

**Well Workplace Award  
Executive Summary**

# **Cooperative Benefit Administrators, Inc.**

## *Silver 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.

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## General Information

### WELL WORKPLACE

*Silver Application*

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#### Basic Information

Name of Organization Cooperative Benefit Administrators, Inc.

Address of Organization \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Council Affiliation WorkWell Inc. Lincoln-Lancaster County

Contact Person Carmen Wiles

Title Human Resources Manager

Work Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax Number \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Alternate Contact Susan Martens

Parent Organization Nat'l Rural Electric Cooperative Assoc (NRECA)

Number of Sites Covered by this Application 1

Number of Employees Covered by this Application 136

Nature of Business or Industry Health Claims Administration

Name of CEO Erlene Davis

Date of Application November 25, 2003

## Executive Summary Overview

**Senior Level Support:** The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) offers its approval of the resource allocation of funds for the wellness programs and activities for Cooperative Benefit Administrators, Inc. (CBA), a subsidiary of NRECA. The Human Resources Department oversees the allocated budget for all events. The decision of which events to offer lies with the responsibility of the Human Resources Advisor, Sr. Administrative Assistant, and the company's Enrichment Committee which provides volunteer staffing for all the programs. All managers within CBA are all very positive in providing support and direction when it comes to the programming and planning events. They have a good understanding of the importance of good health within the company since their positions are surrounded by healthcare providers and health insurance systems. A calendar of events is presented to the Director-CBA on an annual basis and she will review it and offer her opinion as to the content and costs. This is then communicated back to the Enrichment Committee who will begin the planning based on her recommendations, if any.

**Wellness Team:** An Enrichment Committee consisting of 7 employees including the team leader and each presenting a unit within the company. Five of the 7 members will serve a two-year term. The mission of the committee is to provide educational and entertaining programs and activities for the entire staff that encourages healthy lifestyles and at the same time enhance relationships. Committee members are active, full-time employees who volunteer to partake in the organization and distribution of assignments. Each member assumes the attitude of commitment, enthusiasm, dedication, cooperativeness and flexibility. The committee will also address concerns and input from other staff within the company. Each team member respects each other's ideas which helps keep the team close.

**Data Collection:** CBA's demographics are 128 employees, 104 females and 24 males. The average age is 39. We collected data from 8 different sources of data. They are:

- An employee health risk appraisal, which was conducted in October 2003.
- An employee health needs and interest survey, which was conducted in March 2003.
- A facility assessment, which was conducted in May 2003.
- A health screening fair, which was conducted in March 2003. It had 7 different screenings; cardiovision, body composition, bone density, blood pressure checks, diabetes, AICHg, cholesterol, triglycerides, HDL good cholesterol and LDL bad cholesterol.
- A corporate culture audit that was conducted in March 2003 along with the employee health needs and interest survey.
- Injury records for calendar year 2002. The OSHA 300 Log was used to gather this data to see how many work injuries were reported to our workers compensation insurance carrier.

**Operating Plan:** The majority of the CBA staff have identified the following 5 goals: (1) Walking-Exercise Programs, (2) Stress Management, (3) Weight-Nutrition Management, (4) Financial/Retirement Planning, and (5) Back Care. Employees will be

offered an optimum of ways to make healthy choices and provide incentives for them to maintain and reduce health risk behaviors. The goal for the next 3 years is to increase healthy habits of the staff by 10%. Objectives include (1) increase weekly physical activity, (2) increase awareness of health related issues and educate staff on preventative measures, and (3) increase awareness and educate staff on dealing with lifestyle changes.

**Programs and Interventions:** Programs provided at the awareness level were the health screenings and distribution of topic related/calendars/self care manuals. Two behavior change programs were the Stretchware program and the Weighs for Life-Weight Management program. Three programs were presented at the education level; (1) Parenting Series, (2) Stress Series and (3) Healthy Heart/Nutrition.

**Supportive Environment:** Several requirements concerning company policy and benefit options are in place at CBA. Some of these are: tobacco restriction, emergency procedures, alcohol/drug policy, disability prevention, incentives to promote program participation, maintenance of accessible wellness materials and recognition and rewards for success in the wellness program activities.

**Evaluation:** Evaluation of programs at CBA are conducted in a variety of ways. The employee perfect attendance program is one such program that is tracked every quarter. Another way is receiving information and feedback from the Enrichment Committee who has daily face-to-face contact with the staff. Program evaluations are also conducted with the staff via email. Results of a culture audit are also available to management to help determine what programs are of interest to the staff and should be considered offering. Production indicators such as the service levels and quality audits are an objective measurement. Quality is divided into four categories with associates randomly audited each day. Accuracy is measured in PAI (paid correctly), PAB (dollars paid correctly), PSA (statistical accuracy) and PAR (reaudit category).

## **“Preface: Narrative”**

### **Organizational and Program Background**

#### **Overview**

CBA is a not-for profit subsidiary of NRECA, a national trade association. CBA was founded in 1984 and today administers claims for some 900 separate benefit plans covering over 160,000 individuals. CBA's workforce consists of 133 employees of which 111 are female and 22 are male. The average age is 39. CBA's senior management staff consists of Erlene Davis, Director - Claim Administration and Pam Zimelman, Director - Operations. CBA previously was awarded the Well Workplace Bronze designation in 2001.

#### **Background of Wellness Initiative**

With the nature of our business being in the claims administration we see first hand the cost of not having healthy lifestyles. Health promotion has been a major part of our business since 1984. Programs concerning weight management, increasing physical activity, financial planning, and numerous other programs have been conducted throughout the years. Please see the Operating Plan for the 3-year goals.

The Enrichment Committee (Wellness Committee) was developed within a couple years after the establishment of CBA to encourage healthy lifestyles and enhance employee relationships. Just a year ago the wellness committee adopted its mission statement as “Wellness Works at CBA.” This logo is used on all employee communications and other promotional material. The committee is charged with providing educational and entertaining activities for the staff that encourages healthy lifestyles and also to enhance employee relationships

## **Vision and Mission Statement**

Our vision of the future is that the member systems serve their communities such that all Americans would choose such service; that NRECA's member systems are seen contributing to a healthy environment, enabling people to live well and work productively in rural America, and that its member systems are recognized as leaders of the rural agenda. The mission of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association is to provide information and services to make the member systems most competitive worldwide. The core values exemplified are competitiveness and community.

## **Organization Chart**

The Enrichment Committee consists of seven full-time staff members of the organization and is lead by the team leader, Carmen Wiles, Human Resources Manager. See the attached organizational chart.

## **Look and Feel of the Initiative**

### **1. Senior Level Support**

Over the years at CBA the health promotion efforts have continued and improved even through leadership changes at CBA. This alone indicates the importance of the wellness initiative and the continuance of it. CBA has always had senior level support whoever is in the leadership role. At the senior level the company's strategic goals and budget decisions are made and these decisions can make or break the wellness initiative. The wellness team leader has been able to keep the wellness efforts in the forefront of those leaders so those decisions are in support of the wellness program. It has proven to be helpful as we were able to achieve the bronze level well workplace designation in 2000.

## **2. Wellness Team**

The wellness team at CBA has been able to maintain cohesiveness because of how it was formed. The team consists of employees, selected by their peers and managers, who represent all levels of employees, and who represent a cross section of the company. A majority of these individuals have been with the company for at least 5 years and so they have seen what works and what doesn't work in terms of wellness and employee activity programming. This helps them bring forth many good ideas and make good well thought out decisions that will support the wellness initiative and keep it alive. Since the team is included in any program decisions, they feel like they have some input into the programming decisions. Each of them respects each other's ideas, which helps the team remain close.

## **3. Data Collection Efforts**

The team has always believed that in order to offer programs that will support the wellness initiative and meet the employees' interests and needs, they must be able to collect accurate data through employee interest surveys, culture audits, and health risk appraisals. They have done this consistently through the years and have managed to meet the needs of the company and the employees.

## **4. Crafting an Operating Plan**

Each year the Human Resource Manager and the Administrative Assistant, who are members of the wellness team, get together and look at the data results and craft a proposed program plan for the next year. The wellness team reviews and discusses the plan and eventually approves it so it can be presented to the Director for approval. All of this keeps the initiative on track and alive throughout the year.

## **5. Choosing Appropriate Interventions**

The real discussions among the wellness team take place when deciding the “five W’s” to implement the program. Since the wellness program has been alive at CBA for many years and many of the team members have experienced it, they know what has and hasn’t worked and the plan intervention decisions are based on their past experiences.

## **6. Creating a Supportive Environment**

Fortunately, CBA’s environment doesn’t present too many obstacles when it comes to wellness programming. We primarily have one work shift during the day hours and one very small team of employees that work some evening hours. This makes it much easier to schedule programs at times employees can participate. The environment is an office setting and Senior Management ensures that the office is ergonomically furnished, the air and building is clean, provides adequate work breaks, and the surroundings are pleasant. The management team allows the wellness team members time to attend planning meetings and to help with the various programs in addition to allowing employees the time to attend the programs. Employees are supportive of wellness and other employee programs and this is evident through their participation. It isn’t difficult to get the workforce excited about participating in the programs as long as we offer them programs that meet their needs and interests.

## **7. Evaluating the Program Outcomes**

We consistently get feedback on our program offerings to track participant satisfaction and document any changes in their attitudes and behaviors. After every program we send out an evaluation form to gauge their satisfaction. If the program allows us to track behaviors we document the participant behavior prior to the program, after the program,

and then again to see if changes have been made. We have done this with our “Stretchware” program this year and we’re doing that with our health screenings and will be doing that with our stress management programs via surveys and repeat program offerings. The results of the programs will be used to monitor the success of the program and will be communicated to senior management at regular staff meetings.

### **What Made the Wellness Initiative What it is Today**

The success of the wellness initiative at CBA is a result of a group effort rather than just one individual. The group consists of the Director, Sr. Administrative Assistant, Enrichment Committee, and the Human Resources Manager. Each year the program grows and improves in the program selection and quality. Its’ success is attributed to the attitudes of all those individuals involved and the excitement they have about the importance of having a “healthy company”. Last year the committee decided a wellness slogan was important and so it came up with “Wellness Works”. All the members truly believe that wellness works and positively impacts many areas of the company from employee morale to health benefit costs. It is this excitement and originality that keeps the initiative alive and keeps it growing each year.

### **Wellness Initiative Strengths**

Our wellness effort gives our employees three things that they wouldn’t get if we didn’t have a wellness program. It provides them with ongoing health education, an awareness of preventative health conditions, and opportunities to improve their health via a variety program offerings in areas such as weight management, stress management, mental health, nutrition, physical exercise, parenting, ergonomics, financial management, elder care, grief, cancer, drug and alcohol addiction, and self -defense. In time all of these

things will have or have already had a profound impact on their well being and their ability to perform productively and happily at CBA, Inc.

Health education is offered in a variety of ways. Email is the most common method to deliver wellness information and each month we send out wellness information on a variety of health topics. We also hold a number of Lunch 'N Learn sessions to address various health issues. Each employee gets a book entitled, "Self-Care" and each year a wellness calendar is handed out to each employee.

Personal health awareness occurs whenever we hold some kind of health screening. For the past couple of years we have held a health screening for blood lipid profiles, blood pressure, cardio screen, osteoporosis, skin analysis, and a blood sugar test for diabetes. Each time an employee participates and gets this personal health information, it creates an awareness of their health status and hopefully motivates them to make behavior change, which is the third unique strength our initiative offers employees.

We have been offering behavior change programs for a number of years in the areas of weight and nutrition management. Recently, we have been focusing on programs that will increase employees' physical activity levels, improve their stress management, maintain ergonomic work conditions, and improve their physical fitness. These have all been offered over the course of the past 24 months.

### **Popular Programs**

CBA offers an array of programs to their staff. The most popular programs amongst the employees would be the annual walking program, Massage Therapy and the \$300 fitness membership/equipment program. This year the staff participated in Exercise America, a walking program whereby staff exercised their way through all 50 states in 50 days by

converting exercise minutes to miles and keeping a journal. There were 50+ fitness activities to choose from with three levels of participation. Fun trivia, state facts and word games were also enjoyed by the staff with an assortment of prizes being awarded. CBA offers a Massage Therapy program to the staff. Each week a local massage therapist comes on-site to provide a seated massage to the staff for a nominal fee. This program has been offered for several years and continues to be very popular. CBA provides a fitness subsidy program to help their staff achieve their exercise goals by making it more affordable, convenient and attainable. The company will contribute up to \$300 annually toward the cost of an annual single fitness membership or reimburse the employee up to \$300 toward the purchase of one piece of in-home exercise equipment if they choose not to join a fitness facility. This includes equipment such as a treadmill, stair stepper, rowing machine, weight bench, bicycle and other similar equipment.

#### **Other Information**

CBA has a low turnover ratio of staff in comparison to the industry standards. The overall feeling of the CBA staff is good as CBA provides an excellent benefit package and challenging work with a nice environment. CBA has prided itself on being a healthy company with a return on investment through minimal health care premium increases and with one year having a decrease in premium. A few of the exclusive benefits that CBA has to offer is a staff recognition program, elder care (use of extended illness hours for care), employee referral bonus program, legal assistance program, casual dress attire, perfect attendance program, and others.

# CBA ORGANIZATION CHART

