

Commitment to Recovery Ready Workplace

SAMHSA Statement

September 2024

SAMHSA's mission is to lead public health and service delivery efforts that promote mental health, prevent substance misuse, provide treatments, and supports to foster recovery while ensuring equitable access and better outcomes. SAMHSA also has an important role to play in building a healthier, sustainable, and more prosperous nation. To this end, SAMHSA is committed to becoming a recovery ready employer. This means fostering a culture of recovery through educating our workforce on substance use, mental illness, resilience, and recovery. It also means creating a workplace where employees are affirmed and their information is confidential, especially when seeking assistance. Fostering this culture shows we value and support everyone in our workforce. SAMHSA also strives to create employment opportunities for all employees, including people in recovery, recognizing that people in recovery are also dedicated and productive employees.

To accomplish this, SAMHSA will:

- Establish a recovery-ready workplace planning and implementation workgroup with voluntary and diverse representation from across the agency, including employees in recovery and those with experience of substance use and/or mental health and recovery in their families.
- Support the creation and ongoing development of an HHS approved employee resource group (ERG) called People with Lived Experience (PLE), for example, by assisting in the identification of willing recovery champions within the workforce.
- Conduct an organizational assessment to ensure:
 - Employees feel empowered to seek help for substance use and/or mental health conditions and know how to do so.
 - Employees have access to educational, treatment, and recovery support services for themselves and their families.
 - Reasonable accommodations are available, individualized and sustained, to allow employees with disabilities to perform the

essential functions of their position. This may include the facilitation of a successful return to or continuation of duty while in or seeking recovery through scheduling flexibility, reassignment as feasible, and appropriate other mechanisms as required under the Rehabilitation Act.

- Policies, procedures, and partnerships are established to successfully hire and retain people who openly share that they are in or seeking recovery. This includes ensuring awareness about the Schedule A authority to ensure equity, inclusion, and professional advancement.
 - Organizational culture supports recovery from substance use, mental health conditions, and other addictions, and propose changes in policies, practices, or traditions for inclusivity of people in or seeking recovery.
 - External partners are engaged who can help successfully achieve this commitment.
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- Ensure all staff are aware of agency substance use and mental health policies and related benefits and resources.
 - Adopt a safe harbor provision under the Drug-Free Workplace Program, protecting employees experiencing challenges with substance use from adverse personnel actions when they proactively seek help as described in SAMHSA policies/procedures.
 - Prevent mental health conditions and substance misuse in the workforce, including taking steps to mitigate injury and risk. This includes excessive work-related stress and trauma which can contribute to or exacerbate these conditions.
 - Provide employees with easy access to mental health and substance use services and supports including referral to Employee Assistance Programs when needed.

- Make peer support available and create a work environment that accommodates the help/multiple pathways employees need while promoting work-life balance.
- Train employees in prevention and engagement strategies, including the administration of naloxone to reverse opioid overdose, mental health awareness training, and other protocols for responding to behavioral health needs.
- Make naloxone readily available and accessible to all employees in workplace locations with clearly visible signage.
- Create a culture that is welcoming of employees in recovery and celebrates the journey they are on.

For more information on this or on how you can support this effort, please reach out to SAMHSA's Office of Recovery at OR@samhsa.hhs.gov.

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