

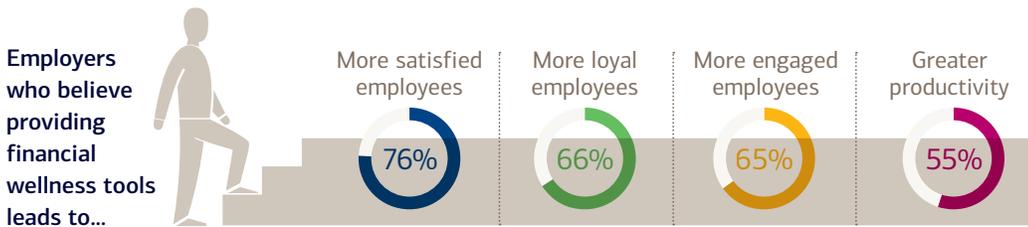
Workplace Insights™

Promoting Financial Wellness: A Guide For Employers

How to implement a holistic program for employees that goes beyond traditional benefits

Helping individuals pursue financial wellness is central to our core beliefs at Bank of America Merrill Lynch. Over time, we've seen individuals shouldering more responsibility in an increasingly complex financial world. Recently, we discovered that a majority of workers (58%)¹ are looking for more guidance to help them manage their financial lives — and they are looking to their employers to help them pursue financial wellness.

In turn, employers believe that providing financial wellness tools for their employees leads to a more satisfied and productive workforce. They believe that workers who take better control of their financial situations are more satisfied, loyal, engaged and productive.



Source: Bank of America Merrill Lynch Employers Workplace Benefits Report, Dec. 2013.

Going beyond traditional benefits is a critical step in today's marketplace

Companies that evolve and expand their benefits offerings beyond retirement education to holistic financial guidance are in a key position to attract and retain the best talent and enhance productivity. These leading companies now offer broad financial wellness packages and new resources for their employees. Most employers (81%)¹ consider their employees' overall personal financial well-being part of their responsibility. In the next pages, we present a guide to help you implement a successful financial wellness strategy.

Defining financial wellness is individual

Financial wellness is defined uniquely and differently by each employee, as each household has different priorities and financial obligations. The broad definition of financial wellness is *the ability of each employee to manage their finances for short-term needs while saving for mid- and long-term goals*. The financial wellness program you implement should offer a variety of options that help your employees choose the information important to them.

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Investment products:

Are Not FDIC Insured	Are Not Bank Guaranteed	May Lose Value
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Employers who feel responsible for employee financial wellness



13%

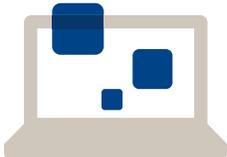
Extremely responsible

68%

Somewhat responsible

Source: Bank of America Merrill Lynch Employers Workplace Benefits Report, Dec. 2013.

The employer's guide to implementing a financial wellness program

	Phase	Why it helps your employees
Assess	 <p>Revisit your current financial wellness program, if offered</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage employees to take advantage of current financial wellness education to help promote a more stable financial future.• Identifying, broadening and filling gaps in your financial education program based on employees' life stages can enrich and improve your offering and help them in many aspects of their financial life.
Implement	<p>STEP 1</p> <p>Create a financial wellness curriculum</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employees have different financial priorities based on their life stage (Are they just starting in the workforce? Are they nearing retirement?), and a tailored financial wellness program can help them to focus on their unique needs.• Employees' life stages and financial knowledge differ and their financial needs go beyond retirement. Helping employees with their needs can create a more satisfied, productive workforce.
	<p>STEP 2</p> <p>Complement education with technology</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Financial principles are hard to grasp for many people. There is an overwhelming amount of information to read through and decipher. Attending just one workshop is typically not enough for an employee to master any one financial topic.• Online tools and interactive sites help employees build knowledge of the financial topics most important to them as well as build financial acumen at their own pace. And, these tools and sites generally offer growth into new topics as they become relevant to the individual.
	 <p>STEP 3</p> <p>Provide 1:1 access to financial professionals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personalized consultations and individual guidance have been shown to deliver better results for more individuals.¹ Relationships built over time tend to help each employee better meet his or her financial goals.• Even the most experienced investors look to professionals for guidance, ideas, or to take a second look at their information. Offering 1:1 consultations can help people review their finances regardless of their specific need, and is beneficial for all levels of employees.
	<p>STEP 4</p> <p>Offer more solutions to help employees see their full financial picture</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employees can benefit from seeing their finances holistically. Competing goals mean they have to be more strategic in how they divide their paycheck toward goals and bills, investing their assets in their retirement plan, and managing the long-term goals and short-term bills/commitments that make up their complete household financial picture.
Monitor	<p>Track employees' interest and activity in the financial wellness program</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sharing success stories and positive outcomes of your financial wellness program can inspire employees to take better advantage of your offering. It also reminds them of the benefits of becoming more financially well.

How to implement it

- **Assess your financial education program.** Do you offer financial education to employees? If so, what types of education are provided: online content, 1:1 consultations, on-site seminars? What financial topics are covered? Identify existing education programs that would benefit from promotion.
- **Improve your offering.** Identify what is hindering employees from participating in your existing financial wellness program. Also identify any gaps in information or education that could make your financial wellness program more valuable and robust. What programs need to be added based on employee needs?

- **Determine employees' needs.** Review employee demographics: What life stages do they belong to? What are their education needs based on their life stage? What do you currently offer to fit the different life stages?
- **Provide education on a range of relevant financial topics,** from personal finance to retirement income planning and college savings planning.
- **Promote the value of the financial wellness program.** Host a financial wellness event and seminars with 1:1 meetings during open enrollment that cover education topics on retirement planning. Offer a series of programs throughout the year to address specific employee needs (saving early for retirement, getting ready to retire, financing college, etc.).

Integrate education and tools on your intranet site where employees can choose to:

- **Access the latest online** financial management tools and mobile apps
- **Use interactive sites** such as [benefitsonline.com](https://www.benefitsonline.com), [education.ml.com](https://www.education.ml.com) and [bettermoneyhabits.com](https://www.bettermoneyhabits.com) for education and guidance on financial topics
- **View their accounts online** to manage their finances overall



Facilitate employee meetings with financial professionals.

- Consider making onsite **seminar attendance mandatory.**
- **Schedule time for 1:1 consultations surrounding your onsite workshops and through representatives in our Contact Center.** Employees can sign up for consultations to review their personal financial goals and determine a plan of action.
- Book conference rooms during benefits fairs for **private discussions between employees and financial professionals.**

- **Offer more ways to help employees manage their financial lives** using tools and solutions they are comfortable with so that they can take better control of their financial futures.
- **Help employees map out their household finances** with access to simple budget worksheets and interactive tools and resources.
- **Improve communication and outreach to employees.** Reach out to employees in the way that will be most impactful to them—from regular financial education e-newsletters (which send them back to sites for more information) to emails and on-site posters. Use a combination of these techniques in a way that works best for your company.

- **Establish metrics** and monitor program use. Track employee productivity levels and financial behaviors, such as contribution rates, enrollments, etc.
- **Gather employee feedback** about the financial wellness program and use their input to improve the offering.
- **Share program metrics** such as participation, increases in contributions and improvements in financial behavior with employees to gain their buy-in to the program and encourage further participation.
- **Acknowledge employees who are taking positive steps** toward improving their financial wellness.

Take the lead in employee financial wellness

Providing holistic financial education and guidance can help employees achieve financial wellness. Because no two employees have the same goals or take the same approaches to pursuing financial wellness, offering

a customized program is essential. Bank of America Merrill Lynch is committed to helping you create a financial wellness offering that can be integrated with your existing benefits plan design today.

It's easy to get started

Bank of America Merrill Lynch offers a turnkey solution for employee financial education, including:

- **Customized workshops** on broad financial topics that matter to your employees. These may cover how to maximize plan usage as well as how to take advantage of out-of-plan savings opportunities.
- **Extensive online resources and tools**, including access to financial education through our extensive education tools and information, including our video library created in cooperation with Khan Academy.*

- **Access to highly qualified Merrill Lynch financial professionals** who offer individualized guidance.

- **Investment solutions** available to meet employees' different needs.

You can implement a financial wellness program in a way that works best for your employees. We can tailor our services to you and your employees' financial wellness needs. Talk to us about how we can help make a difference in your employees' lives today.

*Khan Academy is not an affiliate of Bank of America Corporation.

For more information

Our representatives can help you examine the benefits packages you make available to employees, and can talk with you about strategies that may make the packages more effective — both as recruitment and retention strategies and as pillars of employees' financial wellness. For more information, contact your Bank of America Merrill Lynch representative.

You also can call us at **877.902.8730**, visit us online at **benefitplans.baml.com** or email us at **benefitplans@baml.com**.

¹ Bank of America Merrill Lynch Employees Workplace Benefits Report, Dec. 2013.

In 2013, Boston Research Group completed a national sample of interviews for Bank of America Merrill Lynch; in March, they reached 1,014 participants in 401(k) plans and in August, they reached 1,000 employers of all sizes. To have qualified for the survey, employees were screened to ensure current participation in a 401(k) plan and employers must have offered a 401(k) plan. Bank of America Merrill Lynch was not identified as the survey sponsor. No quotas were set and no weighting was necessary. Investment advice is provided to participants in plans serviced by Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated solely through the Advice Access service.

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