



Special Announcements & Resources

InSync Newsletter: Quarter 1
January - March 2023

Benefits

FSA Reminder: Use it, Don't Lose it!

Do you have money left in your Chard Snyder Health Care or Dependent Day Care Flexible Spending Accounts? Don't forget for your HealthCare FSA only; you have until March 15, 2023 (County offered/IRS approved "Grace Period." The grace period is only available to employees who contribute to their account in the final pay period of the contribution year, which is PP22-25) to incur additional expenses to claim against any unused balance in your 2022 HealthCare FSA account. You must file reimbursement claims for Health Care FSA and Dependent Day Care FSA expenses by April 17, 2023 (because the usual deadline of April 15 falls on a weekend). It is easy to submit claims via www.chard-snyder.com or download the Chard Snyder mobile app for iOS and Android devices. For questions regarding your account, contact 800-982-7715. Representatives are available Monday-Friday from 8 am-8 pm Eastern Time.

Changing Your Primary Care Physician with a County-Sponsored HMO Plan

Sometimes, employees or their dependents need to change their Primary Care Physician (PCP); however, how do you make a change? PCP changes should never be done in VCHRP because PCP information is never transferred to the insurance plan after the employee and/or dependent's initial enrollment. To request a change, contact the following:

- Ventura County HealthCare Plan (VCHCP) - VCHCP can usually accommodate a same-day PCP election change for your convenience. Contact them at 805-981-5050.
- For Blue Shield HMO plans, PCP change requests are effective based on the date the request is made. If you request a change between the 1st-15th of a month, your change will be effective the first day of the following month. Requests made between the 16th and last day of a month, will not be effective until the first day of the second month following the request.
 - Blue Shield ACO Trio – Contact Customer Care at (855) 747-5800.
 - Blue Shield Access Plus – Contact Customer Care at (855) 256-9404

Complaint Resolution and Misconduct Hotline

We believe 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](#).



WELLthy Reward\$

The 2023 WELLthy Reward\$ cash award program will kick off in January. 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.

[Learn more](#)

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.*

HEALTH CARE
FOUNDATION
FOR VENTURA COUNTY



Invitation to WeGive kick-off February 7 at 10:30 am with departmental challenge

5851



COUNTY of VENTURA
Health Care Agency



To celebrate and grow an exceptional culture of health care philanthropy among Ventura County employees, please join us by participating in the *WeGive* 2023 Employee Giving Initiative to kick-off on February 7 at 10:30am.

WeGive 2023 Employee Giving Initiative will include a special departmental challenge kick-off February 7 at 10:30am at County Board of Supervisors meeting with volunteer *WeGive* Ambassadors. Our combined strength of giving across 10,000 employees, your one-time gift, payroll deduction or annual leave gift makes a profound statement that in this county, we support quality health care for all!

It's never too soon to have your impact felt. Giving can start anytime with confidence in knowing 100% of your contribution will fund urgently needed medical equipment and other strategic priorities such as pediatric medicine, rapid assessment tools and addiction treatment.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the impact of your giving. Want to be a *WeGive* Ambassador or consider how you may wish to participate in *WeGive* 2023? Contact Amy Towner at 805-652-3361 or amy.towner@ventura.org or visit our website, hcfvc.org.

Our Mission

Established in 2014, Health Care Foundation for Ventura County (HCFVC) is a public benefit non-profit corporation, dedicated to strengthening the capacity of Ventura County Health Care Agency (VCHCA) to provide quality health care for all, especially its' hospitals, Ventura County Medical Center, and Santa Paula Hospital, with cost-effective and compassionate care for our diverse community. HCFVC focuses on the needs of our county's constituency and are called upon to leverage strategic philanthropic investment to create or enhance vital programs and purchase state of the art medical equipment that

Deferred Compensation



2023 Retirement Plan Contribution Limits

Retirement plan contribution limits are set annually by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). A plan contribution is the amount of money you set aside on a bi-weekly basis for your retirement within the 401(k) and/or 457 plan(s). The contribution limit is the total amount that you can contribute each year. This limit is for employee contributions only and does not include employer matching contributions. For 2023, the IRS has announced they will be increasing these limits by \$2,000.00. The 2023 limits are provided below.

You and Market Volatility

Market volatility has been on most investors mind throughout 2022. Watching the balance of your retirement savings decrease can cause real anxiety and worry. Discover the reasons why you may be struggling to stay invested and how you can notice your own biases and emotional triggers by reviewing the article "[How to stay invested in volatile markets](#)". Understanding the behavioral reactions that you may have to a volatile market can help you make decisions that focus on your long-term plan, not by short-term anxiety.

Take the 1% Challenge

Not too many times in life does 1% really make a difference. You probably wouldn't consider leaving a 1% tip for your server or only adding 1% of coffee to your coffee cup. But when it comes to your retirement savings, a 1% increase could have a significant impact. To see examples of how a 1% increase to your 401k can be impactful, take a look at '[Just 1% more can make a big difference](#)'.

To increase your contribution, call Fidelity at 800-343-0860 or log on to [Netbenefits](#).

Employee Assistance Program - EAP

Relationship Resolution Tips

Many of us start the New Year with goals about diet and exercise, but how about goals to improve relationships? Or, more specifically, can you set a goal to manage conflict in a healthier way? Here are some tips on where to start:

1. Start with yourself – take time to figure out what is bothering you and why. Be as specific as possible and reflect on if you have had a similar feeling in the past. Gather courage to look at how you may be contributing to the problem. How might your actions look through the eyes of the other party?

2. Decide on how you will change your attitude and your actions. Maybe you will take a deep breath before speaking. Maybe you can take the situation less personally. Or maybe you need to set boundaries and communicate your perspective more clearly and calmly.

3. Get help – there are many resources on communication skills, mindfulness, and relationships. Find books, ask friends, and/or get some professional guidance.

If you would like more support in learning to manage conflict or to talk about your relationships, please call EAP at (805)654-4327 and/or visit our website <https://hr.ventura.org/benefits/employee-assistance-program>.



Visit our website

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

Wellness Program - VC-WELL



Million Step Marches

From January – August 2022, 898 county employees successfully completed the Million Step March (MSM), a 34% increase from the previous year! These ambitious employees logged one million steps and 399 employees accumulated more than two million steps (2MSM), a 18% increase from the previous year. VC-WELL is again challenging employees to complete either the MSM or the 2MSM in 2023. Employees completing each challenge can earn up to 80 points toward their WELLthy Reward\$ total. Visit [WELLthy Reward\\$](#) for details, or to create a WELLtrek account.

Resolution Weight Challenge

In February 2022, 847 employees completed the Resolution Weight Challenge, a 28% increase from the prior year! No matter if your New Year's resolution weight goal is to lose, gain, or maintain your weight, this challenge is for you. Employees who complete the challenge will earn 20 points toward their 2023 WELLthy Reward\$ point total. Keep an eye out for the all-County email in January for details, or visit [WELLtrek](#) to log-in or create an account.

VC-WELL is Virtual

To provide greater access to our workforce, many VC-WELL programs and activities are virtual, including our WELLtrek virtual physical activity tracking platform and challenges, health coaching, health education courses, and free Wellbeats and Headspace premium subscriptions. To learn more about these and other offerings from your award-winning program, visit our website (add link). Stay current on VC-WELL offerings by reading our monthly e-mail digests.

Risk Management



COUNTY of VENTURA

COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE
Risk Management

Fire Extinguisher Safety

According to the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA), structure fires made up approximately 36% of all reported fires and resulted in over 3,000 civilian deaths in 2021. A fire can start at work or at home, and all individuals should be prepared to respond accordingly.

If a fire starts, contact 911, activate a fire alarm to alert others (if applicable), and confirm there is no immediate danger to human life. If it is safe to do so, locate the nearest fire extinguisher appropriate for the type of material on fire. When using a fire extinguisher, make sure you have a clear exit path and position yourself about eight feet away from the fire. Use the **PASS** method and continue until the fire extinguisher is empty. If the fire is extinguished by your efforts, monitor the area until emergency response arrives. Only attempt to extinguish the fire yourself while it is safe to do so. If the fire grows too large or out of control, evacuate the area and wait for emergency response.

PASS method:

1. Pull the pin on the extinguisher
2. Aim the nozzle at the base of the fire
3. Squeeze the trigger
4. Sweep the nozzle from side to side

Fires are divided into different classes according to what material fuels them. It is important to know what type of fire extinguisher should be used in various scenarios:

- Class A fires are fueled by solid combustibles including trash, paper, or wood. These fires may be extinguished by removing the heat source with water, or by utilizing an ABC fire extinguisher.
- Class B fires involve flammable liquids and some gases, including gasoline, propane, and oil. These fires may be extinguished by utilizing a specialized class B fire extinguisher, or an ABC fire extinguisher.
- Class C fires ignite from the heat generated from the flow of an electrical current. There are specialized class C fire extinguishers, or an ABC fire extinguisher may be used.
- Class D fires are fueled by combustible metals such as magnesium, potassium, and titanium. These fires must be extinguished with a special chemical powder or foam (a fire extinguisher with a D rating) that must be built up to completely cover the burning metals and eliminate the oxygen supply to the fire.
- Class K fires involve vegetable oils, animal oils, or fats in cooking tools/appliances. These fires are extinguished utilizing a class K fire extinguisher that works by discharging potassium acetate as a fine mist that displaces oxygen while preventing the spread of grease and helping to cool the source of the fire.

Be aware of the location of the nearest fire extinguisher and ensure that it is stored appropriately. Be mindful of any service that may be required, including but not limited to, nozzle cracks, tears, or blocks, missing or damaged lock pin, damaged or loose handle, or the record of inspection sticker is missing. Contact your agency safety officer for more information regarding specific protocols in your workplace.

Cal/OSHA Standard

Safety Inspection Checklist



As 2022 draws to a close, it is a good time to reflect on all the changes we have encountered and ponder new experiences which come in a new year.

Of course, we will continue to encounter new innovations and unexpected changes along the way. Despite the uneasiness and anxiety this may cause, our approach to them should be that they are an opportunity for growth and a chance to build our spirit, resilience, and strength. Hopefully, we will face them with an agile mind, with excitement and enthusiasm.

To help you face the potential changes and challenges of the coming year, we have developed a playlist in LinkedIn Learning that will address the topic of Change Management.

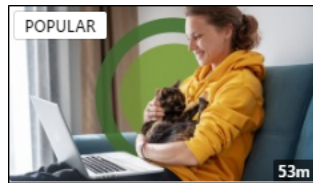
We hope you find these courses useful, so that you may be able to face any coming changes with a positive mindset.

Click any video below to start.

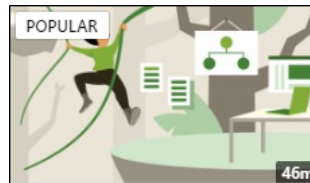
Change Management Tips for Individuals

Take Course

If there is one thing you can rely on, it is change. And while change has its pros and cons, it can be harder to navigate when you are the one having to embrace the change as opposed to initiating it. In this quick course from change management expert Dr. Eric Zackrison, learn how to go with the flow and wield organizational change to your advantage. Gain strategies for how to adapt quickly, tips on what is and is not in your control, and advice for how to show your supervisors that you are a can-do, team player.



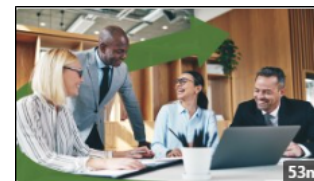
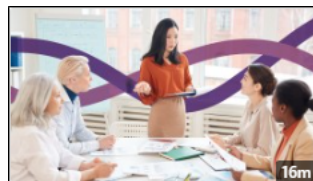
[Managing Stress for Positive Change](#)



[Change Management Foundations](#)



[Building Change Capability for Managers](#)



[How to Lead and Inspire Change](#)

WorkLife Program

Coastal Housing Partnership - Housing Benefits for County Employees!

The County of Ventura is an employer member of the Coastal Housing Partnership. As a County employee, you are eligible for savings and benefits when purchasing a home, refinancing your mortgage, or renting an apartment.

Upcoming Webinars include:

- **Your Housing Benefits Webinar:** [Click here for dates offered](#)
- **Home Buying Webinars-** Coastal Housing Partnership home buying webinars guide you through the process of buying a home. The [Home Buying Closing Cost Assistance Program](#) can reduce your closing costs by 50% or more. Whether you are ready to buy now or just thinking about buying in the future, this information will help you on your path to home ownership.
 - **From Renter to Home Owner** January 24, 2023 from Noon - 1pm
 - 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.
 - **Real Estate Market Conditions – Real Estate Agent Panel** February 16, 2023 from Noon – 1pm
 - Hear from three local real estate agents about the latest real estate market conditions. Find out what is involved with working with a real estate agent and how to prepare to be a strong buyer. Bring your questions!
 - **Navigating the Process of Obtaining a Home Loan - Lender Panel** March 7, 2023 from Noon – 1pm
 - Hear from three local lenders about what is 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. Questions are encouraged!

Check out the [Coastal Housing website](#) to register for upcoming events and for more information on how to save on your closing costs! Looking for a rental? Go to rentals.coastalhousing.org and register with your County of Ventura email.



COUNTY of VENTURA
Human Resources



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