

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the *Healthy Workplaces* program?

A: The *Healthy Workplaces* program recognizes Howard County workplaces that are committed to improving employee health and well-being through the six main areas of worksite wellness: 1) Culture; 2) Nutrition; 3) Physical Health; 4) Mental Health; 5) Safety; and 6) Environmental Health. In 2009, your organization may be eligible to receive either a bronze or silver certification. *Healthy Workplaces* is supported by the Howard County Chamber of Commerce and the Horizon Foundation.

Q: What are the benefits of becoming a *Healthy Workplace*?

A: Benefits of being a certified *Healthy Workplace* include...

- *Healthy Workplaces* decal to display at your workplace
- Public acknowledgement of your accreditation from Health Department, the Chamber and the Horizon Foundation
- Increased visibility as your business will be listed in the programs' print and online advertisements, community publications as well as in materials used at community events throughout the county
- Worksite wellness related newsletters and resources provided by the Health Department
- Technical assistance from the Health Department to support your current efforts as well as plan for future activities and policy development
- Potential for additional certification and awards, including "Fit Friendly" certification from the American Heart Association
- Improved employee health and potential health cost savings!

Q: How do I apply for my business to be certified as a *Healthy Workplace*?

A: It is easy to apply. Just follow the steps listed below

Step 1: Obtain a copy of the *Healthy Workplaces* Application

- An electronic copy of the application is available online at Health Department website: <http://www.hchealth.org/>.
- You may also request an application from Ellen Sweeney at (410) 313-6268 or email healthyworkplaces@howardcountymd.gov.

Step 2: Fill out the entire Application

- Detailed instructions are included with the application. Be sure to complete each section of the application and include any supporting documents.

Step 3: Submit your completed Application

- Applications are accepted via regular mail or email.
- Mailing Address: Howard County Health Department
Attn: Healthy Workplaces
7178 Columbia Gateway Drive
Columbia, MD 21046
- Email Address: Send to healthyworkplaces@howardcountymd.gov



Healthy Workplaces

Q: When is the application due?

- A:** Applications are due on Friday, September 25, 2009
- Mailed applications must be postmarked by this date.
 - Emailed applications must be received by 5pm on this date.

Q: When will I know if my business is a certified Healthy Workplace?

- A:** All businesses will be notified by the Health Department in early October 2009.

Q: Can any employee complete the application?

- A:** Any employee can complete the application on behalf of a business or company. However, the CEO/President must sign the Acknowledgement Form at the end of the application, affirming his or her understanding of the program and the accuracy of the information provided in the application.

Q: How long does it take to complete the application?

- A:** It should take about 60 minutes to complete the application. It could take a bit longer depending on the role and knowledge of the individual completing the application or if you have a very comprehensive worksite wellness program.

Q: Can I start the application and come back to it at a later time?

- A:** Yes! You can download a copy of the application to your computer. You will then be able to save it and work on it whenever you want. Once it is complete, you can either send it to us via email at healthyworkplaces@howardcountymd.gov or print out a copy and submit by mail.

Q: Why are there different levels of certification?

- A:** There are three award designation levels for certified businesses. A *Healthy Workplace* will receive a Bronze, Silver or Gold certification. Each certification level holds the company to a higher level of commitment to employee health and wellness.

Q: Are small businesses eligible to apply?

- A:** Any business – whether you have 10 employees or 10,000 – is eligible to apply. Any business, regardless of size, should be able to identify efforts and activities from each of the six areas in order to meet minimum requirements for certification.

Q: What is the difference between the items listed in the policy, program or promotion categories?

- A:** We've organized the lists of efforts and activities into categories. "Policies" are the guidelines set forth by your business to ensure a health and safe work environment. "Programs" are activities that are held on-site before, during or after work hours. "Promotion" activities are off-site wellness activities that you advertise and promote to your employees.



Healthy Workplaces

Q: Can the Health Department help me with the application?

A: Yes we can! The Health Department will help businesses complete the application. Please contact Ellen Sweeney at (410) 313-6268 or email healthyworkplaces@howardcountymd.gov.

Q: If my business is certified as a *Healthy Workplace*, will I have to re-apply next year?

A: Yes. Healthy Workplace certification is good for a year. The Health Department will help you obtain re-certification.