



## SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: Tuesday, April 7, 2026.** Please include this submission form as the first page of your electronic entry. Contact Gage Harter with any questions.

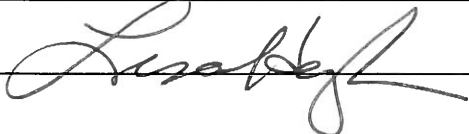
### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Chesterfield County  
Program Title: Employee Wellness Engagement Initiative  
Program Category: Education & Parks and Recreation

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Lisa High  
Title: Chesterfield Co Public Schools Deputy Superintendent  
Signature: 

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**Executive Summary:**

Chesterfield County's C-Fit Employee Wellness Program serves both Government and School employees. Following the pandemic, the program was thoughtfully restructured and relaunched with dedicated leadership and two full-time wellness professionals, each exclusively supporting their respective workforce. This realignment strengthened community partnerships, expanded engagement, and allowed for more tailored programming.

Within CCPS, C-Fit delivers an employee-centered wellness model across 73 schools, prioritizing strategic partnerships, themed wellness events, workshops, and professional development opportunities for faculty & staff.

More than 5,000 eligible employees participated in the \$360 preventive care incentive, reinforcing a focus on proactive health. The County also launched its first annual Wellness Fair, increasing awareness and engagement across the workforce. Additionally, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) connects employees and their families to vital mental health resources.

County leadership played a critical role in supporting the development of programming that has strengthened engagement and broadened access to wellness across the school division.

**Problem or need addressed by the program:**

The program was developed in response to rising healthcare costs and increasing signs of stress across our workforce. While wellness activities existed previously, they were not part of a unified strategy, and participation varied widely. Many employees were unaware of available

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supports, including confidential counseling and well-being coaching through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), or were unsure how to access them.

To address this, we strengthened communication by updating our website and newsletter to better highlight available resources. We also increased outreach by connecting directly with staff at faculty meetings and department retreats.

We know that employee wellness directly impacts morale, productivity, retention, and workplace culture. Although CCPS offered an EAP and a \$360 annual wellness incentive, these supports operated independently rather than as part of a coordinated effort.

The need was not simply for more programming, but for better integration. Employees needed accessible opportunities that addressed multiple dimensions of wellness while connecting them to professional support and preventive health resources.

This new approach created a flexible, structured system that aligns programming, mental health resources, and financial incentives into one comprehensive model—strengthening our commitment to a healthy and supportive work environment.

**Program Description:**

The Employee Wellness Engagement Initiative is grounded in the 8 Dimensions of Wellness: physical, emotional, social, financial, occupational, intellectual, environmental, and spiritual well-being. The primary objective is to create a sustainable and inclusive wellness culture by offering accessible, diverse, and skill-building opportunities for all employees.

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Development began at the start of the fiscal year with a review of participation data, budget allocations, and employee feedback. Programming was structured into monthly and quarterly initiatives to maintain consistent engagement throughout the year while remaining fiscally responsible. We communicate our engagement efforts through our monthly newsletters, our intranet page, and on-site wellness talks.

This fiscal year, we have featured 20 cooking classes, 12 themed wellness events, 4 movement challenges, one stress management lesson, four financial wellness sessions, three professional development workshops along with monthly webinars. In addition, we introduced employees to non-traditional wellness experiences that touch on one or more of the eight dimensions of wellness such as bird watching, olive oil education, local history boat tours, a staff chess club, lawn equipment safety sessions, and guided horseback riding. Free on-site yoga and group exercise classes were made available across schools, along with pickleball opportunities that encouraged social connection and physical activity. In addition, we offered a mountain biking club called C-Cycles that meets weekly at Pocahontas State Park.

To further support staff mental health, we have provided resiliency and compassion fatigue training throughout the year. As a culmination of programs that had been offered thus far, we hosted a division-wide Wellness Fair themed “Enter the Wellness Multiverse,” reinforcing the broader Workplace Wellness Model, where over 300 employees registered and many more stopped by.

C-Fit serves all school employees across departments, job classifications, and work locations. Offerings are intentionally designed to accommodate varying schedules, physical abilities, and financial circumstances.

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Private partnerships expanded programming without significantly increasing costs. Local instructors, wellness professionals, and small businesses contributed discounted or educational services. The program also intentionally promoted the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and aligned participation opportunities with the \$360 wellness incentive, ensuring employees had access to both preventive programming and professional support services.

**Program Cost:**

The County receives an annual wellness stipend from Anthem Health Insurance, allocated on a per-subscriber basis to support employee wellness programming. This funding is directly tied to health plan enrollment and provides funding to create programming, and to strategically expand partnerships, while maintaining long-term program sustainability.

The total operating budget through February 2026 is \$178,022, supporting a workforce of more than 14,000 eligible employees. To date, \$114,295.11 has been invested in strategic community partnerships with local vendors and organizations that provide diversified, nontraditional wellness programming. These partnerships were intentionally selected to expand access beyond traditional fitness initiatives and increase engagement among employees who may not otherwise participate.

To fully replicate this model, a county should anticipate an estimated annual investment of approximately \$200,000 to support staffing, vendor partnerships, incentive programming, and engagement initiatives. Because funding is scalable based on employee population and insurance participation, counties of varying sizes can proportionally adjust investment levels while maintaining the same structural framework.

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**Results/Success of the Program:**

The feedback from our Wellness Fair was overwhelmingly positive. Employees praised the engaging keynote speaker, informative breakout sessions, and the wide variety of vendor resources, including health insurance guidance, financial planning, mental health services, and community partnerships. Many reported taking immediate action—scheduling medical appointments, joining fitness programs, opening financial accounts, and making more informed Open Enrollment decisions.

Interactive experiences such as our healthy cooking demonstration, pickleball lessons, line dancing, mindfulness sessions, and breathing exercises were especially popular, with many participants expressing plans to continue these activities. The vendor fair, healthy snack displays, and organized event layout were frequently described as welcoming, energetic, and well-executed.

Our ongoing cooking and olive oil classes received exceptional praise for being free, inclusive, and hands-on. Participants value learning new recipes, knife skills, and healthy meal preparation techniques in a supportive, fun environment. Many shared that they plan to implement what they learned at home and requested additional classes.

Building on the success of our community partnerships, we have focused on developing programming with community partners to include offerings from local pickleball facilities and coaches, local fitness instructors, the county's parks and recreation department, local athletic facilities, and more. Further, these partnerships create a greater connection to the community for participants and highlights local attractions that they can explore on their own.

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Overall, testimonials reflect meaningful behavior change, increased awareness of district benefits and community resources, and a strengthened sense of connection and morale across the workforce.

Our Wellness program demonstrated measurable growth in engagement and awareness. More than 5,000 employees participated in the \$360 wellness incentive program, and over 2,000 employees engaged in wellness programming during the same period. Many initiatives reached capacity or developed waitlists, indicating sustained interest.

Employees have reported increased awareness of available resources, including EAP counseling services and monthly webinars. By consistently embedding EAP information into events and communications, the program helped normalize mental health support and reduce stigma.

We sent out surveys to our program participants asking for feedback. The results reflected appreciation for the variety of offerings and the opportunity to engage in wellness in ways that felt meaningful and inclusive.

Rather than functioning as isolated events, wellness activities have become integrated into the rhythm of the work year. Participation patterns show a shift toward ongoing engagement rather than one-time attendance.

Overall, the initiative strengthened workplace culture by promoting connection, skill-building, and proactive health behaviors while increasing utilization of existing benefits and resources.

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**Worthiness of Award:**

This program is innovative because it moves beyond isolated wellness activities and instead functions as an integrated system. Rather than treating programming, counseling services, and financial incentives as separate benefits, we intentionally aligned diverse wellness offerings, the EAP, and the \$360 preventive health incentive into one coordinated strategy. This systems-based design increases visibility, reduces stigma around mental health resources, and strengthens participation across multiple wellness dimensions.

The initiative also redefined what workplace wellness can look like. While many programs focus primarily on gym memberships or biometric screenings, our model expanded engagement through non-traditional offerings such as horseback riding, chess club, bird watching, local history boat tours, olive oil education, resiliency training, cooking classes, and on-site yoga. Community partnerships played a critical role in making these unique experiences accessible across the county. These opportunities engaged employees who may not typically participate in traditional fitness programming, fostering greater inclusion and a deeper cultural impact. In addition, we collaborated with Chesterfield County to support the weekly Farmers Market, held Wednesdays from May through October, extending wellness access to all County and school employees.

Innovation is further demonstrated through fiscal responsibility. The program leveraged existing benefits and strategic community partnerships with not for profit partners such as Virginia Credit Union. They have been able to assist us with support, resources and education to provide our employees with financial literacy. Engagement increased while costs remained stable, proving that meaningful outcomes can be achieved through better coordination rather than larger budgets.

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Most importantly, the initiative is scalable and replicable. Any locality with existing wellness benefits can adopt this integrated model to improve participation, maximize return on investment, and strengthen workforce culture. By combining measurable impact, creative engagement, and sustainable design, this program exemplifies the standards of a 2025 Achievement Award recipient.

**Supplemental Materials:**

[Wellness activity pictures](#)