Gord Smith Healthy Workplace Awards

2026

PLATINUM LEVEL TOOLKIT

PRESENTED BY:

WTW EST. 2002
WORKING TOWARD WELLNESS

In partnership with:

Why Invest in a Comprehensive Workplace Wellness Program?

Healthy workplaces lead to healthier employees, which ultimately results in a healthier organization.

It makes good business sense to have a comprehensive workplace wellness program. Workplace wellness programs play a key role in improving the physical and mental health of employees and often will result in cost savings. Employers with wellness programs may be seen as an 'employer of choice' with a greater ability to attract and retain talent. When best practices are applied, comprehensive workplace wellness programs have the potential to increase employee engagement and job satisfaction, and to reduce absenteeism, employee turnover, and rates of accidents *(Pronk, 2014; Jacobs, Yaquian, Burke, Rouse & Zarie, 2017).*

What to Expect for the 2026 Version of the Awards...

Before getting started, we encourage all potential applicants to watch the **'How-To-Apply'** instructional video tutorial under the Awards banner on our website, as well as our previously recorded webinar.

There are no significant changes to the criteria or process this year, as we continue to build consistency into the program.

The **RISING STAR** award is available to those organizations who are in the beginning phase of their workplace wellness efforts. Employers will be eligible to apply for this award level for *up to two years*, after which they will have to show some progression and apply at a higher level. Applicants for this award will be required to provide evidence of the following for ONE (1) Topic (see the list of topics below):

- Promotion/Awareness Raising
- Education/Skill-Building Activity
- Environmental/Administrative Supports

All award applicants will be required to provide a statement of your employer's commitment to employee wellness; this could be a short paragraph to highlight notable achievements, outcomes, or challenges.

Award recipients who have received the *Gord Smith Healthy Workplace Award* for five (5) or more years will have their participation milestone denoted on their award certificate.

Award Levels and Criteria Overview

Award Level >>> Criteria	PLATINUM	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE	RISING STAR
Promotion/Awareness Raising	**5** Topics	**4** Topics	**3** Topics	**2** Topics	**1** Topic
Education and/or Skill Building	**5** Topics	**4** Topics	**3** Topics	**2** Topics	**1** Topic
Environmental and Administrative Supports	**5** Topics	**4** Topics	**3** Topics	**2** Topics	**1** Topic
Evaluation	**4** Topics	**3** Topics	**2** Topics	**1** Topic	N/A
Policies (Formal)	**3** Topics	**2** Topics	**1** Topic	N/A	N/A
Policies (Informal)	**1** Topic	**1** Topic	**1** Topic	**1** Topic	N/A
Comprehensive Wellness Program	Required	Required	N/A	N/A	N/A
Wellness Statement	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required

PLATINUM Level Award Criteria Checklist:

- Choose **FIVE (5)** wellness topics and provide evidence of:

  - ☐ Promotion/Awareness Raising activity
  - ☐ Education and/or Skill-Building activity
  - ☐ Environmental/Administrative Support activity
  - ☐ Evaluation of any of the above activities (FOUR topics only)
  - ☐ Formal Supportive Policy (THREE topics only)
  - ☐ Informal Supportive Policy (ONE topic only)
  - ☐ Comprehensive Wellness Program (including formal policy)
  - ☐ Statement of your employer's commitment to employee wellness

Application Process/Key Dates:

Key Dates

November 2, 2026 – Intention to Apply Notifications (email to: WTW@cmha-wecb.on.ca)
December 14, 2026 – Application Portal available (https://windsoressex.cmha.ca/working-toward-wellness/)
March 5, 2027 – Deadline for Submission of Applications
May 12, 2027 – Awards Ceremony /Breakfast Reception

Application Instructions/Intention to Apply

If you are planning to participate in this year's Awards program, we request that you indicate your intention to apply by November 2, 2026 to assist with our planning for the processing of applications.

If you are unsure of which level to apply for or require further information/assistance with any aspect of the application, please email WTW@cmha-wecb.on.ca and someone will gladly assist you!

Important Notes

- The activities described in your application should occur within the 2026 calendar year
- *Activities* may be repeated for up to two (2) topics/requirements only
- *Policies* may be used for multiple topics/requirements, if applicable
- Please do not submit any private or identifying information such as photos or names of employees who participated in activities, without obtaining their consent (it may therefore be necessary to redact some of the information contained in evidence or obtain consent from employee(s) before submitting any private or identifying information).

***Please Note**: Members of the Working Toward Wellness (WTW) Committee who will be responsible for reviewing applications will maintain appropriate confidentiality with respect to any information submitted by applicants.*

Workplace Wellness Topics

Listed below are a few of the many wellness topics that can be implemented as part of your workplace wellness program. Your wellness activities should address topics that are relevant for your employees.

- **Mental Health Promotion and Support** (initiatives should align with Public Health Standards)
- **Infection Prevention and Control**
- **Injury Prevention**
- **Social/Community Responsibility**
- **Physical Fitness** (e.g. Bike Friendly Workplace, Yoga, etc.)
- **Healthy Lifestyles** (e.g. Nutrition, Addiction/Harm Reduction, Sleep, Screen Time Management, Work-Life Balance)
- **Financial Fitness**

**** See other sample topics on our website under the 'Resources' section.*

Gord Smith Healthy Workplace Awards – General Criteria Descriptions

A primary objective for the *Gord Smith Healthy Workplace Awards* program is that employers implement a cross-section of activities for various wellness topics using several health promotion strategies (i.e., awareness raising, education, skill-building, environmental supports and supportive policies).

To improve and monitor your wellness program, we recommend that you evaluate your wellness activities. A description of the general criteria requirements is below. Refer to the Award Levels and Criteria (above) to determine the number of activities in these categories that are required for the various award levels.

1. **Awareness Raising Activities** raise awareness about important health issues by choosing effective communication strategies that reach most/all of your employees, such as sharing health information through posters, pamphlets or newsletters on bulletin boards, e-mail blasts, social media posts, information on paystubs, or through posting on an internal workplace website.

2. **Education and Skill-Building Activities** help employees to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to support healthy living, such as through 'lunch and learn' presentations, visual demonstrations, hands-on learning, webinars, health fairs, workplace challenges, or workplace contests. These activities must demonstrate some form of learning and instruction was offered.

3. **Environmental/Administrative Supports** create a physical, social, and cultural workplace environment that can encourage and support employees in making healthier choices. Supportive environments help make the 'healthier choice the easier choice' in the workplace and beyond.

4. **Supportive Policies** can go a long way to ensuring that awareness raising, education and skill building, and environmental support components are in place now and into the future. These three types of policies are generally acceptable:

    - **Workplace Wellness Policies:** These are stand-alone, formalized, documented and approved policies specific to a wellness topic (i.e., 'Healthy Vending Machine Policy' specific to healthy nutrition).

- **Policy statements within other policies:** These are not full policies on a wellness topic but may be included as a statement in another broader policy (i.e., fitness membership reimbursement in a general human resources policy for the physical activity wellness topic). This may include organizational policies or union contract language.

- **Position statements:** These are official organizational positions that are dated and signed by an organizational leader. This may include organizational or work sector standards or human resources guidelines. Letters, emails, posted bulletins, or memos from senior management or unofficial documents would qualify as an 'informal' policy.

- **Comprehensive Workplace Wellness Policy (Gold/Platinum levels)** specifies your employer's commitment to organizational practices that promote and support the health and well-being of employees and their families; outlines senior management and employee roles and responsibilities regarding wellness; and defines how the wellness program is communicated and offered to employees and their families. This type of overarching policy may cover most, if not all, of your policy requirements, and may be used for multiple topics.

5. **Evaluation** of your wellness activities is important for assessing their effectiveness and improving them to better align with your employees' interests and wellness needs.

Evidence

This table provides examples of appropriate descriptions and evidence to include in your application. Applicants are not required to submit all of the examples listed. Please include examples that are relevant to the activities that you completed. To maintain employee privacy, do not submit copies of documents (e.g., completed surveys) with employees' names or other identifying information.

	Examples of Acceptable Descriptions and Evidence	Examples of Inappropriate Descriptions and Evidence
Awareness Raising Activities	Submit a copy of the poster or pamphlet that was distributed to employees. Submit a copy of the communication used to share wellness information with employees (e.g., email to employees, a picture of the poster on notice board, a screen shot of the poster on the intranet). Preferably, include the approximate date or time period that the wellness information was communicated to employees.	Submitting a copy of the poster or pamphlet without a description or evidence of how this wellness information was communicated to employees.
Education and Skill-Building Activities	Submit a copy of the communication sent to employees notifying them about the event (e.g., email, poster or intranet posting). Submit a biography or description of the qualifications of the individual who provided the session.	Submitting information without identifying how the event was communicated. Not submitting a biography or description of the individual who provided the session.

	Examples of Acceptable Descriptions and Evidence	Examples of Inappropriate Descriptions and Evidence
	Submit a copy of the communication used to identify the winner of a challenge or contest (with any names removed/redacted to maintain privacy). Please include the date the event occurred and the approximate number of employees that participated. Other relevant proof that the event occurred and employees participated.	
Environmental /Administrative Supports	Submit a photo of the supportive environment (without any employees to maintain privacy) (e.g., a vending machine with healthy food options inside, a company ping-pong table, or a drinking water station). Submit a copy of the communication used to encourage employees to use the supportive environment (e.g., a copy of an email encouraging use of a dedicated space for relaxation, communication promoting the use of EAP services or a poster about an on-site flu clinic).	Submitting a copy of a policy that describes how your workplace implements a supportive environment (e.g., Healthy Vending Machine Policy) without evidence that the supportive environment is currently available and being communicated to employees.
Supportive or Comprehensive Workplace Wellness Policy	Submit an electronic copy of the actual policy document. All policies must display the company name and/or logo. Formal policies must include a date of approval and should be reviewed/revised at intervals appropriate to reflect evolving changes in practice, innovation, and culture. Formal policies must be official organizational policies, include relevant union contract language, organizational standards, and/or human resources guidelines. Informal policies may include letters, emails, posted bulletins, or memos from senior management or unofficial documents.	Submitting a policy that does not have your workplace name or logo or does not have a date of implementation. Policies that are in draft form, letters or memos from senior management or unofficial documents would qualify only as 'informal'.
Evaluation	Submit a copy of a blank survey, interview or focus group questions that were asked of employees to gather feedback. Submit a description or copy of the communication that invited employees to complete the survey, participate in an interview/focus group or provide feedback.	Submitting incomplete survey forms or draft lists of focus group questions, suggesting that an evaluation was not completed. Submitting an application that does not include any proof of evaluation.

	Examples of Acceptable Descriptions and Evidence	Examples of Inappropriate Descriptions and Evidence
	Preferably, include a short summary of the evaluation results. Other relevant proof (i.e. observation records, audits, etc.) that the evaluation occurred.	