







THRIVING WORKPLACE POLICIES


Thrive2027 is a driving movement that unites community perspective with organizational action to accelerate change that will give our kids a strong start, empower our neighbors to thrive – not just survive, and help us all live longer, better.

This toolkit provides several workplace policies and best practices that help to advance Thrive2027 while benefiting your organization and your employees.


OFFER FAMILY-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE POLICIES

POLICY OR BEST PRACTICE	EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	EMPLOYER BENEFITS	THRIVE2027 ADVANCEMENT	EXAMPLES
Offer flexible hours or parental leave so parents can attend school events	Positively impacts employee well-being Decreases stress Assists in meeting work & family responsibilities	Increases employee retention Reduces unscheduled absences Increases employee productivity and concentration	Increases parent engagement, which supports children's early learning experiences 	Massachusetts' Advisory provides an additional 24 hours of unpaid leave (beyond FMLA) for employees to attend school activities or child's or elderly relative's medical appointments. School/Parental Leave : Some states provide for a limited number of hours annually for parents to attend school-related events and activities for their children. Read more about laws that allow parents and caregivers to attend kids' school events.
Expand childcare options for employees, including childcare referral assistance	Positively impacts employee well-being Decreases stress Assists in meeting work & family responsibilities	Increases employee retention Increases employee productivity & concentration	Ensures children receive quality early care & parents have the support they need to remain in the workforce 	Offer on-site child care or back-up care Local Example: Bank of America Offer an Employee Assistance Program which supports all employees (regardless of shift) with referrals to childcare support options. Take childcare needs into account when scheduling employees.
Partner with a childcare center or in-home provider to provide sick-child options to employees	Decreases stress Assists in meeting work & family responsibilities	Reduces employee absenteeism Increases employee productivity & concentration	Ensures children receive quality early care & parents have the support they need to remain in the workforce 	Create a partner-service arrangement with a childcare provider who can provide care in emergency situations so that employees do not have to take sick or not-paid time off. 

OFFER FAMILY-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE POLICIES

POLICY OR BEST PRACTICE	EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	EMPLOYER BENEFITS	THRIVE2027 ADVANCEMENT	EXAMPLES
Provide paid maternity/paternity leave	<p>Increases familial bonding</p> <p>Supports parental mental health</p> <p>Increases probability that mothers return to employment later, and then work more hours and earn higher wages</p>	<p>Reduces employee turnover</p> <p>Creates neutral or positive effects on productivity, profitability, turnover and morale</p>	<p>Decreases infant mortality and maternal deaths, which impact years of premature death</p> <div> <div>1</div> <div>2</div> <div>3</div> </div> 	<p>Bank of America offers 16 weeks of paid parental leave (maternity, paternity, and adoption) along with a new parent kit and other resources.</p> <p>Bernstein Shur offers 16 weeks of paid leave to all new parents regardless of gender and time may be taken flexibly throughout the child's first year.</p> <p>Several of Maine's largest employers offer some form of paid leave for mothers and fathers following the birth or adoption of a child, including MaineHealth, Hannaford, Walmart, L.L.Bean, Unum, WEX, and IDEXX.</p> <p>Leaves That Pay: Employer and Worker Experiences With Paid Family Leave in California</p> <p>Rutgers Study Finds Paid Family Leave Leads to Positive Economic Outcomes</p>



HELP EMPLOYEES DEVELOP PEERS AND FUTURE EMPLOYEES

POLICY OR BEST PRACTICE	EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	EMPLOYER BENEFITS	THRIVE2027 ADVANCEMENT	EXAMPLES
Partner with organizations and schools to offer job shadow days, internships, mentoring programs	Increases job satisfaction through participation Builds and strengthens sense of community	Achieves CSR goals Identifies future employees and assists with recruitment	Develops and strengthens employable skills for future workers regardless of employer Creates career pathways 	Jobs for Maine Graduates (JMG) partners with 500+ businesses whose employees visit classrooms, host job shadows and internships, and volunteer at student enrichment events Sponsor and/or host internships specifically for BIPOC youth, e.g. INROADS . Local Examples: Unum, Dead River Company, Baker Newman Noyes, and many more.
Offer an internal employee mentoring program	Increases skills	Strengthens employees	Increases job retention	Employees can learn in-demand skills from other employees. Intel's program focuses on matching people not by job title or by years of service but by specific skills that are in demand. The voluntary program is open to everyone – from workers on the factory floor to senior-level engineers. Sodexo's Spirit of Mentoring Initiative (IMPACT) is a formal cross-divisional and cross-functional program that builds skills and relationships among employees. About 75% of matches are cross-cultural and in the past two cohorts, women and people of color who participated were at least 10% more likely to be promoted than those who did not.

42% of employees say learning and development is the most important benefit when deciding where to work followed by health insurance (48%) (Udemy)

Offering career training and development would keep 86% of millennials from leaving their current position (Bridge)

OFFER EMPLOYEES ACCESS TO EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

POLICY OR BEST PRACTICE	EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	EMPLOYER BENEFITS	THRIVE2027 ADVANCEMENT	EXAMPLES
<p>Help employees complete high school by offering free access and/ or Paid Time Off to attend accredited programs at local institutions or online (on-site or elsewhere)</p> 	<p>Increases access to advancement opportunities and additional income</p>	<p>Increases employee retention and advancement</p> <p>Reduces time and money spent on training and recruitment</p> <p>Builds talent and improves effectiveness of existing employees</p> <p>Improves company's ability to promote from within, reducing turnover costs</p> <p>Unlocks tax breaks for corporate education reimbursement costs</p>	<p>Impacts high school graduation rate</p> <p>Increases opportunity/ income over lifetime</p> 	<p>Benefiting Both Corporations and Employee By Building Better-Educated Workforce</p> <p>Cengage, Goodwill, University College, Local Adult Educations</p> <p>Ed2Go combines Career Online High School courses and training programs. Example combinations: High School Diploma with Food/Hospitality Training, High School Diploma with Commercial Driving Training, High School Diploma with Child Care Training, High School Diploma with Retail Customer Service Skills Training, etc.</p> <p>McDonald's and Walmart offer Career Online High School as a benefit for their employees. (McDonald's also extends the benefit to family members of the employee at no cost). Any employee who meets certain eligibility requirements can earn their accredited high school diploma at no cost to them. The credential takes 1-2 years.</p>

RESULTS


McDonald's and Walmart have each graduated over 300 employees from Career Online High School since partnering in 2015.

OFFER EMPLOYEES ACCESS TO EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

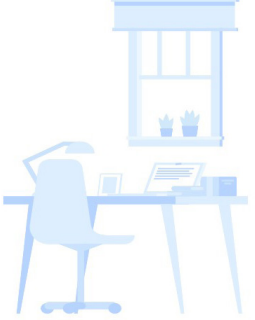
POLICY OR BEST PRACTICE	EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	EMPLOYER BENEFITS	THRIVE2027 ADVANCEMENT	EXAMPLES
Help employees gain skills and access additional credentials and education	Attains credentials and skills, which may help them access advancement opportunities	Increases skills of employees Strengthens existing workforce	Increases post-secondary completion rate Increases stability and advancement of employees	<p>SMCC can deliver on-site credit classes at the workplace, during or after business hours, to a minimum of 10 employees.</p> <p>Offer employees customized training through the resources below:</p> <p>Maine Quality Centers (MQC) Competitive Skills Scholarship Program for Business (CSSP-B) Workforce Solutions (WIOA)</p> <p>Consider providing employee tuition assistance benefits up-front rather than a reimbursement to help more employees take advantage of benefits.</p> <p>Local Examples: BIW, Disability RMS, Goodwill, HP Hood, Long Creek Youth Development Center, Maine Medical Center, WEX (SMCC on-site classes)</p> <p>BIW- Customized Advanced Manufacturing and Welding Trainings (MQC/WIOA)</p> <p>Nichols- Machine Operator Training (CSSP-B)</p> <p>American Roots- Sewing Machine Operator/ Stitcher training (MQC, CSSP-B, WIOA)</p>
Offer support, on-site access to classes, and/or Paid Time Off for education to employees learning English	Increases skills and helps employees advance	Increases communication and efficiency	Increases financial stability and advancement of employees	<p>Local Adult Education providers, SMCC, and USM all have customizable solutions that either integrate learning of the English language into skills training or can offer on-site English language support at the work site.</p> <p>In addition, several additional service providers offer resources around language attainment including: Learning Works, Hope Acts, the Salvation Army, Immigrant Welcome Center, In Her Presence, the Casco Bay Branch of the YMCA, etc.</p>




UTILIZE INCLUSIVE HIRING, MANAGEMENT, AND RETENTION PRACTICES

POLICY OR BEST PRACTICE	EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	EMPLOYER BENEFITS	THRIVE2027 ADVANCEMENT	EXAMPLES
Hire individuals facing barriers to employment (such as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, veterans, New Mainers, people reentering the workforce, people in recovery, and people with disabilities)	Accesses employment, which increases financial stability	Accesses tax incentives	Strengthens the workforce and increases employment rates and financial stability of jobseekers 	Understanding Policies that Impact Employment Opportunities for People Who Have Criminal Records The National HIRE Network helps individuals with criminal records reenter through employment. Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a federal tax credit that offers a tax incentive for private sector businesses to hire individuals from targeted groups that have consistently faced significant barriers to employment. Local Examples: Greater Portland Workforce Initiative Southern Maine Reentry Resource and Job Fair, Maine DOC Federal Probation and Parole, Goodwill Workforce Solutions, Preble Street, MDOL Career Centers.
Prevent unconscious bias from impacting the hiring process	Increases focus on candidates' talent and qualifications rather than other demographic information	Increases hiring of diverse candidates	Strengthens the workforce and increases employment rates and financial stability of jobseekers	Avoid asking candidates for salary history or work authorization information (prior to making an offer of employment). Consider options to anonymize resumé data during review. Train staff involved in hiring processes and search committees to recognize unconscious bias. Compare results of each hiring process against the organization's DEI goals.
Pursue equity in compensation and promotion decisions	Increases advancement opportunities for employees and ensures leadership teams are more diverse	Attracts a more diverse workforce, which can increase profitability Increases employee engagement and retention	Increases financial stability of employees	Conduct audits of decisions related to pay to identify and address disparities. Require managers to provide evidence when measuring employee performance in evaluations, rather than using a global ranking scale alone. Communicate clear career pathway information to employees and provide training to increase advancement of front line staff.


UTILIZE INCLUSIVE HIRING, MANAGEMENT, AND RETENTION PRACTICES

POLICY OR BEST PRACTICE	EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	EMPLOYER BENEFITS	THRIVE2027 ADVANCEMENT	EXAMPLES
<p>Provide employees with stable and flexible scheduling, as well as telework options, when possible</p> 	<p>Ensures employees continue to receive reliable pay and have the flexibility to balance other life responsibilities</p>	<p>Increases employee attendance when other circumstances may otherwise prevent them from working (e.g., weather, pandemic, sick family members)</p>	<p>Increases financial stability of employees ²</p>	<p>Analyze any current instability affecting scheduling and to address it in other ways.</p> <p>Explore ways to end “on-call” shifts and make flexible scheduling options, such as shift swapping, accessible to all employees.</p> <p>Ensure employees have the technology, training, and support to work from home. See tips from WEX, Inc. here.</p>

CREATE A CULTURE OF FINANCIAL WELLNESS

POLICY OR BEST PRACTICE	EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	EMPLOYER BENEFITS	THRIVE2027 ADVANCEMENT	EXAMPLES
Offer financial coaching, education, and other tools to employees	Increases productivity, decreases stress Impacts health (employees who are struggling financially tend to be in poorer health)	Increases productivity, decreases stress Reduces absenteeism Reduces distraction Increases employee engagement and organizational commitment	Increases financial stability of employees ²	Enrich Financial Wellness and Prudential can help companies assess their employees needs and identify the right tools/programs to offer Why Workplace Financial Wellness Programs Are Hot - Forbes Employers could integrate general financial education or coaching with 401K enrollment sessions. Local Example: Goodwill
Educate employees about the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)	Accesses tax refunds, which can increase income	Ensures employees have access to resources that help them become more financially stable	Increases individual and family income and assets, which leads to greater financial stability and ability to afford housing ² 	Toolkit for employers with promotion and outreach ideas: EITC Information for Employers

CREATE A CULTURE OF FINANCIAL WELLNESS

POLICY OR BEST PRACTICE	EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	EMPLOYER BENEFITS	THRIVE2027 ADVANCEMENT	EXAMPLES
Partner with other employers and/or financial institutions to offer employees access to emergency funds and/or low interest loans	Helps employees meet emergency needs Allows employees to begin saving and building credit	Helps address issues that cause people to be late, chronically late, or stressed and therefore less productive at work	Increases financial stability when individuals and families have access to a resources during emergency situations Ensures employees remain in the workforce 	2 An employer partners with a bank or credit union to provide employees Income Advance loans . As long as an employee is in good standing with their employer, the bank approves them for a small loan (usually \$1000 - \$2500) as soon as the same day. Loans are repaid through automatic payroll deduction. After the loan is repaid, employees may establish or improve their credit and can continue the automatic payroll deductions to build savings. There is a guide for employers interested in establishing a similar program . Salary Finance (currently available to companies with 500+ employees) helps employees by replacing high-interest debt with a low-interest employee loan. Loan payments are deducted directly from payroll, reducing loan servicing costs and risk.


RESULTS

Rhino Foods, a Vermont-based specialty ice cream novelty and ice cream ingredient manufacturer, pioneered Income Advance in 2007. Over 10 years, \$355,000 has been loaned to employees, 267 employees have taken advantage of the program, and the company has experienced a 38% increase in employee retention, beating the national manufacturing average.

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On average, employees with Salary Finance loans save \$1,000 in interest over the life of the loan, so they can erase debt more quickly, and start saving sooner.

PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE, AFFORDABLE EMPLOYEE HEALTH BENEFITS (INCLUDING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH)


POLICY OR BEST PRACTICE	EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	EMPLOYER BENEFITS	THRIVE2027 ADVANCEMENT	EXAMPLES
Offer Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs)	Increases ability to access mental health care and address mental health concerns	Lowers company's medical costs Reduces absenteeism Improves productivity	Ensures employees live longer, healthier lives 2 3	EAPs offer employees confidential 24-hour access to resources via telephone consultations, face-to-face meetings, and educational materials. Mental health and the workplace: How employers can help Local Example: UWSM offers an EAP plan through Unum
Offer Paid Time Off (to include sick leave)	Decreases spread of infectious diseases Increases access to screenings and preventive measures, diagnoses, and treatment Shortens hospital stays and reduces emergency room visits Ensures economic security of families	Reduces spread of infection within the workplace Reduces job-related injuries Enhances productivity Reduces turnover	Ensures employees live longer, healthier lives 2 3 	UWSM provides a sick leave benefit to cover regular full and part-time employees. Regular full time employees earn one day of sick leave upon completion of each calendar month of service. Regular part-time employees earn equivalent time on a pro-rated basis. Sick time may be accumulated to a maximum of 45 working days (360 hours). AMA Recognizes Public Health Benefits of Paid Sick Leave The Economic Benefits of Paid Leave: Fact Sheet Health and Productivity Among U.S. Workers Health, Absence, Disability, and Presenteeism Cost Estimates of Certain Physical and Mental Health Conditions Affecting U.S. Employers Local Examples: Many local organizations offer paid sick leave, including Chipotle & UWSM

CREATE A MENTAL HEALTH-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE



POLICY OR BEST PRACTICE	EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	EMPLOYER BENEFITS	THRIVE2027 ADVANCEMENT	EXAMPLES
Implement a stigma reduction/mental health awareness campaign	<p>Encourages employees to seek help</p> <p>Positively impacts employee well-being</p> <p>Fosters an understanding and inclusive workplace environment</p>	<p>Improves overall employee health</p> <p>Increases utilization of employee assistance programs (EAP)</p> <p>Equips managers with information and tools to support employees and address challenges</p>	<p>Ensures employees live longer, healthier lives</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p>	<p>Local Example: IDEXX implemented a local version of the nationally recognized “Make It OK” campaign in their office.</p> <p>Verrill Law partners with MyndUp to offer free virtual counseling sessions to all employees.</p> <p>MaineHealth’s insurance policy charges the same co-pay amount for both primary mental health and primary physical health care.</p>



ENSURE THE WORKPLACE IS RECOVERY-FRIENDLY

POLICY OR BEST PRACTICE	EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	EMPLOYER BENEFITS	THRIVE2027 ADVANCEMENT	EXAMPLES
Implement workplace policies that are recovery friendly and preventative of drug misuse. Reduce work-related injury risks and other working conditions which may increase the risk for substance misuse.	Receives needed help to address substance use	Retains a healthier, more productive, and more motivated workforce Reduces costs related to impaired productivity and absenteeism	Ensures employees live longer, healthier lives 	<p>Human Resources staff can ensure workplace policies are reviewed with new hires and existing employees, discuss ways to submit referrals and get help, explain how employee performance issues are evaluated, and provide information about substance misuse and its symptoms and effects.</p> <p>Recovery Friendly Workplaces (RFW's) support their communities by recognizing recovery from substance use disorder as a strength and by being willing to hire and work intentionally with people in recovery. RFW's encourage a healthy and safe environment where employers, employees, and communities can collaborate to create positive change and eliminate barriers for those impacted by addiction.</p> <p>How to Have a Recovery-Friendly Workplace</p> <p>Facing Addiction in America: The Surgeon General's Spotlight on Opioids</p> <p>Drug Free Workplace Toolkit</p> <p>The Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative (NH)</p> <p>Local Examples: Early adopters include Walmart, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, and more.</p>

HELP EMPLOYEES PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY IN THE COMMUNITY

POLICY OR BEST PRACTICE	EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	EMPLOYER BENEFITS	THRIVE2027 ADVANCEMENT	EXAMPLES
Encourage employee volunteerism and activism through designated paid time off	Increases team building and social connections Builds skills Increases connection to community	Demonstrates company values in action Recruits passionate employees Increases employee morale, retention, and company loyalty	Advances progress toward all Goals when employees take part in volunteer opportunities which support Thrive2027 	Depending on the workplace, the amount of time off to volunteer and program structure may vary. Workplaces may encourage team projects (episodic or regularly-scheduled) and/or empower individual employees to volunteer on their own. Local Examples: Baker Newman Noyes, Dead River Company, IDEXX, TD Bank, Unum, and many more. &Pizza, a local pizza chain in DC, provided three days of paid time off for employees to participate in activism of their choosing. References: Points of Light Volunteer Program and Employee Volunteer Program at a Glance
Hold a voter registration event and/or provide flexible scheduling on voting days	Empowers employees to participate in democracy	Demonstrates a commitment to civic engagement	Increases likelihood that policies and laws which support Thrive2027 Goals are advocated for, voted for, or otherwise supported by employees 	The Time to Vote Campaign is led by 230+ CEOs of various companies across the country. Time to Vote is a way to spread awareness about the steps employers can take to give employees the time they need to vote. The companies joining this campaign are committed to driving voter participation through programs, such as paid time off, a no meetings workday, and resources for mail-in ballots and early voting. Examples: Companies that have signed on to the Time to Vote Campaign include Allagash Brewing, DICK'S Sporting Goods, EILEEN FISHER Inc., Farmers Insurance, GAP Inc., Levi Strauss & Co., Nordstrom, Southwest Airlines, Toad & Co, Tyson Foods, Walmart, and more.

HELP EMPLOYEES PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY IN THE COMMUNITY

POLICY OR BEST PRACTICE	EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	EMPLOYER BENEFITS	THRIVE2027 ADVANCEMENT	EXAMPLES
Collect and donate items which support Thrive2027 Goals and strategies	Feels that they are making a tangible donation	Offers the opportunity to talk about Thrive2027 Engages employees at all levels and helps to fill identified needs of community partners	Ensures necessary materials are in place to support strategies connected to the Goals <div> 1 2 3 </div>	Book drives, snack bag assemblies, school supply collections, backpack programs, etc. Local Examples: Prudential, MaineHealth, TD Bank 

“ [Volunteering] has been an excellent way to engage with colleagues in the community in a concerted and mutually beneficial way. We’re learning at the same time that we’re giving, and I think that’s the best form of volunteerism that one can hope for. ”

– Ari Solotoff, Attorney, Bernstein Shur

EDUCATE EMPLOYEES ABOUT THRIVE2027 GOALS & STRATEGIES & CELEBRATE COMPANY PARTICIPATION IN THRIVE2027 WORK

POLICY OR BEST PRACTICE	EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	EMPLOYER BENEFITS	THRIVE2027 ADVANCEMENT	EXAMPLES
Educate employees about cross-goal topics such as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), social emotional learning, and warning signs	Opportunity to build personal skills	Contributes to an informed and responsive workforce	Increases individuals' understanding of the Goals and how they can support them <div> 1 2 3 </div>	Offer lunch and learns or other presentations Brick & Beam Society (ACEs presentation)
Educate employees about systemic issues that impact Thrive2027 and train them to better address these issues	Opportunity to build personal skills that could lead to community change	Opportunity to create a more inclusive work environment	Increases individuals' understanding of the underlying issues that impact progress toward achieving the Goals <div> 1 2 3 </div>	Offer an ongoing series of anti-racism trainings for all employee.
Visibly display company's commitment to Thrive2027 and actions taken to advance the Goal(s)	Employees are recognized for their efforts in support of Thrive2027	Opportunity to celebrate collaborative efforts of employees toward community goals	Advances company progress up the engagement continuum <div> 1 2 3 </div> Encourages other companies to increase their engagement	Bulletin boards, displays, social media, website, etc.

POLICIES AND BEST PRACTICES AT-A-GLANCE

For more information, please contact Kerrie Keller (kkeller@uwsme.org) at United Way of Southern Maine.

Offer family-friendly workplace policies (Goals 1 & 2)

- Offer flexible hours or parental leave so parents can attend school events
- Expand childcare options for employees
- Partner with a childcare center or in-home provider to provide sick-child options to employees
- Provide paid maternity/paternity leave

Help employees develop peers and future employees (Goal 2)

- Partner with organizations and schools to offer job shadow days, internships, mentoring programs
- Offer an internal employee mentoring program

Offer employees access to educational opportunities (Goal 2)

- Help employees complete high school by offering free access to accredited programs at local institutions or online
- Help employees gain skills and access additional credentials and education
- Offer support to employees learning English

Utilize inclusive hiring, management, and retention practices (Goal 2)

- Hire individuals facing barriers to employment (such as BIPOC, veterans, New Mainers, people re-entering the workforce, people in recovery, and people with disabilities)
- Prevent unconscious bias from impacting the hiring process
- Pursue equity in compensation and promotion decisions
- Provide employees with stable and flexible scheduling, as well as telework options, when possible

Create a culture of financial wellness (Goal 2)

- Offer financial coaching, education, and other tools to employees
- Educate employees about the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

- Partner with other employers and/or financial institutions to offer employees access to emergency funds and/or low interest loans

Provide comprehensive, affordable employee health benefits (including behavioral health) (Goals 2 & 3)

- Offer Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs)
- Offer paid sick leave
- Implement a stigma reduction/mental health awareness campaign

Ensure a recovery-friendly workplace (Goals 2 & 3)

- Implement workplace policies that are recovery-friendly and preventative of drug misuse. Reduce work-related injury risks and other working conditions which may increase the risk for substance misuse

Help employees participate actively in the community (All Goals)

- Encourage employee volunteerism and activism through designated paid time off
- Hold a voter registration event and/or provide flexible scheduling on voting days
- Collect and donate items which support Thrive2027 Goals and strategies

Educate about Thrive2027 Goals & strategies & celebrate company participation in Thrive2027 work (All Goals)

- Offer lunch and learn sessions on cross-goal topics such as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES), social-emotional learning, and warning signs
- Educate employees about systemic issues that impact Thrive2027 and train them to better address these issues
- Visibly display company's commitment to Thrive2027 and actions taken to advance the Goal(s)