



**PRESS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**University of Kentucky Health and Wellness Receives CUPA-HR's HR Innovation Award**

University of Kentucky (UK) Health and Wellness, a department within UK Human Resources, has received the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR) 2019 HR Innovation Award. Thanks to the generous support of PageUp, CUPA-HR is pleased to offer a \$5,000 contribution to UK's endowment or scholarship fund.



UK Health and Wellness received the award for its Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Voucher Program, which presented innovative ways to improve the health and well-being of UK employees. Created as a response to the increase in obesity and diet-related medical claims, the CSA Voucher Program encourages healthy eating and nutrition by way of increasing fruit and vegetable consumption, all while supporting the local farm community.

Vouchers of either \$200 toward a large share or \$100 toward a small share are provided by lottery to employees on a UK health plan to put toward the purchase of a CSA share from a participating local organic farm of their choice. In addition to the voucher, participating employees are given the opportunity to attend an annual farmer meet-and-greet, where shareholders can meet their farmers and learn more about the farms. Monthly education workshops and blog posts are provided by an internal registered dietitian to educate participating voucher holders on recipes and ways to use and prepare produce provided in shares.

The CSA Voucher Program began as a research study in 2015 in collaboration with the College of Agriculture, Food and Environment's Department of Agricultural Economics, was offered as a pilot program in 2016, and started as a regular employee benefit through UK Health and Wellness in 2017. In 2016, the program issued just under 100 vouchers per year; thus far in 2019, it has issued over 470. Participants' satisfaction score was the highest among employer programs in the region, and participants indicated that they were more likely to buy or recommend a CSA without an incentive in the future.

Among the many health and food behavior outcomes measured in the ongoing impact assessment of this program, participants increased their vegetable consumption by nearly two servings per day and reported more than .5 fewer non-wellness/preventive visits per year to doctors' offices or health clinics. The largest improvements were seen among those who considered themselves to be in a lower health condition at the start of the CSA Voucher Program, showing statistically significant health savings. Initial estimates indicate that for every dollar spent on the program, \$2.47 was saved in medical expenditures.

UK human resources leaders have been instrumental in the support of the CSA Voucher program, which has served as a model for employers in the surrounding area. To date, approximately 789 shares have been sold across 11 employers, which has been facilitated by the Kentucky Farm Share Coalition.

This program was a result of UK Health and Wellness's five-year strategic plan to improve the culture of health at UK, as well as provide resources for stress and resiliency, physical activity, nutrition, health screenings and other awareness-raising wellness events.

### **About CUPA-HR**

CUPA-HR is higher ed HR. We serve higher education by providing the knowledge, resources, advocacy and connections to achieve organizational and workforce excellence. Headquartered in Knoxville, Tennessee, and serving over 31,000 HR professionals and other campus leaders at more than 2,000 member institutions and organizations around the country and abroad, the association offers learning and professional development programs, higher education salary and benefits data, extensive online resources and just-in-time regulatory and legislative information.

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