



Diversity & Inclusion Corner

Brought to you by Training & Development

The Diversity and Inclusion Task Force has identified Mentor programs as a research based, best practice model for developing inclusive organizations. The Task Force has developed, and is implementing, a pilot **Mentor Program** in our County. Once the pilot program is complete, it will be offered to all of our workforce.

The Ventura County Pilot Mentor Program is designed to help prepare professional staff to be successful candidates for career development opportunities by providing them one-on-one time with effective senior managers. Mentoring has an impact to address gaps of wisdom that have not been filled by any other means.

The Mentor Program will run two sessions per year. Each session includes a three week application process for the Mentors and Mentees. Each session is a four month commitment consisting of face-to-face meetings to share professional wisdom and explore professional growth needs twice a month. Mentees go through a 360 Degree Assessment experience, which serves as a map for

their professional development plan. Mentees will also participate in a four hour workshop, *Working with Power and Influence*, to learn tips on managing their career and increasing their credibility. The inaugural pilot program has a total of 29 Mentor/Mentee pairs.

The next application period for the Mentor Program will occur at the end of June with a program start date slated for September.

For more information on the Ventura County Mentor Program please go to the [Mentor Program page](#) on MyVCWeb



Are You Enrolled in a MetLife Life Insurance Plan?

If So, Specialized Services are Available to You!

Travel Assistance

To complement your MetLife Insurance coverage, you have access to Travel Assistance, a special travel service administered by AXA Assistance USA, Inc. Travel Assistance offers you and your dependents worldwide medical, travel and concierge assistance services, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Grief Counseling

Valuable resources and services provide expert support when needed most. Whether it's help coping with a loss or a major life change, you and your family can turn to professional counselors and support services, provided by Harris Rothenberg International (HRI), to get you moving forward.

Funeral Planning Guide

A comprehensive guide that helps you get organized and put in writing your wishes for your end of life arrangements.

**For those enrolled in an Optional Life Plan, the services below are also available.*

Will Preparation Services

Unlimited access to valuable legal resources to help you prepare or update a will, living will or power of attorney offered through Hyatt Legal Plans.

Estate Resolution Services

Unlimited access to valuable legal resources for settling an estate offered through Hyatt Legal Plans. MetLife's Estate Resolution Services covers the cost of attorney fees to probate the estate of the insured and the insured's spouse/domestic partner's estate.

For more information on these services and how to access them, please go to: hr.ventura.org/benefits/life-insurance

The Employee Assistance Program

There When You Need It!

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides professional and confidential mental health counseling support to you and your family.

Licensed staff are available to assist you and your family with personal, marital, work-related, or other issues that may be emotionally challenging or overwhelming. Workplace issues can be addressed as well. See below for two special services that the EAP provides for the workplace.

Services are free to all County employees and eligible dependents enrolled in a County sponsored medical or opt-out plan.

EAP normal business hours are Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm. Staff will make every effort to arrange a prompt appointment at a time that is convenient to your schedule, this can include after-hours appointments when available. An EAP representative is available 24-hours a day for telephone emergencies at **805/654-4327**.



Difficulties can occur between co-workers when differences of opinion, misunderstandings, or contrasting styles result in strained communication and compromised workplace effectiveness. Mediation in the workplace has continued to be an effective alternative for many employees. This is a free service provided by the EAP to benefit employees. Mediation Services assist participants by involving a neutral third party to listen to all parties and facilitate solutions. Participation is voluntary, proactive, and very effective. For additional information that includes details and limitations on mediation services, contact the EAP staff at **805/654-4327**.

The EAP staff offers workplace coaching and consultation. Coaching is not mental health care or psychotherapy. Instead, coaching is an approach for those who are interested in professional and career self-development and goal setting.

Whether it is an exploration for future career development, assessing interpersonal strengths and challenges in the workplace, or the goal of achieving greater workplace satisfaction, coaching may be a useful approach.

If you are interested in workplace coaching, give the EAP a call at **805/654-4327**.



Be Alert! Accidents Hurt!

An Ounce of Prevention from Risk Management



You are probably familiar with the common adage, “accidents happen”. But do you know that “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure”? The cost of providing workers’ compensation benefits and treating injured workers is on the rise, both locally and across the state. Implementing practices and strategies to avoid injuries is the very best way to keep workers’ comp costs down.

Let’s take a look at the three leading causes of injuries reported to the Workers’ Compensation division of Risk Management that plague County employees, and focus on the prevention of these three common injuries.

Slip, trip, and fall injuries are the leading cause of workers’ compensation claims. The majority of these claims occurred by slipping on wet surfaces or tripping over an obstruction in a walkway. Consider these simple measures for prevention of slip, trip, and fall injuries; take the time to correct the hazard, report the hazard if it cannot be easily corrected, and watch out for other people’s safety. Avoid regret and heed these preventive measures.

The second most common cause of workers’ compensation claims are due to **repetitive motion injuries**. The majority of these injuries occur while keying at the computer. One simple measure that is often overlooked is preventing sedentary behavior. Micro-breaks are a great way to give yourself a short break and avoid sedentary behavior. Opportunities for micro-breaks can be as easy as retrieving documents from a printer across the room, standing up during phone calls, or standing up to stretch. The benefits of an effective micro-break is giving the body rest, reducing discomfort, and improving performance.

Rounding out the list of the most common cause of workers’ compensation claims is **being struck by or against objects**. In other words, running into something or being run into. Avoid cell phone use or other distractions while in motion. Accidents stemming from walking and texting have become such a community issue that the City of Honolulu passed the Distracted Walking Law last year citing a high rate of pedestrians being hit in crosswalks. To be on the safe side, slow down and don’t rush! Look ahead to anticipate hazards, and pay attention to your surroundings.

The most effective way to minimize workers’ compensation costs is through accident prevention. Recovering from an injury is time consuming, painful and requires a significant amount of energy from our bodies. Let’s put our energy towards prevention and staying healthy. Remember to be observant, take micro-breaks, anticipate hazards and slow down!

Get Paid to \$ave!

DEFERRED COMPENSATION

401(K) Shared Savings
& Section 457 Plans



Did you know the County will pay you to save? It's true! For most bargaining units, the County will contribute a specified percentage to your 401(k) based on the amount you contribute.

[See the attached Plan Year Information brochure for your eligible employer matching amount.](#)

In fact, if you aren't contributing to your 401(k) plan up to the amount the County matches, then you are turning down money that the County would otherwise be providing for your retirement. It is hard to imagine a scenario where turning down free money is a good idea.

Besides free money, contributing to a 401(k) plan is an affordable way to save for retirement and offers key advantages over a regular savings account.



It's easy. Your contributions are automatically deducted from your paycheck, so you don't have to write a check or make a deposit



It's flexible. You decide how much to contribute and where to invest your money



It reduces your income tax. The money you contribute to the plan is not subject to Federal or State income tax until you withdraw it.

Meet your match today! Enroll, or increase your contribution by logging onto <http://netbenefits.com/ventura>, or calling 800/343-0860.



Is Your 2018 Withholding a Mystery?

New IRS Calculator Shows What You Owe

Curious how the new tax law will impact you? The IRS has updated their income-tax withholding tables for 2018 to reflect changes made by the new tax law. This new tool can help you strike a balance between paying Uncle Sam too much in income taxes and not enough. Withholding the right amount can be the difference between owing the IRS and getting a refund.

[Check out the new IRS calculator here.](#)

Got a Minute?

If you haven't enrolled in your County of Ventura 401(k) or 457 Plan(s) you can do it in just 60 seconds on your smartphone, tablet or computer. With a few simple clicks you can get started today with a savings approach that suits you—then, feel free to adjust it any time to fit your changing needs.

Get started right now at: NetBenefits.com/Easy

Questions? Guidance is always available. Talk to a Fidelity Representative at **800/343-0860**.



In 2017, our Fidelity representatives conducted over 500 one-on-one consultation appointments with our participants. These appointments are always in high demand and fill up quickly. We will continue to add as many appointments as possible but did you know that this same confidential personal consultation is just a phone call away? Licensed Fidelity representatives are



available from 5:00am to 6:00 pm (Pacific Time), Monday-Friday to help you with your planning needs. The experience is the same as our in-person consultations but you are able to call when it is convenient for you. Contact **877/895-5986** and find out the difference a quick conversation could make.

To highlight the County's commitment to encourage healthy activity, healthy competition and camaraderie, the Wellness Program presented a "Golden Sneaker Trophy" to three County Agencies/Departments that demonstrated *their* healthy commitment by achieving the highest collective-daily-step-average during the VC-WELLtrek "Celebrations Around the Globe" competition (10/31/17-12/11/17).

CONGRATULATIONS to the "GOLDEN SNEAKER AWARD" Agency/Dept. WINNERS!



Johnson Gil, HCA Director
David Sasek, GSA Director

Todd Howeth, Public Defender



- ▶ **Public Defender**, (Small dept. 1-199 employees) **Collective daily avg .of 10.62K steps**
- ▶ **General Serv. Agency**, (Medium dept. 200-999 employees) **Collective daily avg. of 11.12k steps**
- ▶ **Health Care Agency**, (Large dept. 1000+ employees) **Collective daily average of 8.2k steps**

As "Chariots of Fire" played in the background during the Wellness Program's award presentation at the 1/23/18 Board of Supervisors' meeting, a hush fell over the audience as Johnson Gill—HCA, David Sasek—GSA and Todd Howeth—Public Defender, ran down the aisle in *suuper-slow* motion to claim their Agency's "Golden Sneaker Award". *It was a memorable sight!*

During the VC-WELLtrek "Celebrations Around the Globe" competition, being "healthier together" was the goal as Agency/Dept. teams competed for *permanent "bragging rights"* and temporary custody of the "Golden Sneaker Trophy"!

Winning Agency/Dept. *team members* who achieved at least an average of 7,000 steps/day during the competition, earned a "Golden Sneaker" pin. →

According to many of the participants, this challenge provided a fun way to stay motivated and active *together!*

"I get so excited each day when I meet that 7k daily goal! Lets keep it up..."

"...Let's all walk/run/bike for our health and have fun doing it!!"

"...All for fun & our health!"

"I am having a great time getting my steps in ..."



Actual Size!



For Healthy Potluck ideas, Discount Gym Memberships, Walking Maps, Community Services—or to see the Wellness Program class schedule—or to learn more about the FREE, CONFIDENTIAL Wellness Profile screening, go to www.ventura.org/vcwell.

Watch for emails about the next VC-WELLtrek competition—YOUR Agency/Dept. could be the next guardians of the "Golden Sneaker Trophy"!

In the meantime, create your own teams and keep steppin'!

Log in or create a new account @ <https://vcwelltrek.walkertracker.com>



The WorkLife Program provides resources to help you care for the most important people in your life!

Child Care

Elder Care

Lactation Accommodation

[Click here for WorkLife resources.](#)

Family Care & Volunteer Resource



Receive information and resources on family care including child care, elder care and senior care services. Volunteer opportunities throughout Ventura County will also be available.

For more info, contact the [WorkLife Program](#) or call 805/477-7234.



COASTAL HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Thinking About Buying a Home?

Attend the Path to Home Ownership Home Buying Seminar!

Whether you are a first-time home buyer, move-up buyer or getting back into the housing market, the information provided will give you the tools needed to be a more informed buyer. To register go to:

<http://www.coastalhousing.org/>

April 24, 2018 or June 5, 2018

5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Government Center, Ventura
Hall of Administration, Multi-Purpose Room



Are You Caring for an Elderly Relative?

Whether your loved one lives with you, lives across town or is out of state, caring for an elderly or sick relative can be stressful. Caregivers need to nourish their spirit and support their physical and mental health. Join us for support and resources at the **Elder Care Support Group**. Drop in as your schedule allows, no registration is required.

Noon - 1:00pm

Government Center - Hall of Administration, Room

- April 25
- May 30
- June 27

