



Recovery Friendly Workplace  
(401) 462-1886

Helping employers respond substance use and mental health conditions in the Rhode Island workforce.



# RECOVERY FRIENDLY WORKPLACE RI EMPLOYER GUIDE



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## **ELEVATING YOUR WORKPLACE: A DYNAMIC GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS ON CULTIVATING RECOVERY-INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS**

CONGRATULATIONS ON TAKING THE TRANSFORMATIVE LEAP TOWARDS CULTIVATING A WORKPLACE THAT RADIATES INCLUSIVITY AND ACTIVELY SUPPORTS THOSE ON THE JOURNEY TO RECOVERY! AT RECOVERY FRIENDLY WORKPLACE RI, WE BELIEVE THAT CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT THAT EMBRACES EVERYONE'S UNIQUE PATH IS NOT JUST A CHOICE BUT A POWERFUL COMMITMENT TO THE WELL-BEING OF YOUR ENTIRE TEAM.

THIS GUIDE IS YOUR COMPASS, POINTING EMPLOYERS TOWARDS THE DYNAMIC STRATEGIES NEEDED TO FOSTER A CULTURE OF UNDERSTANDING AND UNWAVERING SUPPORT WITHIN YOUR ORGANIZATION. LET'S EXPLORE HOW EMPLOYERS CAN RESHAPE THE NARRATIVE OF THEIR WORKPLACE, ENSURING IT NOT ONLY ACCOMMODATES BUT AMPLIFIES THE STRENGTHS OF INDIVIDUALS IN RECOVERY FROM SUBSTANCE MISUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES AS WELL AS FRIENDS AND FAMILY THAT MAY BE AFFECTED.

### **EMPOWERING EMPLOYERS FOR IMPACTFUL CHANGE**

BECOMING A RECOVERY-INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE IS A DECLARATION OF CHANGE, AN ASSERTION OF EMPOWERMENT AND INCLUSIVITY. THIS GUIDE IS YOUR PLAYBOOK, EMPOWERING EMPLOYERS TO LEAD THE CHARGE IN ESTABLISHING A WORKPLACE CULTURE THAT NOT ONLY ACCEPTS BUT CELEBRATES THE RESILIENCE AND UNIQUE CONTRIBUTIONS OF EVERY TEAM MEMBER, ESPECIALLY THOSE IN RECOVERY AND THEIR FRIENDS AND FAMILY AFFECTED BY SUBSTANCE MISUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES.

### **CHARTING THE COURSE TO UNYIELDING SUPPORT: YOUR COMPREHENSIVE RESOURCE FOR ACTIONABLE SOLUTIONS**

THIS GUIDE IS YOUR COMPREHENSIVE TOOLKIT FOR EFFECTING POSITIVE CHANGE. IT UNFOLDS A PLETHORA OF RESOURCES AND ACTIONABLE STRATEGIES, ENABLING EMPLOYERS TO PROACTIVELY SUPPORT INDIVIDUALS IN RECOVERY AND THEIR FRIENDS AND FAMILY AFFECTED BY SUBSTANCE MISUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES. FROM FOSTERING DEEP UNDERSTANDING TO IMPLEMENTING POLICIES THAT RESONATE WITH INCLUSIVITY, DISCOVER A MYRIAD OF APPROACHES TO TRANSFORM YOUR WORKPLACE INTO A HAVEN OF ACCEPTANCE AND ENCOURAGEMENT.

THANK YOU FOR EMBARKING ON THIS EMPOWERING JOURNEY. BY EMBRACING THE INSIGHTS WITHIN THIS GUIDE, YOU ARE NOT JUST CREATING A RECOVERY-INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE; YOU ARE PIONEERING A CULTURAL SHIFT TOWARDS UNPARALLELED COMPASSION, STRENGTH, AND COLLECTIVE TRIUMPH.

WELCOME TO AN ERA WHERE EMPLOYERS ARE ARCHITECTS OF WORKPLACES THAT STAND AS VIBRANT SYMBOLS OF DIVERSITY, SUPPORT, AND SHARED SUCCESS.



**In the ocean state, substance misuse costs account for more than \$1.41 billion annually. A majority of that cost (\$935 million) is incurred by businesses due to lost productivity and absenteeism**

Governor Dan McKee wants to be part of the solution. Rhode Island's "Recovery Friendly Workplace" (RFW) Initiative challenges employers to be part of the solution and employers workplaces to provide support for employees in recovery and all those impacted by substance misuse challenges as well as mental health issues.



Positive outcomes realized by participating workplaces include:

- Increased Productivity
- Less Absenteeism/Turnover
- Greater Employee Satisfaction
- Community Connection
- Increased Morale
- Supportive Culture
- Improved Communication





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## How can I guide my business or organization to embrace a recovery-friendly approach?

Getting Started on Becoming A Recovery Friendly Workplace starts with the completion of these next steps

- ✓ Complete letter of interest at [RecoveryFriendlyRI.com](http://RecoveryFriendlyRI.com)
- ✓ Meet with a Recovery Friendly Advisor for a brief introduction, to discuss goals, and address initial questions.
- ✓ Attend an hour-long orientation led by a Recovery Friendly Advisor. All supervisors, managers, human resources leaders and board members are encouraged to attend.
- ✓ Create and distribute a Recovery Friendly Workplace declaration. We recommend that this declaration be shared at least annually with all current employees, including any part-time or contract staff and during onboarding with all new hires.
- ✓ Receive your letter from the Governor of Rhode Island declaring you a Recovery Friendly Workplace!





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## Recovery Friendly Workplace Practices

Transforming your organization into a recovery-friendly environment extends well beyond the outlined five steps. It involves the genuine embodiment and application of practices that not only offer support to individuals in the recovery community but also entails a willingness to experiment with various approaches to identify what genuinely resonates with your company. Keep in mind that every workplace is unique, shaped by factors such as workforce size, industry, and geographical location. Uncover the strategies that align with your organizational dynamics by exploring the actionable items outlined below.



# POLICY

## Actions To Consider

- Develop a substance misuse policy.
- Ensure job security.
- Provide paid sick leave and/or offer flex time for staff who need to engage in treatment or therapy for SUD or mental health conditions.
- Include expectations around creating an inclusive environment at work-related events where alcohol may commonly be present (happy hour, office parties, dinner, etc.).
- Develop a substance misuse agreement.
- Include a list of local resources such as BHLink ([bhlink.org](http://bhlink.org), 401-414-LINK), RI Recovery Hotline 401-942-STOP, United Way 211. Visit [RecoveryFriendlyRI.com/support-resources](http://RecoveryFriendlyRI.com/support-resources) for more information.
- Invite employees to provide feedback on existing policies and procedures as they relate to recovery in the workplace.
- Evaluate and reduce the availability of substances during the workday, as well as workplace norms and rituals that support substance use.
- Recognize employee recovery accomplishments/achievements. □ Reduce workplace hazards that contribute to musculoskeletal pain and injury.
- Adopt the Total Worker Health (TWH) perspective, recommended by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. TWH is defined as “policies, programs, and practices that integrate protection from work-related safety and health hazards with promotion of injury and illness prevention efforts to advance worker well-being.





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## HIRING

**This initiative centers around intentionally working with people in recovery. Often, there are organizational barriers to hiring people in recovery due to criminal history.**

□ Consider actively seeking to employ individuals in recovery and eliminating interview or hiring practices that prohibit individuals with substance misuse related experiences or criminal history from being considered. The San Francisco Fair Chance Ordinance is a model for employers to consider.

→ Employers with open job opportunities will have their career site featured on [RecoveryFriendlyRI.com/workplaces](http://RecoveryFriendlyRI.com/workplaces).

□ Consider including your status as a recovery friendly employer into job descriptions and on your career/employment website, similar to an Equal Opportunity Employment statement. Your recovery friendly declaration can decrease stigma by encouraging people to be open about their recovery.

□ Contract outsourced services and partner with organizations/businesses that also support recovery friendly workplace policies and hiring practices.

□ During onboarding for new employees, include declaration and an overview on your recovery friendly workplace initiative and substance related resources available for employee and family members if applicable.





## Services

- Consider providing a peer recovery coach for employees to access.
- Support programs utilizing co-workers or peers, with appropriate training, may offer relevant and confidential support through the sharing of information, referrals, advocacy, and accountability.
- Offer updated monthly, quarterly or annual resource guides for staff that include treatment support options for employees and their family members who may be struggling with substance misuse.
- Consider offering an EAP service to your staff (including part-time, seasonal and per diem). Many affordable options are available, of which offer an abundance of services beyond mental health and substance misuse. Ex: Financial coaching

## Healthcare

- Offer employees health insurance that covers adequate mental health/SUD treatment.
- If you are unable to offer insurance, ensure that each employee and/or contractor is aware of their options to obtain healthcare on their own (such as [healthsourceri.com/](http://healthsourceri.com/)).
- Promote a culture of wellbeing through the adoption of services or initiatives that promote overall employee wellbeing.





## Education

- Place the Recovery Friendly Workplace decal in high visibility areas of your physical location(s).
- Provide employees with access to Shatterproof's Just Five lessons (speak to your RFW Advisor for more information and access instructions).
- Provide additional in-person or virtual training to employees, this could include topics such as:
  - What is and How to Use Narcan
  - ◆ CDC: Using Naloxone in the Workplace to Reverse Opioid Overdose Factsheet
    - How to Respond to an Overdose
    - Treatment Overview and Explanation of Community Resources → What is Substance Use Disorder (SUD)
    - Words Matter
  - ◆ Anti-Stigma training is available and promotes compassionate communication through evidence based practices to address stigma against people in active addiction and long term recovery.
    - Other, there is an endless array of topics surrounding addiction and recovery as well as recovery in the workplace. We are happy to customize training for your organization.
  - Participate in Kim Lamontagne's "The 4 Pillars of Creating and Sustaining a Mentally Healthy Workplace Culture" Leadership Training. More information on n on the training and a discount for RFW's available here: <https://kimlamontagne.net/rfw-ri>





## Education

- Keep Narcan and/or Naloxboxes in easily accessible locations at your organization.
  - Any organization or individual (including your employees) can receive free Narcan and other services delivered directly to them by RIDOH, simply fill out the Get Naloxone form at [preventoverdoseri.org](http://preventoverdoseri.org).
- Provide specific training or tips to managers on how to use the declaration as a conversation starter.
- Invite EAP or other providers to do an overview of services or provide time for employees to ask questions. □ Adopt language that reflects a person first, pro-health perspective and is consistent with the way physical health conditions are described (e.g., “person with substance use disorder”).

## Community

Connect with local recovery community organizations. Learn and promote when meetings or events occur with your employees.

- Provide support (financial/paid time off) for employees to participate in local prevention events.
  - This allows the employee to get involved with THEIR local community.
  - Some employers have allowed staff to join local prevention coalitions as part of their workday.
- Connect and engage with Recovery Friendly Workplace RI on social media.





## Racial, Equity & Inclusion

The following steps, adapted from The Race Equity and Inclusion Action Guide can help your organization identify steps to create equitable opportunities for your employees and the populations served.

- Step 1: Establish an understanding of race equity and inclusion principles.
- Step 2: Engage affected populations and stakeholders.
- Step 3: Gather and analyze disaggregated data.
- Step 4: Conduct systems analysis of root causes of inequities.
- Step 5: Identify strategies and target resources to address root causes of inequities.
- Step 6: Conduct race equity impact assessment for all policies and decision making.
- Step 7: Continuously evaluate effectiveness and adapt strategies.





## Questions To Consider

- The following questions, adapted from Reality Check, can help your organization assess the next steps to take towards becoming a Recovery Friendly Workplace.
- Do you have a substance misuse policy & when was it last updated?
- What gaps in your policies & procedures are preventing employees from accessing help?
- What resources do you currently offer employees seeking help for substance misuse?
- What resources are available locally?
- What is the workplace culture around individuals in recovery and/ or substance misuse?
- How do employees feel about individuals struggling with substance use?
- Do supervisors & employees know what to do if there is a substance misuse concern?
- Has your organization been impacted by substance misuse in the past? How was the situation handled and what could be improved?
- Are supervisors and employees educated on substance use and its impacts on personal, home & work life?
- What ideas do your employees have to support individuals in recovery or needing help with substance misuse?





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## **Meet Your Recovery Friendly Team**

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## Resources

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