



Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

## 2012 Annual Awards Program

### Program Excellence Awards Nomination Form

**Deadline for Nominations: March 16, 2012**

Complete this form (sections 1 and 2) and submit with your descriptive narrative.

#### SECTION 1: Information About the Nominated Program

Program Excellence Award Category (*select only one*):

- Community Health and Safety
- Community Partnership
- Community Sustainability
- Strategic Leadership and Governance

Name of program being nominated: Employee Wellness Program

Jurisdiction(s) where program originated: San Antonio, Texas

Jurisdiction population(s): 1.3 million

Please indicate the month and year in which the program you are nominating was fully implemented. (Note: All Program Excellence Award nominations must have been fully implemented by or before January 31, 2011, to be eligible. The start date should not include the initial planning phase.)

Month: July Year: 2007

Name(s) and title(s) of individual(s) who should receive recognition for this award at the ICMA Annual Conference in Phoenix, Arizona, October 2012. (Each individual listed MUST be an ICMA member to be recognized.):

Name: Sheryl Sculley

Title: City Manager Jurisdiction: San Antonio, Texas

Name: Sharon De La Garza

Title: Assistant City Manager Jurisdiction: San Antonio, Texas

Name: Flor Garcia  
Title: Assistant                      Jurisdiction: San Antonio, Texas  
Director, Human  
Resources

## **SECTION 2: Information About the Nominator/Primary Contact**

Name of contact: Edward Benavides  
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In recent years, San Antonio has been ranked as one of the most obese cities in the country. In an effort to reverse this trend, the City of San Antonio has taken a lead role in the implementation of a Wellness Program for its employees, intended to create a healthier workforce, and in time, a healthier City.

**Problem Assessment:**

Many San Antonians, including the approximately 11,000 City of San Antonio employees and their families, are facing serious challenges with weight-related health issues such as diabetes, heart disease and high blood pressure. The City's leadership understood the ramifications these health issues could have not only on the quality of life of employees and residents, but on the cost of providing high quality health care for employees. They knew efforts needed to be put in place to curb this epidemic. As a true role model of living a balanced lifestyle of proper nutrition and physical activity, San Antonio City Manager Sheryl Sculley led the implementation of an Employee Wellness Program that would seek to encourage City employees to embrace healthy eating and exercise habits, and ultimately change lives.

A Health Risk Assessment was conducted by Community First in 2007, and of the 2,977 City of San Antonio employees and spouses who completed the assessment, 22% had high cholesterol, 35% had high blood pressure, 27% had diabetes or high blood sugar, 45% did not engage in regular physical activity, 80% were overweight or obese, 13% used tobacco and 96% consumed less than five fruits or vegetables per day. Additionally, the City's 2011 medical claims report for City employees reveals hypertension, diabetes and coronary disease as the most prevalent diagnoses and among the top four health issues that generated the largest claims. These startling results underscore the important need for an ongoing Employee Wellness Program.

**Program Implementation and Costs:**

Introduced in 2007, the Employee Wellness Program is a comprehensive approach to help employees create and maintain a healthy lifestyle. The program is comprised of several services and programs to meet the needs of the City's diverse workforce. These include:

- The Wellness Rewards Program that offers employees a financial incentive for engaging in certain eligible activities;
- Biometric screenings meant to educate employees about their weight, glucose, blood pressure and body mass index;
- No-cost flu shots;
- The Quit for Life Tobacco Cessation Program;
- Health Expos;
- Quarterly Lunch & Learn sessions;
- Special fitness center rates;
- Half Marathon Training Program;
- Annual City Manager's 5K Run/Walk;
- Disease Management Programs;
- A convenient NurseLine provided by the City's third-party administrator, UnitedHealthcare, that provides basic medical guidance 24 hours a day;
- Interactive City Health Stations that help employees monitor their blood pressure;
- Value-based prescriptions for diabetics;
- Onsite Health Coaches;
- Employee Assistance Program for mental wellness;
- Worksite vending machines offering wholesome choices and;
- 100% coverage for annual physicals, screenings and immunizations.

Additionally, in 2008 the City established an Employee Health & Wellness Center

in collaboration with a San Antonio-based medical group. This facility provides all City employees with a central location to address basic health care needs, including treatment of minor illnesses and injuries, on-the-job injuries, preventative care and screenings, drug testing, physical examinations and immunizations.

The cost to implement the Employee Wellness Program in 2011 was approximately \$720,000.

**Measurable Outcomes:**

The Employee Wellness Program has seen a steady increase in the number of active participants each year. Some results that speak to the success of the program include:

- More than 3,900 participants in the City Manager's 5K event since its inception in 2007;
- More than 1,000 employees received biometric screenings at the first "Know Your Numbers" event in 2011;
- 2,860 employees have participated in the Wellness Rewards Program since it began in 2009;
- Use of the City Health Stations has increased from 1,303 participants in 2009 to 2,087 in 2011;
- 1,300 employees are enjoying the fitness center discount rates; and
- 382 City employees have joined the Half Marathon Training Program.

The Employee Wellness Program has helped the City of San Antonio stabilize unhealthy medical trends, maintain increases to claim costs significantly lower than peer market average, provide a comprehensive benefits plan at affordable rates that are also lower than peer market average and increase employee satisfaction to 85%. Additionally, UnitedHealthcare (UHC) recognized the City of San Antonio for its

Employee Wellness Program with the “Well Deserved Award” in 2009 for demonstrating an exceptional commitment to helping their employees improve their health and well being through worksite wellness programs. UHC honored the City once again in 2010 with the Golden Apple Award, given to employers who earn the Well Deserved Award for two consecutive years.

The Employee Wellness Program was established to help its employees and their families become healthier. Having a workforce 11,000 employees strong, the City’s Executive Leadership Team knew that a positive impact was possible, not only for City employees, but for the City as a whole. Through the Employee Wellness Program, each City employee is being provided with opportunities to learn about making more nutritious food choices, incorporating physical activity into their daily routines and becoming more educated about the importance of preventative care. These valuable lessons are arming the City’s workforce with the tools necessary to improve their overall health and that of their families, and are also having a positive impact on the bottom line.

**Lessons Learned:**

While the Employee Wellness Program has generated and maintained steady momentum over the last three years, City leadership has learned that it is important to identify ways to reach more employees and better understand what initiatives resonate with them and motivate them to participate. Keeping the Employee Wellness Program fresh and relevant is essential for its growth and longevity. The longer the program exists, the more opportunities employees will have to learn about and embrace a balanced and active lifestyle. In an effort to incorporate new and innovative offerings, a fitness center subsidy initiative has recently been introduced to help offset the cost of fitness center memberships for employees. Additionally, the Diabetes Prevention and

Control Alliance will be launched to help pre-diabetic and diabetic employees live healthier lives. The Employee Wellness Program is also working through its third-party vendors to deliver health and wellness services to the City of San Antonio retiree community so that even after retirement, employees can have access to some of the Wellness Program's initiatives. Additionally, the Wellness Rewards initiative is being evaluated to determine if transitioning it from an activity-based format to an outcome-based format would generate even greater results.