

Career & Workplace

Healthiest Employers: Winner and finalists in the Medium category



Image: Contributed

Congratulations to Jamestown Board of Public Utilities, winner in the Medium category.

CONTRIBUTED



By [Donna Collins](#) – Editor-in-chief, Buffalo Business First
Aug 23, 2024

▶ Listen to this article 3 min



The 29 finalists and four Wellness Champions all excel at keeping their employees both happy and healthy.

Below, meet the finalists in the Medium (100-249 employee) category.

WINNER: Jamestown Board of Public Utilities

Location: 92 Steele St., Jamestown

Website: jamestownbpu.com

CEO: David Leathers

Founded: 1923

Employees (WNY FTE): 150

Product/service: Provide affordable electric, water, wastewater and solid waste utilities to the City of Jamestown and surrounding areas.

Top executives: Kris Sellstrom, deputy general manager (electric); Alex Pickett, operations manager (water resources); Kevin Karr, finance and customer accounts manager

HR: Tammy Anderson

Popular wellness activities: Biometric screening, lunch & learns on wellness topics, interactive challenges throughout the year.

Biggest benefits: Healthier employees are happier and more productive resulting in reduced sick time and insurance costs.

Programs in place since: 2012

Why wellness programs started: To promote healthier lifestyles for employees to live a long and fruitful life.

Rewards/recognition: Financial rewards for meeting set milestones based on a points system.

Participation during work hours: Yes

Here's some advice: Reach out to great organizations such as Asset Health to help tailor a program to your organization and have fun with the program. Keeping things simple and fun leads to greater participation.

RELATED: [*Meet all of the Healthiest Employers winners for 2024*](#)

FINALIST: Buffalo Rehab Group, Physical and Occupational Therapy

Location: 2100 Union Road, West Seneca

Website: buffalorehab.com

CEO: Jeff Woodrich

Founded: 1990

Employees (WNY FTE): 185

Product/service: Buffalo Rehab Group provides physical and occupational therapy at 13 locations.

Top executives: Eric Herman, partner and COO; Ray Hammel, partner and CFO; Steve Gonsler, partner and CMO

HR: Taylor Cappelli Shafer

Popular wellness activities: Buffalo IceCycle; Wellness Wednesdays during lunch; May mental health program

Biggest benefits: Wellness activities offer employees opportunities to interact outside work, fostering stronger relationships and camaraderie.

Programs in place since: 2019

Why wellness programs started: To help team members live a healthier lifestyle and create a positive work environment. We provide health care to the community, so it's important for team members to have access to resources to improve their health as well.

Rewards/recognition: Company newsletter showcases a team member who engages with our indi wellness app; prizes include healthy lunch or points on our employee recognition platform; health insurance discount of \$700 for an annual physical and 12 hours of activity on our wellness app indi.

Participation during work hours: Yes

Here's some advice: Survey and talk to employees about what their health needs are and what they're interested in. Wellness isn't one size fits all. Offer a variety of programs and resources to reach everyone.

• • •

FINALIST: CannonDesign

Location: 50 Fountain Plaza, Buffalo

Website: cannondesign.com

CEO: Brad Lukanic

Founded: 1945

Employees (WNY FTE): 171

Product/service: CannonDesign is a design practice for strategy, experience, architecture, engineering and social impact. The firm has 18 offices.

Top executives: Dave Carlino, CFO; David Polzin, executive director of design; Juliet Rogers, executive director of strategy

HR: Charlene Miraglia

Popular wellness activities: Firmwide webinars promote financial well-being and stress reduction; well-being programs available through our health plan, employee assistance program and retirement plan provider; two third-party organizations - Accolade Connect and FOLX

Biggest benefits: Connecting employees to resources has resulted in positive trends. For example, our employees utilize preventive health care that is much higher than our

health plan's statistics.

Programs in place since: 2020

Why wellness programs started: To control costs and cost trends and to align with company pillars. Cannon Design believes "people are everything."

Rewards/recognition: Improved health and control of costs for employee benefits rewards everyone.

Participation during work hours: Yes

Here's some advice: Look at data and data trends over time and develop programs that align with negative trends. Many medical insurers have free wellness modules that are just as good as the plug-and-play wellness vendors. Find others within the organization who have a passion for well-being even if they aren't part of HR.

...

FINALIST: Caz Recovery

Location: 2495 Main St., Buffalo

Website: cazenoviarecovery.org

CEO: Lindsay Herndon

Founded: 1980

Employees (WNY FTE): 175

Product/service: Caz Recovery provides residential treatment and support services to individuals with substance-use disorders.

Top executives: Jenn Leumer, CFO; Jay Swarthout, vice president of clinical services and development; Ed Cichon, vice president of advocacy, communications and DEI

HR: Kristin Minervini, vice president of employee services

Popular wellness activities: Welevate is our \$100 annual incentive program. Monthly challenges encourage staff to try different wellness activities. Weekly emails educate

staff on wellness topics.

Biggest benefits: We've been able to help our staff members navigate challenging times by reminding them to prioritize their health and wellness.

Programs in place since: 2015

Why wellness programs started: We wanted to provide ways for our staff members to better manage the unique challenges of working in behavioral health.

Rewards/recognition: Staff can receive \$100 for completing wellness activities; prize drawings for monthly wellness challenges.

Participation during work hours: Yes.

Here's some advice: Reach out to your partners to get you started (brokers, health insurance companies). Start small and set a goal of getting just a few interested people to participate in your first year. It'll spread quickly.

...

FINALIST: Community Missions of Niagara Frontier Inc.

Location: 1570 Buffalo Ave., Niagara Falls

Website: communitymissions.org

CEO: Robyn Krueger

Founded: 1925

Employees (WNY FTE): 110

Product/service: Administers programs for those experiencing homelessness, food insecurity, mental health concerns, release from incarceration, gun violence and substance abuse.

Top executives: Natalie Mosley, CFO

HR: Sandy Brandon

Popular wellness activities: Annual staff gatherings, summer picnic, winter recognition luncheon, quarterly recognition lunches to recognize new staff and those celebrating longevity, bi-monthly newsletter

Biggest benefits: Building camaraderie among staff that do not interact regularly and work in separate locations.

Programs in place since: 2016

Why wellness programs started: To encourage staff to be healthier with focus on both physical and mental health.

Participation during work hours: Yes

Here's some advice: Start small and continually build. Begin with simple initiatives like a lunchtime walking club or other activities that have interest from your staff.

•••

FINALIST: Endeavor Health Services

Location: 795 Indian Church Road, West Seneca

Website: ehsny.org

CEO: Elizabeth Mauro

Founded: 1972

Employees (WNY FTE): 200

Product/service: Private, not-for-profit organization that provides behavioral health services. The mission is to collaborate with people, families and communities to promote wellness and recovery through mental health and alcohol and substance use treatment, education and support services.

Top executives: Scott Morton, COO

HR: Melanie Tarantelli

Popular wellness activities: Annual wellness fair, employee-led virtual yoga, healthy cooking demonstrations

Biggest benefits: Our sites are all over Buffalo and into Rochester. Participation brings staff together to help form a culture of wellness.

Programs in place since: 2019

Participation during work hours: Yes

...

FINALIST: Great Lakes Dental Technologies

Location: 200 Cooper Ave., Tonawanda

Website: greatlakesdentaltech.com

CEO: John Ende

Founded: 1965

Employees (WNY FTE): 208

Product/service: Great Lakes Dental Technologies is an employee-owned company that designs, develops, manufactures and markets appliances and products for use in the orthodontic, dental, and sleep and airway markets.

Top executives: Bill Gertner, Kristine Dickinson, Joe Mazurkiewicz, Paul Lesniak, Tyler Sisson

HR: Whitney Bower

Popular wellness activities: FitWorks, Corporate Challenge, healthy lunch & learns

Biggest benefits: Independent Health's FitWorks wellness program rewards employees for joining health and wellness challenges, one of those being an extra day of PTO. Additional events include meditation events, Corporate Challenge, Tunnel 2 Towers 5k and biometric scans.

Programs in place since: 2015

Why wellness programs started: The positive work culture and focus on employee well-being contributes to higher retention rates.

Participation during work hours: Yes

Here's some advice: The wellness program energizes our employees and brings the team together. An organization will greatly benefit for implementing a wellness program.

•••

FINALIST: Gross Polowy LLC

Location: 1775 Wehrle Drive, Williamsville

Website: grosspolowy.com

CEO: Amy Polowy

Founded: 2012

Employees (WNY FTE): 170

Product/service: Law firm focusing on home retention, real estate law, mortgage servicing and loss mitigation.

HR: Amy Lovullo

Popular wellness activities: Participation in walks/runs within the community; monthly wellness articles/newsletter; calendar of happiness and wellness challenges; allowance for volunteerism during the workday; flexible scheduling

Biggest benefits: Getting employees motivated to learn about wellness, whether it is mental, physical or both.

Programs in place since: 2018

Why wellness programs started: Improve the health and well-being of all employees by empowering them to partake in healthy behaviors through lifelong commitment to wellness.

Rewards/recognition: Recognition on Kudos website, email and firm's intranet

Participation during work hours: Yes

Here's some advice: Have a group that is interested along with your top executive to achieve the team's goals. Have a mission statement.

•••

FINALIST: Lumsden McCormick CPA

Location: 369 Franklin St., Buffalo

Website: lumsdencpa.com

CEO: Sara Dayton

Founded: 1952

Employees (WNY FTE): 140

Product/service: Lumsden McCormick CPA offers a comprehensive suite of accounting services, including audit, tax, wealth planning, forensic accounting, and nonprofit technology.

Top executives: Stephanie Wilkinson, COO

HR: Tracy Johnston

Popular wellness activities: JP Morgan Corporate Challenge; workouts at local facilities - pickleball, workouts, hiking in state parks; wellness webinars on various topics

Biggest benefits: Providing employees with various ways to get active and to educate them on topics about their overall well-being.

Programs in place since: 2012

Why wellness programs started: To get our employees thinking more about personal health and to encourage them to be proactive with their overall wellness. We incorporate giving back in our program by providing volunteering opportunities for employees.

Rewards/recognition: Additional discount on health insurance premiums if they complete a certain number of activities. The firm sponsors all wellness events and pays

for activities offered. Annual workday of giving sends employees into the community to volunteer.

Participation during work hours: Yes

Here's some advice: Start small and gauge participation. Listen to what your employees enjoy doing, what they would like to try and what they are interested in learning about.

• • •

FINALIST: Trocaire College

Location: 360 Choate Ave., Buffalo

Website: Trocaire College

CEO: Bassam Deeb

Founded: 1958

Employees (WNY FTE): 232

Product/service: Private, career-oriented Catholic college that strives to empower students toward personal enrichment, dignity and self-worth through education.

Top executives: Richard Linn, senior vice president of academic affairs; Michael Cucinotta, vice president of finance and administration; Kamu Pindiprolu, chief information officer

HR: Patrick Allaire

Popular wellness activities: Wellness fair each semester, group walks, farmers market in campus courtyard

Biggest benefits: Employees learn to take ownership of their health, develop problem solving skills and boost self-esteem. All of which contributes to morale and engagement in the workplace.

Programs in place since: 2001

Why wellness programs started: To develop a healthier lifestyle that can create an improved quality of life free from disease, illness and injury. Healthier employees have better work-life balance, and are more productive.

Participation during work hours: Yes

Here's some advice: Offer tips and ways to improve an employee's healthy habits in areas such as mental health, physical health and overall morale. These endeavors can lead to happier, healthier employees who feel the company supports them and may make them stay on long-term.

• • •

FINALIST: Trusted Nurse Staffing

Location: 500 Seneca St., Buffalo

Website: trustednursestaffing.com

CEO: Martin Vidal

Founded: 2008

Employees (WNY FTE): 100

Product/service: We staff health care professionals on temporary assignments across the U.S.

Top executives: Michael O'Leyar, CFO; William Thomas, COO; Dave Bachowski, CTO

HR: Karen Eichner

Biggest benefits: Creating a wellness program has encouraged our employees to be well and helps us to keep a pulse on activities in which they engage.

Programs in place since: 2023

Why wellness programs started: We hired a wellness company in the past that didn't work for our team so we decided to invest an impressive amount of time and resources into a custom program for our employees.

Rewards/recognition: We have quarterly payouts. Each person who completes the wellness program earns \$125 a quarter, totaling \$500 a year.

Participation during work hours: Yes

Here's some advice: Survey your employees, and be ready to pivot. It takes time to figure out a program that works for your group.

• • •

FINALIST: Wendel

Location: 375 Essjay Road, Williamsville

Website: wendelcompanies.com

CEO: Joseph DeFazio

Founded: 1940

Employees (WNY FTE): 187

Product/service: Architecture, engineering, energy efficiency and construction management firm

Top executives: Daniel Hurley, CFO; David Duchscherer, chairman;

Mark Molnar, executive vice president

HR: Meagan Faulkner

Popular wellness activities: Wellness weeks with each week dedicated to health, wealth or self; health reimbursement stipend up to \$200 each year; wellness Bingos and other challenges held throughout the year.

Biggest benefits: Seeing employees come together to focus on bettering their health wellness. This program aims to encourage lifestyle changes and reduce long-term health problems to feel more energized and happy.

Programs in place since: 2017

Why wellness programs started: To encourage healthy lifestyles and prevent employee burnout at work. Employees come together for fun events and healthy competition.

Rewards/recognition: We use π to send out wellness specific rewards for participation and winners of challenges. With this platform, they can choose their wellness prize.

Participation during work hours: Yes