

# SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

## What Are Social Determinants of Health?

Social determinants of health (SDOH) is defined as “the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life.”<sup>21</sup> The workplace ties into many aspects of SDOH.


The Healthy People 2020 definition of SDOH indicates that “health is also determined in part by access to social and economic opportunities; the resources and supports available in our homes, neighborhoods, and communities; the quality of our schooling; the safety of our workplaces; the cleanliness of our water, food, and air; and the nature of our social interactions and relationships.”

Workplaces are at the cornerstone of SDOH for employees, and therefore, employers have a responsibility to be mindful of SDOH when considering their employee population. By incorporating tactics that aim to address SDOH, employers can promote equity within the workplace.

## Here’s What It Means for Employers

- » SDOH can impact more than just an individual’s personal life—employees bring their personal life to work with them!
- » While employers may not have direct control over certain SDOH, they can influence the SDOH associated with employment. The following demonstrates an employer’s ability to help fill in gaps for SDOH:

## Employer Influence




### ACCESS & QUALITY OF HEALTHCARE

EXAMPLES

- » Network access issues
- » Established PCP relationship
- » Out-of-pocket cost for care

POSSIBLE INTERVENTIONS

- » Educate employees on the importance of having a PCP
- » Offer a telehealth option
- » Open up an onsite or near-site clinic
- » Promote the free preventive services through the health plan:  
[healthcare.gov/coverage/preventive-care-benefits](https://healthcare.gov/coverage/preventive-care-benefits)




### SOCIAL & ECONOMIC FACTORS

EXAMPLES

- » Employment/income
- » Education
- » Social support
- » Community safety
- » Community connection

POSSIBLE INTERVENTIONS

- » Offer a tuition reimbursement program
- » Provide employees with financial wellness education
- » Offer employees the ability to submit anonymous feedback/safety concerns
- » Offer a CSA for employees to have access to fresh produce
- » Create a resource map for food markets/food banks/farmers markets or partner with local vendors:  
[ams.usda.gov/local-food-directories/farmersmarkets](https://ams.usda.gov/local-food-directories/farmersmarkets)
- » Create volunteer opportunities for employees to give back to the community
- » Form a volunteer partnership with a local non-profit or charity (i.e. offer ongoing volunteer opportunities throughout the year)
- » Sponsor a local charity (e.g. promote a holiday give-back event for employees to partake in or sponsor a community garden)



### PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

EXAMPLES

- » Built environment
- » Transportation
- » Air and water quality

POSSIBLE INTERVENTIONS

- » Create a space for employees to exercise/provide gym discounts
- » Offer transportation subsidies
- » Direct employees to local transportation options/resources

## Did You Know?

- » Lower income and minority communities are less likely to have access to grocery stores with a wide variety of fruits and vegetables.
- » In 2006, adults with less than a high school degree were 50% less likely to have visited a doctor in the past 12 months compared to those with at least a bachelor's degree.
- » Low socioeconomic status is associated with an increased risk for many diseases, including cardiovascular disease, arthritis, diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases, and cervical cancer, as well as for frequent mental distress.

**SUGGESTED RESOURCE** // Mental Health in the Workplace: <https://www.welcoa.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/i-mental-health-in-the-workplace.pdf>

## Social Determinants of Health & WELCOA 7 Benchmarks



### **Benchmark 3: Collect Meaningful Data to Evolve a Wellness Strategy**

Collect meaningful data and identify what the needs of the employee population are.

**SUGGESTED RESOURCE** // Benchmark 3 Toolkit: <https://www.welcoa.org/resources/resource-topics/benchmark-3-toolkit/>



### **Benchmark 5: Choosing Initiatives that Support the Whole Employee**

Based on the needs from Benchmark 3, what can the employer provide? Choose initiatives that support the whole employee (i.e. physical, emotional, social, financial and career wellbeing).

**SUGGESTED RESOURCE** // Benchmark 5 Toolkit: <https://www.welcoa.org/resources/resource-topics/benchmark-5-toolkit/>



### **Benchmark 6: Cultivate Supportive Health Promoting Environments, Policies, and Practices**

Company supporting Benchmark 5 by being involved/encouraging employees to be able to take advantage of resources/initiatives and decrease barriers for employees (financial support, communication support, endorsement from leadership)—cultivating company support for employees to take advantage of opportunities that are either employer sponsored or other.

**SUGGESTED RESOURCE** // Benchmark 6 Toolkit: <https://www.welcoa.org/resources/resource-topics/benchmark-6-toolkit/>

## Sources

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<https://www.cdc.gov/socialdeterminants>

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