



CASE STUDY: Cedar Falls Utilities (CFU)



How **CFU** goes the extra mile
for their employees' **well-being**

Meet CFU



As a self-funded and community-owned utilities provider, **Cedar Falls Utilities** supplies electric, natural gas, water and communication services to residents and businesses in Cedar Falls, Iowa. The utility company employs both on-the-road service employees and on-site support staff to help install, maintain and provide customers with top-quality service.


180+
employees


40k+
city population


18k+
service accounts
each year

The need

CFU's overarching goal has always been to offer meaningful well-being programs — with resources employees actually want to use. CFU, like many organizations, found itself at a crossroads: The company wanted to provide a diverse program for its employees, while still being able to manage all the options effectively. And, with some CFU employees working outside of an office setting, the organization faced challenges in delivering independent access to materials without burdening the human resources team.

Finding solutions

Employee well-being is a crucial benefit and a central part of CFU's ongoing retention strategy. Looking to try new things, CFU engaged the help of the **Wellmark Well-being Team** in 2015 to work through recommendations and take their program to the next level.

Through this partnership (which is still ongoing), CFU created a streamlined engaging well-being program with the ability to evolve with the needs of their population.

Top priorities

- Empower participant self-service
- Create flexible, diverse options
- Boost program participation and retention

The solutions

- Simplify it all pages 4-5
- Lead with best practices pages 6-7
- Embrace change pages 8-9

The CFU success story

CFU's well-being challenges are shared by many other organizations. Their success story is meant to show you the art of what's possible when teamwork, employee health and industry best practices are prioritized.



CHALLENGES

Employer

- Program management
- Administrative burden
- Employee communication
- Incentive tracking

Employee

- Access to program materials

THE APPROACH:

Simplify it all.



One of the first things CFU and the Well-being Team accomplished together was transitioning the organization's entire program to the Wellmark Wellness Center. Powered by WebMD®, the platform acts as a central hub for well-being program management and employee participation.

Low-maintenance program management

The Wellness Center allows CFU to easily manage all the ins and outs of their program efficiently. From automated communication options to participant incentive tracking, the intuitive Wellness Center platform helps CFU host all of its well-being resources in one spot.

A few of their favorite capabilities:

- Centralized activities, health plan information and educational support tools.
- Streamlined communication — including automatic, direct-to-employee messaging.
- Hands-free, paperless incentive tracking (no Excel spreadsheets needed!).
- Specialized point solution integration options.

Personalized employee experience

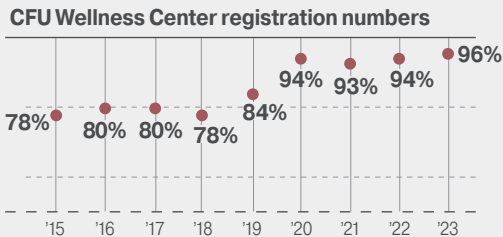
The Wellness Center also gives CFU employees the ability to customize their well-being plans to align with their personal interests and needs. And with the intuitive, self-learning algorithm, participants are constantly served up relevant content based on their risks.

Additional program features:

- Personalized health status reports with tips to improve overall well-being.
- Real-time rewards status updates.
- Digital health coaching to set lifestyle and well-being goals and track progress.
- Easy access to the Wellmark complimentary physician form (for documenting biometric data).

KEY METRICS

CFU has historically seen steady participation rates within their program, but continuous high Wellness Center registration numbers illustrate the value employees have found within the platform.





CHALLENGES

Employer

- Diverse, whole-health activities
- Program flexibility
- Relevant activities

Employee

- Mental health
- Motivation to engage

THE APPROACH:

Lead with best practices.

Effective employee health and well-being programs go beyond encouraging people to eat right and move more. They require whole health initiatives, mental health resources, encouraging preventive health checks and rewarding behavior change.

CFU offers a prime example of what happens when an organization follows industry, whole-health program best practices. In addition to offering EAP resources, CFU works with the Well-being Team to curate a balanced menu of rewardable activity options. And they're not afraid to try new things or pivot if something doesn't resonate with their employees.

Samples of CFU's rewardable program options include:

- Financial challenges
- Make It OK class attendance
- Daily Habits plans
- Personal training sessions
- Community volunteer hours
- CoachingU Webinar attendance
- meQ skill bundles

Know your health trends

Due to increased interest in mental health resources among employees, the Well-being Team recommended integrating the meQuilibrium™ (meQ) resiliency training tool into their Wellness Center the following year. An incentive drove meQ registration during the initial launch to encourage interest and awareness. These types of additional Wellness Center integration options keep employees engaged in the program.

RESULTS

61% employees registered for meQ

within the first year of launch



What is meQ?

meQ is a digital well-being training tool that delivers personalized solutions to help users manage stress, improve health and well-being, and improve productivity. This program also allows employers to predict and mitigate risks tied to workforce burnout, stress and depression.



Based on feedback from our employees, CFU's well-being program is a highly valuable part of our company culture. We'll continue to make it a top priority and ensure everyone has access to a variety of resources touching on different areas of life — be it physical, mental or financial.

— Kelsey Young
CFU Employee Service Specialist





CHALLENGES

Employer

- Ongoing engagement
- Effective incentives

Employee

- Motivation to engage
- Desire to feel heard

THE APPROACH:

Embrace change.

CFU embraces the motto, “Change before you have to” — and continuously revises their well-being program to prevent employees from getting bored and stopping engagement.

Through regular meetings and an annual strategy session with the Well-being Team, CFU makes sure their activity options and rewards are relevant to current employee needs. CFU also regularly seeks employee feedback and makes changes based on what they hear (another best-practice approach).

The following changes have delivered positive impacts for CFU and could be applied to any organization’s well-being program:

1. Inclusive rewards

Outcomes-based health incentives are a thing of the past.

Since 2015, CFU has rewarded any employee who completes a biometrics screening, no matter the results. This more inclusive rewards policy has been incredibly impactful — not only from a work culture perspective, but for employees’ overall health awareness, too.

One year after the policy update, 96 percent of CFU employees completed a biometric screening, and the organization continues to see strong participation to this day. Big health changes in an organization can start small.

2. Year-round programming

Set-and-forget well-being programs rarely inspire true health changes.

In 2020, CFU adopted the Well-being Team’s year-round programming model to encourage steady engagement. Their program is now deployed using quarterly health themes with ongoing touchpoints throughout the year.

3. Meaningful incentives

It’s important to understand your employee population and what motivates them. If you don’t know, ask. If someone offers a suggestion, listen.

In 2022, an employee suggested CFU offer more paid time off (PTO) as an incentive option within the program. After incorporating the ask, CFU saw an increase of 23 percent in program participation year over year.

KEY METRICS

96% biometric completion

from employees in 2016

81% program participation

for eligible employees in 2023

23% increase

in program participation year over year, following a new PTO incentive in 2022

“

I like that I can send a general thought to the Wellmark Well-being Team, and they’ll come up with a list of ideas or brainstorm back with us. It helps us get creative.”

– Kelsey Young

”

Employee health is foundational



Well-being programs are no longer a frivolous extra initiative — they are crucial to recruitment and retention strategies. CFU continues to put in the work and see direct results from their efforts. Through the organization's vision and a best practice partnership with the Wellmark Well-being Team, CFU's program is now set up to evolve and meet employee needs.

READY TO GROW YOUR SUCCESS?

You've invested significantly in a health plan that protects your employees and their families — and we're here to be an extension of that investment. Give us a problem and let us solve it. Contact us for a free, personalized consultation to learn more about how we can help your organization.

Contact the Wellmark Well-being Team at wellbeing@wellmark.com for a free consultation.



Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Iowa, Wellmark Health Plan of Iowa, Inc., and Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of South Dakota are independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. Blue Cross®, Blue Shield® and the Cross® and Shield® symbols are registered marks of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, an association of independent Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans. Wellmark® is a registered mark of Wellmark, Inc. WebMD® is a registered trademark of WebMD Health Services Group, Inc. meQuilibrium™ is a trademark of New Life Solution, Inc. WebMD and meQuilibrium are independent companies that provide wellness services on behalf of Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield. WebMD and meQuilibrium are solely responsible for the services they provide. M-2022592 3/24