



Wellness Account

PURPOSE

Vulcan County is committed to providing a healthy and positive workplace by creating an environment that values health and wellness. The Wellness Account provides employees with a benefit of up to Three Hundred Dollars (\$300) per calendar year for reimbursements of expenses for improving personal health and wellness. By doing so, this policy will maintain and improve the conditions of employment between the Employer and Employees and promote the morale and well-being of all the Employees.

PROCEDURE

Permanent full time employees and Councilors are entitled to funds up to a maximum of \$300 (including GST) per calendar year. This amount is prorated for permanent full time employees or Councilors that begin employment during the year. Seasonal employees with an expected employment term of 6 months or more will be entitled to funds up to a maximum of \$150 (including GST). Seasonal employees with an expected employment term of less than 6 months will not be eligible for the Wellness Account.

GUIDELINES

1. Eligibility

The Wellness Account is available from January 1 to December 31 of each fiscal year. Employees are eligible to claim expenses to be reimbursed from the Wellness Account after 3 months of employment.

Use of the Wellness Account is not mandatory. Employees may carry forward Wellness Account credits for one additional calendar year. However, if employees choose not to use the Wellness Account, or any portion of it, unused funds will lapse at the end of the second calendar year. For example credits earned in 2015 would need to be used by December 2016.

2. Tax Implications

The Wellness Account is a **taxable benefit** and all reimbursed expenditures will be considered as a taxable benefit payment. Taxable benefits will be listed on the employee's T4.

3. Examples of Eligible Expenditures:**3.1 Physical Activity and Fitness**

- Fitness memberships, personal trainers/fitness consultations
- Classes/lessons/passes for swimming, skating, skiing, golfing, etc.
- Membership/league fees for sports such as curling, hockey, softball, etc.
- Equipment/accessories for any physical activity or sport – golf clubs, squash racquet, soccer ball, tennis racket, skates, hiking or running shoes, etc.
- Exercise equipment – treadmill, elliptical, bicycle, home gym, weights, etc.

3.2 Stress Management

- Instructional session fees for activities such as yoga, tai chi, dance, meditation/relaxation, self-defense, martial arts, etc.

3.3 Healthy Eating

- Weight management program membership/fees (Weight Watchers, etc.)
- Nutrition counseling
- Cooking classes

3.4 Lifestyle and Personal Development

- Smoking cessation
- Personal interest courses, self-help books

3.5 Leisure Activities

- Registration for classes such as pottery, crafts, photography, woodworking, music lessons, etc.
- Camping equipment, fishing rod

4. Examples of Ineligible Expenditures:

To ensure accountability for the use of public funds, purchases not eligible for reimbursement include:

- Services provided by immediate family members
- Services/products that are eligible under Provincial Health Care or Extended Health Care.
- Clothing (except athletic footwear)
- Clubs where singular focus is not on physical activity.
- Vitamins, supplements, nutrition replacement, etc.
- Supplies for general interest courses and hobbies
- Firearms/weapons

5. Wellness Account Submission Guidelines

- 5.1 Each employee chooses how to best use the funds for his/her own particular wellness.
- 5.2 If the employee's choice requires time away from work for the purpose of attending a workshop or conference, supervisor approval is needed. Time off is subject to departmental approval and will require that you utilize existing vacation, or banked time.
- 5.3 Complete your hardcopy Wellness Account claim form, and bring your receipt(s) to the Chief Administrative Officer for processing. The Chief Administrative Officer will initial your original receipt, take a photocopy for submission and return the original back to you.
- 5.4 All ORIGINAL receipts are to be from a qualified vendor or service provider, indicating that the service provider has been PAID in full, and must indicate that the services were purchased by and for the employee of Vulcan County or eligible family member.
- 5.5 The intent of Wellness Account is to benefit the Employee. Family related purchases will be acceptable provided they are for your spouse/common-law spouse or child under the age of 18 and residing with the employee.
- 5.6 Clarification on expenses eligible for reimbursement prior to purchase should be directed to the Chief Administrative Officer.
- 5.7 You may continue to submit claims until your annual maximum prorated amount or maximum of \$300 is used.
- 5.8 You must submit claims two weeks prior to December 31 to allow for processing in the current fiscal year.
- 5.9 If you return an item you have purchased through your Wellness Account, the funds retrieved must be returned to the County. Your Wellness Account will be credited accordingly.
- 5.10 In order to provide the quickest return to employees, we ask that you please refrain from submitting your claim until you have accumulated receipts totaling a minimum of \$100.
- 5.11 Turn-around time to process your claim will be approximately two weeks and reimbursement will be made through the normal payroll cheque cycle.
- 5.12 All requests may be subject to final approval of the Chief Administrative Office

