

County of Alameda, California

Worksite Wellness Policy

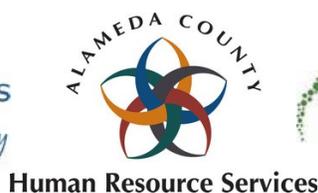


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Policy Introduction

Purpose

This Worksite Wellness Policy aims to improve the health and well-being of County employees and residents. We all want to be healthy, and the goal of this policy is to make it easier for Alameda County employees and residents to make healthy choices during our busy days.

Alameda County wants to take a leading role in modeling healthful environments by improving access to healthy food choices and by supporting healthful behaviors where employees and residents live, play, and work.

Need

Overweight and obesity prevalence continues to be a problem in Alameda County. More than half (58%) of adults and one-third (34.7%) of school-aged children are overweight or obese.¹ Obesity is a serious concern because it is associated with poorer mental health outcomes, reduced quality of life, and the leading causes of death in the United States (heart disease, diabetes, stroke, and some types of cancers).² Obesity results from a combination of contributing factors, including individual behaviors such as dietary patterns, physical activity, and inactivity. Additionally, people make decisions based on their environment. Community, school, health care, and workplace settings can all influence daily behaviors. Therefore, it is important to create environments in these locations that make it easier to engage in physical activity and eat a healthy diet.

About two out of three adults (62.5%) do not walk regularly³ in Alameda County, and only 41% of adults regularly walk for transportation, fun, or exercise. Most adults do not eat the recommended servings of daily fruits and vegetables.⁴ Twenty-five percent (25%) of working adults eat at work one or more times each week, and that food is generally high in empty calories, salt, fat, and sugar. The majority of foods obtained at work is not from cafeterias or vending machines but offered for free at social events and meetings.⁵

The economic costs associated with overweight, obesity, and physical inactivity in Alameda County are staggering. The combined economic costs of health care and lost productivity associated with overweight prevalence, obesity, and physical inactivity in 2006 were estimated to total \$2.17 billion.⁶ Obesity has also been linked with reduced worker productivity, chronic absence from work, and medical expenditures.⁷

¹ <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/DCDIC/NEOPB/Pages/SNAPEdCountyProfileDashboard.aspx>

² <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/adult/causes.html>

³ <http://www.healthyalamedacounty.org/indicators/index/view?indicatorId=2832&localeId=238>

⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6426a1.htm>

⁵ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-workplace-snacks/workplace-foods-a-source-of-unhealthy-calories-idUSKCN1PN27B>

⁶ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-workplace-snacks/workplace-foods-a-source-of-unhealthy-calories-idUSKCN1PN27B>

⁷ <https://www.phi.org/uploads/application/files/b3ijvh13fg7xbztpyt0kbcu8g4iqn7lzzl6ykuhobjek0758wj.pdf>

As one of the largest employers in the region, Alameda County can take a leading role in modeling healthful environments. Making small changes, such as switching to consuming water in place of a sugar-sweetened beverage, can measurably affect health outcomes. Since people spend at least one-third of their day at work, the worksite becomes crucial for helping to improve the health of Alameda County residents.

Policy Updates

In 2009, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Alameda County Nutrition and Physical Activity Policy and Guidelines, brought forward by the Alameda County Public Health Department. Since then, great strides have been made in worksite wellness. This policy updates the 2009 version by integrating the two sections (Policy and Guidelines), updating nutrition standards, and taking into account programs that have been developed over the past nine years to support worksite wellness and sustainability.

Some milestones over the course of policy implementation are highlighted in the table below.

Milestone	Date
Policy promotion materials developed	2010
Policy and supportive materials posted on ALCO web	2010-2017
Promoted policy at AC Health Expos	2010-2018
All-county staff email sent to promote policy	2010
Articles promoting policy included in department newsletters (i.e., AC Courier)	2010
Policy Promotion presentations at county departments	2010–2011
Caterer Forum – training on “healthy criteria”	2010
Posted posters at vending machines	2010
Bike to Work Day activities	2010-2018
Integrated nutrition policy into Manual for Accounting Policies and Procedures (MAPP)	2011
Language added to Uniform Procurement Manual to support policy enforcement	2011
Videos promoting and explaining policy were created and shared on YouTube	2011
Facility use and waiver forms for PA created and promoted	2011
Language inclusion in RFP request by Asian Youth Center	2011
Green & Healthy Meeting & Event certification launched with trainings	2014
430 bike racks installed across 36 county locations	2015-present
Employee Climate Action Summit	2015
Green & Healthy meeting planning presentations at over 20 staff meetings	2015
Green & Healthy Awards contest/ceremony, recognizing employees who plan healthy events	2015
Community Commutes Day inter-agency competition encouraging active transportation	2016
Kickoff events at ACPHD – Broadway and Creekside	2016
Policy Handbook created	2016
AC employee “bike fleet launch”	2014
Healthy meeting Toolkit developed and distributed to ACPHD pilot departments	2017
Vending machines at Santa Rita Jail now in compliance	2018
ITD’s new HQ includes bike fleet bikes, bike room, open staircases, lockers, and shower	2019

Key Requirements

- A choice of healthier refreshments must be offered when County funds are used to serve meals, snacks, or drinks.
- County-funded meetings and events must take steps to reduce waste. Practices will be appropriate to the event but at minimum include serving tap water rather than bottled water and avoiding disposable plastic plates.
- Vending machines at County-leased or owned spaces are required to offer healthy options.
- All County meetings and events that are two hours or longer must provide a ten-minute break for stretching or physical activity.
- When leasing, buying, or building a new facility, convenient access to transit, bike racks, lockers/showers, staircases, and areas for physical activity should be considered. When planning large events, convenient access to transit should be considered.

What This Means to You

The policy was developed to make worksite environmental improvements possible. Tangible changes will be evident in the daily experiences of County employees and residents when visiting County facilities or meetings.

- Even more healthy options will be available for you to choose from at County-funded events and meetings. These may include seasonal fresh fruits and vegetables.
- At events and meetings, waste reduction efforts will be made. Examples include using reusable dishware and serving drinks in pitchers.
- A greater selection of healthier snacks and drinks will be available to you in vending machines at County facilities.
- You will be invited to stretch or exercise during breaks in meetings.
- Biking, walking and taking transit to County facilities will be more convenient.
- Employees will also see continued opportunities and incentives to stay physically active. For instance, employees will be invited to physical activity classes during lunch or after work.
- Employees will see increased opportunities to incorporate physical activity into commutes and on-the-job travel, such as by biking or walking to transit.

Implementation

The Wellness Working Group will oversee the implementation of the policy. The Wellness Working Group members in the Health Care Services Agency – Public Health Department, County Administrator's Office – Risk Management Unit, and General Services Agency (GSA) will provide technical assistance for staff who order and purchase food, plan meetings and events, and wish to organize on-site physical activity. Wellness Working Group meetings will also provide technical assistance as needed to caterers and vending machine operators.

The Public Health Officer will provide a yearly report to the Board regarding the status, progress, challenges and successes of this policy implementation, and if necessary, recommend potential amendments.

How to Learn More and Get Involved

- All of us have a role in promoting a culture of wellness in our own departments and in the community.
- Department directors and managers can encourage employees to participate in wellness events and include wellness items on staff meeting agendas.
- Managers can orient new employees to wellness programs and support staff by accommodating flex time to facilitate exercise, participation in wellness programs, or active commuting. Event planners can follow the guidelines when ordering food for meetings and events and get recognized by applying for Green & Healthy meeting certification through GSA. Staff who work with community-based organizations can ask them to follow these guidelines when using County funds for their meetings and events.
- Staff can be supportive of each other by forming walking or other activity groups, participating together in sponsored events, and encouraging one another to make healthful food choices.
- The policy and related resources are posted at <http://acgov.org/wellness>.

Contacts

Questions can be directed to Working Group representatives:

Wellness and Physical Activity:

Employee Health & Wellness Manager
CAO Risk Management Unit
(510) 272-6920

Meals, Snacks, and Vending:

Annette Laverty
Nutrition Services
Public Health Department
(510) 268-4220

Waste Reduction and Sustainability:

Emily Sadigh
Office of Sustainability
General Services Agency
(510) 208-9531

Healthy Meetings & Events

Healthy Food

- Whenever County funds are used to purchase food for County meetings and events, those foods will provide variety, nutritional benefit, and choice. This includes all foods that are catered, purchased, or prepared for County meetings or events.
- At least 50% of all food choices available at events, meetings, and other agency/department-supported activities will contain no more than 5% Daily Value "saturated fat", no more than 5% Daily Value "added sugars" per serving, and contain 0% trans-fat. It is suggested that items also contain at least 3 grams of fiber.
- It is recommended to serve refreshments buffet-style (rather than in prepacked boxes) so that participants can choose their own items and portion sizes, which also reduces food and packaging waste.
- For environment sustainability and accommodation of those who do not eat animal products, providing a vegetarian option is optimal.



Healthy Beverages

- Whenever County funds are used to purchase beverages for County meetings and events, those beverages will provide variety and nutritional benefit. This includes all beverages that are catered, purchased, or prepared for County meetings or events.
- At least 50% of all beverage choices available at events, meetings, and other agency/department-supported activities will contain one or a combination of the following:

Water	Plain, sparkling, and flavored water (no added caloric sweeteners)
Coffee & Tea	Coffee or tea with no added caloric sweeteners (if condiments are provided, sugars and sugar substitutes may be provided and milk/creamer products, such as whole or 2% milk, that have less fat than cream)
Milk	Fat-free or 1% low-fat dairy milk 1% fat or less milk alternatives (soy, rice, or almond milk) with less than 200 calories per container
Juice	100% fruit juice or fruit juice combined with water or carbonated water (limited to a maximum of 12-ounce container; no added caloric sweeteners) 100% vegetable juice (limited to a maximum of 12-ounce container, no added caloric sweeteners, and less than 200 milligrams of sodium per container)
Other	Low-calorie beverages that are 40 calories or less per 8-ounce serving

Physical Activity

- All County meetings and events that last two (2) hours or longer should provide a 10-minute physical activity or stretch break. Meetings that are longer than four (4) hours should provide additional breaks. Employees planning events are encouraged to hold large meetings or events in locations convenient to public transportation and to provide directions to participants for how to reach the meeting by public transportation.



Sustainability and Waste Reduction

- Alameda County is committed to sustainable practices that reduce waste and support the local economy. Meeting and event practices should be in accordance with the 75% Waste Diversion Resolution adopted in 2008, the *Alameda County Climate Action Plan for Government Services and Operations* adopted in 2010, and the Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy adopted in 2011.
- Whenever possible, the use of local and regional foods at County meetings or events is recommended. Seasonal fresh fruits and vegetables are more likely to be regional than out-of-season produce.
- To assist employees who plan events, an optional Alameda County Green & Healthy Meetings & Events certification checklist has been created. Event planners can review the Green & Healthy Meetings & Events resources for guidance. Examples of recommended practices include:
 - Reducing paper handouts or printing double-sided on recycled-content paper;
 - Getting an accurate attendee count in advance to right-size food orders and reduce waste;
 - Serving beverages in pitchers or large reusable dispensers;
 - Serving items in bulk rather than boxed or individually wrapped;
 - Clearly labeling recycling and compost bins;
 - Working with a certified Green Business caterer;
 - Using reusable trays and serving ware; and
 - Using reusable or compostable dishes and utensils



Most county sites have separate bins available for compost, recycling and waste.



Additional Resources

- Healthful options, catering vendors, and suggested menus for typical County events are posted on the wellness website, www.acgov.org/wellness. Resources include recipes for “spa water” to make water in large containers attractive to your meeting attendees.
- Simple exercise breaks that anyone can lead are posted on the wellness website, www.acgov.org/wellness.
- Green and Healthy event and meeting practices for County event planners are detailed on the sustainability intranet (<http://alcoweb.acgov.org/sustain/green-events.page>)
- Build your own “kit” to have on hand to promote healthier options at meetings and events. Contents could include:
 - Large serving bowl
 - Cutting board
 - Cutting knives (chef, paring, and/or utility)
 - 3-gallon beverage dispenser
 - Serving spoon
 - Tongs



Serving water in pitchers is an excellent way to have water available while reducing waste.

Healthy Food at Work

Encouraging Healthy Food

- Employees are encouraged to bring to work a variety of healthful, natural foods that are low in sugar and fat. Examples include:
 - Fresh vegetables
 - Fresh fruits
 - Whole grain breads or crackers
 - Whole grain cereals
 - Healthy protein sources including lean meats, fish, lentils, beans, nuts, and soyproducts
 - Water
 - 100% natural juices



Flavoring water with colorful fruits or herbs improves appearance and flavor.

Sharing Food in the Office



- Employees are encouraged to celebrate special occasions and to show appreciation of others with non-food items and activities.
- Employees are encouraged to inquire about food allergies/sensitivities and dietary requirements when providing food at special occasions. Be sure to observe food safety standards at potlucks, such as washing hands before preparing food and limiting the time that foods are left at room temperature.⁸

Healthy Food/Beverages in Vending Machines

- A minimum of 50% of food items available in vending machines on County-leased or County-owned property must comply with "Healthy Option Criteria" as described below. Healthy Option Criteria for snacks include:
 - Fruits or vegetables not processed with added fats or sugars;
 - Nuts not processed with added fats or sugars;
 - Items containing not more than 5% Daily Value of "added sugars" as listed on the nutrition fact label, except foods containing 100% fruits and/or vegetables;
 - Items containing not more than 5% Daily Value "saturated fat", (except nuts, which may exceed this level and be considered a Healthy Option) with no processed fats or sugars;
 - At least one item that meets the Federal Drug Administration low sodium criteria (foods with 140 milligrams or less per serving of sodium); and
 - Items not containing trans fats, trans-fatty acids, hydrogenated and/or partially-hydrogenated vegetable oils

⁸ For information on food safety visit <https://www.fsis.usda.gov> (click on "Topics", then "Food Safety Education")

- Healthy Option Criteria for beverages:
 - Beverages containing:
 - No high fructose corn syrup
 - No more than 12 fluid ounces or more than 200 total calories
 - At least 40% of all beverages must be non-carbonated
 - Carbonated or non-carbonated fruit juice beverages containing at least 50% fruit juice, neither nutritive or non-nutritive sweeteners (e.g., sugar or sugar-free sweeteners)
 - Water and other non-caloric beverages containing no sweeteners; and
 - Beverages with added nutritive sweeteners containing no more than 50 calories per 8 ounces, 75 calories per 12 ounces, or 100 total calories per container

All items that meet the "Healthy Option Criteria" must be stocked in ways that are easily visible and distinguishable from non-healthy items.

To implement this, County personnel responsible for vending machine contracts will provide, upon request from the Public Health Department, the location and vendor contact information for vending machines on County-leased or County-owned property.

Sustainability and Waste Reduction

- When sharing food at potlucks, employees are encouraged to use reusable or compostable plates, such as paper (rather than plastic) plates. Event planners may also want to invite employees to bring and wash their own reusable plates.
- Vending machines will comply with ENERGY STAR energy-saving guidelines to reduce County energy bills and our climate impact. This energy-saving policy will be implemented at the time of contract renewal.

Additional Resources

Healthy Vending Machine Options:

http://www.acgov.org/wellness/documents/Healthy_Vending_Machine_Options.pdf

Potluck Food Safety:

<https://www.manchesternh.gov/portals/2/Departments/health/Potluck%20Brochure.pdf>

Packing a Healthy Lunch:

<https://uhs.berkeley.edu/eatwellatwork>

Physical Activity Promotion

Encouraging Activity

- Employees are encouraged to meet the United States Department of Agriculture guideline of at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity and muscle-strengthening exercises on two (2) or more days each week. The following workplace-related activity ideas may help employees achieve this goal, especially with support of their managers:
 - Utilizing lunch breaks to walk, stretch, and engage in other movement activities, especially with friends and co-workers
 - Requesting use of flex time for physical activity purposes
 - Participating in Employee Wellness Program sponsored fitness initiatives which promote adoption of a more physically active lifestyle and the incorporation of physical activity during lunchtime, breaks, and at County-sponsored fitness events, including walking clubs, walkathons, and department-based competitions
 - Taking advantage of discounted rates offered by health plans to County employees at gyms and health clubs to enroll in and utilize such facilities
 - Taking part in initiatives promoting clean and active commutes, such as Bike to Work Month and Clean Commute contests
 - Taking physical activity classes offered onsite at lunchtime or after work; and
 - Taking the stairs whenever possible

Spaces Available for Activity

- County-owned or -leased facilities where County employees work should be made available at lunchtime and non-work time for physical activity, if the space is safe and suitable. Employees are welcome to apply to set-up an exercise group in County-owned or -leased space.

Work Environment

- Whenever possible, County contracts for leased facilities will make staircases and bike infrastructure such as racks, lockers, showers, and bike rooms available to County employees. Departments are encouraged to reinforce the importance of this by highlighting such requests in their space request.
- County facilities shall continue to add safe and convenient bike racks as feasible to facilitate bike use by employees and visitors.
- When leasing, buying, or building a new facility, convenient access to transit; bike infrastructure such as racks, lockers, showers, and bike rooms; staircases; and areas for physical activity should be considered.

Active Commuting and Business Travel

- The County will continue to establish, expand and publicize incentive programs for walking, biking, and using public transportation to work and on the job.
- Employees are encouraged to walk or bike to work and for work-related travel, when feasible. Employees can use the employee bike fleet for on-the-job travel and obtain discounts on local bike-sharing services for commutes.
- Employees are encouraged to commute by public transportation, which can complement walking or biking. Support from the County includes pre-tax transit benefits and free County shuttles from BART stations. The Guaranteed Ride Home program is also available to clean commuters in Alameda County.
- Employees are encouraged to take public transportation for on-the-job travel. A Clipper Card check-out program and shuttles to County facilities have been established to make this more convenient.



AC Transit makes it easy to help you get to work or meetings on a bike.

Additional Resources

- Free quarterly fitness classes such as yoga and Zumba are offered free to County employees at several locations:
<http://acgov.org/wellness/fitness/classes.htm>
- To ensure everyone's safety, there are a few steps to apply to exercise at your worksite on lunch or non-work time. These are detailed at
<http://acgov.org/wellness/fitness/guidelines.htm>
- Bay Area health clubs offering discounts to County employees are listed on
<http://acgov.org/wellness/fitness/club.htm>
- The website, <http://commute.acgov.org>, contains comprehensive information on clean commuting for County employees.
- The sustainability intranet site will direct you to additional resources for clean commuting and clean on-the-job travel:
<http://alcoweb.acgov.org/sustain/Transportation.page>



Use a pack attached to your bicycle to carry meeting papers. And don't forget a lock to keep your bike safe.

Other Wellness and Well-Being

Wellness Activities

- The County will engage employees, dependents of employees, health plan and other benefit providers, health professionals and other community members in support of the Countywide Wellness and Disease Management initiatives and activities. The County is committed in providing a work environment that fosters good health and well-being for all employees.
- County Agencies/Departments will encourage employees to participate in County-sponsored health and wellness activities and provide incentives when financially feasible as outlined in the policy implementation plan.
- Employees are encouraged to take advantage of prevention and wellness activities and disease management programs offered by their health plans and other benefit providers.
- Employees are encouraged to participate in the prevention and wellness activities offered by the County's Employee Wellness Program sponsored or co-sponsored by the Risk Management Unit of the County Administrator's Office and Human Resource Services Department. These activities include:
 - Annual health expos;
 - Fitness and nutrition initiatives and events;
 - Onsite group physical activity classes;
 - Health education seminars and brown-bag presentations; and
 - Web-based health and wellness resources and referrals.



Stress Reduction

Stress is normal but if it occurs too often, it can have negative effects on your health. Employees are encouraged to look for ways to reduce stress, including getting enough sleep, participating in meditation/mindfulness practices, addressing the cause of stress, and eating healthier foods.

The County offers stress management classes and webinars that employees can attend at no cost.

Ergonomics

- Ergonomics means adjusting and arranging your work environment to fit you. Applying ergonomic principles will help prevent injuries and improve efficiency both on and off the job.
- Alameda County strategically addresses repetitive strain injuries throughout the multidimensional ergonomics safety program.
- Employees can ask their supervisor about scheduling an ergonomic evaluation.
- The County offers office ergonomic classes at no cost to employees.

Smoke-Free Worksite

- Alameda County owned- and leased-buildings shall be smoke-free.
- Smoking, including the use of tobacco, electronic smoking devices, hookahs, and marijuana, shall not be permitted in any enclosed County facility, including common work areas, conference and meeting rooms, private offices, elevators, hallways, medical facilities, employee lounges, stairs, restrooms, and County-owned vehicles.
- This policy applies to all employees, clients, contractors, and visitors.
- Smoking shall also not be permitted within a reasonable distance of 25 feet outside entrances, operable windows, and ventilation systems of enclosed facilities where smoking is prohibited.
- Those employees who smoke and would like to take this opportunity to quit are invited to seek support from smoking cessation programs.

Additional Resources

- Ergonomics and stress management classes are available through the Alameda County training & Education Center at no cost to employees: <http://trainingcenter.acgov.org> (Members of the public may register for some classes for a fee.)
- The Claremont Employee Assistance Program offers resources to address stress at no cost to employees including online stress-reduction videos, free counseling visits, financial and legal consultations, and referrals to community resources. More information is available on the wellness website, <http://acgov.org/wellness/>.
- Your health insurance provider such as Kaiser Permanente or United Healthcare may also offer stress management classes. More details at <http://acgov.org/wellness/>, www.kp.org, or www.uhc.com.
- Smoking cessation resources are available on the wellness website, <http://www.acgov.org/wellness/disease/smoking.htm>

Breastfeeding Accommodations

Breastfeeding in the Workplace

Alameda County supports breastfeeding employees by providing adequate breaktime and space for mothers to express milk at work. Each County Agency/Department will post, enforce, and be consistent with State requirements for employers to provide break time and the use of a clean, private space for employees to express milk.

Additional Resources

- The California Department of Public Health notes the requirements and provides guidance on how to get help with workplace accommodations:
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CFH/DMCAH/Breastfeeding/Pages/Laws.aspx>
- Minimum requirements of the California Lactation Accommodation Law:
http://achcsa.org/media/10365/lactation%20policy_01%2002.pdf
You can contact your Departmental Human Resources Officer with questions.
- The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services provides guides for managers and employees:
<https://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/breastfeeding-home-work-and-public/breastfeeding-and-going-back-work>