

## Walker & Dunlop sees workplace health program participation rise

**Company Name:** Walker & Dunlop, Inc.

**Location:** Bethesda, Maryland

**Industry:** Commercial Real Estate Finance

**Founded:** 1937

**Number of Employees:** 450

**Age of Workplace Health Program:** 3 years

### Company Profile

Walker & Dunlop is a commercial real estate finance company, with a primary focus on lending to property owners, investors and developers of multifamily properties across the country. The company has 20 office sites in the United States.

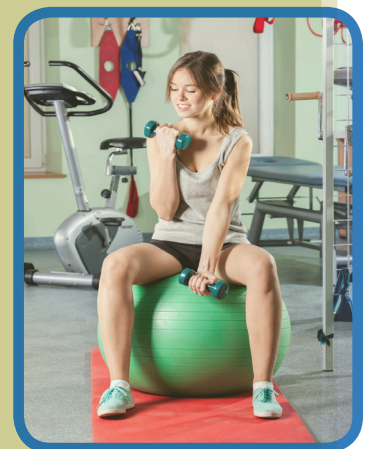
### Employee Health Program Origin

The health and wellness program at Walker & Dunlop was proposed to the company CEO by upper management, who believed that people who are active, healthy and happy are also productive at work, and that healthy people contribute to a positive culture. The CEO suggested changes and approved it, and the program began with company-wide wellness challenges in which employees were invited to participate. The CEO is very active and encourages all employees to participate.

### Walker & Dunlop Workplace Health Program Features

Some of the main features of the Walker & Dunlop program are:

- « A workout and a wellness challenge
- « Every three months the wellness challenge is assigned a new theme, such as the Green Earth Wellness Challenge, in which employees get points for recycling and saving electricity
- « Partnership with a vendor, which provides comprehensive high-touch worksite wellness programs
- « Free pedometer upon request
- « Employee points for physical activity, logging steps by a pedometer and bringing a healthy lunch to the office
- « Reimbursements of \$25 or \$50 every three months for physical activity based on target numbers
- « Nutrition classes provided by a gym



*Photo by iStock*

Flex schedules allow employees time for workouts during the work day.

- « Chef demonstrations of healthy meals to cook at home
- « Flexible schedules that allow employees time to be physically active during the work day

## Program Costs

Walker & Dunlop has an annual wellness budget of \$25,000.

## Program Outcomes

Walker & Dunlop has seen a lower rate of medical-related absences, an increase in employees who are physically active, a rise in gym memberships and an increase in the number of employees participating in the company health and wellness program.

## Challenges

Some of the challenges that Walker & Dunlop face are:

- « Their office is located in a shared building so they do not have control over what food is served in their cafeteria
- « Variety of wellness activities is limited, even though the company tries to incorporate new, fresh ideas
- « Difficulty in engaging every employee
- « Employees self-report their wellness activities, which influences accuracy of information

*“Many benefits come hand-in-hand with wellness in the workplace,” says Sarah Cheung, Walker & Dunlop benefits coordinator. “It connects people and gives opportunities to socialize, it’s a good team-building opportunity while increasing morale, and it reduces absences due to illness, injury and disability.”*

# Walker & Dunlop, Inc.

## Facilitators of Program Success

There is high participation and positive feedback from employees. The employees like the reimbursements and the wellness challenges. Making goals that are attainable has contributed most to the program’s success, incorporating activities that employees may already have been doing and have an interest in has also been beneficial.

CDC supports a coordinated, systematic and comprehensive approach to workplace health promotion. This profile is intended as an example of one employer’s approach and is not intended as an endorsement. For more information on developing workplace health programs, please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/workplacehealthpromotion>



*\*Based on an interview with Walker & Dunlop, Inc. in October 2012 as part of the development of the CDC Work@Health® employer training program. This employer is not a participant in the Work@Health® program.*