**Washington Wellness Worksite Designation Program Incentive Requirements**

**PEBB Program Administrative Policy 91-3 Frequently Asked Questions**

1. **What is the Washington Wellness Worksite Designation Program?**

In 2013, Governor Jay Inslee established the Washington Wellness Worksite Designation Program (also known as Washington Wellness) through Executive Order 13-06. Washington Wellness supports employers that participate in the Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB) Program to build, grow, and sustain effective worksite wellness programs. Washington Wellness coordinates with wellness coordinators at these employers’ work sites to promote wellness programs, tools, and resources, including the online health and wellness tool SmartHealth.

1. **What is SmartHealth?**

SmartHealth is Washington State’s voluntary wellness program that supports employees on their journey toward living well. The secure, easy-to-use, mobile-friendly website offers tips and tools through fun activities such as sleeping better, eating healthier, and planning for retirement. As employees progress on their wellness journey, they can also qualify for rewards and incentives.

1. **What is PEBB Program Administrative Policy 91-3?**

Policy 91-3 provides a set of requirements to use when offering wellness incentives under the Washington Wellness Worksite Designation program.

PEBB Policy 91-3 is available at: <https://www.hca.wa.gov/assets/pebb/policy-91-3-2019.pdf>

1. **What authority does the Health Care Authority (HCA) have to set wellness program guidelines?**

Revised Code of Washington (RCW) [41.05.065(2)](https://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=41.05.065) states that:

“*The public employees' benefits board shall develop employee benefit plans that include comprehensive health care benefits for employees. In developing these plans, the public employees' benefits board shall consider the following elements: …*

*(c) Wellness incentives that focus on proven strategies, such as smoking cessation, injury and accident prevention, reduction of alcohol misuse,*

*appropriate weight reduction, exercise, automobile and motorcycle safety, blood cholesterol reduction, and nutrition education*;”

Revised Code of Washington RCW [41.05.540](http://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=41.05.540) states that:

*“The health care authority, in coordination with the department of health, health plans participating in public employees' benefits board programs, and the University of Washington's center for health promotion, shall establish and maintain a state employee health program focused on reducing the health risks and improving the health status of state employees, dependents, and retirees enrolled in the public employees' benefits board.”*

[Executive Order 13-06(1)](https://www.hca.wa.gov/assets/program/ExecOrder-13-06.pdf) states that:

*“HCA’s Washington Wellness Worksite Designation Program will provide structure and technical and training assistance to agencies involved in developing an effective internal wellness program for employees.”*

[Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 182-12-300](https://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=182-12-300) states that:

*“The public employees benefits board (PEBB) annually determines the design of the PEBB wellness incentive program.”*

1. **What is the incentive limit described in Policy 91-3(1)?**

For plan year 2019, the total value of the worksite wellness incentives administered by an employing agency that an eligible employee may earn must not exceed $900.

1. **What counts toward the $900 incentive limit set for 2019?**

All wellness-related incentives administered by an employing agency (or committee that operates within an employing agency) count toward the $900 per employee incentive limit. Wellness incentives may be linked to SmartHealth, such as earning an incentive after reaching 2,000 points, or can operate independently, like the incentives listed below. Whether an incentive is linked to SmartHealth or not, all incentives administered by an employing agency (or committee that operate within an employing agency) must not exceed $900 in value per eligible employee.

The $125 commercial driver’s license (CDL) fee reimbursement offered as a wellness incentive at select agencies **does** count toward the $900 incentive limit. Other examples of wellness program incentives that count toward the limit include an employer paying for:

* Prizes, such as a bicycle or a digital tracker.
* Employee gym memberships.
* Passes to state parks.

1. **What does not count toward the $900 incentive limit in 2019?**

Incentives administered by the PEBB Program **do not** count toward the $900 limit. PEBB Program incentives include:

* $25 Amazon.com gift card for completing the Well-being Assessment.
* $125 reduction applied to a medical plan deductible or a health savings account deposit for earning 2,000 SmartHealth points.
* Avoiding the PEBB tobacco premium surcharge ($25 per month/$300 per year).
* The $25 Amazon.com gift card drawing for completing the yearly SmartHealth user survey.

1. **Why was the $900 incentive limit for plan year 2019 increased?**

In early 2018, Washington Wellness received feedback from employing agencies about the $250 incentive limit. Policy 91-3, effective January 1, 2019, increased the incentive limit from $250 to $900 per employee. The incentive increase to $900 allows employing agencies to offer more or larger incentives while HCA ensures compliance with various federal regulations for wellness programs. Every year the PEBB Program will consider revisiting the incentive limit.

1. **What are employing agencies’ responsibilities?**

Employing agencies are responsible for understanding Policy 91-3, following its requirements, and designing their wellness programs so that no employee earns and receives more than $900 in incentives in 2019.

Employing agencies are also generally responsible for ensuring compliance with federal laws and regulations.

1. **Who do I contact with questions?**

Please email questions to the Washington Wellness team at [wawellness@hca.wa.gov](mailto:wawellness@hca.wa.gov).