

# STEPS TO CREATE A RECOVERY FRIENDLY WORKPLACE

## A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS

### HOW MUCH DOES SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER (SUD) IN YOUR WORKFORCE COST ANNUALLY?<sup>1</sup>

Example: A construction contractor in Iowa with 100 employees

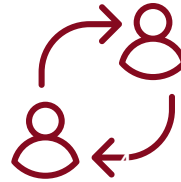
Employees affected: 17



Lost Time: \$53k



Health Care: \$44k



Job Turnover and Retraining: \$77k

TOTAL COST:  
\$173k

### INVESTING IN YOUR WORKFORCE PAYS OFF

If the employer in this example implemented recovery friendly workplace (RFW) policies across all levels of their organization, they could save \$163k annually.

To see how much substance use disorder could be costing your organization, go to:  
<https://www.nsc.org/forms/substance-use-employer-calculator>

### NALOXONE AT WORK SAVES LIVES

Naloxone is a drug used to temporarily halt the effects of an opioid overdose. Sold over-the-counter, it is a critical component of your RFW plan and all employees should be trained on its storage and administration.

For free training and to view naloxone administration laws in your state, visit <https://www.nsc.org/workplace/safety-topics/respond-ready-workplace/home.2>



# STEPS TO CREATE A RECOVERY FRIENDLY WORKPLACE

## Step 1: Conduct a needs assessment

- To start, assess your workplace culture and policies. For an example assessment, check out the [Department of Labor's Recovery Ready Toolkit, Appendix 1](#).<sup>3</sup>
- Make the business case. Calculate the benefits of adopting RFW policies. <https://www.nsc.org/forms/substance-use-employer-calculator><sup>1</sup>
- Identify work conditions that put employees at risk and take steps to reduce injury.
- Contact state and regional resources or workplaces that have already implemented a plan for guidance.<sup>4</sup>

## Step 2: Make a plan

- Create a planning team with members from all levels of your organization.
- Write a mission statement and develop a plan to communicate it to new and existing employees and the community.
- Institute RFW policies on hiring, retention, advancement, benefits, and education. For benchmarks, refer to the [National Recovery Friendly Workplace Institute's RFW Definition & National Certification Standards](#).<sup>4</sup>
- Ensure health insurance includes comprehensive SUD benefits for employees and family members.
- Take into account industry- or sector-specific factors that may impact the implementation of policies (e.g., DOT rules, safety sensitive positions, labor agreements)

## Step 3: Implement the plan

- Regularly educate and train employees on substance use disorder and recovery to reduce stigma.
- Clearly communicate to new and existing employees RFW policies, SUD benefits, and available health and wellness resources.
- Update your website, employee handbooks, benefits documents, operating procedures, and other documents.
- Provide reasonable accommodations for participation in treatment and recovery support.
- Partner with local SUD treatment providers.
- Support hiring people in recovery by implementing Fair Chance Hiring.
- Facilitate access to employee resource groups or peer recovery support specialists.

## Step 4: Monitor your progress

- Survey employees to assess changes in workplace culture and the effectiveness of new policies, benefits, and training programs. Keep surveys anonymous for honest feedback.
- Plan to regularly review and adjust your policies to improve and sustain the program.
- Keep going! Share your experiences among your professional networks and inspire others to implement their own programs.
- Consider becoming certified through the [National Recovery Friendly Workplace Institute](#).<sup>4</sup>

### References

1 National Safety Council Substance Use Employer Calculator. <https://www.nsc.org/forms/substance-use-employer-calculator>

2 National Safety Council Respond Ready Workplace. <https://www.nsc.org/workplace/safety-topics/respond-ready-workplace/home>

3 Federal Recovery-Ready Workplace Interagency Workgroup. Recovery-Ready Workplace Toolkit: Guidance and Resources for Private and Public Sector Employers. 2023. [www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/RRW-hub/Toolkit](http://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/RRW-hub/Toolkit)

4 National Recovery Friendly Workplace Institute RFW Definition and National Certification Standards. <https://rfwinstitute.org/certification/>

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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