Step 3: Collect Data to Guide Efforts

An effective wellness program must rest on a foundation of evidence to guide its components and ensure continuous improvement. Completing a detailed needs assessment will allow you to understand what health needs should be prioritized when planning and developing activities for the program. Ongoing data collection ensures the ability to continuously monitor progress and improve the program.

A health needs assessment will provide key data to support and plan an effective program. Gauging the interest of the staff with an interest survey can help determine what set-up and interventions will be the most effective.

There are three data collection processes essential to understanding your program’s needs:

1. **Health Needs Assessment**
   
   This assessment determines the baseline health status of employees to understand where to focus activities, interventions, and efforts. The Wellness Committee can decide whether to make a health assessment mandatory or just voluntary for all staff participating in the wellness program. All responses should be kept anonymous. A sample Health Needs Assessment is available later in this toolkit.

2. **Interest Survey**
   
   An interest survey ensures wellness activities are responsive to the needs and concerns of participants. By understanding when, where, and how employees want to improve their health and wellness, you can develop a program that engages all employees to address their most current interests. A sample Interest Survey is available later in this toolkit.

3. **Research Evidence-Based Interventions**
   
   Research to provide knowledge of evidence-based interventions is important to understanding what activities have been tried and proved successful in the past. Evidence-based interventions will also provide information on how to implement and evaluate the planned program. A sample list of past successful interventions is available later in this toolkit.