



PARSE
NYS Coalition to Prevent Addiction and
Support Recovery in Employment

Becoming a Recovery Ready Workplace (RRW)

This factsheet lists key steps in establishing a RRW program. It is general guidance that may be adapted to specific needs of employers in New York state.

Background

There are about 2.8 million New Yorkers struggling with addiction. National data indicates that 10% of all people in the U.S. are in recovery from alcohol or substance use disorder (SUD). By becoming a RRW, you are supporting employees and creating a healthier work environment. Your commitment shows customers and the community that your business is a proactive, valued partner. Workplaces that implement evidence-based health and safety policies and programs recruit and retain a healthier, more productive, and more motivated workforce.

Employer Return on Investment (ROI)

Adopting a RRW can be a wise and financially sound business decision for an employer. Consider these facts:

- Employee **replacement costs** ranges from 25% to 200% of annual salary, not including losses in company knowledge, continuity and productivity.¹
- An employee in recovery from a substance use disorder **misses less work** than the general workforce, resulting in a cost savings of more than \$3,200 per year.²
- Workers in recovery **use less healthcare and workers' compensation**. Cost savings include hospital and emergency room use, ambulatory care, and primary medical care.³

Job **commitment** of an employee who has been supported by his or her employer to get healthy is immeasurable.

Initial Steps

1. Submit a **Letter of Interest** (hyperlink to online letter) to learn more about the RRW Initiative. By submitting a Letter of Interest to the Coalition to Prevent Addiction and Support Recovery (PARSE), you are simply expressing your organization's desire to learn more about the initiative. A representative will meet with you and help walk you through the process while keeping in mind what is best for your organization's specific needs.
2. Establish a process for developing your RRW program including key leadership personnel and develop an action plan that includes an assessment of current relevant policy and programs (drug and alcohol, safety and health, Employee Assistance Program (EAP), wellness, health benefits, action steps, assignments, and timelines. An effective process is key to developing the program.

¹ "A Substance Use Cost Calculator for Employers – Methodology." NORC at the University of Chicago for Shatterproof, and the National Safety Council. www.nsc.org/work-safety/safety-topics/drugs-at-work/methodology

² NORC at the University of Chicago.

³ Ibid.

Initial Steps (Continued)

3. Ensure senior management, human resources, and labor union leadership (when present) receive RRW orientation provided by PARSE organizational members or other qualified providers.
4. Make a declaration to employees stating your workplace's commitment to RRW principles and its participation in this initiative.

SAMPLE: "ABC Company is committed to creating a healthy, safe, and stigma-free work environment through our development of a Recovery Ready Workplace (RRW) program. RRW's encourage environments where employers, employees, and communities can collaborate to create positive change and eliminate barriers for those impacted by addiction, mental health, and injury. In order to achieve a high level of employee health, safety, and productivity, we invite and encourage all employees to reach out for help and support."

5. Receive RRW designation by PARSE.

Additional Steps

To be completed within one year of RRW designation.

1. Provide employees with information and resources to promote safety and health, well-being and recovery for themselves and their family members. Include information to counter stigma and fear.
See the National Institute of Occupational Safety & Health's Total Worker Health Program:
<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/twh/index.html>
See: Healthy Work Campaign:
<https://www.healthywork.org/>
Regarding Stigma:
<https://www.cdc.gov/stop-overdose/stigma-reduction/stigma-beyond-the-numbers.html>
2. Update the organization's drug and alcohol policies to reflect the RRW program changes. Ensure supervisors and union officials receive education on alcohol and drug policies upon hiring and on an annual basis thereafter.
3. Ensure supervisors and employees receive annual training and education on substance misuse, behavioral health, and addiction.
See: US Department of Labor Recovery Ready Resource HUB:
<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/RRW-hub> and
The National Clearinghouse for Worker Safety & Health Training:
Opioids & Substance Use: Workplace Prevention & Response
<https://tools.niehs.nih.gov/wetp/index.cfm?id=2587>
4. Establish connections with local recovery support organizations as a resource for employees.
5. Assess and address workplace hazards and job stress risk factors that may contribute to misuse of substances (prescription or self-medication).
6. Review and modify as needed employee health benefit plans regarding access to addiction and mental health treatment.
7. Review and update return to work, job accommodations, job recruitment, and access to recovery resource policies.
8. Consider organizational systems for family support including the utilization of EAP and the potential development of peer support programs.
9. Establish availability of naloxone and related training in the workplace.

Complete and submit RRW checklist and application with assistance from your PARSE contact.

Designated Recovery Ready Workplaces Will:

- Receive recognition from **PARSE**
- Receive a distinctive Recovery Friendly Workplace Sign for Display
- Be advertised as a Recovery Ready Workplace
- Enjoy continued access to a Recovery Friendly Advisor