

Health Benefits: Other Options

What are some alternatives to providing health benefits for my employees and my business?

If none of the more traditional options for providing health benefits seem affordable or manageable for your business at this point in time, there are some alternatives to consider:

Institute a wellness program.

Consider providing healthy snacks for your employees, subsidizing gym memberships, or organizing group exercise activities. Creating a [healthier environment](#) for your workers increases awareness of healthy lifestyles and encourages employees to take better care of themselves, potentially reducing their medical costs. Be sure to implement options that fit within your existing business culture and philosophy, and give your employees the option to participate so that such changes don't feel like an added burden.

Raise wages, if possible.

If you're finding it too difficult or expensive to pay for insurance premiums or reimburse your employees for healthcare spending, consider giving your employees a modest pay increase. *Forbes.com* [published an article in 2015](#) about one small business owner who did just that. The downside is the additional cost to you in wages paid immediately, as well as in payroll taxes. And take caution: the IRS does not allow raises to be made on the condition that employees spend the extra funds on health insurance; employees must be free to manage their earnings as they choose. [Still, higher wages are linked with better health outcomes](#), potentially offsetting the adverse effects of having poor or no health insurance for both business owners and employees.