

Human Resources Management Wellness Program

USDA Forest Service
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HRM Wellness Program

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Overview

The Human Resources Management (HRM) Wellness Program objectives are to:

- Promote optimal health and well-being through education and participation.
Encourage employees to participate in fitness and wellness activities as appropriate (i.e., weight loss, smoking discontinuance, flexibility, muscle tone, aerobic capacity, stress reduction, etc.).
- Enhance each employee's job performance by facilitating the employee's efforts to lead a
- physically and mentally healthy and productive life, both on and off the job and
- Enhance unit efficiency and productivity by reducing absenteeism due to illness and injury.
- By providing educational and fitness opportunities to increase knowledge and to improve the well-being of those in the program, we will increase personal effectiveness and agency productivity.
Improved personal and physical well-being will reduce nonattendance and accidents and promote positive employee morale.

Authorities

There are several policies which affect the establishment, implementation, and funding of the Human Resources Management Wellness Program. For reference, they are listed below:

1. [Title 5, United States Code, section 7901](#). Authorizes the head of each agency to establish a health service program to promote and maintain the physical and mental fitness of employees within the limits of available appropriations.
2. [Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 792](#). Provides agency requirements for offering health and counseling services.
3. [Forest Service Manual 6760, Amendment 6700-2019-1, dated June 11, 2019](#). Encourages Forest Service units to establish employee wellness programs which promote active lifestyles to maintain mental and physical well-being, to enhance an individual's ability to lead a satisfying and productive life, and to reduce Forest Service costs by increasing productivity and reducing illness and injuries.
4. [Master Agreement Between FS and NFFE \(Article 27.5\), effective September 13, 2019](#). A negotiated agreement between Management and NFFE that contains rules, requirements, and procedures for those employees that have been identified as the exclusive representative under the Federal Labor-Management Relations Statute. The agreement is superseded only by laws or Government-wide regulations and is a legally binding document. Article 27.5 provides wellness provisions specifically for the those recognized bargaining unit employees. Parties at the local and intermediate level may negotiate additional wellness procedures. The Master Agreement takes precedence over local or intermediate agreements if conflicts arise.

Eligibility

All permanent employees with approved Personal Fitness Plan Agreements are authorized administrative leave to participate in wellness activities. Temporary or term employees with an approved Personal Fitness Plan Agreement may receive administrative leave for participation in wellness activities.

All permanent employees in pay status are authorized to participate in wellness education with advance supervisory approval.

Note: Employees who are allowed administrative leave for exercise under other authorities or programs are excluded from also participating in physical fitness activities under the Wellness Program during any period that would result in duplication or overlap of coverage.

Employees in travel status: Employees who are in travel status are encouraged to use the fitness room provided by the facility in which they are staying if one is available. Under certain conditions, it may be permissible to use a government-owned or leased vehicle to participate in an approved wellness activity while in travel status. Contact your supervisor if you have questions.

Termination from the program: Failure of an employee to fulfill the requirements of their Personal Fitness Plan Agreement may result in the termination of their authorization to participate in this Wellness Program.

Administration

1. HRM executive leadership administers this Wellness Program in accordance with the authorities listed above.
2. This Wellness Program may be modified to meet local collective bargaining obligations where applicable.
3. This Wellness Program allows employees to participate in approved activities and programs that support their health and well-being.
4. This Wellness Program provides all employees with opportunities to increase their health and wellness awareness and knowledge through educational materials and events.
5. Wellness Program participation is strictly voluntary; however, all employees are encouraged to participate. Wellness participation has no bearing on performance reviews.
6. Supervisors and employees are responsible for maintaining copies of all associated Wellness Program documents (refer to attachment #1 and #2).
7. Employees who are injured while participating in an approved wellness activity may file workers' compensation claims with the Department of Labor (refer to Federal Employees

Compensation Action, 5 U.S.C 8108, et seq). When developing their Personal Fitness Plan, employees should consider activities that limit the potential for injury or illness.

8. The Forest Service is aware of the significant benefits of a Wellness Program to both the organization and individuals. The HRM Wellness Program Coordinator is the point of contact for this program (Masthead Safety Manager). As needed, the Wellness Program Coordinator in coordination with the HRM executive leadership, will provide feedback with recommendations for improvement of this program and its implementation to the HRM staff.

Wellness Activities

Education. All employees are encouraged to learn about how they might improve and maintain optimal health and wellness. This program component provides employees with information on an array of topics such as nutrition, stress management, weight management, smoking cessation, disease prevention, and other wellness issues. HRM units are encouraged to support employee participation in wellness education activities, such as seminars, and the associated educational opportunities, workshops, health fairs, and other health screening activities. Wellness education may also include sending newsletters, publications, and other wellness literature. Wellness education does not contain any physical exertion.

Employees are not required to “enroll” in the Wellness Program to attend USFS wellness education activities. If the workload permits, supervisors may authorize official time (code (66) to employees who wish to participate in wellness educational activities.

Physical Fitness Activities. Employees are encouraged to participate in health and fitness activities to meet their personal wellness goals within any limitation provided by their health care provider. One of the hosted physical fitness events is the Annual Tree Mile Run.

Forest Service Manual 6762 requires us to identify sanctioned fitness activities by considering the potential for injuries, and the image, such activities may present to the public. When reviewing activities for inclusion into or exclusion from the Wellness Plan, these three major factors were considered.

1. How the public would view the appropriateness of a particular activity, where government funding was supporting the activity(s).
2. Potential for injury or illness and how they might be associated with potential workers' compensation claims.
3. An overall assessment of whether the activity fits into the Wellness Plan's goals of motivating employees rather than just providing recreation.

The potential for injury is determined by a great number of variables such as age, weight, familiarity with the activity, state of fitness and flexibility, frequency and intensity of the exercise, competitive drive, and warm-up and cool-down activities. Some personal fitness activities result in frequent, less serious injuries, while other activities result in less frequent but more serious injuries. Moderate intensity exercise lasting 30 minutes, four or more times a week, provides excellent fitness and health benefits with minimal risk. High-intensity exercise is associated with increased injury potential, and those activities are not included in the approved physical fitness activities list. Competitive sports events are not part of the approved physical fitness activity list.

Following are **approved** physical fitness activities that employees can participate in as part of the Wellness Program:

Aerobics <i>(Jazzercise, Zumba, etc.)</i>	Bicycling <i>(Roads w/approved helmet)</i>	Calisthenics
Cross-country Skiing <i>(Groomed trails)</i>	Fitness Classes	Free Weights (Spotted)
Hiking/Walking	Jogging/Running	Kickboxing <i>(Against bag)</i>
Non-contact Martial Arts <i>(Tai Chi, etc.)</i>	Pilates	Racquetball
Rock Climbing <i>(Supervised in a gym setting)</i>	Rowing Machine	Ski Machine
Skipping/Jumping Rope	Stair/Step Machine	Stationary Bicycle/Spinning
Stretching/Toning	Swimming (in a pool)	Tennis
Treadmill	Weight Machines	Yoga

The following lists **non-approved** activities:

Basketball	Canoeing/Kayaking	Darts
Football	Golf	Hockey/Rugby
Ice Skating	Martial Arts <i>(Contact)</i>	Off-road Cycling
Rock Climbing <i>(Outdoors/unsupervised)</i>	Rollerblading/Roller-skating	Skiing <i>(Downhill/backcountry)</i>
Snowboarding	Soccer	Softball/Baseball
Volleyball/Wallyball	Telemark Skiing	

Alternate Health Programs. Alternate Health Programs support a wide range of structured programs that serve to meet personal wellness goals including weight management, stress management, mental resilience or mindfulness, and smoking discontinuance. These structured programs may be authorized and provided as group activities for employees or as part of an Individual Wellness Agreement. The approving official must consider the potential for injury and how the public might perceive the activity.

Liability. Employees who are injured while participating in agency-approved physical fitness activities may file workers' compensation claims with the Department of Labor (refer to Federal Employees Compensation Act, 5.U.S.C. 8108, et seq). When developing their Personal Fitness Plan, employees should consider activities that limit the potential for injury or illness.

Wellness Program Enrollment

Employees who wish to participate in the approved physical activities or alternate health programs must enroll by obtaining an approved Personal Fitness Plan Agreement (Attachment #1). The agreement requires that the employee identifies the approved wellness activities, proposed schedule, and frequency.

The agreement requires that the employee identifies the approved wellness activities, proposed schedule, and frequency.

The employee must also provide a Medical Authorization (Attachment #2). Any expense associated with obtaining medical authorizations is the responsibility of the employee and not reimbursable under this program. Personal Fitness Plan Agreements, along with the applicable medical information, must be updated annually.

Initiation fees, exercise clothes, towel fees, equipment, and food (even if associated with a weight management program) are not reimbursable expenses; these items are the responsibility of the employee.

Administrative Leave. Employees may use up to three (3) hours per week, of administrative leave for activities covered by their Personal Fitness Plan Agreement if their workload permits and must be approved by their supervisor in advance. Administrative Leave used for wellness activities cannot exceed one hour per day or be less than 15 minutes per day. Unused hours cannot be carried over to the next week. Employees cannot use administrative leave to account for travel time for any wellness activity. Administrative leave for wellness activities should not be granted when greater than 4 hours are previously scheduled for sick or annual leave or on non-workdays. The total hours for a single workday should not exceed what an employee has documented in their Regularly Scheduled Administrative Workweek (RSAW) in Paycheck 8. Wellness and work time are combined to meet your scheduled hours for the day. Wellness time is not to be tacked on to the day resulting in more hours than are regularly scheduled to be worked for that day.

Scheduling of Administrative Leave. Wellness activities should be scheduled at a time that is mutually agreeable between the employee and his/her supervisor. Utilization of the Wellness

Program during periods of heavy workload is at the discretion of the supervisor.

Activities can be performed outside of their established work hours, from 5am to 10pm. For example, an employee whose established work schedule is 8:00am to 4:30pm leaves at 3:30pm to exercise later in the day, 7:00pm to 8:00pm. Administrative leave is granted for one hour and the compensable hours do not extend the established work hours scheduled for the day as outlined in their RSAW in Paycheck 8. Employees will not be granted administrative leave for wellness activities on holidays, non-workdays, such as days when greater than four hours of any type of leave is claimed.

Time-sheet Certification and Coding: The employee's signature on the Time & Attendance (T&A) report certifies that the employee participated in fitness activities during the time administrative leave was charged. Administrative leave for wellness will be coded using TC 66 and descriptor code 06.

Credit Hours: Employees may not earn credit hours during wellness time. The purpose of the Administrative Leave option is to allow an employee to use some base hours for wellness participation. If at the end of the pay period, an employee has exceeded their base hours, then Credit Hours Earned would be coded for the extra hours worked, not for wellness participation.

Administrative leave for wellness is not intended to be the routine granting of additional work hours in a pay period. Authorization for administrative leave for wellness activities may be withdrawn where employees exhibit a continued pattern of earning credit hours, compensatory time, or overtime in conjunction with administrative leave for wellness.

Sundays: Only employees who are regularly scheduled to work on Sundays may be granted administrative leave for fitness activities on Sunday.

Night Shift Differential: If an employee's regular schedule does not include night pay or shift differential, they are not entitled to night pay or night shift differential while participating in the Wellness Program when they exercise between 6:00pm and 10:00pm or between 5:00am and 6:00am.

NFFE Bargaining Unit Employees: All terms of the Master Agreement apply to this Wellness Program. Administration of this program may not violate or conflict with any provisions of the Master Agreement for NFFE Bargaining Unit Employees, particularly concerning Article 18, Work Schedules and Article 27, Section 5, Programs for Wellness Activities.

Note: Employees who are allowed work time for exercise under other authorities or programs are excluded from also participating in the HRM Wellness Program during any period that would result in duplication or overlap of coverage.

Attachment 1

PERSONAL FITNESS PLAN AGREEMENT

To be completed by the employee

Employee's Name:	Unit:
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Supervisor's Name:	Section:
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My Work schedule is: **Fixed-Schedule** **Flexible-Schedule**

FULL-TIME (80 hours/pay period)

PART-TIME (show regularly scheduled hours per pay-period):

PART-YEAR (show number of guaranteed pay-periods):

My Program/Activity(s): (physician's authorization is required)

My Program/Activity schedule: (describe attendance or participation frequency)

- I have read and understand the provisions and requirements of the Human Resources Management Wellness Program.
- I agree to abide by all conditions and requirements of the Human Resources Management Wellness Program applicable to my approved activity(s).
- If I fail to comply with these requirements, this agreement may be limited or terminated by my supervisor.
- Any changes to this agreement must be approved by my supervisor in advance.
- I have provided a Medical Authorization to my supervisor.
- This Agreement is valid for one (1) year.

Date Agreement Initiated

Renewal Date

To be completed by Supervisor

REQUEST IS: **Approved** **Denied**

If limited, modified, or disapproved, please explain:

Supervisor Signature

The employee and supervisor will review this agreement during both the second and fourth quarterly performance reviews. This will have no bearing on the performance rating.

*Original: Employee
Copy: Supervisor*

Attachment 2

Medical Authorization

Employees Name Printed: _____

Employees Signature: _____

Authorizing Physician

Name Printed: _____

Signature: _____

Does this authorization warrant re-evaluation? If so, when? _____

Facility: _____

Phone: _____

To be filled out by the physician:

_____ (PATIENT NAME) may participate in an unsupervised exercise program offered through the USDA Forest Service. This may include but are not limited to aerobic conditioning equipment (bicycling, x-country skiing, walking / running, rowing) and perhaps some muscle conditioning such as calisthenics or weight training.

Please specify any recommendations, limitations, or comments that the Forest Service, as administrators of this program, should be aware of:

Medical Authorization requires an annual update