and sizes. Created by the Mayor’s Health & Fitness Council (MHFC) in 2007, its goal is to incentive employers to support opportunities for improved nutrition, physical activity, and wellbeing for employees through policy, system, and environmental change.

COMPONENTS

Four Pillars of Health

To achieve MHFC Partner Certification, organizations must have health initiatives that comprehensively address each of the following four pillars of health (see page 3 for the 4 Pillars of Health).

Sustainable changes are achieved by:

<h3>ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE</h3> <p>Creates a long-term improvement in a person’s immediate environment that increases their ability to participate in exercise, be in a tobacco-free area, or eat more fruits and vegetables.</p>	<h3>SOCIAL SUPPORT</h3> <p>Creates a network of people who participate together and encourage one another in healthy behaviors.</p>	<h3>INCENTIVES & REWARDS</h3> <p>A system for recognizing or rewarding people who engage in healthy behaviors.</p>
<h3>DECISION PROMPTS</h3> <p>A prompt that is located at the point of decision which encourages a healthy choice.</p>	<h3>MARKETING & PROMOTION</h3> <p>A class, newsletter article, poster, email, or other informational piece or event that raises awareness.</p>	<h3>SYSTEM OR POLICY CHANGE</h3> <p>A system or policy change is designed to impact the health of everyone in an organization and does not require active participation to benefit.</p>

Technical Assistance provided by Austin Public Health (APH) for

- Policy design and implementation
- Chronic Disease Prevention Wellness Programming
- MHFC Partner Certification Application Completion

Partner Certification Program Application

- Objective/quantitative measures
- Points for having policies and programs under the 4 Pillars
- Must achieve minimum requirements under each pillar to be Partner Certified
- Organizations with a comprehensive tobacco-free policy eligible to become Gold certified
- Summed score of all the points, plus tobacco-free policy type, determine certification level
- Areas for improvement or policy change can be identified in each pillar/section

Certification Levels

Organizations can be certified at the Bronze, Silver & Gold levels

Recertification

Organizations recertify every 2 years – this is an opportunity to be certified at a higher level

THE 4 PILLARS OF HEALTH

The four pillars of health include: tobacco-free living, nutrition, physical activity, and health education/preventive services, including mother-friendly. Workplaces, a place where the average working adult spends most of their daylight hours, that support these four areas of health create a work culture devoted to assisting their employees achieve better health. Higher perceived workplace health support for employees is associated with higher work productivity.¹ This means that employees who feel their employer is supportive of healthy lifestyles will be more productive during the workday. Providing opportunities to support these four areas of health has the potential to increase business productivity, improve overall employee morale and health, and decrease health-care-related costs.



¹ Chen, L., Hannon, P. A., Laing, S. S., Kohn, M. J., Clark, K., Pritchard, S., & Harris, J. R. (2015). Perceived workplace health support is associated with employee productivity. *American Journal of Health Promotion*, 29(3), 139-146.

Pillar 1: Tobacco-Free Living

Tobacco use remains the number one preventable cause of death and disability throughout the entire nation.² Encouraging tobacco cessation in places where people spend many hours of their day, such as the workplace, has the potential to save lives. In addition to the higher mortality rate associated with tobacco use, businesses are affected when employees use tobacco products. Losses in productivity, increased employee healthcare costs, and absenteeism plague employers of tobacco users. Instituting and enforcing a tobacco-free environment is beneficial to the physical health of employees, the financial health of a company,

Tobacco-free policies can be tailored to each organization's unique needs. Considerations for tobacco-free policy type include property status (i.e. whether the location is leased or owned) and specific organizational needs/policies regarding tobacco use (see table below for different policy types).



Tobacco-free policy types:

Policy Name	Definition	Strength
Tobacco-free Leased Policy	Prohibits use of all forms of tobacco, including electronic cigarettes, by all tenants, visitors, contractors, and consultants at properties leased by the organization to other entities.	STRONG
Tobacco-free Campus Policy	Prohibits use of all forms of tobacco, including electronic cigarettes, by employees, visitors, contractors, and consultants on all properties owned, operated, or leased by an organization.	STRONG
Tobacco-free Personnel Policy	Prohibits use of all forms of tobacco, including electronic cigarettes, by employees at any location where an employee conducts business for the organization.	STRONG
Tobacco-free Workday Policy	Prohibits use of all forms of tobacco, including electronic cigarettes, by employees at any location where an employee conducts business for the organization. Employees are prohibited from using tobacco during business hours. Business hours of the organization include lunch and other break times.	STRONGER
Tobacco No Hire/ Non-Recruitment Policy	Prohibits the hire of any candidate who currently uses any tobacco or nicotine product. Candidates are notified during the hiring process of the policy. Current employees follow a tobacco-free workday policy, and as positions are filled, new hires follow the tobacco no hire/non-recruitment policy.	STRONGEST

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). *Fast Facts - Diseases and Deaths, 2015*. www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fast_facts/ Accessed March 18, 2019.

The resources listed below provide tools to become a tobacco-free workplace, free cessation resources, and educational fliers.

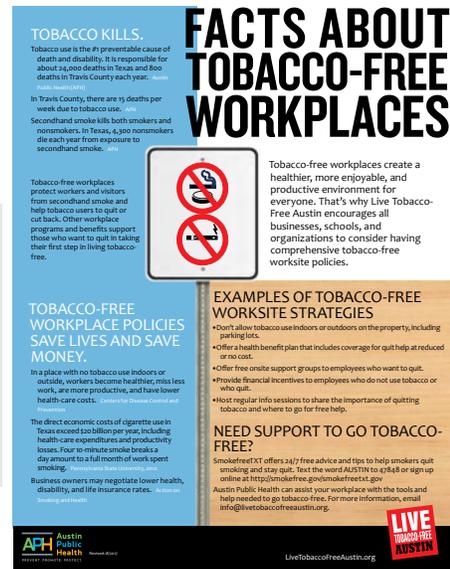
Free Resources: [Live Tobacco-Free Austin](http://www.livetobaccofreeaustin.org)



Tobacco Free Workplaces
www.livetobaccofreeaustin.org/tobacco-free-workplaces

How to Quit
www.livetobaccofreeaustin.org/how-to-quit

Facts and Tools
www.livetobaccofreeaustin.org/facts-and-tools



TOBACCO KILLS.
 Tobacco use is the #1 preventable cause of death and disability. It is responsible for about 4,000 deaths in Texas and 400 deaths in Travis County each year.

In Travis County, there are 15 deaths per week due to tobacco use.

Secondhand smoke kills both smokers and nonsmokers. In Texas, 4,300 nonsmokers die each year from exposure to secondhand smoke.

Tobacco-free workplaces protect workers and visitors from secondhand smoke and help tobacco users to quit or cut back. Other workplace programs and benefits support those who want to quit in taking their first step in living tobacco-free.

TOBACCO-FREE WORKPLACE POLICIES SAVE LIVES AND SAVE MONEY.
 In a place with no tobacco use indoors or outside, workers become healthier, miss less work, are more productive, and have lower health-care costs.

The direct economic costs of cigarette use in Texas exceed \$20 billion per year, including health care expenditures and productivity losses. Four to minute smoke breaks a day amount to a full month of work spent smoking.

Business owners may negotiate lower health, disability, and life insurance rates.

FACTS ABOUT TOBACCO-FREE WORKPLACES

Tobacco-free workplaces create a healthier, more enjoyable, and productive environment for everyone. That's why Live Tobacco-Free Austin encourages all businesses, schools, and organizations to consider having comprehensive tobacco-free worksite policies.

EXAMPLES OF TOBACCO-FREE WORKSITE STRATEGIES

- Ban all other tobacco use indoors or outdoors on the property, including parking lots.
- Offer a health benefit plan that includes coverage for quit help at reduced or no cost.
- Offer free onsite support groups to employees who want to quit.
- Provide financial incentives to employees who do not use tobacco or who quit.
- Host regular info sessions to share the importance of quitting tobacco and where to go for free help.

NEED SUPPORT TO GO TOBACCO-FREE?
 SmokefreeTX offers 34/7 free advice and tips to help smokers quit smoking and stay quit. Text the word **AUSTIN** to 43588 or sign up online at <http://smokefree.gov/smokefreeatx.gov>
 Austin Public Health can assist your workplace with the tools and help needed to go tobacco-free. For more information, email info@livetobaccofreeaustin.org

Austin Public Health
 LiveTobaccoFreeAustin.org

Pillar 2: Nutrition

The pillar of nutrition promotes and encourages healthy food choices, nutritionally appropriate meals, and healthy eating habits. It is estimated that up to one-third of all deaths related to cancer stem from poor eating habits and a lack of physical activity.³ Making healthy food choices can reduce the risk for many serious illnesses, including cancers.⁴ Appropriate, healthy nutrition can improve the physical and psychological health of employees, thereby reducing absenteeism and increasing productivity. In the workplace, several actions can boost healthy eating habits and limit unhealthy nutrition. An emphasis on consuming more vegetables, fruits, and whole-grains and less salt, sugar, and saturated fats through worksite policies such as healthy vending and healthy meeting policies, and offering employees nutrition education, contribute to supporting healthy eating in employees. The resources listed below can help guide an employer interested in providing healthy food and beverage options at the workplace.

Free Resources: [American Heart Association](http://www.heart.org)



Healthy Workplace Food and Beverage Toolkit
www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/company-collaboration/healthy-workplace-food-and-beverage-toolkit

Healthy Meeting Checklist
www.heart.org/-/media/healthy-living-files/foodscape/checklist-evaluation-for-meetings-and-catered-meals-pdf-ucm_474796.pdf?la=en



³ American Cancer Society. Diet and Physical Activity: What's the Cancer Connection? www.cancer.org/cancer/cancercauses/dietandphysicalactivity/diet-and-physical-activity. Accessed March 18, 2019.

⁴ American Cancer Society. Lower Your Cancer Risk By Eating Right. www.cancer.org/myacs/newengland/lower-your-cancer-risk-by-eating-right. Accessed March 18, 2019.

Pillar 3: Physical Activity

Physical activity has been shown to provide a host of positive health benefits, including lowering the risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, depression, and some cancers. Additionally, it can decrease workplace presenteeism (working while sick with some type of illness), absenteeism, and disability rates.^{5,6} Regular physical activity can control weight, strengthen bones and muscles, help manage stress, and improve self-esteem.⁷ The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) both recommend that healthy adults exercise at least 30 minutes per day, 5 days per week. Many adults work in job environments where physical activity is limited, which makes achieving these recommendations difficult. A common misconception of employers is that providing employees with opportunities for physical activity will take away from workplace productivity. However, incorporating physical activity into the workplace can lead to greater productivity and positive economic returns to the company.⁸ With proper planning, implementation, and creative strategies, an organization can encourage healthier employees and more productivity through physical activity opportunities. The following resources are examples of programs that can easily be implemented to encourage employees to increase their daily physical activity within their workday.

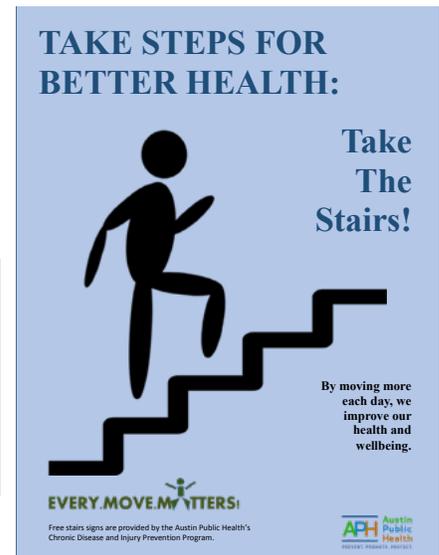
Free Resources: Healthy Places, Healthy People

Decision Prompts

www.healthyplaceshealthypeople.org/resources

Walk TX and More 10-Week Challenge & Yoga Beginner Series

www.healthyplaceshealthypeople.org/getactive



⁵ Walker, T. J., Tullar, J. M., Diamond, P. M., Kohl III, H. W., & Amick III, B. C. (2017). The Association of Self-Reported Aerobic Physical Activity, Muscle Strengthening Physical Activity, and Stretching Behavior with Presenteeism. *Journal of occupational and environmental medicine*, 59(5), 474; Goetzel, R. Z., Long, S. R., Ozminkowski, R. J., Hawkins, K., Wang, S., & Lynch, W. (2004).

⁶ Health, absence, disability, and presenteeism cost estimates of certain physical and mental health conditions affecting US employers. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 46(4), 398-412.

⁷ The Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Summary: Physical Activity and Health- A Report of the Surgeon General. www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/sgr/summ.htm. Accessed March 18, 2019.

⁸ Mills PR, Kessler RC, Cooper J, Sullivan S. Impact of a health promotion program on employee health risks and work productivity. *Am J Health Promot*. 2007;22(1):45-53.



Pillar 4: Health Education & Preventive Services, including Mother-Friendly Worksites

A workplace that is supportive and encouraging of a mother-friendly environment for their employees demonstrates that the company is serious about the health of its employees and their families. Fostering a culture that is receptive and honors the values of their employees is essential to employee retention.⁹ In addition, children's health benefits due to breastfeeding results in fewer sick days that mothers and fathers take for their children's illnesses, higher productivity, and lower health care costs overall.¹⁰ Likewise, mothers gain benefits from breastfeeding such as weight loss following pregnancy, reduced risk for postpartum depression, cancers, type 2 diabetes, and osteoporosis.⁷ A healthy mother translates into a healthy employee that can effectively contribute her time and energy at work, resulting in greater productivity. Since mothers usually return to work within 12 weeks following birth, and breastfeeding is recommended through the first year, workplaces should provide reasonable accommodations for mothers to express breast milk while they are on the job. Ultimately, mother-friendly policies and practices contribute to healthy babies, employees, and overall business productivity.

Many employers offer a variety of family-friendly and caregiver support programs/policies to help employees achieve work-life balance. Options for programming can be tailored to meet the needs of each organization and range from offering paid leave (including paid family/parental leave), flexibility in location and working hours, including self-care in organizational culture/branding, and providing support for employees with caregiver responsibilities. The resources below will help employers develop programs and policies to support employees who have family responsibilities, including caring for aging family members, so that they can bring their whole self to work every day.

Free Resources:

Texas Mother Friendly Worksites

www.texasmotherfriendly.org

Family-Friendly Workplace Toolkit

www.earlymattersgreataustin.org/toolkit

Caregiver Support Toolkit for Employers

www.mhfaustin.org/partner-certification-toolkit



⁹ The US Department of Health and Human Services- HRSA Maternal and Child Health. *The Business Case for Breastfeeding*. www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/breastfeeding-home-work-and-public/breastfeeding-and-going-back-work/business-case. Accessed March 18, 2019.

¹⁰ Slavitt W, editor. *Investing in Workplace Breastfeeding Programs and Policies: An Employer's Toolkit*. Washington, DC: Center for Prevention and Health Services, National Business Group on Health; 2009. www.businessgrouphealth.org/pub/?id=f2ffe4f0-2354-d714-5136-79a21e9327ed. Accessed March 18, 2019.



Additional Resources

Austin Mayor's Health & Fitness Council Website

www.mhfcaustin.org

Find information on the MHFC Board, Austin Business Group on Health, MHFC Program applications, and resources for worksites.

CDC's Workplace Health Promotion Website

www.cdc.gov/workplacehealthpromotion/index.html

Learn more about workplace health promotion and how to design, implement, and evaluate effective workplace health programs.

CDC's Worksite Health Scorecard

www.cdc.gov/workplacehealthpromotion/initiatives/healthscorecard/index.html

Learn more about the CDC Worksite Health ScoreCard, a tool designed to help employers assess whether they have implemented evidence-based health promotion interventions or strategies in their worksites to improve the health and well-being of their employees.