

RECOVERY FRIENDLY WORKPLACE

Colorado's RFW Initiative

July 19, 2023



Introduction



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Based at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus. A collaboration between the Center for Health, Work & Environment and the Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention, **we aim to address the national mental health crisis and substance use epidemic made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic.**



Colorado Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative

The Colorado Recovery Friendly Workplace (RFW) Initiative acknowledges the critical role employers hold in elevating the importance of mental health in the workplace. The objective of the initiative is to recruit business leaders across the state to collaboratively identify and implement RFW principles across all industries in order to improve workplace well-being and performance.

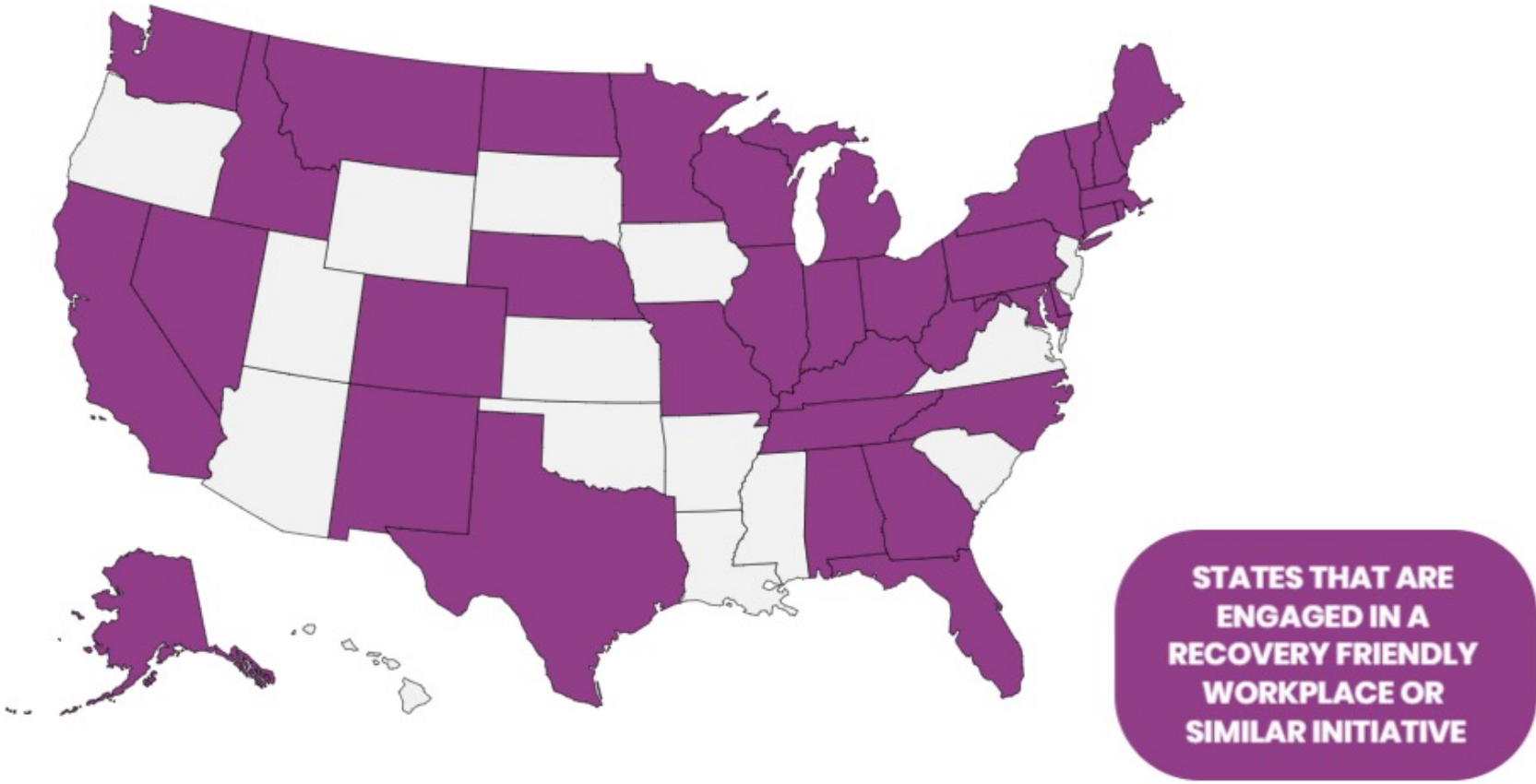
Definition

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 by being willing to **work intentionally** with people in recovery.



**Recovery
Friendly
Workplace**

Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiatives by State



Colorado is one of over 30 states in the US with RFW Initiatives.

Colorado participates in the RFW Community of Practice along with the other states, the U.S. Department of Labor, and the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP)

Colorado's RFW Initiative

Funding

To date, Colorado's RFW Initiative has been supported by funding from the American Rescue Plan Act and a cooperative agreement (U19OH011227) with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health as part of one of ten national Centers of Excellence for *Total Worker Health*®.

Peer Learning Series (Sept. 2022 - Jan. 2023)

Four-part virtual workshop for Colorado executive management, leadership, HR directors, and influencers/decision-makers with a mixed format of case studies and peer discussion.

- 41 individuals, 34 employers
- Industry representation:
 - Construction/Utilities
 - Education (K12-Higher Education)
 - Government
 - Healthcare/Social Services
 - Hospitality/Restaurant
 - Restaurant

Funding

Peer Learning Series

RFW 1-on-1 Advising

CO RFW Toolkit

RFW Peer Learning Series Key Takeaways

- **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion**: Employing individuals in recovery can be part of the company's diversity, equity & inclusion practice.
- **Communication**: If the company wants to reduce the stigma associated with SUD and recovery, it needs executive leadership to talk about mental health and substance misuse.
- **Awareness**: There are evidence-based resources available to help our company talk about SUD and recovery as a workplace issue.
- **Individualized**: RFW policies and practices require an individualized and personalized approach, each company is different and is joining the initiative based on its previous experience (or lack thereof).
- **Network**: There are many companies that want to have the RFW conversation and work to support and hire employees in recovery, companies can learn from one another.
- **Policies & Practices**: RFW requires evaluation and updating of the company's policies and practices around mental health and substance use (i.e. drug free workplace policy, reasonable suspicion policy, mental health training, suicide prevention training, etc).

Colorado's RFW Initiative

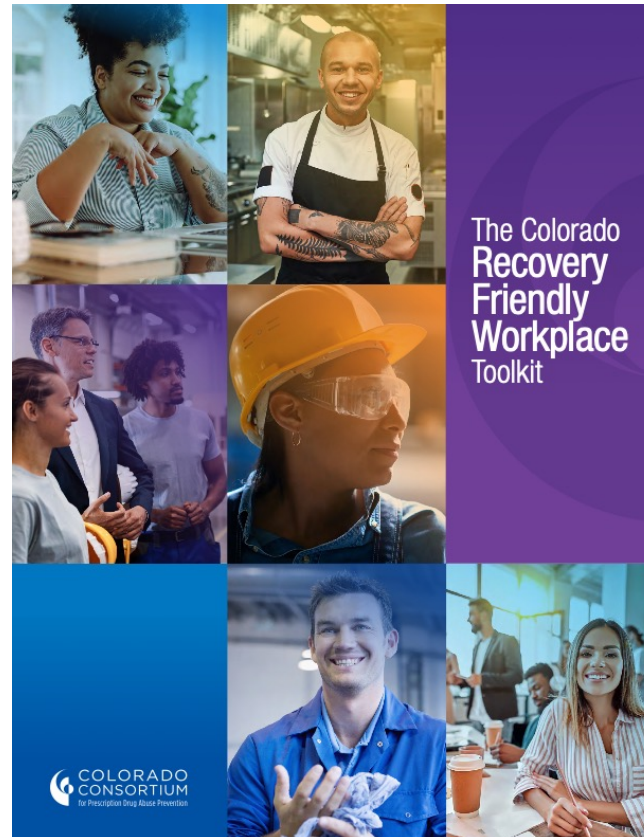
RFW Advising

- 23 sessions, 20 employers

Top 5 Identified RFW Priority Areas

- **90%:** Overall employee mental well-being (18 out of 20)
- **55%:** Support for employees in recovery (11 out of 20)
- **45%:** Becoming a Recovery Friendly Workplace (9 out of 20)
- **25%:** Compliance with industry guidelines on substance use (5 out of 20)
- **25%:** Safety measures for employees in recovery (5 out of 20)

Colorado RFW Toolkit



Peer Learning Series

RFW 1-on-1 Advising

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Colorado Recovery Friendly Workplace Work Group

- Launched in March 2023
- Meets [virtually] every other month
- Currently **107 members** representing employers from **15 Colorado counties:**

Adams

Arapahoe

Boulder

Denver

Douglas

Eagle

El Paso

Gunnison

Jefferson

La Plata

Larimer

Mesa

Pitkin

Pueblo

Routt

Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention



Colorado's RFW Plan



- **2023:** RFW Blueprint
(The Standards)
- **2023/24:** RFW Designation
(The Badge)
- **2024+:** RFW Education
(The Training)

Model RFW Legislation: Legislative Analysis and Public Policy Association (LAPPA)

1. To become a participant in the recovery friendly workplace program, employers shall
 - A. **Submit a letter of interest** to the program;
 - B. **Complete an orientation webinar/meeting** conducted by the program; and
 - C. **Notify employees in writing** of the intent to become a recovery friendly workplace.

2. Employers designated as recovery friendly workplace program participants shall:
 - A. Be assigned a recovery friendly workplace advisor;
 - B. Receive written documentation of such designation; and
 - C. Be listed on the program website as a participant.

Model RFW Legislation: Legislative Analysis and Public Policy Association (LAPPA)

3. To become a CO recognized recovery friendly workplace, employers shall **do each of the following within one (1) year** of becoming a participant:
 - A. **Complete training offered by the program** regarding what it means to be recovery friendly, substance use and substance misuse in the workplace, fighting stigma, and supporting people in recovery;
 - B. **Work with recovery friendly workplace advisor** to review the employer's currently-in-place workplace substance use **policies and procedures**, if any, to assess their effectiveness and work toward updating or implementing new policies or procedures as needed;
 - C. **Work with a recovery friendly workplace advisor** to review the employer's currently-in-place **employee wellness and assistance programs**, if any, and work toward updating or implementing new programs as needed;

Model RFW Legislation: Legislative Analysis and Public Policy Association (LAPPA)

3. To become a recognized recovery friendly workplace, employers shall **do each of the following within one (1) year** of becoming a participant:
 - D. Ensure that all **employees in management positions**, upon hire and at least annually thereafter, receive **education and training** regarding the employer's substance use policies and procedures, including, but not limited to, identification of all resources, including insurance coverage for substance use disorder treatment, available to employees;
 - E. Ensure that **all employees**, upon hire and at least annually thereafter, receive **education and training** regarding substance use, primary prevention measures, and resources available to all employees with a substance use disorder, mental health disorder, or co-occurring disorders; and
 - F. With assistance from the recovery friendly workplace advisor, **connect employees with community resources** and local organizations that promote health, safety, well-being, and recovery.

Model Employer Incentives for RFW Certification Program

WOTC (Federal)

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit, or WOTC, is a general business credit provided under section 51 of the Internal Revenue Code (Code) that is jointly administered by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the Department of Labor (DOL). The WOTC is available for wages paid to certain individuals who begin work on or before December 31, 2025. The WOTC may be claimed by any employer that hires and pays or incurs wages to certain individuals who are certified by a designated local agency (sometimes referred to as a state workforce agency) as being a member of one of 10 targeted groups. In general, the WOTC is equal to 40% of up to \$6,000 of wages paid to, or incurred on behalf of, an individual who:

- is in their first year of employment;
- is certified as being a member of a targeted group; and
- performs at least 400 hours of services for that employer.

Thus, the maximum tax credit is generally \$2,400. A 25% rate applies to wages for individuals who perform fewer than 400 but at least 120 hours of service for the employer. Up to \$24,000 in wages may be taken into account in determining the WOTC for certain qualified veterans.

Model Employer Incentives for RFW Certification Program

WOTC (Federal)

An employer may claim the WOTC for an individual who is certified as a member of any of the following targeted groups under section 51 of the Code:

- the formerly incarcerated or those previously convicted of a felony;
- recipients of state assistance under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (SSA);
- veterans;
- residents in areas designated as empowerment zones or rural renewal counties;
- individuals referred to an employer following completion of a rehabilitation plan or program;
- individuals whose families are recipients of supplemental nutrition assistance under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008;
- recipients of supplemental security income benefits under title XVI of the SSA;
- individuals whose families are recipients of state assistance under part A of title IV of the SSA; and
- individuals experiencing long-term unemployment.

Could a Colorado State tax credit be issued to certified RFW employers?

Model Employer Incentives for RFW Certification Program

Colorado Child Care Contribution Tax Credit

Taxpayers that make a qualifying monetary contribution to promote child care in Colorado may claim an income tax credit of 50% of the total qualifying contribution. The credit a taxpayer can claim for qualifying contributions made during a tax year is limited to \$100,000. In-kind contributions of services or property (non-monetary donations) do not qualify for the credit.

Any taxpayer that makes a qualifying contribution can claim the child care contribution credit. Resident and nonresident individuals, estates, trusts, and C corporations can all claim the credit for qualifying contributions they make, either directly or as a partner or a shareholder in a partnership or S corporation that makes a qualifying contribution.

Could a contribution tax credit like this work for employers who hire/employ individuals in recovery?

Questions

