



**User's Guide for PowerPoint Presentation–
“Know Your Rights” – Legal Rights of People with Alcohol and
Drug Histories and Criminal Records**

by the Legal Action Center for the *Partners for Recovery* Initiative (March 2008)

This PowerPoint presentation covers the legal rights of people with alcohol and drug histories as well as the rights of people with criminal records. It teaches about the federal laws that prohibit employers, landlords, government agencies, and others from discriminating based on a person's alcoholism, drug addiction, or criminal record. It also gives suggestions for how people can gather evidence of rehabilitation and otherwise overcome obstacles created by their former addiction or criminal histories.

The Legal Action Center, one of the nation's leading experts in these areas, created this presentation with funding from *Partners for Recovery*, an initiative of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The presentation is for use by –

- Alcohol and drug treatment professionals and provider associations,
- Government oversight agencies,
- Recovery support providers and organizations,
- Attorneys with an interest in these topics, and
- Other allies of people in recovery.

The presentation incorporates information on federal anti-discrimination laws, and includes areas where state law can be inserted. Below are basic questions and answers regarding the presentation:

1. *Exactly What Does the Presentation Cover?*

The presentation has six parts:

Part 1: *Introduction: What is Discrimination?*

Part 2: *Which Laws Prohibit Discrimination Against People with Alcohol/Drug Histories?*

Part 3: *What Rights Do These Laws Give People With Current or Past Alcohol/Drug Problems?*

- Employment Discrimination
- Housing Discrimination
- Government Services & Programs

Part 4: *Responding to Violations of Your Rights Under Anti-Discrimination Laws*

Part 5: *Medication Assisted Treatment: Special Issues*

- Overview of Legal Protections for People in Medication Assisted Treatment

- Common Problems Faced by People in Medication Assisted Treatment
 - Driving Under the Influence
 - Residential Facilities for People in Recovery: May They Exclude People in MAT?
 - Child Welfare System: What About Parents in MAT?
 - Criminal Justice System: Is There Any Right to MAT?

Part 6: *Legal Rights of People with Criminal Records*

- Sealing & Expungement
- Restoration of Civil Rights
- Access to Criminal Records
- Criminal Background Reports
- Employment Discrimination
- Housing Discrimination

2. Do I need to use the whole Powerpoint presentation?

No! Parts 1 – 4 should be used together because they provide a cohesive overview of the rights of people with alcohol/drug histories, but Parts 5 and 6 do not need to be shown to every group.

How best to combine the parts? We recommend one of the following combinations:

- Parts 1 through 4 – show together.
 - You can shorten Part 3 by using only one or two of the following sub-parts (i) Employment Discrimination, (ii) Housing Discrimination, and (iii) Government Services & Programs.
 - If you are not using Part 6, be sure to remove the few references in Part 1 to discrimination based on a criminal record.
- Part 1 through 5 – show together.
 - Part 5 assumes knowledge of the topics covered in Parts 1-4. Part 5 can be shortened by omitting some of the topics (e.g., DUI, Residential Facilities for People in Recovery, Child Welfare System, Criminal Justice System).
 - If you are not using Part 6, be sure to remove the few references in Part 1 to discrimination based on a criminal record.
- Part 6: can be used by itself or in conjunction with Parts 1-4 or Parts 1-5.

Make sure, however, that you review all of the slides to omit references to the parts you are not using. All references to the optional sections are in brackets so that you can easily locate them.

3. What if I want to cover employment discrimination – but not housing discrimination?

You can do that by omitting the “Housing Discrimination” sections from Parts 3 and 6.

4. *Can I present information about the federal laws only – and not cover state law?*

Yes. If you want to only discuss federal laws only – and not research the state laws – you can simply remove the slides that are the markers for inserting state laws. Check for anything in brackets; brackets usually indicate where to insert state law.

5. *Do I need to be an attorney to present the Powerpoint?*

It is preferable to have an attorney conduct the presentation because of its legal content and the nature of the questions that may arise. However, other individuals familiar with anti-discrimination principals can also lead the presentation successfully. The slides are very thorough – and include many case studies – so that the presenter will not need great deal of outside knowledge. If you want to insert applicable state law into the presentation, however, you will likely need an attorney to research the state law.

6. *How can I give feedback about the Powerpoint presentation?*

The Legal Action Center welcomes feedback about how you are using the PowerPoint (e.g., for what types of audiences) and how it worked for you. To provide feedback, please email the Center at lacinfo@lac.org and put “Know Your Rights Powerpoint” in the subject line.

7. *How do I find the most recent version of the PowerPoint?*

The Center may update the presentation, so please verify that you are using the most recent version, which should be on the websites of *Partners for Recovery*, www.pfr.samhsa.gov (materials should be posted by early summer 2008), and the Legal Action Center, www.lac.org (click on “Trainings and Technical Assistance,” “Training Materials,” and then “Alcohol/Drug”) (materials are posted now).