

LOPFI

LOCAL POLICE & FIRE RETIREMENT SYSTEM

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To: LOPFI Employers

From: Local Police and Fire Retirement System (LOPFI)

Re: Common Components of Wellness Programs – Best Practices

Date: June 2020

LOPFI encourages all employers to utilize vigorous hiring practices that seek out and attract the most physically, mentally, and emotionally strong candidates to join the ranks of their police and fire departments. After joining your police or fire department, it is vital to then support your employees throughout their career by promoting healthy habits and offering employee assistance programs, testing, and screening to ensure the satisfactory state of the employee's physical, mental, and emotional health.

With the above background, LOPFI has assembled an overview of common components of wellness programs that employers may consider. Wellness programs are intended to promote ongoing healthy habits throughout an employee's career. Such practices can improve employee productivity while reducing health care, workers' compensation, and disability retirement costs.

As you consider implementing a wellness program, LOPFI encourages you to work closely with your legal counsel to determine what is best for your department. We hope this information is helpful. Thank you.

Common Components of Wellness Programs

Peer Support

- Provides access to resources and tools for employees experiencing personal or professional issues
- Provides essential support through non-disciplinary procedures
- Can help identify at-risk behavior, stress indicators, and training deficiencies
- Guidance, coaching, counseling, education, and training from senior level firefighters/police officers

Mental Health/Behavioral Health

- Psychological services
 - On site/In-House psychologist
 - Off-site psychologist (provides greater level of anonymity and confidentiality)
 - Contract with facility/physician
- Stress management
 - Assists with retirement planning, debriefing after critical incidents, supporting the peer support team, and in-service trainings

Wellness/Physical Fitness

- Medical exams (typically annually)
 - Health risk assessment
 - Heart screening
 - Medical history questionnaire
 - Physical examination
 - Blood analysis
 - Urinalysis
 - Vision test
- Certified physical fitness training
 - Some allow on duty fitness training for individual and team exercise activity
- Exercise and nutrition programs
- Injury rehab
 - Diagnosis, treatment, duty modification, injury prevention program

Chaplaincy Program

- Ordained minister
- Several instances that chaplains are retired firefighter/police officer
- Training and experienced in peer support
- Spiritual guidance and counseling

Deployed Military Support Unit

- Provides support when a firefighter/police officer deploys, while they are on assignment, and when they return
- Helps firefighter/police officer get access to services they are eligible for through the VA upon their return to civilian life

The information provided above was compiled based on research of the Fire Service Joint Labor Management Wellness-Fitness Initiative and the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Programs Case Studies completed by the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) of the Bend Police Department, Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department, Milwaukee Police Department, & Metropolitan Nashville Police Department.