



# RECOVERY FRIENDLY WORKPLACE MISSOURI

BUILDING A STRONGER  
WORKFORCE IN MISSOURI

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# Welcome

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about what becoming a Recovery Friendly Workplace (RFW) entails and the benefits to employers, employees, and communities.

In this toolkit, you'll find information on creating a supportive workplace, conducive to fostering employee happiness, productivity, and retention.

You'll learn about Substance Use Disorders (SUDs), suggestions for cultivating a work culture that reduces stigma surrounding SUDs, and supports individuals to undergo recovery, as well as those who are currently in recovery.

You'll learn some suggested practices and receive resources for creating a workplace culture that encourages and empowers employees to be the best versions of themselves both in and outside of the workplace. This toolkit is meant to be an introduction, not a comprehensive resource, and additional materials and support opportunities will be listed in the resources section at the end.

Additionally, RFW is not a magic button to solve all of your employee hiring and retention needs, but rather an ongoing process to help with these, among other, common employer challenges.

*Our concerted efforts to develop a RFW model in the state will improve recruitment and retention of employees and slow the growing chasm that substance use disorder has caused in our labor force.*

**-Daniel Mehan, MO Chamber President/ CEO**

# Substance Use Disorder (SUD)

*"Substance use disorder (SUD) is a complex condition in which there is uncontrolled use of a substance despite harmful consequence. People with SUD have an intense focus on using a certain substance(s) such as alcohol, tobacco, or illicit drugs, to the point where the person's ability to function in day to day life becomes impaired. People keep using the substance even when they know it is causing or will cause problems. The most severe SUDs are sometimes called addictions."* (American Psychological Association [APA], n.d.)

Addiction is a disease, like any other chronic health condition, and should be treated as such. According to research, genetics is a contributing factor to an individual developing an addiction approximately 50% of the time (Murphy & Shafir, 2022).

SUD is more likely to affect individuals with other mental health disorders– an estimated 1 in 5 Americans (National Institute of Mental Health [NIH], 2022).

Signs of SUD include changes in weight, speech, and eyes, appetite or motivation at work, changes in attitude, unexplained periods of hyperactivity, paranoia, accidents, among other things. Some signs of SUD can be explained by other life issues or conditions like depression, so don't make assumptions or accuse individuals.

To learn more about how to recognize and help with SUDs, view the Shatterproof Just 5 videos (provided in employer trainings, as well as on the resource table).

# SUD

The **Substance Use and Mental Health Services Administration** (SUMHSA) says:

***“ Substance use disorders occur when the recurrent use of alcohol and/or drugs causes clinically significant impairment, including health problems, disability, and failure to meet major responsibilities at work, school, or home.” (Lapiri & Van Horn, 2017)***

In 2020, 71% of surveyed Missouri employers reported suffering consequences as a result of substance misuse.

With a reported 70% of individuals with SUD in the workforce, employers need help supporting employees through and after recovery.

*“Some of our strongest team members are recovering folks... They're willing to make the extra effort. They move up to higher positions quickly because they are so willing to go the extra mile.”*

**-Mark Maloney, Buddeez management**



The above image is from a 2021 study conducted by the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

# Why Become an RFW?

*"Each year, thousands of Missourians leave the workforce due to SUD and many never return." -Daniel Mehan, MO Chamber President/CEO*

A 2016 economic impact report estimated addiction costs Missourians \$12.6 billion per year (Missouri Hospital Association [MHA], 2018).

It's estimated an employee with an untreated SUD costs their company on average \$8817 more per year than an employee who does not have an SUD. Supporting an individual through recovery could save a company approximately \$8500 per individual per year (National Opinion Research Center [NORC], n.d).

Individuals are much more likely to go to and complete a recovery program if recommended by an employer than by family or friends (NCOR, n.d.). Employment is a vital part of the recovery process for individuals receiving treatment.

To view the cost of SUD in a particular industry, use the tool in the website below:

<https://www.nsc.org/forms/substance-use-employer-calculator>

## **Employer Benefits:**

- Improved Health and Wellness
- Reduced Absenteeism
- Safe, Positive Workplace Culture
- Employee Retention
- Productivity and Profitability
- Employee Loyalty

## **Employee Benefits:**

- Improved Health and Wellness
- Improved Communication
- Motivation to Succeed
- Reduced Stigma
- Supportive, Safe Environment
- Job Satisfaction

*"They just end up being better employees because they have a different outlook on life."*

**-Tim Dobbelare, Tower Rock Stone Management**

# What does it mean to be an RFW?

Becoming an RFW is more than just changing a few policies. It requires a commitment to a work culture that supports the mental and physical health needs of all employees. Individuals with untreated chronic conditions have less energy to devote to being productive team members and employees. Mental illness is a risk factor for developing an SUD (National Institute on Drug Abuse [NIDA], 2020). Engaging in regular physical activity, mindfulness practices, and therapy supports a healthy body and mind and can help in managing chronic mental and physical illnesses (National Institute of Mental Health [NIMH], 2021).

**Encouraging employees to make healthy choices is better for everyone!** The goal is to ensure your employees are healthy inside and out. When they feel comfortable coming to you with their needs you are able to create an open chain of communication and understanding. This allows employees to express their humanness and vulnerabilities (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA], 2022). Fostering open communication between employers and employees helps achieve their goals.

## What RFW isn't:

A cure-all for your hiring and retention needs  
A checklist to "make it through and forget about it"

## What RFW is:

A culture shift to support ALL employees and encourage them along their wellness journeys  
An ongoing commitment for employers and employees

*"If I can't talk about it (at work and be honest), I get very drawn into myself and very depressed and start isolating. I know these are warning signs of relapse for me.*

**-Stephanie Brooks, person in recovery**

# RFW Designation Process

**Begin the designation process to becoming Recovery Friendly by submitting a request on our website below!**

- Self-paced online trainings**
- Employer, employee, and peer resources**
- Provide online education and support to employers at no cost (thanks to grant funds!)**

## **Getting Started: Easy Steps for Businesses**

- **Assess workplace culture** (policies, practices, employee perceptions)
- **Communicate RFW commitment** to all staff
- **Identify community resources** and share with employees and their families (bulletin boards, websites)
- **Connect and develop relationships** with local public health/prevention and recovery organizations
- **Have a plan** in place for how to respond to employee concerns
- **Offer trainings** to increase knowledge and awareness
- **Create an RFW Committee**

**Visit [recoveryfriendlymo.com](https://recoveryfriendlymo.com) to begin!**



*"We...encourage them to make all of their meetings and all of their court times. Some of them need to go to physicians. We support that...You treat everyone the same and with respect."*

**- Mark Maloney, Buddeez management**



# Employer Suggestions

## Employee Assistance Program

Offering an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) may support and encourage individuals in recovery. EAP is a resource for employees and their families seeking help for chronic health conditions, including SUD behavioral health and mental health struggles. Providing an EAP can lead to a larger return on investment by increasing employees' productivity and job satisfaction (Harris, 2020). Because mental health conditions can perpetuate SUDs, treatment is recommended for any mental health conditions along with any SUDs.

### EAP Cost Estimate:

<https://icare-aware.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Trend-Report-EAPs-Expand-Rapidly-.pdf>

## Peer Support Groups

Employees may worry about the potential consequences associated with utilizing EAPs. Some businesses report that peer support groups are helpful additions to EAP services. Research suggests peer support groups can be an effective way to support employees in the workplace. Visit our resource page linked on the website to find out more!



Recovery Friendly Workplace  
MISSOURI

## LANGUAGE MATTERS

Language is powerful, especially when talking about addictions, because stigmatizing language perpetuates negative perceptions.

Use "Person first" language that focuses on the person, not the disorder.

### When Discussing Addictions...

#### SAY THIS

#### NOT THAT

person with a substance use disorder	addict, junkie, druggie
person living in recovery	ex-addict
person living with an addiction	battling/suffering from an addiction
person experiencing drug dependence	addicted, has a drug habit
recurrence of use	relapse
person who has stopped using drugs	clean, sober, drug-free
No longer using drugs	stayed clean
positive/negative drug screen	dirty/clean drug screen

Treating all individuals with respect and dignity goes a long way. Our words matter. Research shows, using "person-first" language greatly reduces stigma associated with SUD.

*"An employee relapsed while they worked here and... we wrapped supports around this individual through our employee assistance program and FMLA...and the results in the investment that we made in this employee has returned to us seven-fold."*

**-Mehgan Kensel**

# Employer Suggestions

## Suggestions from employee/ employer interviews:

- Partner with a local behavioral health or recovery center/group to support the health and well-being of employees.
- Encourage peer support in the workplace with meetings formed and hosted by employees in recovery. Offer a physical space and time during work days for employees to attend.
  - Host employee gatherings in a space free of substances like alcohol.
  - Offer employee gatherings to celebrate sobriety milestones.
- Ask employees how you can support them in their journeys to recovery.

*"You have to give people a venue to discuss the issue that they're having and being able to talk about it gives the opportunity to help."*

*-Mark Maloney, Buddeez management*

## Guidelines for Best Practice from Current RFWs

1. Provide non-disciplinary assistance for addiction recovery.
2. Offer time off for employees to attend meetings to help maintain their recovery.
3. Ensure policies clearly outline employee leave policies for positive drug and/or alcohol screens. Will employees be paid for time off?
4. Ensure policies have clear directives for return to work procedures. Will employees be required to pass a drug screen before returning? Who pays for any future screens?  
**Example:** Upon a positive drug screen, the employee must provide documentation that they are seeking treatment and a negative screen must be shown before returning to work. It's clearly written in the policy that unannounced future drug screens will occur upon return to work.
5. Ensure policies have outlined procedure for multiple offenses.
6. When forming policies, take into account the health of the individual.
7. Include educational opportunities for all employees about SUD.

# Employer Programs: Federal Bonding Program

## What is it the Federal Bonding Program and what does it cover?

- An insurance policy that encourages employers to hire individuals with criminal history by protecting employers against fraud and dishonesty.
- The bond is free for both employee and employer and is issued as soon as the employee has a job offer with a start date.
- Three \$5,000 bonds can be taken out per employee per 6-month period. Each bond can be renewed once for 6 more months for a total of 5 bonds or \$25,000 per individual.

What the Federal Bond Program DOES protect against	What the Federal Bond Program DOES NOT protect against
Theft	Liability with workplace injuries, accidents
Larceny	Liability due to poor workmanship
Embezzlement	Self-employed
Forgery	

- Usually issued for new employees, but can be used for current employees if the employer plans to terminate employment because they've learned of a criminal background.
- If the employee's background prevents their promotion because of a criminal background, a bond can be issued in order to enable the promotion.

**-Available for any job, any employer, in any state, and any industry, and for full- or part-time work.**

**-No additional paperwork is needed other than normal hiring paperwork. If the employee meets the criteria, the employer will be given coverage.**

The Federal Bond Program is used in over 55, 000 jobs in various industries.  
Losses account for less than 1% of bonds issued.

### **Potentially high-risk individuals must meet one or more of the criteria:**

- Have little or no work history
- Receive public assistance
- Have bad credit
- Have declared bankruptcy
- Cannot secure insurance without insurance coverage
- Have former conviction record, including individuals recovering from an Opioid Use Disorder or Substance Use Disorder

# Employer Programs: Work Opportunity Tax Credit

## What is the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) and what does it do?

Employers hiring individuals who face barriers to employment can realize a significant savings in their federal tax liability by taking advantage of the Missouri Work Opportunity Tax Credit.

- Allows for hiring of groups with partial salary coverage for up to the first 2 years of employment.
  - Amounts vary based on group\*, year in program.
  - May be claimed by any private or for-profit business.
- Any qualified tax-exempt organizations can participate if they hire qualified veterans.
- There is no limit on the number of new hires or amount of credit you can claim per year.

\*For groups, check website at bottom of page.

Example: Long-term Family Assistance Recipient

- Up to 2 years of eligibility
- \$9,000 for each TANF recipient
- Employee must work for 400 hours for employer to get entire tax credit
  - Year 1: 40% of first \$10,000 in earned wages for a max of \$4,000
  - Year 2: 50% of of first \$10,000 in earned wages for a max of \$5,000

## **FBP and WOTC benefits employees, employers, and communities:**

- Data shows individuals in employment are two times less likely to return to incarceration within 2 years when compared to their unemployed counterparts.
- Allow for individuals with conviction records, including a history of OUD and SUD, to get back into the workforce through insurance for employers.

[Learn more about the Federal Bonding Program or Work Opportunity Tax Credit](#)

# Resources



**It's not just us! Check out our website to see our Missouri partners, other states participating in RFWs, and additional resources including monthly blog posts, and more!**

[recoveryfriendlymo.com](https://recoveryfriendlymo.com)

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## Recovery Friendly Workplace Partners



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