

Discover Aurora: **Building a Holistic Wellness Program From the Ground Up**



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City of Aurora

A rapidly growing, diverse city where it's easy to enjoy the outdoors.

The City of Aurora sits about 10 miles east of Denver. Known as the “Gateway to the Rockies,” it’s famous for its outdoor recreation and natural attractions—including beautiful parks and open spaces, picturesque reservoirs, extensive trail systems, and world-class golf courses.

With an annual population growth rate of nearly 3%, Aurora is one of the country’s fastest growing suburbs and home to a thriving arts and cultural scene.¹ Aurora is also the most culturally diverse city in Colorado. Twenty-two percent of residents were born outside the U.S., and Aurora’s public school students speak over 160 languages.²

¹ Auroragov.org. Media Kit. November, 2022.

² Auroragov.org. Population.





City of Aurora at a glance:

WebMD Health Services client since 2021

Population of nearly 400,000

Third largest city in Colorado

The City of Aurora needs a wellness program that serves all kinds of employees.

City employees form the backbone of the community. About one-third are first-responders, including police, fire, and public safety. The rest of the workforce holds positions in utilities, engineering, finance, communications, parks and recreation, planning, and more.

For the past four years, WebMD Health Services has partnered with the City to develop and refine a wellness program that stays relevant for their ever-changing, growing, and diverse employee population. Read on to learn how they built their wellness program from the ground up.

A Holistic Focus on Well-Being

As the most culturally diverse city in Colorado, Aurora strives to unify communities and be a leader in creative outcomes and economic development. They carry this same innovative spirit and creativity into their employee wellness program.

Client Takeaway

“

By supporting and caring for the whole person—mind, body and spirit—we can enhance the health and engagement of our valued employees and build a culture of well-being in our organization.”

JENNIFER HICKEY

City of Aurora Wellness Coordinator





The Aurora Employee Wellness Program is built around five elements of well-being.

The City of Aurora launched their wellness program a decade ago. Originally, it focused on physical well-being, including biometric screenings, disease prevention, on-site fitness classes, and step and weight-loss challenges.

Over the past five years, the Aurora Employee Wellness Program has evolved to become much more holistic, incorporating multiple aspects of well-being to meet the needs of today's employees.

The program's approach is grounded in Gallup research showing that all aspects of well-being are interconnected: when an employee is struggling in one area, it impacts their quality of life in other areas, too. The City also recognizes that increased overall well-being can boost job satisfaction and engagement.

Win With Wellness is an incentive program which includes a variety of ways—across all the elements of well-being—to earn points. The incentive period runs from March through October each year, and employees who earn 200 points on the WebMD ONE portal receive a \$200 Visa gift card.

Career

Employees who feel a sense of purpose and like what they do are happier and more engaged.

Safety program

Diversity, equity, and inclusion programming

Formal mentoring programs

High performance bonus and recognition programs

Aurora Learn professional development classes

Tuition assistance

Continuing education program



Social

Social connections boost mental health and increase engagement.

Community health events

Colfax Marathon, the biggest marathon in Denver

Employee Wellness Committee

Monthly wellness walks

Annual Benefit, Wellness, and Safety Expo

Financial

Financial stress can affect both physical and mental health.

GERP - pension plan

Webinars on financial literacy

Retirement readiness and Medicare seminars

EAP financial services

HSA and FSA education

Physical/Mental

Meeting employees wherever they are in their journey to better physical and mental health.

Onsite wellness center with free, in-person and virtual fitness classes

Subsidized city recreation center memberships

Preventive care

Weight Watchers membership discounts

WebMD ONE portal (health coaching, wellness challenges, incentives)

EAP counseling services

Total Brain mental health and brain performance program

Three unique mental health apps

Chat with a mental health counselor

Mental Health First Aid at Work course

Fun events like “gratitude journaling” classes

Community

Volunteering is a known stress-reducer, increases social connections, and creates pride in the community.

Eight hours of paid time off to volunteer in the local community

Bike to Work Day

Discounts for the Colfax Marathon

Community health events



Spotlight on **Mental Health**

Like workers all over the world, the pandemic took a toll on City employees' mental health—particularly for essential workers. City data showed an increase in stress and burnout. And, the shift to remote and hybrid work resulted in a decrease in social connections and employee engagement.

To address these concerns, the City increased its mental health support with:

More education about EAP and Kaiser Permanente mental health offerings.

Stress management tips and education in monthly newsletters, with links to mental health resources.

The Total Brain Program, a neuroscience-based mental health and brain performance app.

Additional community-building activities and events to help bring workers together—whether they're remote or in person.





Well-Being for Managers

The City of Aurora found that engaging middle managers in the wellness program is key to empowering employees to participate themselves.

Managers are:

- Encouraged to practice and promote all five elements of well-being.

- Offered a quarterly “wellness for supervisors” course that teaches them how to support employee well-being and create a positive, supportive environment where employees can thrive.

- Encouraged to build strong relationships and trust with direct reports.

- Urged to demonstrate care and empathy in tandem with City-wide values: integrity, customer service, respect and professionalism.

Perhaps most importantly, managers are encouraged to lead by example by taking breaks, weaving well-being into the workday, and engaging in self-care.

Client Takeaway

“

When we give our managers the tools to focus on their own well-being, they share that information with their employees. It really helps them ‘walk the talk’ of well-being and shows employees that it’s a priority.”

JENNIFER HICKEY

City of Aurora Wellness Coordinator

A Robust **Wellness Committee**

The Wellness Committee plays a key role in the City's wellness program.

Over 20 wellness champions representing different departments within the City.

Meets monthly to review the wellness program and plan events, like the popular Bike to Work Day, Benefits Expo, team challenges and Wellness Walks.

Responsible for promoting wellness programs and events, including posting flyers, sending emails, and giving presentations.

Solicits feedback from peers about wellness program offerings.

Creates buy-in to build culture of well-being.



City of Aurora Employee Wellness Committee Mission Statement

To promote a culture of health in the City of Aurora by providing opportunities and resources that support the total well-being of our employees and their families.

Communication is Key

The City of Aurora relies on different modes of communication so that every employee hears about the wellness program on a regular basis. Some of their go-to tactics include:

A monthly wellness newsletter.

In its eighth year of production, the newsletter is emailed to every employee, and is a source of well-being info that employees have come to expect.

SharePoint site.

The intranet site is a one-stop shop for all of Aurora's well-being offerings. Managers also use the site to direct employees to the right well-being resources.

Communication for non-desk workers.

The team still uses print for hard-to-reach populations, including flyers for breakrooms and mailings to homes.

AURORA EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAM - MARCH 2023

NEWSLETTER

AT A GLANCE

- March 1**
Start of Win With Wellness Program
- March 9**
Nationwide Financial Education Session - Social Security, 12:30 p.m.
- March 23**
Nationwide Financial Education Session - Health Care Costs, 12:30 p.m.

Win With Wellness!
Participate and Earn a \$200 Visa Gift Card

It's time to Win With Wellness! We are excited to continue our partnership with WebMD to offer our Win With Wellness portal, which provides a more personalized experience for participants. Take meaningful steps to improve your well-being and earn a gift card - it's a win-win!

Step 1 - Access the Win With Wellness Portal

- Current participants: Sign into the Win With Wellness portal at <https://webmdhealth.com/coawellness>
- New participants: Create an account on the Win With Wellness portal using your employee ID number (all 7 digits)
- Medically-enrolled spouses are eligible to register on the Win With Wellness portal. *Medically-enrolled spouses are not eligible to receive a \$200 Visa gift card.
- Go Mobile! Download the free "Wellness At Your Side (WAYS)" app and enter the connection code "coawellness" to access the Win With Wellness portal on your smartphone or mobile device.
- Special Prize Drawings! Employees who complete a health assessment between March 1-31 will be entered into 15 prize drawings to win a \$25 Amazon gift card!

Step 2 - Earn at least 200 points on the Win With Wellness Portal by completing your choice of activities

ACTIVITY	DATES	POINTS
Resilience - Health Assessment	March 1-Oct. 31	50
Daily Health Plan (a listening & goal tool)	March 1-Oct. 31	100
WebMD Health Coaching - complete health coaching sessions via telephone or secure messaging	March 1-Oct. 31	\$1 each (max \$25)
Total Brain Program (mental health and brain performance) *Medically-enrolled spouses are not eligible for the Total Brain program.	March 1-Oct. 31	100
The Invitational (team-focused physical activity challenge)	April 5-May 23	100
Reflexology (physical activity challenge)	July 3-Aug. 22	100
Walk at 1st Environmental trail (walking challenge)	Sept. 1-Oct. 9	100
NEW! Participate in a wellness or fitness class - any community-based or employee wellness sponsored class of your choice (on program or virtual)	March 1-Oct. 31	50
Register and complete an organized walk - at least 1 hr weekly (on, before, after, or during work hours)	Jan. 1-Oct. 31	50
Volunteer in Aurora - utilize at least 4 hours of your paid Employee Volunteer time	Jan. 1-Oct. 31	50

Step 3 - Win With Wellness!

- Receive a \$200 Visa gift card for earning at least 200 points on the Win With Wellness portal. *Medically-enrolled spouses are not eligible to receive a \$200 Visa gift card.
- Earn all 200 points by October 31, 2023.

Win With Wellness is open to all benefit-eligible employees (both Kaiser and non-Kaiser members) and medically-enrolled spouses. For more information about the program, contact Jennifer Hickey at jhickey@auroragov.org or visit [SharePoint](#).

For questions or comments, please contact Jennifer Hickey at jhickey@auroragov.org or 303.739.7242, unless noted. For wellness resources visit the [Wellness Program SharePoint site](#).

For wellness resources visit the [Wellness Program SharePoint site](#)

Aurora Employee Wellness Program, March 2023



Client Takeaway

The City of Aurora's tips for top-notch well-being program communication:

- 1 **Keep up a regular cadence** of communication so employees know when to expect it.
- 2 **Use a variety of media** to reach people in different ways.
- 3 **Share success stories.** People love to hear about employees who have achieved their well-being goals.
- 4 **Use print as a “disrupter”** to get employees' attention—e.g., postcards to homes, tent cards in cafeterias or breakrooms.

Key Takeaways

The City of Aurora's Employee Wellness Program is successful because it doesn't just address one aspect of health, rather it considers multiple dimensions of employee well-being. An active Wellness Committee and a special focus on manager well-being, along with a steady stream of communication, makes it easy for employees to engage with the wellness program and helps create a true culture of well-being.



The results of this holistic approach are clear. In a recent survey:

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employees say the Wellness Program has had a positive impact on them;

87%

are satisfied with the Wellness Program; and

90%

reported the Wellness Program is a valuable benefit!

What's Next for the City of Aurora?

Continued program evaluation and reinvention.

The City reviews and evaluates their wellness program each year, using data on participation, WebMD ONE health assessment data, Kaiser Permanente utilization, engagement survey results, and employee satisfaction feedback.

They plan on including a mental health awareness training for leadership, promoting additional mental health programs through Kaiser, as well as weight management and health coaching options. They're also refocusing on preventive screenings, which declined during the pandemic. Finally, they plan to work on strengthening social connections between employees through community-building events and activities.

And, because the City is hiring new employees all the time, they want to make sure new hires get engaged in the wellness program right away. So, they are actively promoting their wellness portal and all of their wellness program offerings both during recruitment and onboarding.



The City of Aurora is growing rapidly, and it needs a wellness program that can meet the needs of its changing population. We're proud to be able to partner with the City to continually reassess their program to make sure we empower well-being in everyone and keep Aurora a healthy, vibrant place to live and work.



Empowering Well-Being In Everyone

To make the most of your well-being program, visit webmdhealthservices.com.