



Special Announcements & Resources

InSync Newsletter: Quarter 2
April - June 2023

Benefits

Welcoming a New Family Member? Need to Add Them to Your Health Plans?

Don't miss the timeline to add dependents to your health plans. New family members are not automatically enrolled in an employee's insurance plans. To enroll, you must submit a Mid-Year Enrollment and Change request within 31-days. Qualifying events for such additions include a dependent's birth, adoption, adoption placement, marriage, or registration of Domestic Partnership. Contact your agency's HR Representative(s) as soon as possible and within 31 days (including the event date) with any questions and to submit the necessary enrollment paperwork. See Chapter 1 of the Benefits Plan Handbook (linked below) for more information.



[2023 Benefits Plan Handbook](#)

Reduce Your Carbon Footprint with Commuter Benefits

Save money and help the environment by making your commute to work more ecofriendly by taking advantage of the County's commuter benefits.

- Interested in taking public transit to work? Through the [Transportation Benefit Reimbursement Program](#), employees can set aside pretax dollars to use for public transit and vanpooling.
- Need to travel for work? Use electric vehicles in GSA's motor pool and save wear and tear on your vehicle.
- Do you bike to work? Sign up for a bike locker to store your bike during work hours.
- Have you been carpooling? Employees who carpool can get a carpool preferential parking permit.

[Visit the HR Benefits' Commuter page to learn more.](#)

Complaint Resolution and Misconduct Hotline

The County of Ventura believes employees should be able to voice concerns about tough workplace issues like harassment, discrimination, or

discourteous workplace behavior. When appropriate, employees are encouraged to first discuss concerns with their supervisors, then their agency/department HR Representatives. If resolution is still not reached, more information and online reporting are available on the [Complaint Resolution Webpage](#).



24-Hour Employee Misconduct Hotline - 1 (800) 684-6523

*Calls and online reporting can be anonymous so there is no fear of retaliation.
Human Resources is committed to compliance and your participation is essential.*

Risk Management



COUNTY of VENTURA

COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE
Risk Management

Updated Workplace COVID-19 Protocols for County Employees

The state of California has seen dramatic improvements in community COVID-19 infections since the onset of the pandemic. This is due to widespread vaccination efforts and lower levels of community transmission. Due to these developments, on March 3, 2023, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) issued [updated guidance regarding isolation and quarantine of the general public](#). This guidance took effect on March 13, 2023 and is in alignment with recent [recommendations issued by the Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#).

Cal/OSHA follows CDPH definitions and isolation procedures, therefore, elements of the new guidance are now incorporated into the [COVID-19 Prevention Regulations \(CCR Title 8, § 3205\)](#). The County of Ventura is required to follow these workplace regulations and has made the following changes to employee COVID-19 protocols in general settings:

- Employees with COVID-19 are no longer required to test in order to leave isolation before Day 10* if their symptoms are improving and they have not had a fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.
- The definition of the “infectious period” has been modified as follows:
 - For symptomatic confirmed cases: 2 days before symptom onset through Days 5-10. The infectious period may end after Day 5 if symptoms are improving, and the individual has been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications. If fever persists, isolation should be continued until 24 hours after fever resolves. If symptoms other than a fever are not improving, isolation should continue until symptoms improve or until after Day 10.
 - For asymptomatic confirmed cases: 2 days before positive test specimen collection date through Day 5.
 - Confirmed COVID-19 cases who end isolation in accordance with this updated guidance are no longer considered to be within their infectious period.
 - If after ending isolation, symptoms recur or worsen, the individual should test again, and if positive, restart isolation at Day 0.
- Close contacts of workplace COVID-19 cases should test within 3-5 days of last exposure and should wear a face covering around others for a total of 10 days. Those with symptoms should isolate pending test results. Close contacts who were previously infected within the last 30 days do not need to test unless symptoms develop.

This updated guidance has been provided to Agency Safety Officers and will be incorporated into Agency COVID-19 Prevention Plans (CPP). For more information regarding COVID-19 protocols and requirements specific to your agency, please contact your agency Human Resources representative.

Each employee has a responsibility to maintain a safe environment for themselves and others. Please remain vigilant and help to reduce the spread and impact of COVID-19.

**Counting days: If symptomatic, Day 0 is the date of symptom onset. If asymptomatic, Day 0 is the date of first positive test specimen collection. Day 1 is the first full day after symptoms began/test specimen*



WELLthy Reward\$

The 2023 WELLthy Reward\$ cash award program is in full swing. Don't miss out on your chance to earn a cash award ranging from \$100 - \$400 by participating in various healthy and fun activities! Employees who earn a cash award for the first time will also receive a one-time \$50 bonus added to their cash award. Visit [WELLthy Reward\\$](#) for details, or to create a WELLtrek account.

[Learn more](#)



Healing Garden Engraved Brick Opportunity at Ventura County Medical Center (VCMC)

Seize the opportunity to be a part of history and purchase a personalized brick to be placed in Phase 2 of the Healing Garden, nestled in the heart of VCMC. Honor or impart a message of hope to a loved one, patient, or colleague as the perfect sentiment to be included in a peaceful sanctuary for patients, grieving families, and staff seeking respite. [Click here](#) or [contact Amy Towner at amy.towner@ventura.org](mailto:amy.towner@ventura.org) to learn more.

Stuart E. Siegel, M.D., Retired Pediatric Oncologist, CHLA and Health Care Foundation for Ventura County, Board Chair

When I heard about the creation of the Healing Garden, I immediately thought, what a great way this would be to honor patients and families I cared for through the 40 years I was here, as well as some of the staff. I dedicated several bricks to some of these people."



[Click here](#) to get a closer look at the Healing Garden Engraved Brick Opportunity!

Learning & Organizational Development

New Learning Management System Coming Soon

We are upgrading our learning infrastructure! The County of Ventura will be implementing a new all-in-one learning management system (LMS) called **VenturAcademy**, utilizing the Cornerstone On-Demand platform. Our new LMS will increase our capacity and streamline our learning systems making it easier to host new trainings, catalogue classes, track learning, and recommend and assign courses.



VenturaAcademy will combine the ability to provide learning, just-in-time training, the acquisition of new skills, and the capabilities of an on-demand, real-time system into a personalized, curated experience. It will also provide the ability for agency/department or countywide training that is customized for all or certain groups. **VenturaAcademy** will also have the capability of being much more than a training platform. It can be used as an organizational communication platform. It can communicate a wide range of messages, from important countywide communications to department-specific tips. Each message can be directed to a specific audience. That way, employees will never miss a message because a notification will be populated on their Welcome Page. All full-time regular employees will be ensured equitable access to critical information from their agencies/departments, that is aligned with our value of inclusivity.

VenturaAcademy provides users with:

- Unlimited on-demand secure access to all training that is assigned or recommended as long as the employee has access to a web browser
- The ability to request/enroll in training sessions and track progress
- The ability to view personal training history

VenturaAcademy is coming this summer!

Deferred Compensation



Elimination of "Month Prior" Rule for 457

Planning contributions to your 457 just became a little easier. Previously, the "month prior" rule stated that initial contributions, an increase in contributions, or a decrease in contributions had to be made the month prior to the change taking place. The federal SECURE 2.0 Act of 2022, eliminated this former IRS rule. Effective April 19, 2023, your contribution increase or decrease to your 457 account will take place in 1-2 pay periods. If you plan on deferring your buydown to your 457, your buydown forms must be submitted to Deferred Compensation no later than the pay period prior to your requested buydown check date. Buydown forms are available by emailing deferred.compensation@ventura.org.



QDRO Service Now Available through Fidelity

A Qualified Domestic Relations Order is a legal document, typically associated with a divorce settlement, that recognizes that a former spouse is entitled to receive a predefined portion of the account owner's retirement plan assets. If you are in the process of a divorce and it has been determined that your deferred compensation plans will be divided, Fidelity has a [QDRO Center](#) to help you prepare the necessary documentation. Effective March 15, 2023, the County of Ventura Deferred Compensation office will no longer coordinate the QDRO process with County Counsel. All QDRO inquiries should be directed to Fidelity's QDRO Center at qd.ro.fidelity.com or by calling Fidelity at 800-343-0860.

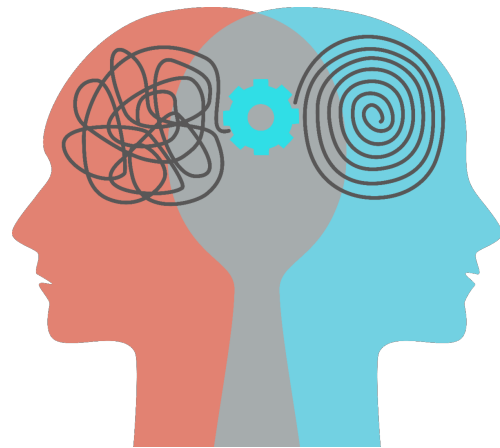


Employee Assistance Program - EAP

Mental Health Awareness Week May 15 - 21, 2023

Mental Health Awareness Week is May 15 - 21, and the theme this year is anxiety. This is the perfect time to check the level of anxiety in your life and make choices to improve your overall health and well-being. Increasing self-care activities such as exercise, meditation, creative hobbies, and spending time with friends and family is part of a healthy work-life balance and can help manage minor symptoms of anxiety.

If you would like more strategies on self-care, or if you would like to talk about other issues, whether personal or professional, remember that the Employee Assistance Program is here for you! We are available for in-person, video, or telephone appointments. We also offer an Elder Care Support Group. Please give us a call for more information at (805) 654-4327.



Visit our website

950 County Square Drive, Suite 200
Ventura, CA 93003
805-654-4327

Wellness Program - VC-WELL

Wellbeats Now Free for Friends & Family

Starting in April, employees with Wellbeats accounts can add up to 5 additional friends & family members to their account for free so they can access Wellbeats' classes. This is a great opportunity to share the gift of well-being and maybe get a workout partner to help you stay on track in meeting your well-being goals. All employees will receive an email on April 5 directly from Wellbeats providing instructions on how to add people to their account.



Beat Your Peers Challenge

VC-WELL is debuting a new individual WELLtrek challenge in April called the *Beat Your Peers* Challenge. Everyone who had an account in March was automatically registered. Employees who complete the challenge by meeting the step goal will earn 20 points toward their 2023 WELLthy Reward\$ point total, and those who exceed their peers' step average (average of all participants) at the end of the challenge, will receive an additional 5 WELLthy Reward\$ points as a bonus. Good luck beating your peers!



Spring Hike Series

VC-WELL will host two hikes this spring, one at the Santa Monica Mountains to see the Sycamore Canyon waterfall, and the other at the beach walk by the Ventura Pier. Event details will be provided on the April VC-WELL *Digest*. Employees who complete all hikes in 2023 will be added in a random drawing at the end of the year for three \$50 iRedeem Health vouchers. Good luck and have fun!



Wellness Screenings

Wellness biometric screenings are ongoing at various County sites. Please visit VC-WELL's webpage to learn more and [register for your appointment](#).



Visit our website

Wellness.Program@ventura.org
805-654-2628

WorkLife Program

Ventura County Home Buying Fair - Free for County Employees

Housing Benefits Available to County of Ventura Employees

Coastal Housing Partnership provides many housing benefits for County of Ventura employees. Whether you are purchasing a home, seeking home buying education, refinancing a mortgage, or looking for a new rental, check out how they can help you reduce your costs. www.coastalhousing.org

Coastal Housing webinars can guide you through the home buying process.

Whether you are ready to buy now or just thinking about buying, this information will help you on your path to home ownership.

- **Navigating the Home Buying Process** - Tuesday, May 16, Noon – 1 p.m.
 - Hear from three local lenders about what's involved in obtaining a home loan and how the current market has changed. Topics discussed will include how to improve your credit score, how much of a loan you can afford, and how to buy a home with less than a 20% down payment. And there will be time to get your questions answered.
 - Click here to [register in advance for this free webinar](#).
- **From Renter to Homeowner** - Tuesday, June 13, noon – 1 p.m.
 - Hoping to make that step from renter to homeowner? Attend this webinar for tips and guidance from a local loan officer and a real estate agent on how to be prepared, what to expect, and how to save money.
 - Click here to [register in advance for this free webinar](#).
- **Understanding Your Housing Benefits Webinars:**
 - 30-minute webinars offered twice each month outlining all the housing benefits available to County of Ventura employees.

For a schedule of these webinars and to register, go to [Home Buying Webinars \(coastalhousing.org\)](https://coastalhousing.org)



COUNTY of VENTURA
Human Resources



Thank you for reading this edition of *InSync*.

[Please complete our brief survey to assist us in publishing the best newsletter possible.](#)