



Recovery  
Friendly  
WORKPLACE

## EMPLOYER ORIENTATION PACKET

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## PROGRAM OFFICE

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# WELCOME & OVERVIEW

The Colorado Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative™ helps employers respond to substance use, mental health, and addiction in the workplace and beyond.

Signed into law with bi-partisan support (SB24-048) and administered by the Centers for Health, Work & Environment (CHWE) at the Colorado School of Public Health, the Colorado Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative aims to create positive change, eliminate stigma, and support recovery.

A Recovery Friendly Workplace (RFW) is an organization that uses evidence-based policies and practices to unite the entire organization by recognizing recovery from addiction as a strength and supporting all employees affected by substance use disorder (SUD).

RFWs encourage a healthy, safe, and productive work environment where employers, employees, and communities collaborate to create positive changes and eliminate barriers for all people impacted by addiction.

## Mission & Vision

**The Centers for Health, Work & Environment (CHWE)** educates and trains future leaders, conducts research, and designs and implements practical solutions to occupational safety and health challenges with its partners. CHWE collaborates with faculty, students, and community partners to advance worker health, safety, and well-being. Part of the Colorado School of Public Health, CHWE is home to one of 10 nationwide Centers of Excellence for *Total Worker Health*®, the Mountain & Plains Education and Research Center (MAP ERC), and the Climate Impacts on Worker Health & Safety (CIWHS) Center.

**The Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention** coordinates the state's response to the crisis of misuse and abuse of prescription medications such as opioids (including fentanyl), stimulants, and sedatives. Since the Consortium took its current form in 2013, it has been a place where stakeholders from diverse backgrounds and viewpoints work together and focus their efforts to advance Colorado's opioid crisis response.

# IMPACT

In Colorado, SUD leads to significant health and economic burdens. Colorado has a unique opportunity to become a leader in recovery friendly workplace initiatives, leveraging the state's commitment to workforce development and public health.

**400K**

individuals in recovery in Colorado.

**\$8,500**

average amount employers save annually for each employee in recovery.

**\$21B**

lost economic output due to opioid misuse in Colorado.

**360M**

cumulative work hours lost due to opioid use in Colorado.

*Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention*

**95M**

US adults aged 18+ reported ever perceiving a substance use or mental health problem.

**66%**

of individuals with SUD are actively employed.

**1 in 12**

workers reportedly struggles with an untreated substance use disorder.

**75%**

of employers report opioid use has affected their workplace.

*2023 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH); Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention; National Safety Council*

# BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION

- **Training and Technical Assistance:** Receive guidance from a dedicated Recovery Friendly Workplace Advisor, customized staff training, and access to evidence-based resources. All at no charge!
- **Peer-to-Peer Connection:** Connect with a collaborative community of advocates working together to enhance mental well-being in the workplace.
- **Total Worker Health®:** Boost engagement, retention, and productivity by adopting evidence-based practices to support employee health, safety, and well-being.
- **Public Recognition:** Get certified as a Colorado Recovery Friendly Workplace™ and showcase your commitment to employees, customers, and the community.





## STEPS TO BECOME A COLORADO RECOVERY FRIENDLY WORKPLACE™

1



Submit  
Letter of  
Intent

2



Schedule  
Orientation

3



Complete  
Survey &  
Training

4



Become  
Certified



QUESTIONS?  
Let's Chat



# REQUIREMENTS

## ✓ Initial Requirements for Annual Certification

- Sign the Letter of Intent
- Schedule Orientation
- Complete Survey & Training
- Become Certified
- Provide employees with access to recovery-related resources.

## ✓ Ongoing Requirements for Annual Certification

- Review workplace policies with your Recovery Friendly Workplace Advisor.
- Submit organizational survey to maintain certification.
- Offer employees training on addiction, recovery, and mental health.
- Provide employees with access to recovery-related resources.

## ✓ Encouraged Activities

- Ensure supervisors receive education on impairment, substance misuse, and recovery.
- Participate in community prevention or recovery-focused events and groups.
- Develop customized policies and training based on workplace needs.



# WHAT YOU GAIN

## Recovery Friendly Workplace Advisor

An RFW Advisor is a representative of the Recovery Friendly Workplace Program who assists employers in becoming participants or certified Recovery Friendly Workplaces. You will receive:

- **Guidance through the Certification Process:** Receive expert support as you navigate the steps to achieve Colorado Recovery Friendly Workplace™ certification.
- **Access to Recovery Resources:** Gain direct connections to state and local recovery resources to enhance workplace support.
- **Personalized Goal Setting:** Work with advisors to set and achieve tailored, workplace-specific recovery goals that foster a supportive environment for employees.

Our program empowers your workplace by providing evidence-based resources, guidance, and support to foster a recovery-friendly environment for all employees.



## Valuable Resources and Tools

- **Access to a comprehensive suite of downloadable resources,** including customizable policy templates, engaging training modules, and practical guides for boosting employee involvement.
- **State & Community Resources:** Stay informed with updated contact information for critical state and community-based recovery services, ensuring you're always connected to supportive services.



```

graph LR
    A[Become a Participant] --> B[Complete Organizational Survey]
    B --> C[Complete Training Requirements]
    C --> D[Achieve Certification]
  
```

Become a Participant

Complete Organizational Survey

Complete Training Requirements

Achieve Certification

[illegible]



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Why should we consider having our organization certified?

Substance misuse is associated with missed workdays, reduced productivity, work-related incidents, and higher health care and turnover costs. Employers are uniquely positioned to help address this epidemic in our communities. Our individualized, tailored engagement model empowers you to take control and make a difference.

### What are the benefits of being an RFW?

As an RFW, your organization can:

- Connect to statewide and local resources
- Receive materials curated for your workplace
- Support employees and their loved ones
- Access training about SUD and recovery
- Establish and nurture peer connections
- Become an employer-of-choice
- Discover the *Total Worker Health*® approach

### Will my organization have to change our current workplace policies & practices?

We strongly encourage companies to review current policies and practices during an RFW organizational assessment. Our RFW Advisors will help you every step of the way, ensuring a smooth and manageable transition. Participating in RFW may motivate you to update your policies or change your practices. Becoming an RFW can align with and support your current Employee Assistance Program and/or Drug-Free Workplace Policy.

### If we have locations nationally or across the state, how do those employees access the services offered?

Our local and statewide RFW Advisors collaborate to ensure that locations across the state have access to the benefits available through the RFW program. Our staff can also link you to other available statewide RFW initiatives to support your team members outside of Colorado.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## How much does it cost to become a Colorado Recovery Friendly Workplace?

Becoming a certified RFW is a straightforward process that begins with your organization expressing interest. From there, you will receive support, guidance, training, advising, and an annual assessment, all at no cost. This comprehensive support ensures that you are well-equipped to meet the requirements and maintain your certification.

## What does a Recovery Friendly Workplace Advisor do?

A Recovery Friendly Workplace Advisor is a dedicated resource provided by the Centers for Health, Work & Environment. This advisor serves as your point of contact for the program, offering guidance and support to businesses and organizations that wish to become recovery friendly. They are well-versed in local and statewide resources and can help you navigate the process of becoming a certified RFW.

## What resources are available?

Workplaces of all sizes, industries, and readiness levels benefit from participating in the Colorado Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative™. Resources include customized training, toolkits, materials, and support. In addition, the Centers for Health, Work & Environment staff will ensure your organization is well connected to community prevention and recovery support services to best support your employees.

## What happens after RFW Certification?

After achieving RFW Certification, you will not be left to navigate the recovery-friendly culture on your own. You will continue to receive ongoing support from your RFW Advisor and the Centers for Health, Work & Environment. This support ensures that you can maintain and enhance your recovery-friendly practices and activities.

## Can sole proprietors or companies without employees participate in the Colorado Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative?

Yes! Any company, regardless of size, industry, or business type, can voluntarily participate in the Colorado Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative™. Sole proprietors and businesses without employees can benefit by gaining access to resources, training, and community support to foster a recovery-friendly environment in their professional network.



## ADDITIONAL FACTS

★ 95 million adults aged 18 or older reported ever perceiving they had a substance use and/or mental health problem.

- **30.5 million adults perceived they ever had a substance use problem.**
  - 73.1% (22.2 million) of these individuals considered themselves in recovery or recovered from their drug or alcohol use problem.
- **64.4 million adults perceived they ever had a mental health problem.**
  - 66.6% (42.7 million) of these individuals considered themselves in recovery or recovered from their mental health problems.

★ 66% of individuals with SUD are actively employed.

★ 1 in 12 workers reportedly struggles with an untreated substance use disorder.

★ In 2023, approximately 9 million people misused opioids.

★ 75% of employers report that opioid use has affected their workplace.

★ There are an estimated 400,000 individuals in recovery in Colorado.

★ 1 in 5 Coloradans drinks alcohol excessively, contributing to about 5 deaths each day.

★ Colorado has lost \$5 billion in economic costs due to excessive drinking.

★ Studies show that each employee in recovery:

- Is absent approximately 13.7 days fewer each year than those not in recovery and 3.6 days less than the general workforce.
- Saves employers an average of \$8,500 annually in turnover, absenteeism, presenteeism, and healthcare costs and an average of \$500 annually in health plan usage costs compared to those not in recovery.

*2023 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH); Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention; National Safety Council Abuse Prevention*

## RESOURCES & GUIDES

Toolkit



Resource Guide



Stories



Training

COMING SOON

Webinars



News



View Electronic Version



## QUESTIONS? Contact Our Recovery Friendly Workplace Advisors

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