

# Wellness Programs

Wellness programs are generally health promotion and disease prevention programs and activities offered to employees as part of an employer-sponsored group health plan. There are three main types of wellness programs:

- **Participatory wellness programs**, which are generally available without regard to an individual's health status and do not offer any reward based on satisfying a health-related standard.
- **Activity-only wellness programs**, which require an individual to perform or complete a health-related activity to obtain a reward.
- **Outcome-based wellness programs**, which require an individual to attain or maintain a specific health outcome in order to obtain a reward.

Wellness programs are subject to certain federal requirements. General compliance information for these different types of wellness programs appears below.

## Participatory Wellness Programs

Participatory wellness programs offered as part of a group health plan generally must:

1. Be made available to all "similarly situated individuals." However, the following employees can be treated as different groups of similarly situated individuals: part-time and full-time employees, employees working in different geographic locations, and employees with different dates of hire or lengths of service.
2. Not bar individuals from participating based on a health factor, including disability.
3. In accordance with HIPAA, generally protect from disclosure any individually identifiable health information collected from or created about participants in the program. [Click here](#) for more information.
4. If sponsored by an employer with **15 or more employees**, offer reasonable accommodations that allow employees with disabilities to participate.
5. If collecting employee health information **and** sponsored by an employer with **15 or more employees**, distribute an **ADA Notice Regarding Wellness Program** to all individuals eligible to participate. [Click here](#) for a sample ADA Notice Regarding Wellness Program.
6. If sponsored by an employer with **15 or more employees**, ensure that the employer does not receive any information about program participants except where necessary for plan administration.

## Activity-Only Wellness Programs

Activity-only wellness programs offered as part of a group health plan generally must:

1. Not bar individuals from participating based on a health factor, including disability.
2. Allow participants to obtain a reward at least once per year, and generally limit such rewards to 30% of the cost of coverage under the health plan for the employee and his or her dependents.
3. Offer a reasonable alternative standard to individuals who, due to a medical condition, are unable to satisfy the standard necessary to obtain the reward.
4. Distribute a Wellness Program Disclosure in all plan materials that describe the program. [Click here](#) to download a model Wellness Program Disclosure.
5. In accordance with HIPAA, generally protect from disclosure any individually identifiable health information collected from or created about participants in the wellness program. [Click here](#) for more information.

6. If sponsored by an employer with **15 or more employees**, offer reasonable accommodations that allow employees with disabilities to participate.
7. If collecting employee health information **and** sponsored by an employer with **15 or more employees**, distribute an **ADA Notice Regarding Wellness Program** to all individuals eligible to participate. [Click here](#) for a sample ADA Notice Regarding Wellness Program.
8. If sponsored by an employer with **15 or more employees**, ensure that the employer does not receive any information about program participants except where necessary for plan administration.

## Outcome-Based Wellness Programs

Outcome-based wellness programs offered as part of a group health plan generally must:

1. Not bar individuals from participating based on a health factor, including disability.
2. Allow participants to obtain a reward at least once per year, and generally limit such rewards to 30% of the cost of coverage under the health plan for the employee and his or her dependents.
3. Offer a reasonable alternative standard to individuals who do not meet the program's initial standard based on a measurement, test, or screening.
4. Distribute a **Wellness Program Disclosure** in all plan materials that describe the program. This notice must also be furnished to any individual that fails to satisfy an outcome-based standard necessary to obtain a reward. [Click here](#) to download a model Wellness Program Disclosure.
5. In accordance with HIPAA, generally protect from disclosure any individually identifiable health information collected from or created about participants in the wellness program. [Click here](#) for more information.
6. If collecting employee health information **and** sponsored by an employer with **15 or more employees**, distribute an **ADA Notice Regarding Wellness Program** to all individuals eligible to participate. [Click here](#) for a sample ADA Notice Regarding Wellness Program.
7. If sponsored by an employer with **15 or more employees**, offer reasonable accommodations that allow employees with disabilities to participate.
8. If sponsored by an employer with **15 or more employees**, ensure that the employer does not receive any information about program participants except where necessary for plan administration.

**Additional requirements and exceptions may apply to your wellness program.** For more information, [click here](#).