

National Recovery Friendly Workplace Institute

<https://rfwinstitute.org/>

Connect Appalachia
CREC - July 23, 2026



Presented by:



Level-Setting and Laying the Groundwork

What exactly is "Recovery
Friendly Workplace" & why
does it matter?



Definition:

Recovery Friendly Workplace

...is a place of work in which the employer, in collaboration with employees, establishes, maintains, and continually enhances policies, practices, and a culture and work environment that are supportive of current and prospective employees in recovery from, or otherwise affected by, substance use disorders.



Need for Recovery Friendly Workplaces

People spend a bulk of their time **at work**

14 million U.S. employees are in long-term recovery

26.9 million U.S. employees have an SUD (2021)

Two-thirds of U.S. households are affected by substance use disorder (SUD)

SUD costs employers **\$81 billion annually**

RFW does **not** bring the problem to the workplace, it brings the **solution** to a problem that already exists.

Sources:

KFF Tracking Poll July 2023: Substance Use Crisis And Accessing Treatment
U.S. Department of Labor Recovery [Friendly] Workplace Toolkit
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence

Productivity

Employee health

Employee satisfaction, morale, & loyalty

Talent attraction & retention

Community connection

Customer loyalty

IMPROVED

Benefits of being a Recovery Friendly Workplace

Absenteeism & presenteeism

Workplace injuries & incidents

Health care, disability, & workers'
compensation expenses

Turnover & related costs

Harm to employees, families, &
communities

DECREASED

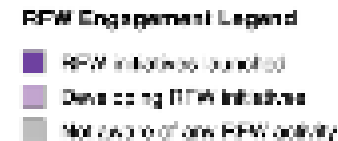
Background & History

How did the Recovery
Friendly Workplace
movement start and grow?



Map provided by the [National Recovery Friendly Workplace Institute](#)

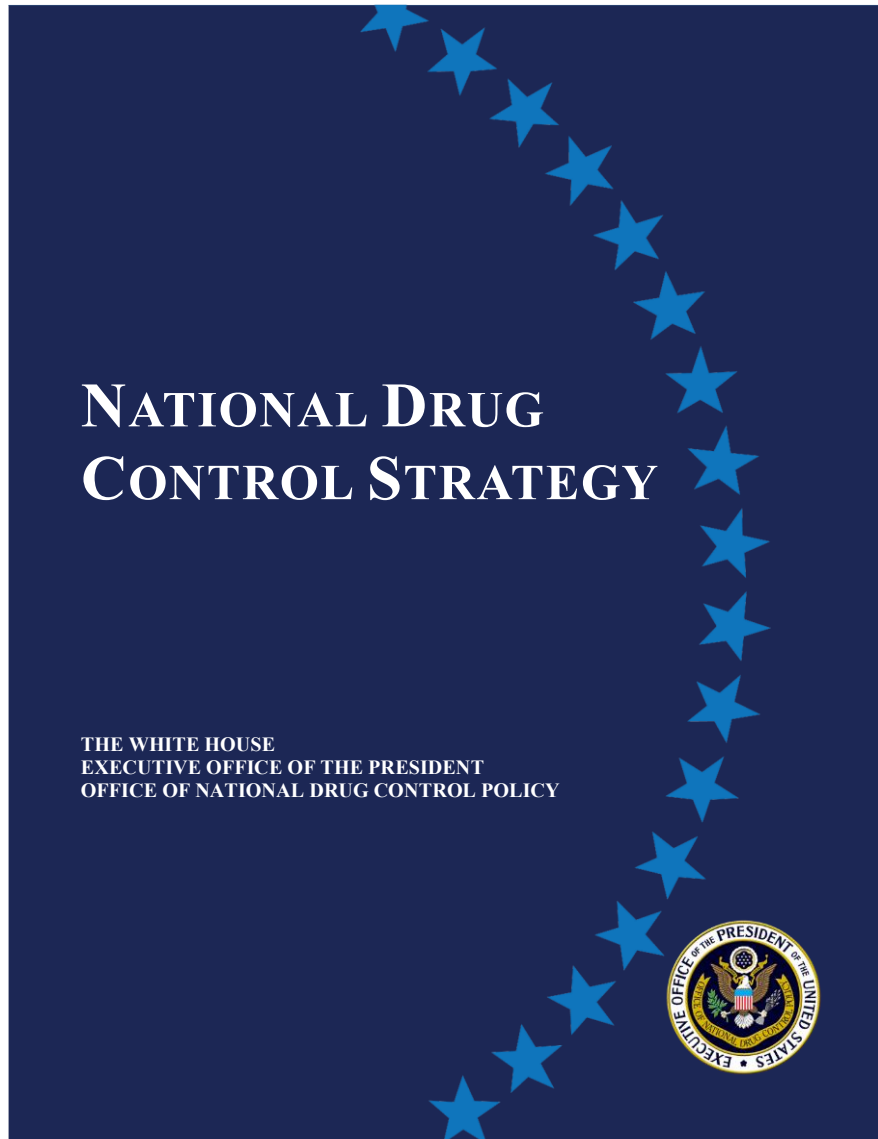
Map provided by the [National Recovery Friendly Workplace Institute](#)



Note: This map was last updated July 2026 and reflects RFW activity that the Institute is aware of and there may be changes since it was last updated. This is not an explicit endorsement of these initiatives, but rather serves to show the national growth of RFW activity. Hyperlinks will direct you to that state's program website or to the point of contact working on establishing a program. Some highlighted states operate local and regional programs, not statewide. Please email info@rfwinst.org with any inquiries or updates.

DRAFT – this map is in progress with information and links being confirmed; the final version will be published to the Institute website





[Link](#)

C. Expand employment opportunities and promote Recovery-Ready Workplace policies.

(Agencies Involved: Commerce; DOL/ETA, ODEP; EEOC; HHS/ASPE, CDC, SAMHSA; OPM; VA/VHA)

Employment is a critically important part of the recovery journey for many and is also recognized as a key form of recovery capital.³⁰⁸ Indeed, employment not only offers stabilizing supports to the individual and the larger community, but also reduces recidivism among people involved in the criminal justice system thereby enhancing public safety. However, a history of substance use or related criminal justice system involvement constitutes a significant barrier to meaningful employment for the individual. A crucial form of recovery capital, employment is associated with enhanced rehabilitative outcomes for the individual and public safety outcomes for the greater community.

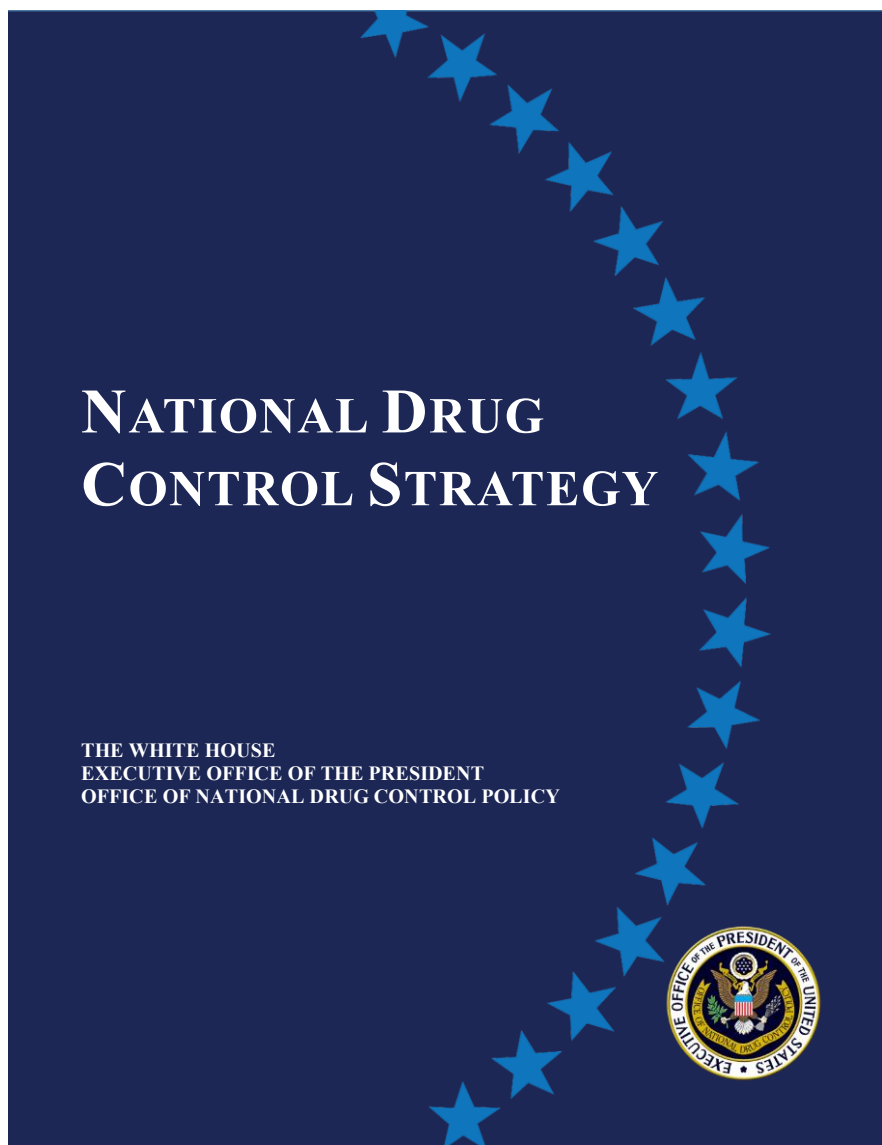
ONDCP should contribute to and coordinate with the Administration's existing interagency process to expand employment opportunities for formerly incarcerated persons so that it may share its expertise on how to support individuals in recovery. ONDCP should also continue to co-lead a working group focused on recovery-ready workplace policies, such as those detailed through CDC/National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health's (NIOSH) Workplace Supported Recovery initiative and New Hampshire's Recovery-Friendly Workplace initiative, which was launched with funding from the Department of Labor and has been adopted by a number of states. Participants in that working group include SAMHSA, the Departments of Commerce, the Department of Labor, NIOSH, and the VA. This existing interagency process works to develop and implement plans for establishing, expanding, and enhancing employment-related initiatives for people in recovery and people with active SUD, including through broader adoption of approaches such as the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) supported employment model. In addition, with support from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), the Equal Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the Department of Commerce, the Chief Human Capital Officers Council (CHCOC), and selected other agencies, it will explore opportunities to promote the adoption of recovery-ready workplace policies within the federal government. ONDCP should also apply these insights to the Administration's interagency process on expanding employment opportunities for formerly incarcerated persons.

Recognizing that the majority of Americans with SUD are employed,³⁰⁹ it is essential that more employers adopt recovery-ready workplace policies to prevent substance use in the workforce, encourage help seeking by employees with SUD, provide needed accommodations and workplace supports for those in treatment and recovery, and build recovery-supportive workplace cultures—all of which enhance public health and public safety.

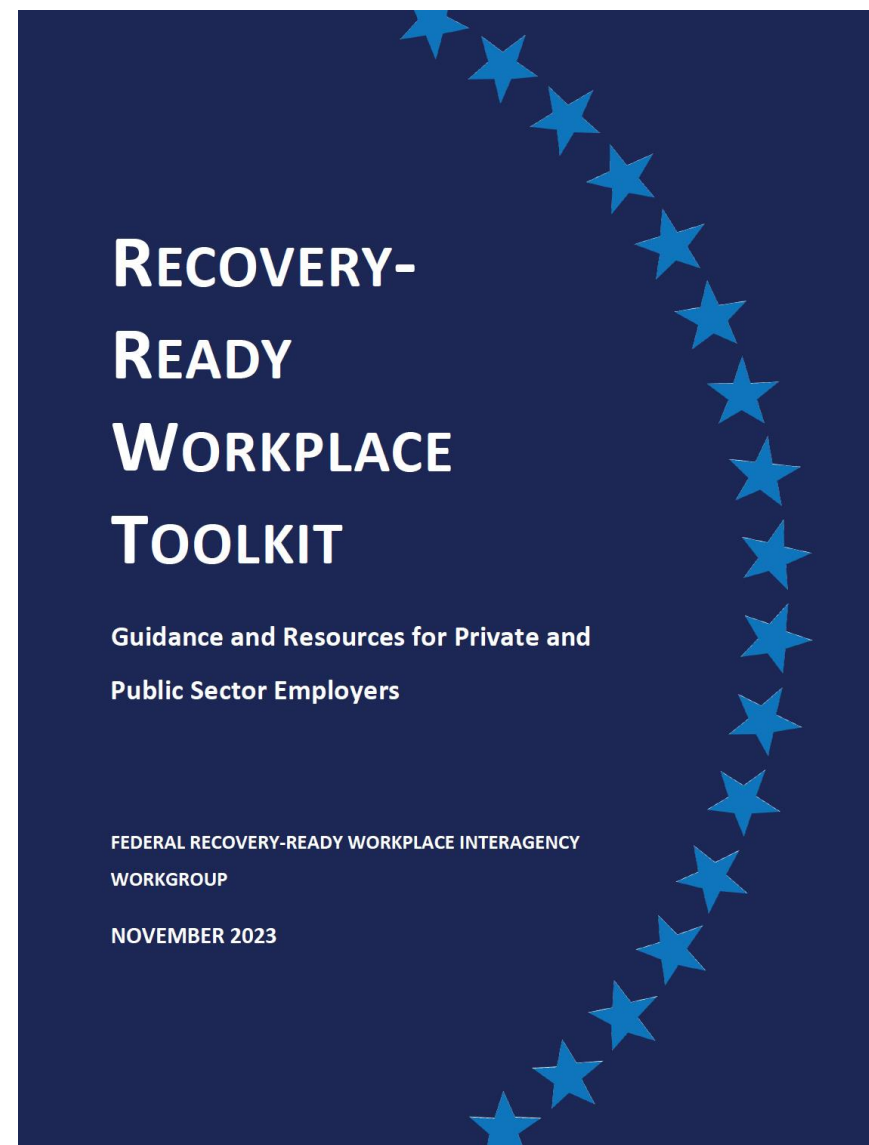
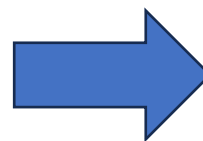
To improve outcomes over the long-term, we must recommit to shifting the focus of drug policy from punishment and social exclusion to healing and community reintegration. That is how we will begin to turn the tide, building recovery-ready communities that can effectively respond to and heal from drug use, addiction, and overdose.

D. Reduce legal, regulatory, policy, and practice barriers to recovery.

(Agencies Involved: DOL/ETA, ODEP; DOJ/DEA, OJP; HHS/ASPE, CMS, IHS, OASH, SAMHSA; HUD; VA/VHA)



[Link](#)



[Link](#)

Note: the language recovery friendly and recovery ready are viewed as synonymous, as noted in Toolkit



NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL STRATEGY

2026

[Link to Strategy](#)

Objective 7.2: Expand recovery-friendly workplaces

Measure 7.2.1: Increase the number of nationally-certified recovery-ready workplaces.

Data Source: [National Recovery Friendly Workplace Institute](#)

Measure Description: National Recovery Friendly Workplace Certification recognizes employers who are committed to supporting employees in recovery from substance use disorders and fostering a healthy workplace culture. This measure includes all nationally-certified recovery-friendly workplaces.

Historical Trends: National Recovery Friendly Workplace Certification did not begin until 2024, therefore there are no historical data.

2024 Baseline: 15 new workplaces

Targets: 33 new workplaces in 2026; 60 new workplaces in 2029

Target Setting Approach: Subject Matter Expertise

Rationale: This is a new program that did not exist until 2024. Given that this is a new program, we are proposing a target of 60 new nationally-certified recovery-ready workplaces in 2029 to encourage broad adoption across the private sector.

GRI & National RFW Institute

Who are they & what do
they do?



For over 20 years...



**GLOBAL RECOVERY
INITIATIVES FOUNDATION**

<https://globalrecoveryinitiatives.org/>



Advances philanthropy and government investment to grow programs to sustain recovery for people with SUD



Convenes experts and people with lived experience in recovery to identify gaps in research and programs



Consistently engages public, private, and pop culture to fill gaps in the field through recovery initiatives such as:

- Establishing one of the 1st recovery high schools
- Partnering with AmeriCorps to create Recovery Corps
- Launching Young People in Recovery
- Convening 2 national Recovery Research Summits
- Establishing the National Recovery Friendly Workplace Institute

National Recovery Friendly Workplace Institute

<https://rfwinstitute.org/>



Mission

To engage employers in creating **certified** Recovery Friendly Workplaces



Vision

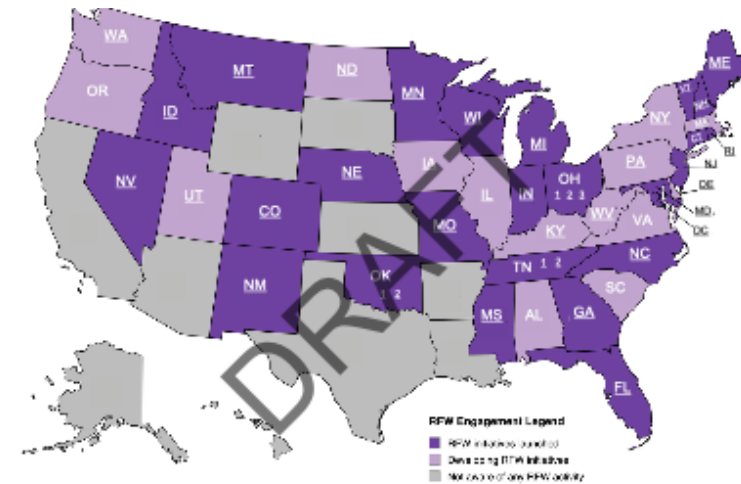
A future in which employers are equipped knowledge, tools, resources, procedures, policies, and benefits to ensure employees with Substance Use Disorder and mental health conditions have access to treatment and recovery services at parity with all other chronic health conditions



Achieving a Nation of Recovery Friendly Workplaces through...



National Certification



State Initiatives

National RFW Certification

What is national certification & how does an employer obtain it?



Pillars of National RFW Certification

[Link to Full Certification Document](#)



RFW Pillars, Policies, and Practices



Culture

- RFW Statement/Policy
- Resource Group
- Substance-Free Options
- Highly Placed Ally
- Charitable Support

Benefits

- Credible Medical Guidelines
- No-Cost Assistance
- Reliable Health Insurance
- Resource List

Hiring, Retention, & Advancement

- Fair Chance Hiring
- Contingent or Return to Work Agreement
- Proactive Recruitment
- Flexible Work

Education & Awareness

- Employee Awareness
- SUD and Recovery Education
- Naloxone Access

Not an all-encompassing list, but rather places to start

[Link to Full Certification Document](#)

RFW Certification Application Process

Interest Form

Orientation

Internal
Review

Online
Submission

Staff Review

GRI Board
Approval

Certification
Notification

Who You Are Joining!

What other employers and
leaders are involved?





Dana Piscopo, CPRC, CFAA,
CSRC, CMHFA



Jordan Foster
HRCI, Director of Marketing and
Community Engagement, Co-Chair

Corporate Council

[Link to Bios](#)



David Balinski
Chief Executive Officer, Wire
Health, Chief Executive Officer



Melissa Cheng, MD, MOH,
MHS, FACOEM
CoMagine Health, Clinical
Medical Director



Travis LaHaye
Hypertherm Associates, HR
Business Partner II



Samantha Lewandowski,
MS
Recovery Friendly Workplace NH,
Senior Director



Jo McGuire, CSAPA
National Drug and Alcohol
Screening Assoc, Executive
Director



Kimberly McRoy
ThermoKool, Human Resources
Director



Cheryl Brown Merriwether
MHR, SHRM-SCP, SPHR,
CM, CRSS, CPRC
NET Institute Center for
Addiction & Recovery, Education
Executive Director



Haley Moyers
Associated Builders and
Contractors, Director, Workforce
Programs and Initiatives



Domenica Personti MS,
LCDP, CADC
Impact Life, Chief Executive
Officer



Stephanie Styles
The Gorilla Glue Company, Sr.
Human Resources Generalist



DeAnna Thomas
Associated Builders and
Contractors, Vice President of
Human Resources

Nationally Certified RFWs

[Link to View Online](#)

ORACLE®



IOWA

Eliot



Premise Health.



Comagine Health

KIMRAY INC.®

Vermont Association for
Mental Health &
Addiction Recovery



IMPACT
LIFE

FAVOR
UP STATE
COMPASSION • HOPE • RECOVERY



ForsMarsh



List of Nationally-Certified RFWs

[Link to View Online](#)



Associated Builders and Contractors – 90

Association of Flight Attendants-CWA – 50,000

Comagine Health – 464

Eliot Community Human Services – 2,000

FAVOR Upstate – 33

Fors Marsh – 428

Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts – 7

Georgia Council for Recovery – 47

GoMo Health – 47

The Gorilla Glue Company – 848

Human Resources Certification Institute – 53

Hypertherm Associates – 1,500

ICARE Aware – 6

Impact Life – 56

Kimray, Inc. – 706

National Drug and Alcohol Screening Association – 4

National Safety Council – 250

Olympia Hospitality – 1,891

Oracle - 85,000

Premise Health – 6,327

Recovery Jobs – 6

Shaw Industries – 17,400

Sobrynth – 10

State of Minnesota – 40,000

Thermo-Kool – 155

University of Iowa – 14,000

Utah Support Advocates for Recovery Awareness - 43

Vermont Association for Mental Health and Addiction Recovery

Wire Health – 7

~221,000+

Employees working for a Nationally Certified Recovery Friendly Workplace

A few stories



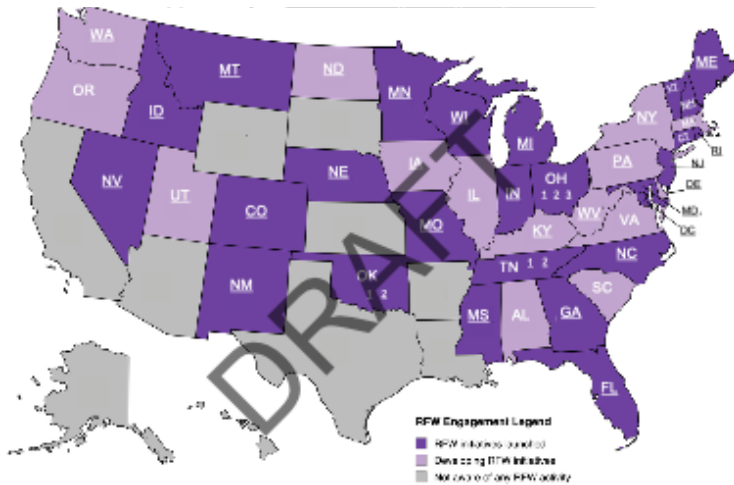
- Calls to suicide line down, ER visits down, requests for help up
- EAP utilization
- Retention rates
- Cost-savings

Zoom in to States

What is the role of state-level RFW initiatives and how does the Institute support them?



Achieving a Nation of Recovery Friendly Workplaces through...



Important Roles for State RFW Organizations



**Awareness &
Education**



**Training &
Technical
Support**



**Connection to
Resources &
Recovery
Community**



**State-level
designation**

Elevating the work of state initiatives



- RFW Online Community
- RFW State Leaders Group
- RFW Program Spreadsheet
- Map on website
- Embed points in certification
- Webinars
- Research and data access
- National report
- Contract work to help build process
- Contract work to certify businesses within a state

2026 National & State Recovery Friendly Workplace Report

[Link to report](#)

09

By The Numbers



There is...

1

National Entity

that offers national certification as a Recovery Friendly Workplace, that brings together representation from...

38

States

through the RFW State Leaders meetings and the RFW Implementers Community, that are establishing or expanding RFW initiatives that collectively work with...

1,523

Employers

that have engaged with these RFW initiatives either as participating, designated, or certified, which represents over...

572,038

Employees

across the nation, and even globe, that are working for a Recovery Friendly Workplace!



What can I do right now?

- Attend an educational RFW webinar: [RFW Institute Webinars Playlist](#)
- Look through resources on our website: <https://rfwinstitute.org/>
- **Join our distribution list** to receive updates: <https://rfwinstitute.org/contact/>
- Fill out a certification interest form to learn more about national certification as an RFW: <https://rfwinstitute.org/certification/about-certification/>
- Follow us on the National RFW Institute socials:
 - [youtube.com/@rfwinstitute](https://www.youtube.com/@rfwinstitute)
 - [linkedin.com/company/rfwinstitute/](https://www.linkedin.com/company/rfwinstitute/)



The strongest Recovery Friendly Workplaces have **clear, consistent, and communicated policies**



Recovery Friendly Workplaces do not bring the problem to the workplace, but rather **bring solutions** to the problem that already exists



Employers should strive to train employees well enough that they *can* leave, but treat them well enough that they **want to stay**



Recovery Friendly Workplaces are not only the right thing to do, but they are good for people AND good for business



People in recovery are resourceful, resilient, and ready to work





Contact



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National Recovery Friendly Workplace Institute

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