

10 ways to design better wellness incentive programs

http://ebn.benefitnews.com/gallery/ebn/10-ways-to-design-better-wellness-incentive-programs-2743254-1.html?portal=ebn_hc_wellness_disease

With the average wellness incentive reaching nearly \$600 this year according to some estimates, it's no wonder employers are looking to get more bang for their buck. The right incentive program depends on a host of factors and requires thoughtful consultation with your wellness vendor. Here are 10 best practices from Provant to guide the development of effective incentives.

In addition, start with WHY. Inform the workforce regarding the need and benefit of a wellness program in terms of health and medical impacts, macro/micro economic, organizational effectiveness, quality of life for individuals, families and the community.

Those with a compelling enough Why will find a HOW.

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- Know what the top health cost drivers are for your workforce and offer incentives for wellness initiatives that address those health risks.
- Determine the type of incentives based on the demographics of your employees and company culture: cash may work for some populations, while a tier-based plan may be more motivational for others.
- Make the rewards and what the employee has to do to earn them easy to understand and easy to communicate.
- Determine early on how new hires will be handled (what will they need to do and the timeframe in which they have to complete the goals).
- Set a reasonable timeframe for participants to complete goals.
- Communicate early and often about what participants need to complete in order to earn the incentives.
- Clearly define and communicate reasonable accommodations and medical appeals process.
- Make sure the effort or activity that is required in order to receive the reward is reasonable compared to value of the reward.
- Ensure that employees can earn the incentives if they are going to participate in the wellness program. Whether the incentive criteria are to participate, complete, or meet specific health goals, they must be attainable.
- Engage employees throughout the plan year by scheduling wellness events over several months. As employees participate and earn rewards for activities, they will gain better perspective on their health.