



Special Announcements & Resources

InSync Newsletter: Quarter 2
April - June 2025

The Power of Preventive Care: A Healthy Future Starts Today

Your health is your most valuable resource. Taking care of yourself isn't just about visiting the doctor when you're feeling unwell, it's about being proactive in preventing illness and maintaining overall well-being. That's where preventive care comes in.

What is Preventive Care?

Preventive care includes routine check-ups, screenings, vaccinations, and lifestyle choices that help detect and prevent health issues before they become serious. It's about staying ahead of potential problems, rather than treating them after they arise.

Benefits of Preventive Care

- **Early detection saves lives:** Routine screenings can identify health concerns, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and certain cancers, at an early stage when they are most treatable.
- **Lower health care costs:** Preventive care reduces the need for expensive treatments, hospital visits, and emergency care by managing risks early.
- **Improved productivity:** Staying on top of your health allows you to feel your best, be more productive, and enjoy a more active lifestyle.
- **Stronger immune system:** Vaccinations and healthy habits help protect against preventable diseases, reducing sick days and time away from work and family.

Simple Steps to Take Charge of Your Health

- **Schedule regular check-ups:** Don't wait until you feel unwell; annual wellness visits help monitor your health.
- **Get screened:** Follow recommended guidelines for screenings like cholesterol checks, mammograms, and colonoscopies.
- **Stay up-to-date on vaccinations:** Protect yourself and those around you by keeping up with flu shots and other recommended vaccines.
- **Prioritize mental health:** Stress management, counseling, and work-life balance are key to overall well-being.
- **Make healthy choices:** Nutritious eating, regular exercise, and adequate sleep all contribute to long-term health.
- **Utilize employee wellness programs:** Take advantage of health screenings, fitness programs, and other wellness benefits offered by the County.



Take Advantage of Your Benefits

We encourage you to take advantage of your health benefits, including preventive care services covered by your insurance plan. Prioritizing preventive care is a proactive step toward a healthier, happier future. Utilize the **resources available** through your health care provider and our employee wellness initiatives to support your well-being. Your future health starts today. Make preventive care a priority.

Important Benefits Reminders

2024 Flexible Spending Accounts: If you were enrolled in a Flexible Spending Account (FSA) in 2024, make sure to claim your FSA funds. If you have any balances remaining in your Health Care or Dependent Care FSAs from 2024, submit your claims for reimbursement by April 15, 2025; any unused funds will be forfeited. For questions, contact Chard-Snyder, the FSA Administrator, at 800-982-7715.

Mid-Year Changes to Health Plans: Employees who experience a mid-year life event, such as a marriage, birth, or loss of outside health coverage, must make any changes to their County of Ventura health plans within 60 days, including the event date. If you fail to act within the timeline, you will be ineligible to make plan changes until the next open enrollment period. For assistance, contact your agency/department HR Representative.



Medical Plan Opt-Out: For employees who opt out of the County's medical plans, you must notify Benefits if your outside medical plan information changes mid-year. If you need to update your outside medical plan information, visit VCHRP > Employee Self-Service > Benefit Details > Opt-Out Certification.

Questions about Health Plan Enrollment: The answers to most questions regarding health plan enrollment or mid-year change requirements and deadlines, and the current Benefit Plans Handbook, **can be found online**. For any additional questions, please contact your agency's HR Representative or email Benefits.ServiceRep@ventura.org.

Mountain Fire Natural Disaster Additional Leave Accrual Period Ending

In November 2024, our community and workforce were impacted by the effects of the Mountain Fire, and the Board of Supervisors declared the event a Natural Disaster. As a result of that declaration, County of Ventura employees were able to accrue up to 60 additional paid leave hours beyond their standard maximum limits until the declaration was lifted. On January 11, 2025, the Mountain Fire disaster was officially ended by the Ventura County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services.



The end of the natural disaster marked the beginning of the six-month period during which employees may use their additional accrued paid leave hours. On July 11, 2025, accrual limits will revert to pre-disaster maximums, starting with pay period 25-16 (August 8 pay date). At that time, any unused hours exceeding the standard accrual limits will be forfeited. It is strongly encouraged that all eligible employees with accruals currently over the normal maximum plan their leave usage accordingly by pay period 25-15 (July 25 pay date).

To check your specific leave balance, please review your accruals in **VCHRP**. If you have any questions regarding your accrued leave balance or usage, please contact your agency/department HR Representative.

Arts & Culture

Arts, Culture, and Creativity Month

April is Arts, Culture, and Creativity Month. This annual, month-long spotlight showcases the many contributions of the cultural and creative arts to our communities, with benefits for individual wellness, community well-being, and economic prosperity. The County is recognizing Arts, Culture, and Creativity Month in 2025 through a Board of Supervisors’ Proclamation, special employee arts and wellness workshops, and the Employee, Retiree, and Family Art Exhibit, on display at the Hall of Administration Atrium Gallery, through April 25, 2025.



If you want to stay up-to-date on the latest arts and culture news in Ventura County, please sign up for our [monthly newsletter](#).

Bring Your Kid to Work Day



You and your children are invited to the County’s 2nd Annual “Bring Your Kid to Work Day” on Thursday, April 24, 2025, at 8:00-11:00 a.m., located at the Government Center Hall of Administration (HOA). This is a fun and educational opportunity for your children to get an inside look at the meaningful work you and your fellow County team members do each day.

In Parking Lot G, you and your children can participate in a “touch-a-truck” event with exhibits from various County agencies. Your children will have the opportunity to interact with our personnel and get a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the hard work our agencies deliver across the county.

While you are welcome to explore the outdoor open house any time from 8:00-11:00 a.m., you are also invited to the Board of Supervisors’ meeting room in the HOA at 10:30 a.m. for a special presentation. Please note that parents/guardians must accompany their children at all time during the event.

The goal is not only to give your children an opportunity to visit your workspace, but also to ignite a curiosity and ambition for a future career in public service.

For agencies or departments located outside the Government Center area, you are encouraged to consider planning a local activity at your facility. If you share space or are within a short distance from other agencies, consider coordinating a joint event to make the day even more special.

If you plan to attend this event at the HOA or participate at your work location, please coordinate with your supervisor.

Complaint Resolution and Misconduct Hotline

The County of Ventura believes employees should be able to voice concerns about tough workplace issues like harrassment, discrimination, or discourteous workplace behavior. When appropriate, employees are encouraged to first discuss concerns with their supervisors, then their agency/department HR Representatives. If resolution is still not reached, more information and online reporting are available on the Complaint Resolution website.



24-Hour Employee Misconduct Hotline: **1-800-684-6523**

Calls and online reporting can be anonymous so there is no fear of retaliation. Human Resources is committed to compliance and your participation is essential.



Matching Grant Funds Diabetes Care in Ventura County

Health Care Foundation for Ventura County (HCFVC) is pleased to share that the Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) has awarded a generous \$100,000 matching grant to Lions District 4-A3, which successfully raised an additional \$100,000 locally with the support of Driscoll's, Inc. Together, their efforts have resulted in an incredible \$200,000 investment in diabetes care for Ventura County.



This funding supports the Ventura County Lions Clubs Diabetes Care Collaborative to address type 2 diabetes in Ventura County by equipping seven federally-qualified health centers (FQHCs) with state-of-the-art diagnostic tools. This advanced equipment will enhance each clinic's ability to diagnose, prevent, and treat diabetes, helping to mitigate severe complications such as blindness.



Through this initiative, HCFVC has purchased seven Siemens Healthineers A1c Monitors, five Crystalvue Retinal Cameras, two Sonoscape X5 Ultrasound Machines, and ten Philips TC50 EKG Machines. This essential equipment has been delivered to John K. Flynn Community Clinic, Las Islas Family Medical Group (North and South), Las Posas Family Medical Group, Magnolia Family Medical Center (East and West), and Mandalay Bay Women and Children's Clinic. Plaques recognizing LCIF, Lions District 4-A3, and Driscoll's, Inc. now accompany the equipment at each site, honoring these generous contributions.

HCFVC extends its deepest gratitude to LCIF, Lions District 4-A3, and Driscoll's, Inc. for their extraordinary commitment to expanding diabetes prevention, diagnosis, and treatment. Their support is enhancing diabetes care in Ventura County, improving patient outcomes, and promoting a healthier community.

Please consider making a donation to support Ventura County's Ambulatory Care Clinics and to help provide essential medical equipment and quality health care for all.



Total Compensation Statements are Headed Your Way

In April of each year, Total Compensation Statements are mailed out to full-time, regular employees. These statements provide an overview of your total compensation from the County. This includes not just your salary, but other cash compensation, and the value of your benefits package.

New to the Total Compensation Statement this year is a personalized insert that highlights your savings progress in the 401(k) and 457 plans, and provides projections for future growth. This insert also includes a variety of resources to support your retirement savings journey. To ensure that you receive the mailed Total Compensation Statement, your current address is needed in VCHRP. If your address has recently changed, please **update that information in VCHRP** as soon as possible.



Ask Fidelity Webinars

Whether you are a new employee, at mid-stage of your career, or actively planning for retirement, Fidelity can help you plan to make your dream a reality. Bring us your questions and concerns, and we will work together to create the right plan for you. **Register now** for any or all the Fidelity webinars listed below.



Navigating Market Volatility

Wednesday, April 16, 2025, 12:00-1:00 p.m.

Learn about the importance of having a plan and staying the course, investing best practices, and common pitfalls to avoid during volatile markets. The goal is for you to establish a plan if you don't have one, feel comfortable with your plan, and know where to get help.

What is Financial Wellness and Why is it Important

Wednesday, April 30, 2025, 12:00-1:00 p.m.

Being well prepared to handle any financial crisis, that's financial wellness. Learn how to prioritize your needs and wants, so you can pay today's bills while saving for your future goals.

Resetting Your Financial Foundation

Wednesday, May 28, 2025, 12:00-1:00 p.m.

Whether it's prioritizing expenses and debt, or saving for the future, it's important to review your saving and spending to get clarity on where your money is going.

Creating the Retirement You Want

Wednesday, June 11, 2025, 12:00-1:00 p.m.

Whether you're planning as a couple or on your own, it's important for women to plan for higher retirement expenses (especially health care costs) and to be strategic about when to claim Social Security.

Take NetBenefits® With You Wherever You Go

NetBenefits® is the place to access all your Fidelity workplace accounts. It is a full-service website that allows you to change your contribution election, check your balance, research investment performance, model and request a loan, update your beneficiaries, and view statements. For even more portability, **download the NetBenefits® mobile app** to your phone or tablet so you can access your accounts any time, anywhere.

Download the NetBenefits® mobile app.

Access all your Fidelity® workplace accounts — anytime, anywhere.*



VIEW

Review account balances, investments, your personal rate of return, next steps, and more.

ACT

Change contributions or investments, update your profile or beneficiaries, send paperwork, and more.

PLAN

See how much you may need in retirement and get your Fidelity Retirement Score™.

LEARN

Access articles, videos, podcasts, and interactive tools.



The Wellness Program provides and encourages workplace programs and practices to promote the overall health and well-being of County employees. Through the Wellness Program, employees have access to a wide variety of valuable offerings including annual biometric screening, well-being apps, physical activity classes and challenges, health coaching, and other resources to support healthy living.

Wellthy Rewards

Wellthy Rewards is a wellness-focused incentive program offered through the County of Ventura Wellness Program. During the program cycle (January-August), employees can complete various Wellness Program activities to earn points toward receiving cash awards of \$100, \$200, or \$300. It's not too late to start earning **Wellthy Rewards** points.



Hiking Series

This year, we are exploring some of our County's hiking trails, providing opportunities for employees to socialize and exercise with colleagues, family, and friends, while also enjoying the beautiful nature of Ventura County. In February, we kicked off the Hiking Series on a sunny Saturday morning at Harmon Canyon Preserve in Ventura. **Registration is open** for our next hike on Saturday, April 12, at Arroyo Verde Park in Ventura.



Coastal Housing Partnership provides an array of housing benefits for County of Ventura employees. Whether you are purchasing a home, seeking home-buying education, refinancing a mortgage, or looking for a new rental, Coastal Housing Partnership can help you **learn more** about how this nonprofit can help reduce your costs.

Upcoming Home Buying Fair - Tuesday, April 29, 4:30-7:00 p.m.

Located at the Hilton Garden Inn in Goleta. **Register for this event** to meet experts, get questions answered, and make connections with local professionals.

Home Buying Webinars

Register for upcoming webinars featuring local real estate professionals who can explain the latest real estate market conditions, help with navigating today's market, answer home-buying questions, and provide closing cost savings to County of Ventura employees.

Employee Assistance Program

Stress Management with Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a trending stress management technique, but what does it mean to be mindful? "Mindfulness is a state of active, open attention to the present, observing one's thoughts and feelings without judging them," says *Psychology Today*.



Non-judgmentally observing your thoughts and feelings leads to a more compassionate view of yourself, which can lead to better mental health. For example, a mindful perspective would notice confusion without being immersed in confusion, feeling pain without judging pain, or feeling sadness without numbing it. Practicing mindfulness puts a little space between the person and the feeling.

Another aspect of mindfulness is being conscious of where you focus your attention. We can focus on the things we are grateful for or the things we lack; petals on a flower or a mistake that was made; on what we can do rather than what we can't. Choosing to be hopeful and positive reduces the risks of depression and improves the ability to problem-solve.

If you would like more information on mindfulness, stress management, or other self-care skills, please call the **Employee Assistance Program** at 805-654-4327. We offer individual and family counseling, meditation groups, and elder care support groups.

Learning & Organizational Development

Community Engagement Training

When we, as County of Ventura representatives, actively engage with the community through public meetings, outreach programs, or delivery of needed services, we demonstrate transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to the needs and concerns of our community members. This engagement fosters trust by showing that the government values public input and is committed to addressing community needs more collaboratively. Being skilled in community engagement is good government.



The Community Engagement course will introduce you to key principles of community engagement and explain why the County is committed to incorporating community perspectives into decision-making.

In this training, you'll learn:

- The importance of involving the community in our processes and decision-making.
- Practical ways to incorporate community input specific to your role.
- Effective strategies to build stronger relationships with the communities we serve.

This training is open to all County employees and counts as a Nuts & Bolts Elective for management classifications. It's a great way to strengthen your ability to engage with the community and contribute to meaningful outcomes in your role.

To access this course, **log in to your agency's Cornerstone** and search for "community engagement."

Additional Cornerstone Courses

Whether you're looking to expand your skills, develop new expertise, or explore personal growth, we've got you covered. With thousands of courses available within Cornerstone, you can enroll in courses that match your interests and career goals, while completing them at your convenience. Here are some of the key categories that can take your professional development to the next level:



Personal and Professional Growth

- Career Development: Take charge of your career path with practical tools to navigate your professional journey.
- Mentoring: Develop the skills to inspire and guide others as a mentor or find guidance for your own career development.
- Unconscious Bias: Dive deep into understanding biases and how they affect your decisions, relationships, and workplace dynamics.
- Resilience: Strengthen your ability to overcome challenges and adapt in the face of adversity.
- Emotional Intelligence: Learn how to manage and harness your emotions to improve communication and relationships at work.

Effective Leadership & Communication

- Building Consensus: Master the art of collaboration, finding common ground, and driving decisions in a diverse team environment.
- Strategic Thinking: Learn to think ahead, make informed decisions, and shape long-term goals that align with your organization's vision.
- Meeting Management: Make meetings more effective by managing time, fostering participation, and driving results.
- Giving & Receiving Feedback: Enhance your ability to provide constructive feedback and effectively receive it for self-improvement.
- Collaboration & Teamwork: Unlock the power of working together to achieve collective goals and enhance workplace dynamics.

Workplace Efficiency and Compliance

- Office Safety: Understand and implement safety protocols to ensure a safe working environment for all.
- Hazard Communication: Learn the necessary steps to manage hazardous materials and ensure compliance with safety regulations.
- Code of Conduct: Stay informed on the ethical standards and behaviors that help create a fair and respectful workplace.
- Business Ethics: Delve into ethical decision-making in business practices to maintain integrity and trust.

Problem-Solving and Decision-Making

- Analytical Thinking & Decision-Making: Sharpen your critical thinking and analytical skills to make well-informed, data-driven decisions.
- Managing Conflict: Learn to address and resolve conflicts in a productive manner, maintaining healthy workplace relationships.
- Workplace Influence & Authority: Understand the dynamics of authority and influence to effectively lead and collaborate with others.

Technology & Productivity

- Internet, Browsers, and Social Networking: Stay up to date on using the latest technologies to maximize your productivity and online presence.
- Computers and Technology: Keep your tech skills sharp with courses on a variety of software and hardware tools.
- Improving Your Personal Productivity: Discover tools, techniques, and strategies to become more efficient and organized in your workday.

To access these courses, **log in to your agency's Cornerstone** and search for the training name or topic.

For any questions, **contact your agency's Training Representative**, or Learning & Organizational Development at **Training.Administration@ventura.org**.



Connect with us:
Facebook
Instagram
LinkedIn
X

Thank you for reading this edition of *InSync*.
Click here to take a brief survey to assist us in publishing the best possible newsletter.

Please check with your supervisor should you wish to attend any of the events mentioned in this edition of InSync during your scheduled shift.

This County-wide email has been approved for distribution by the County Executive Office.