

Well Workplace Award Executive Summary

City of Ames Gold Recertification Award

Information in this publication is carefully reviewed for accuracy. Questions, comments, or ideas are welcome. Please direct to Dr. David Hunnicutt, Executive Editor, at the address below.

Information may not be reproduced, copied, cited, or circulated in any printed or electronic form without written permission from the publisher. ©2002 Wellness Councils of America, 9802 Nicholas Street, Suite 315, Omaha, NE 68114; phone (402) 827-3590; fax (402)827-3594; visit our website at www.welcoa.org.

All rights reserved. Information contained in this document was accurate at the time the award was designated. Due to changing business environments information is subject to change without notification.



WELLNESS COUNCILS OF AMERICA

© 2002

PREFACE: NARRATIVE

The City of Ames is a municipality that serves approximately 50,000 residents, including 25,000 Iowa State University students. The City is governed by a city council, with the city manager responsible for administering the policies established by the council. The city manager also sets the tone for the City of Ames organizationally. He establishes the vision and philosophical beliefs upon which the City operates.

There are 14 departments within the City of Ames. They are: Attorney, Manager/Clerk, Electric, Equipment Services, Finance, Fire, Human Resources, Library, Parks and Recreation, Planning and Housing, Police, Public Works, Transit, Water and Water Pollution Control. A Department Head directs each of these departments and divisions within them. The Employee Wellness Program falls under the supervision of the Parks and Recreation Department.

The Employee Wellness Program began in 1986 as a part of the Public Wellness Program of the Parks and Recreation Department. The Parks and Recreation Department seemed a logical choice to house the new Employee Wellness Program because of the qualifications of the Public Wellness Supervisor. Initially, the wellness offerings to the employees of the City of Ames included aerobics classes and a nutritional education class. Employees and their spouses received classes at a discounted rate. In 1989 Wellness Profiles were first offered to employees, spouses and retirees and included bloodwork, a Health Risk Appraisal and a fitness assessment.

In 1991 a part-time employee was added to the Public Wellness Program. This allowed the full-time staff person to devote half of their time to the expansion of the Employee Wellness Program. A Wellness Committee was organized with an employee volunteer from most worksites. In 1991 the City of Ames became a member of the Central Iowa Wellness Council (currently the Wellness Council of Central Iowa).

In 1993 the Public and Employee Wellness Programs were separated. A permanent half-time employee was hired to supervise the Employee Wellness Program. The City of Ames became a Bronze Well Workplace. The program offered employees a variety of screenings, nutritional counseling, fitness classes and educational workshops. In May 1993 an Employee Health Care Advisory Committee was established to try to control rising health care costs. The committee began to analyze health care claims and survey and assess data to determine the areas of greatest need and cost, with programming implemented to address these needs.

In 1996, 482 City employees attended a Healthwise workshop and received a Healthwise Handbook, promoting self care in an effort to impact health care costs. The City became a smoke-free workplace and offered monthly smoking cessation classes. In 1997 the Wellness Program began offering a comprehensive stress management class, Total Life Management. In 1998 and 1999 a series of Cash Flow and Debt Reduction classes were offered. In the fall of 1997 a Health Culture Audit from Human Resources Institute, Inc. was completed. In 1998 the New Employee Orientation was reorganized, and as part of the orientation, all new employees were given a one-hour medical self-care workshop and a Healthwise Handbook.

In 1999 the Wellness Program continued its wide variety of programming and moved into the Workers Comp area with a Musculoskeletal Intervention for departments incurring the most frequent injuries. In 2000, mammogram screenings were offered to all employees and spouses at little or no cost. Musculoskeletal Interventions continued, as well as a full array of programming and screenings. In 2001, the Wellness Program worked to develop fitness programming for the fire and police departments. In June 2002, the Wellness Supervisor was asked to be a part of the newly formed Health Insurance Team, created to analyze health cost data and develop a plan to address escalating health care expenditures. In October 2002, with the resignation of the Employee Wellness Supervisor, the Employee and Public Wellness Programs were once again brought together, with the thought that both programs would benefit and programming duplications could be eliminated.

Currently, both programs are supervised by a full time Wellness Supervisor with the assistance of a full time staff person. All ongoing programming, such as fitness classes, nutritional counseling, mammogram screenings, wellness profiles and monthly wellness publications continue, as the transition is made bringing the Public and Employee Wellness Programs together.

Mission Statement for City of Ames Employees

The Mission Statement for the City of Ames states, among other things, that: "We are a caring people, providing quality programs with exceptional service to a community of progress... valuing continuous improvement in our organization, valuing personal development and valuing each other."

The Vision Statement for the City of Ames Employee Wellness Program states that: "The Employee Wellness Program will be an effective champion for both the good health and well being of every employee and their family and for the organizational health of the City of Ames."

The mission of the Employee Wellness Program is to support and encourage employees and their families in their efforts to achieve and maintain healthy lifestyles, by providing educational materials, programs and activities and by promoting organizational health.

Remote Sites

The City of Ames is housed in 16 different buildings. Most sites have a Wellness Ambassador who coordinates the wellness events at that site. All sites have access to a full range of wellness programming, brochures and information.

A Musculoskeletal Intervention program was started at four different worksites to reduce the occurrence of work related injuries at those sites. Research and programming was implemented to bring fitness equipment, testing and programming to the fire and police departments, meeting the needs of their shift workers. Departments employing shift workers have relied on the Employee Wellness Program to provide information regarding the effects of shift work on employee health and morale.