



Special Announcements & Resources

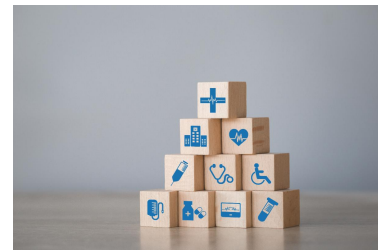
InSync Newsletter: Quarter 4
October - December 2023

Open Enrollment is Just Around the Corner

This year, open enrollment will be held from **November 1 through November 30**. This is your opportunity to review and modify your benefits for the upcoming plan year. During open enrollment, you can change medical plans, add or remove dependents, enroll in a flexible spending or dependent care accounts, and ensure your benefits align with your needs for the 2024 Plan Year.

You will be able to make your elections online through VCHRP, upload any required documents, double-check your elections, and submit your choices. If you do not wish to make changes and prefer to maintain the same benefits as in the 2023 plan year, you do not need to take any action— **UNLESS** you are currently enrolled in a Healthcare or Dependent Care flexible spending account (FSA). **These accounts do require you to make annual elections.**

Check your email for important open enrollment announcements and updates.



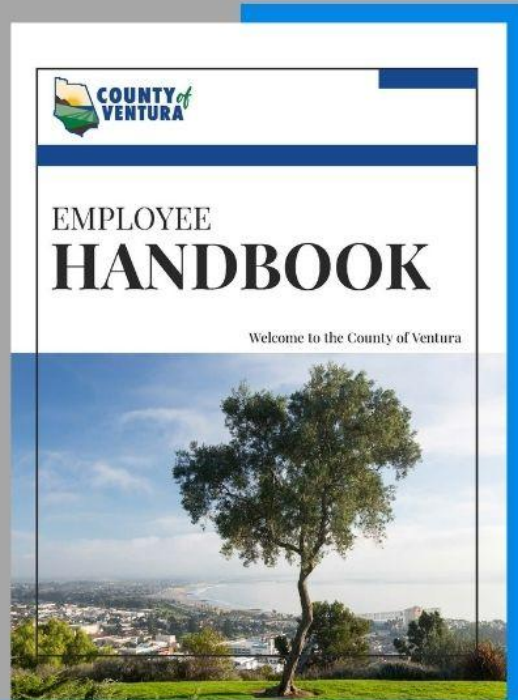


HOT OFF THE PRESS

The Employee Handbook has a new look.

Access it here:

<http://myvcweb/index.php/hr/employee-handbook>



What's Inside:

- Overview of the County of Ventura
- General rules, policies, and benefits information
- Direct website links to various topics

Is Your Information Up to Date?

Open Enrollment is a great time to verify that the County has your most up-to-date contact details. Please review and confirm your mailing address, phone number, and personal email address in VCHRP. This step is crucial to ensure that you receive essential communications from the County, including Open Enrollment and W-2s, especially if you do not receive them electronically. You can submit your updates conveniently within VCHRP. To review and update your information, log into VCHRP at <https://vchrp.co.ventura.ca.us/> and access the "Personal Details" tile.



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](#).



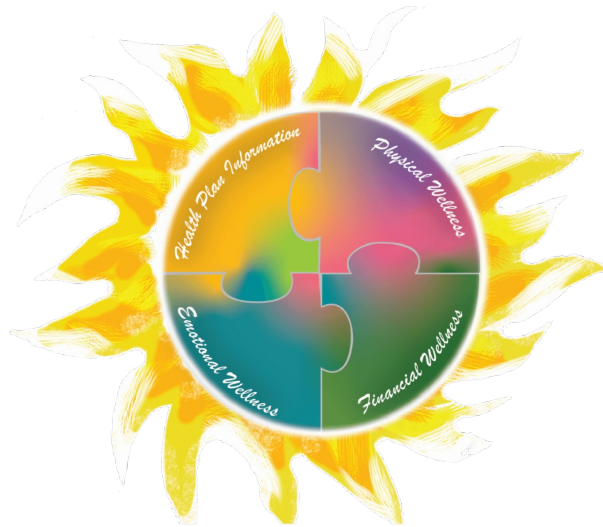
24-Hour Employee Misconduct Hotline - 1 (800) 684-6523

Save the Date!

Join us for our annual *Health and Wealth Fair*, scheduled for November 8 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. This event is your opportunity to discover more about the employee benefits and resources that directly impact your physical, emotional, and financial well-being.

Here's what you can look forward to:

- Speak with representatives from County Benefits and our health plan providers.
- Find out what's new with the Employee Assistance and Wellness Programs.
- Have questions about your 401(k) and 457 plans? Connect with experts from Deferred Compensation and Fidelity.
- Grab some fantastic free giveaways, available while supplies last.



For those unable to attend in person, don't worry. We will also host a virtual Health and Wealth Fair site throughout November. This virtual platform will feature important information and highlights regarding the employee benefits available to you.

Keep an eye on your email for more details on this upcoming event. We look forward to seeing you there.



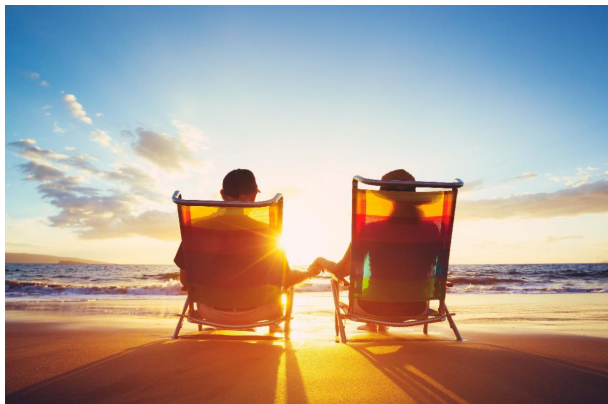
Heath Care Foundation for Ventura County is Pleased to Announce Free Estate Planning Tools

Health Care Foundation for Ventura County (HCFVC) has sponsored *Giving Docs* so that everyone can have access to a FREE Will and Trust. Gain peace of mind by protecting your family.

The Cycle of Health and Wealth

The relationship between health and finance is cyclical. Good health fosters the ability to work, earn, and invest, thereby contributing to financial prosperity. Financial resources can enhance access to healthcare, preventive measures, and a healthier lifestyle, leading to improved health outcomes.

Planning for the future is a powerful way to leave a lasting legacy and continue supporting the causes that matter most to you. We have partnered with Giving Docs to help you gain peace of mind by protecting your family with a free will, trust, advanced healthcare directive, power of attorney, and more. Our easy-to-use software takes a task that may be seen as complicated or daunting, and easily guides you through the process of creating your will and trust step by step, ensuring your wishes are met and your loved ones' futures are protected. We have had an overwhelmingly positive response to this free service. Here is what other County employees have shared:



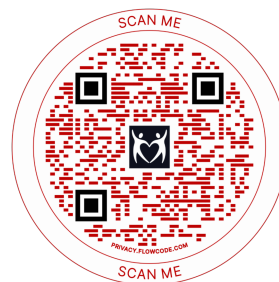
- *"Thank you so much for organizing this. What a wonderful thing! I've been thinking about doing this for years and I just went through the process and took me less than 20 minutes."*
- *"I plan on doing this over the weekend. I felt exactly the same, I knew I had to create these*

essential documents, but I didn't know how to start or find a reputable person to help me without paying \$5- \$7k for the process."

- "Awesome, thank you SO much for always doing great things for us County Workers and the community as usual!!"

The Health Care Foundation invites you to take a few moments to explore the website and discover the FREE essential financial planning documents that await you. Together we can envision a healthier future and equalize access for all. [Get started today.](#)

Giving Docs is a free service that is not endorsed by the County of Ventura and is being made available as a courtesy by the Health Care Foundation of Ventura County, Inc. (the "Health Care Foundation"). Giving Docs is an independent third-party platform, completely separate from the County of Ventura and the Health Care Foundation. Its services are provided without review from the County of Ventura and the County of Ventura and the Health Care Foundation are not liable for its use. Giving Docs is not a law firm and does not provide legal advice. You are encouraged to seek and obtain your own separate legal advice regarding Giving Docs and your own personal estate planning issues. Your use of the Giving Docs' platform is subject to its Terms of Service which we also encourage you to review.



If you have any questions or would like to learn more about supporting HCFVC with a gift in your will or other estate plan, please contact: Amy Towner at Amy.Towner@ventura.org or 805-652-3361

Learning & Organizational Development

Come Grow with Us... Ready, Set, Grow!

We are now transitioning from VCHRP to our new learning management system (LMS) platform powered by Cornerstone. This process began in late summer and will continue into early next year.

Ready, Set, Grow!

CEO-HR Learning & Organizational Development is transitioning from VCHRP to a new learning management system, Cornerstone. It will serve as a "one-stop shop" for enrolling in courses, completing online training, and tracking your progress. We look forward to full implementation in 2024.

**All County Agencies except HCA*

Come Grow With Us!

To learn more about VCLearning Hub, visit our website:
<http://myvcweb/index.php/vclearninghub>

[HTTP://MYVCWEB/INDEX.PHP/VCLEARNINGHUB](http://myvcweb/index.php/vclearninghub)

It is an exciting time in our County because we will have a streamlined system and process for delivering and tracking all training, an improved way of communicating with all County employees, and access to hundreds of on-demand courses coming soon. The LMS can quickly and efficiently reach every County employee, agency/department, or customized group as needed. It can track compliance with regulations and document the receipt of a change to a policy or procedure. If an agency or group has a critical message that must be distributed quickly, this system can also do that. Does your agency have a new form that must be completed correctly? If so, a video of the steps to follow can be made and your agency rep. will have the ability to upload it into the system for everyone on your team to watch and have as a reference. These are just a few of the great features available through the Cornerstone LMS.

Compliance

- Harassment Prevention
- Diversity & Inclusion
- Social Media
- Cultural Awareness
- Data Security

Professional Skills

- Strategic Thinking
- Work-Life Balance
- Managing Conflict
- Emotional Intelligence
- All Microsoft Office applications
- Customer Service

All of these and many more will be at your fingertips and available to you on demand and just-in-time when you need to take them. These changes will happen by the Spring of 2024. More information will be provided, as it becomes available.

October is National Retirement Security Month

National Retirement Security Month (NRSM) is a national event to promote the benefits of saving for retirement. The NRSM campaign encourages employees to think about and build on the financial goals they have set for themselves and their families by participating in their employer sponsored retirement plans.

It's National Retirement Security Month

How do you know if you are saving enough for retirement? How can you plan for the rising costs of health care in retirement? Should you be saving to an emergency fund? NRSM provides an opportunity to think about these questions and seek answers.

Be sure to utilize the [“Are You Saving Enough”](#) page located on the Deferred Compensation website. You can also set up a complimentary appointment with Tia Scott, our dedicated Fidelity Workplace Financial Consultant to determine if you are on track with your retirement savings. In-person or virtual appointments can be scheduled by using the [Fidelity Scheduling System](#) to secure time with Tia. For a quick issue or question, you can drop in on Tia during her [drop-in schedule](#) for 2023.

National 401(k) Day Incentive Drawing

To celebrate National 401(k) Day, Deferred Compensation offered an incentive to encourage employees to establish or increase their contributions to their 401(k).



Regardless of whether you won a prize or not, anyone who contributes to a deferred compensation account is a winner for saving for retirement. A total of eight employees were selected randomly from those who established or increased their contributions between August 31 and September 8. The campaign is viewed as a success due to a 48% increase in contributions when compared to the same time period in the prior year.

New Roth Option Coming in 2024

We are pleased to announce that a Roth option will be available on your 401(k) plan in early 2024.

Contributions to the Roth option of the 401(k) are made on an after-tax basis and are subject to federal and state tax. The Roth option can provide you with a source of tax-free income in retirement if you meet two requirements:

1. You hold the account for at least five tax years from your initial contribution, and;
2. You are at least 59 ½ at the time of withdrawal.



Contributions to the 401(k) Roth are a percentage of your regular pay and do count towards the contribution needed to draw the County match. County match contributions will only be applied to the pre-tax 401(k) plan.

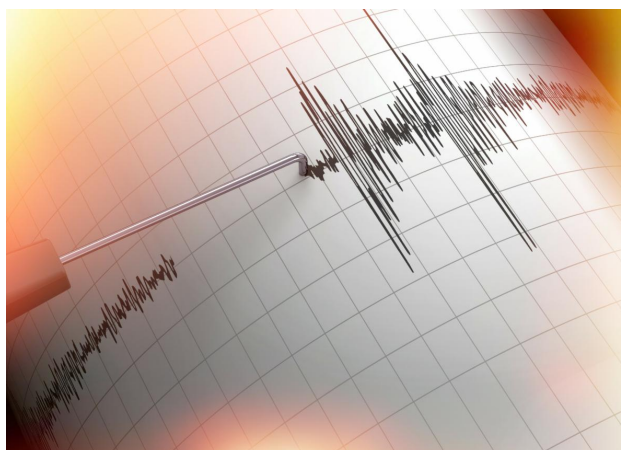
For more information on the Roth 401(k) plan, please visit the [Deferred Compensation website](#).



Earthquake Preparedness

Did you feel the recent earthquakes centered in Ojai? Did you feel prepared? California experiences earthquakes daily; most are not felt by humans. It is important that you understand how to prepare and react at work and at home.

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) partners with the Earthquake Country Alliance (ECA) to provide a [helpful plan](#) to better prepare yourself and your family.



Step 1: Secure your space by identifying hazards and securing moveable items.

- Secure furniture items in your home to the wall if needed.
- Ensure walking areas around your workspace are kept clear in case of an evacuation.

Step 2: Create a disaster plan and decide how you will communicate in an emergency.

- Be familiar with your agency's emergency response procedures so that you can easily act when needed.
- Develop a plan with your family and coordinate a method of contacting loved ones in the case of any loss of utilities.

Step 3: Organize disaster supplies in areas that are easily accessible.

- The ECA provides a sample [checklist](#) to help you determine what items you may need.
- Essential supplies may include, but are not limited to, a first aid kit, flashlights, dust masks, spare shoes or clothes, spare glasses or contact lenses, medications, water, and food (make sure to have pet food too if you have furry friends).
- If you require prescription medication while at work, ensure that it is easily accessible to you and that you take it with you when you evacuate, if it is safe to do so.
- Optional supplies may include, but are not limited to: copies of personal identification, cash, toiletries, a portable radio, road maps, gloves, blankets, and a whistle.

Step 4: Attempt to minimize the potential for future financial hardship by ensuring important personal documents are organized. If possible, maintain backup copies in case the originals are inaccessible. Ensure your property is well-maintained and strengthened against potential damage as much as possible.

- Consider what insurance policies may apply to your home and maintain accessible copies of policy documents.
- If able, photograph property damage sustained as a result of the earthquake. This will help with any future claims you may submit.

Remaining prepared will ensure you are able to act quickly in the case of an earthquake or other emergency. Check supplies once or twice per year to be sure that food and medication have not expired.

Employee Assistance Program - EAP

Back to School Stress?

Getting back to school with friends and activities can be exciting. It can also be very stressful. Watch for signs that your child or teenager may be stressed out or even struggling with depression. Not sure what to look for? Talk to our Employee Assistance Program team at (805) 654-4327. Our

EAP team provides professional and confidential mental health counseling support for you and your family. They are licensed mental health professionals who can provide up to 5 visits at no cost to you and/or your family members. You can also contact EAP to talk with a representative regarding community resources and referrals. No need to go it alone. The EAP is here to help.



Self-Care for the Holidays

The Holidays are coming, and in a time when our calendars are more packed than ever, there is a trick to keep from being overwhelmed: schedule self-care. Look ahead at the next few months. Notice when you are likely to be getting tired or stressed and block out periods for down-time, hobbies, exercise, or spiritual practices. Request days off and don't fill them with errands. Look at what you need to do to make your Holiday Season enjoyable and make that a priority.

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.



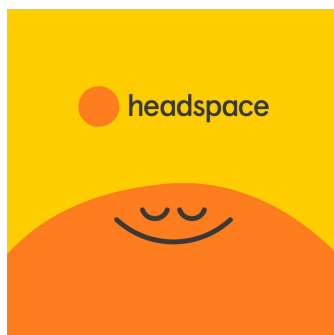
Visit our website

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

Wellness Program - VC-WELL

WELLthy Reward\$

The 2023 WELLthy Reward\$ incentive program ended on August 31, 2023, with 1,244 employees earning cash awards that ranged from \$100 - \$450. That's the highest number of cash awards earned in the program's history, and a 30% increase from last year. Cash awards will be disbursed in the November 3, 2023, paycheck. If you missed out on a cash award this year, VC-WELL plans to resume the program in January. Visit our webpage to learn more about the WELLthy Reward\$ program.



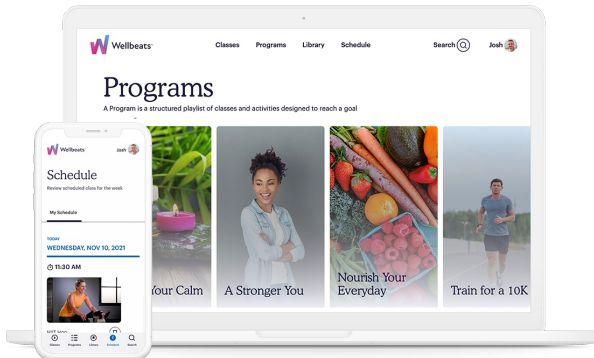
headspace

Try our free organizational premium subscription to headspace, a meditation and mindfulness app with an easy-to-use interface that includes features to support various areas of well-being such as sleep, focus, activity, and meditation. New for this year's free premium subscription, you can add up to 5 family members (must be 18 or older) to your headspace account for free. [Click here](#) to register for your free premium subscription.

Health Coaching

VC-WELL is pleased to offer unlimited health coaching sessions to employees and their spouses for programs

that focus on: General Well-being, Healthy Weight, Stress Management, Quality Sleep, and Tobacco Cessation. [Enroll Today.](#)



Wellbeats

Complete Wellbeats' sponsored "Rest and Restore" program challenge in November and get entered into a random drawing to win a Wellbeats' store gift card. If you don't yet have a free Wellbeats account, [click here to join.](#)

WELLtrek Challenges & Competitions

In 2023, 1148 people completed the Million Step March (MSM). This is a 28% increase from last year, and a new record since our first MSM in 2019. 123 teams competed and 986 employees completed the step goal in this year's WELLtrek Team Competition. Congratulations to Team BBY for winning the competition, and to Fired Up and Preamble for finishing in 2nd and 3rd places, respectively.



Visit our website

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

WorkLife Program

Make Your Home Ownership Dreams Come True!

Coastal Housing Partnership provides an array of housing benefits for County of Ventura employees.* They have helped more than 13,000 local employees achieve their dream of home ownership.



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

- **From Renter to Homeowner**
 - Tuesday, October 17, 2023, 12:00 - 1:00 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.
 - [Register in advance for this webinar](#)

- ***Focus on Ventura County - Real Estate Market Conditions & Lending Options***

- Tuesday, November 14, 2023, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.
- At this webinar, you will get the latest information from local real estate professionals about the Ventura County real estate market. Learn about market trends, loan opportunities and how to get started on your path to homeownership in Ventura County.
- [Click here](#) to register for Homebuying Webinars hosted by nonprofit Coastal Housing Partnership.

Not a home buyer? The Coastal Housing Partnership hosts a rental search service that provides information on available rentals in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties. For more information, go to: <https://coastalhousing.org/rental-search-site/>

**Access to this benefit applies to County of Ventura employees.*



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.](#)