

## Executive Summary

From the beginning of this program our motto has been “Changing the Culture of the Agency”. The emphasis and focus has been on the entire agency to include the Law Enforcement, Corrections, and the civilians and support staff of the Harford County Sheriff's Office. So many times we take for granted the stress, the hard work, and the toll that it takes on individuals and families. Our goal is to try to alleviate some of those stressors and provide an atmosphere of teamwork, camaraderie, and a positive attitude as it relates to our wellness program and the benefits for the men and women that serve our community.

We have taken the approach that the programs provided would be voluntary and those that partake would receive incentives for their efforts. The incentives awarded by the agency are for the purpose of a healthier and productive lifestyle while on the job, at home with their families, and during retirement. We have supplied all agency members with three fully equipped fitness rooms with commercial grade Life Fitness cardio and strength equipment. This equipment was chosen to encompass all fitness levels. The fitness rooms are open 24/7 to all agency members and task force members assigned to the Harford County Sheriff's Office to accommodate shift work.

The innovative practices include the creation of two tracks of incentivized fitness levels that incorporates all levels from the beginner to the elite athlete. We have seven certified fitness instructors that can work with agency members on individual programs. The incentives are based on the specific track an individual chooses according to their own fitness level or interests and are awarded every six months. Depending on the track chosen, the fitness level, and agency requirements, the member will receive either additional time off or a monetary reward. We also incorporated a required yearly physical into the program as well as wearing a device on their shoe called a “pebble” from a company called FitKIK. FitKIK has software as part of their package that allows an administrator of the system track the member's activity in order to assist them to achieve success which is the goal. We also preach that it is not just the physical aspect that is important but we require, for track 2, non-physical activities such as doctor's visits, health fairs, free screenings and other related items because it is about the member's overall wellness.

We have been able to establish many relationships with health care professionals and other local business owners within the county that the men and women serve. The closest partnership we have is with Upper Chesapeake Health Link. They are a part of Upper Chesapeake Medical Center. We have teamed up on at least five health fairs over the past two years. They have provided on site services that has made it convenient for agency members to attend at various locations. We have also had a number of free screenings off site for people to attend. All of the events that we are involved in are available to all agency members, and sometimes families, whether they are in the wellness program or not. Those members that are in the Wellness Incentive Program (WIP) can use these events as part of their required activities. We have also teamed up with other professionals in the county such as Chiropractors, Physical Therapists, Massage Therapists, Clinical Pharmacists, Sleep Specialists, and Nutritionists to name a few.

It has been a great experience and more resources are becoming available all the time. There is no limit as to what can be accomplished by individuals and their agencies.

## Project Narrative

The Harford County Sheriff's Office consists of five hundred twenty-eight (528) full time and fifty-seven (57) temporary personnel that serve a county of approximately 248,800 citizens. The demographics consist of 486 square miles of residential, commercial, and industrial properties. We are a full service law enforcement agency that consists of two (2) precincts, a detention center, a training academy, responsible for circuit and district courts, a criminal investigative and special services division, a child advocacy center, school resource officers, a special operation unit, and several other satellite offices in the county.

The program is called the Wellness Incentive Program (WIP) and was created in the fall of 2012 and officially kicked off in February 2013 with extensive health screenings provided by LifeLine Screening and Upper Chesapeake Health. This program has been in the works since 1999 when two members of the Harford County Sheriff's Office attended a personal training course hosted by Cooper Institute of Aerobic Research. These members were the first ever certified instructors in the agency and they immediately began to use the tools learned to change the culture of the agency. They assisted the training academy by providing a detailed daily itinerary and documentation of activities to assist in the tracking of the recruits and their progress. Over the years the hiring process has changed tremendously with physical requirements and is used as part of the hiring process today. The program consists of two (2) tracks for the member to choose from based on their interests, level of fitness, and incentives. The program is voluntary and all full time employees can join. The incentives are awarded every six (6) months and based on the track chosen and the agency requirements set for each. The member can earn either additional time off or a monetary reward. With either track the member is required to have a yearly physical and wear a device called "pebble" manufactured by FitKIK

that tracks their physical activity. There is also software programming an administrator monitors activity to assist in the success of the member. The member can see their physical activity on a computer once they are registered and are active.

Track 1 consists of four physical tests that include, push-ups, sit-ups, a 1.5 mile run, and a 300 meter run. The scores from these tests formulate a percentage fitness levels that correlates to the incentive of either time off or money. The member chooses their incentive on the day of their physical testing. The leave incentive ranges from 4-22 hours and the monetary incentive from fifty (\$50) dollars up to two hundred twenty-five dollars (\$225). If members of track 1 complete two non-physical activities they also receive eight (8) additional hours of leave.

Track 2 consists of the members own type of physical activity. The agency requires 600,000 steps as a minimum every six months and two non-physical activities for a successful completion. The more steps the individual completes the higher the incentive is up to a maximum of 2,000,000 steps. The incentive for track 2 is additional leave of 8 to 16 hours. Members of either track have up to six months to use this leave when staffing is at proper levels. New members can join in the spring and fall during set sign up times. New members are given their device to wear and the program coordinator meets with them prior to their start. Members receive the device free at the onset and are responsible for replacement under circumstances stated in the wellness manual. The program coordinator sends a report to the budget manager and time keepers of those members that achieved their goals.

One of the most important changes is that our standards for hiring, in regards to physical fitness, has been greatly improved since adopting these same Cooper Standards. It has allowed new recruits to be in better shape entering and exiting the academy allowing them to improve in their overall well-being. A nutrition lecture and other related items are now a part of the

curriculum as well as during in-service training. I also see a change in the attitude of personnel in the wellness program. Many members were in shape and have taken that portion of their job seriously but are now rewarded for their efforts. People talk about the program, how many steps they have, challenge each other, and just plain feel better about themselves. It's hard to put a number to that. We've had several people in the program lose weight, walking more steps, taking additional fitness classes, and are getting medical checkups and screenings which are huge.

I think the thing that makes this unique is that it is voluntary, easy to join, easy access to follow their activity, very little paperwork involved, tangible incentives, three fitness centers, all personnel can take part regardless of their fitness level, there are non-physical activities required that are vital to a person's overall well-being, and the agency sets up free health fairs and other resources they can use.

There were a few challenges to overcome. The biggest one was to get the county government to realize the program was necessary to the men and women that serve our community every day many putting their lives on the line. After creating various waiver forms and their approval then the next challenge was to bring it back to our personnel and sell the program. There were some that jumped on board immediately and then a lot of skeptical officers. All roll calls were attended and the program was discussed in length. We had 229 members attend the extensive screening and 185 joined the program shortly after that. Other challenges was funding, expanding and creating new workout facilities, and continued work with county government.

The impact depends on the individual as well as the entire agency. We have seen a change in attitude, self esteem, we've seen several members lose over 100 lbs. in the past year after using

this program as a motivational tool to get started. We have seen people in the program helping others and the camaraderie has increased among program members. We also correspond and use the “personal” touch because we care and want each member to be successful.

There is some measurable successes and some that just cannot be quantified. We’ve had two members lose over 100lbs. in over a year’s time. We’ve had and heard stories of people that have been or reduced the medications or doses that they are taking. From our health fairs that we sponsor or the free screenings and other resources that we post, people are attending various seminars, classes, start fitness classes, being properly measured for running shoes, just to name a few. Members are happy and are reaping rewards both physically and non-physically. Families are also benefiting from the overall well-being of their loved ones and access to some of the free programs.

Yes the program can be replicated by other agencies. It is fairly easy once the agency has decided which direction they would like to proceed, speaking with staff to see if there is a genuine interest, meeting with your local county government, discussing and selecting incentives, developing paperwork, and having an administrator for the program. If I can assist you in any way please feel free to contact me about the Harford County Sheriff’s Office Wellness Incentive Program.

## Supporting Documentation

1. Harford County Sheriff's Office Wellness Incentive Program Manual
2. Wellness Incentive Point System Form
3. Track #1
4. Track #2
5. Protocols for physical testing and for prospective recruits-on HCSO Website
6. Fit KIK documents
7. Health screening-aggregate reports
8. Samples of free health fairs, screenings, or classes posted in the wellness program folder on HCSO network.