

Reclamation Manual

Directives and Standards

Subject:	Employee Wellness/Fitness Reimbursement Program
Purpose:	The benefit of this Directive and Standard (D&S) is to support employees' efforts in achieving and maintaining healthier lifestyles by reimbursing a portion of the expenses associated with wellness and fitness activities. There are many benefits to having a physically and mentally fit workforce, such as, reduced absenteeism, preventing illnesses and accidents, increased work productivity, and improving employee morale.
Authority:	5 U.S.C. Section 7901, Health Services Programs; 5 U.S.C. Section 7904, Employee Assistance Programs Relating to Drug Abuse and Alcohol Abuse; and 370 Departmental Manual 792, Health Services and Employee Assistance Programs
Approving Official:	Director, Policy and Administration (Director, POLICY)
Contact:	Human Resources Policy and Programs Division (HRPPD), 84-58000

- 1. Introduction.** The Bureau of Reclamation recognizes the benefits of a healthy workforce, and actively promotes and supports employee wellness activities. The Wellness/Fitness Reimbursement Program (the Wellness Program) assists employees in achieving healthy lifestyles while permitting employees the flexibility to choose components of the Wellness Program that best fulfill individual needs and preferences. The Wellness Program supports employees' efforts to gain or maintain health by reimbursing employees for a portion of the eligible expenses incurred for wellness/fitness activity and over-the-counter smoking cessation aids.
- 2. Applicability.** All permanent and temporary employees with assignments of 1 year or longer to a region/office are eligible for reimbursement on wellness/fitness activities. This D&S applies to all Reclamation employees participating in a wellness/fitness activity eligible for reimbursement. Other wellness activities, including the Employee Assistance Program, transportation subsidy (mass transit and van pool), and the bicycle commuting reimbursement are not covered under this D&S.
- 3. Definitions.**
 - A. On-Site Facility.** Facilities furnished and established at Federal locations by either the participating agency or in combination with several agencies and the General Services Administration.
 - B. Reclamation Leadership Team (RLT).** Commissioner; deputy commissioners; regional directors; and Denver and Washington, D.C. directors and senior level positions.

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- C. **Regional Wellness Coordinator.** Person responsible within each region/directorate/office to oversee the Wellness Program.
- D. **Wellness/Fitness Activities.** Activities undertaken to gain or maintain health and fitness (physical and mental) that includes gym memberships, exercise classes, weight loss support groups, and nutritional classes. All of these activities are designed to improve an employee's health and morale.
4. **Responsibilities.**
- A. **RLT.** The RLT¹ members are responsible for:
- (1) establishing a local Wellness Program that meets the minimum requirements set forth in this D&S for their region/directorate/office;
 - (2) establishing the maximum allowable reimbursement and cost-share for participants (amount and cost-share may differ between full-time and part-time employees); and
 - (3) supporting the Wellness Program and other wellness activities that assist employees in achieving and maintaining health and fitness (physical and mental).
- B. **Director, POLICY.** Director, POLICY is responsible for:
- (1) administering the Wellness Program; and
 - (2) approving or denying requests for deviation from this D&S.
- C. **Manager, HRPPD.** The Manager HRPPD is responsible for:
- (1) designating a Wellness Program Coordinator within HRPPD;
 - (2) monitoring and evaluating compliance with the requirements of the Wellness Program established in this D&S; and
 - (3) ensuring requests for information regarding the Wellness Program are answered timely.

¹ RLT members must work collectively to ensure a consistent program and process for employees at a particular location (e.g., Denver, CO) or with a single human resources officer (offices in Denver, CO, and Washington, D.C.).

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- D. **Wellness Program Coordinator.** Reclamation's Wellness Program Coordinator, is responsible for:
- (1) establishing minimum requirements and preparing/updating Reclamation-wide guidance for the Wellness Program;
 - (2) compiling Reclamation-wide data related to the participation rates and costs for the Wellness Program;
 - (3) ensuring the Wellness Program, as implemented, meets the minimum requirements set forth in this D&S; and
 - (4) advising and providing information related to the Wellness Program.
- E. **Regional Wellness Coordinator.** Regional wellness coordinators are responsible for:
- (1) gathering data on an annual basis and reporting to Reclamation's Wellness Program Coordinator the number of participants and the amount spent on the Wellness Program;
 - (2) coordinating with supervisors to approve and ensure consistency of approvals for wellness/fitness activities not ineligible per this D&S;
 - (3) determining the schedule and frequency, if any, for reimbursement (e.g., annually, quarterly, or monthly);
 - (4) ensuring that all the procedures outlined in this D&S are effectively implemented; and
 - (5) providing information and guidance to supervisors and employees.
- F. **Supervisor.** Supervisors are responsible for, or designating someone to be responsible for:
- (1) ensuring forms for reimbursement are completed accurately;
 - (2) ensuring the maximum reimbursable amount is not exceeded;
 - (3) maintaining all records related to the Wellness Program;
 - (4) ensuring appropriate reporting to the regional wellness coordinator; and
 - (5) forwarding a photocopy of the Form 7-2661, *Report of Taxable Fringe Benefits/Reclamation Wellness Reimbursement*, to the Payroll Operations Office (Interior Business Center).

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- G. **Employee.** Employees are responsible for:
- (1) providing the appropriate documentation for reimbursement of eligible expenses to the supervisor for signature; and
 - (2) adhering to all applicable rules of the Wellness Program as set forth in this D&S and local guidance.
5. **Wellness Program.** Each RLT member shall develop and promote a local Wellness Program that best meets the needs of their employees and establishes a procedure for reimbursement, including prior approval for participation and/or participation agreements specifying the minimum participation time spent engaging in wellness/fitness activities.
6. **Funding.** Each region determines the appropriate funding source to charge the costs of the wellness reimbursement. Funding for the Wellness Program will be the responsibility of each region/office/directorate. Each RLT member will set the maximum reimbursement amount, with RLT members in a single location working collectively to set the maximum reimbursement to ensure fairness. An employee cost share of no less than 25 percent is required in order to enhance the employee's investment and commitment to the Wellness Program.
7. **Participation.** Participation in any component of the Wellness Program is strictly voluntary, and must be done on employee's own time. No official duty time is authorized under the Wellness Program.
- A. **Liability.** Reclamation will not be held liable for injuries sustained by employees participating in the Wellness Program which occur during the use of fitness and recreational facilities outside of official working hours, on or off Federal premises.
 - B. **Flexibility.** Employees may participate in and get reimbursed for more than one activity or more than one aspect of each component, and may join more than one gym, up to the total reimbursement maximum.
 - C. **On-site Facility.** On-site facilities may be provided by the region/directorate/office at no cost, or with a cost-share, to employees. Availability of an on-site facility shall not replace nor reduce the total reimbursable amount allowed to employees when the employee has elected to use the on-site facility. Employees have the flexibility to choose components of the Wellness Program that best fulfills individual needs and preferences.
8. **Eligible Employees.** All permanent and temporary employees with assignments of 1 year or longer to a region/directorate/office are eligible to participate in the Wellness Program.

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9. **Eligible Expenses.** Eligible expenses include activities undertaken to gain or maintain health and fitness or participate in a significant health and fitness component. This includes:
- A. **Membership Fees to a Fitness Center (Gym Membership).** The monthly or annual cost of a gym membership, including any associated initiation fees, equipment fees and annual fees, is eligible for reimbursement. Commercial facilities must be unsegregated, where membership is not restricted on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, political affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, disability and genetic information, age, or membership in an employee organization.
 - B. **Fees for Participation in Fitness Classes.** Group classes such as Step Aerobics, Pilates, Yoga, Spinning, Zumba, Aquatics, and Kickboxing.
 - C. **Smoking Cessation Aids.** The five qualifying nicotine replacement therapies allowed are: the nicotine patch, nicotine gum, nicotine lozenge, nicotine nasal spray, and the nicotine inhaler (if not covered by employee's health benefits plan).
 - D. **Wellness or Health Maintenance Activities.** Enrollment fees for health education courses available to the public, such as smoking cessation, weight control/management, and activities designed to modify lifestyles to improve health, such as nutritional counseling, hypertension control, and other similar structured programs.
 - E. **Other Activities Not Specified.** For all other wellness/fitness activities, prior approval by the supervisor, in coordination with the regional wellness coordinator, is required before reimbursement will be made. Activities must have a wellness/fitness component. Before approving wellness/fitness activities not specified in this D&S, supervisors must coordinate with the regional wellness coordinator and consider the local availability of eligible activities, the needs of the employee, budget, and other approved wellness/fitness activities.
10. **Ineligible Expenses.**
- A. **Products and Services Inherently Personal in Nature.** Products of a personal nature, or for use only by the individual, will not be reimbursed. Examples include, but are not limited to, the purchase of exercise equipment, diet/fitness books, computer software/fitness videos, pedometers, shoes/clothing, products used to enhance or maintain performance, chiropractic and acupuncture treatments, biofeedback and hypnosis sessions, laser treatments, massages, the purchase of fitness/weight loss beverages, food, prescription medication, vitamins, and nutritional supplements.
 - B. **Costs Incurred by Family Members.** Only costs for the eligible employee are reimbursable. If an employee has a family or group membership, documentation must be provided showing the cost for an individual member (the employee) and only that amount will be used to calculate the reimbursable amount.

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- C. **Compensation.** Compensation for time spent participating in the Wellness Program is not eligible for reimbursement (see Paragraph 6).

11. Reimbursement Process.

- A. **Engagement in Eligible Health/Fitness Activities.** Employee participating in eligible wellness/fitness activities incurs the expense.

- B. **Complete Forms and Supporting Documentation.** Each eligible employee participating in the Wellness Program must complete the appropriate form(s).

- (1) **Statement.** The employee must prepare a statement explaining the wellness activity, cost, and request for reimbursement (e.g., This is for my (eligible expense define) for (dates expenses occurred and period of time covered by the amount paid). I paid \$____, eligible reimbursement totals \$____ after cost-share of ____% (receipts attached)).

- (2) **Receipts.** The receipts must include the facility name (if gym dues), the name of the employee, expenses, time period covered by receipt, and the dollar amount paid. Copies are acceptable. If dues are paid by auto-withdrawal, a copy of the bank or credit card statement may be submitted as proof of payment. The employee must remove all personally identifiable information on the statement except for the name of the employee, the name of the financial institution, and the line item that shows the charge. The line item must include the name of the recipient/facility and the dollar amount paid.

- (3) **Report of Taxable Fringe Benefits/Reclamation Wellness Reimbursement Form.** The employee must complete Form 7-2661, *Report of Taxable Fringe Benefits/Reclamation Wellness Reimbursement* (Appendix A). Be advised, when completing the form, the calendar year in which the reimbursement is made is the year entered on the line "Taxable Income to be Reported in Tax Year: _____", and not the calendar year of participation.

- C. **Supervisory Approval.** The employee must submit the statement, Form 7-2661, with receipt(s) attached, to the employee's immediate supervisor for approval and signature. The supervisor must review the forms and receipts, ensure the annual maximum is not exceeded, and approve them as appropriate.

- D. **Submit to Payroll Operations Office.** After the request for reimbursement is approved by the supervisor, a photocopy of Form 7-2661 and receipt(s) will be forwarded to the Payroll Operations Division, Attention: D-2663 (Interior Business Center) by the supervisor or designee.

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- E. **Maintain Original Paperwork.** The supervisor or designee maintains the original paperwork. The supervisor must give a copy of the documents to the employee and the regional wellness coordinator.
 - F. **Direct Deposit.** The Payroll Operations Division has two pay periods to process wellness reimbursements. Reimbursements will be directly deposited into the employee's bank account as part of his/her paycheck. It is listed as "Fringe Benefit" on the Leave and Earnings Statement.
12. **Tax Liability.** All reimbursements made under the Wellness Program are considered taxable income to the employ.

RECLAMATION MANUAL TRANSMITTAL SHEET

Effective Date: _____

Release No. _____

Ensure all employees needing this information are provided a copy of this release.

Reclamation Manual Release Number and Subject

Summary of Changes

NOTE: This Reclamation Manual release applies to all Reclamation employees. When an exclusive bargaining unit exists, changes to this release may be subject to the provisions of collective bargaining agreements.

Filing instructions

Remove Sheets

Insert Sheets

All Reclamation Manual releases are available at <http://www.usbr.gov/recman/>

Filed by: _____

Date: _____