

**National Recovery Friendly Workplace Institute**  
Responses to Questions about National Certification  
June 4, 2024

Below are responses to questions the Institute received following our May 28 webinar entitled “Recovery Friendly Workplace: Definition and 2024 National Certification Standards.”

**How can I access the presentation slides and certification document?**

The recorded [webinar](#), presentation slides, and national certification document are available on the Institute website, [rfwinstitute.org](http://rfwinstitute.org). The recorded webinar can also be accessed at the Institute’s [YouTube channel](#).

**How many people attended the webinar?**

We had 189 registrants and 138 attendees during the live webinar.

**Why has the Institute excluded mental health disorders from the definition and most of the talking points?**

The Institute recognizes that, for many individuals, the substance use disorder (SUD) recovery process involves addressing concurrent mental health disorders that may impact the individual’s wellness, cravings, emotional self-regulation, and behavioral control.<sup>1</sup> Mental health is discussed on pp. 15-17 of the [national certification document](#) and is expressly included in the culture, benefits, and education and awareness categories of the national certification criteria.

**Why has the Institute excluded the reentry community from the definition and most of the talking points?**

The recovery friendly workplace (RFW) movement encourages employers, in collaboration with employees, to establish, maintain, and continually enhance 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. It is our observance that re-entry programs are distinct in their mission. We see the overlap and the need to incorporate re-entry programs as part of an RFW ecosystem. To that end, our hiring, retention, and advancement category for

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<sup>1</sup> See Nat’l Inst. on Drug Abuse, *Diagnosis and Treatment of Drug Abuse in Family Practice – American Family Physician Monograph* (Feb. 20, 2023), <https://archives.nida.nih.gov/publications/diagnosis-treatment-drug-abuse-in-family-practice-american-family-physician-monograph/assessment>; Am. Soc’y of Addiction Medicine, *Public Policy Statement on the Role of Recovery in Addiction Care* (Apr. 11, 2018), <https://downloads.asam.org/sitefinity-production-blobs/docs/default-source/public-policy-statements/2018-statement-on-role-of-recovery-in-addiction-care.pdf>.

national RFW certification, discussed on p. 18 of the certification document, credits an employer that collaborates with the re-entry community when recruiting job candidates.

**Although important to be informed by employees when forming RFW culture, if the leadership is not instituting it or modeling it, then what are the chances it will catch on?**

The Institute holds the same position. For recovery friendly policies and practices to have a meaningful impact, management and RFW leaders must work together to effectively weave RFW principles into the employer's employment practices, employee benefits, educational programming, and workplace culture. Our national certification criteria reflect this need for cultural leadership. For more detailed information, see pp. 15 and 17-19 of the certification document.

**Will the Institute emphasize employee access to various behavioral health levels of care, such as partial hospitalization, intensive outpatient, and outpatient medication management, to support the many pathways to recovery from SUDs and mental health disorders?**

Yes. The national certification criteria emphasize the importance of health plan compliance with federal SUD and mental health health parity requirements. Additionally, the criteria credit employers for ensuring their health plans employ credible medical guidelines to inform SUD and mental health placement and continuity of care decisions and coverage appeals. See pp. 17-19 of the certification document for more information.

**Will EAPs count toward certification?**

Yes. Employers will be credited for providing employee access to an SUD recovery-informed service provider, such as an employee assistance program (EAP) or member assistance program (MAP). See pp. 18 and 19 for more information.

**Will the "highly placed ally" criterion disqualify entities that do not have an influential champion of people in recovery?**

No. Applicants for certification that do not yet have a highly placed ally may earn points under the culture category by satisfying one or more of the other criteria in that category: RFW policy, resource group, or substance-free options. See pp. 17 and 18 for more information.

**Are you providing training to employers during the certification process?**

The Institute will provide a webinar on the certification application process for potential applicants. Additionally, the Institute will collaborate with other stakeholders to provide RFW

educational and awareness programming. We will publicize these opportunities on our website and by email.

**Are you helping employers with policy guidance and providing boiler plate examples? Is there a delivery framework to actually teach, train, develop and support the national and multinational corporations that might sign on?**

At this time, we are not providing technical assistance to employers. For more detailed information on the RFW evidence base and best practices, we recommend the [Federal RRW Toolkit](#) and Recovery Friendly Hamilton County's [website](#) and [User Manual](#).

**For your inaugural RFW class prior to September, will you only be reporting on national RFWs or will you also be looking to report on State RFWs?**

The Institute's 2024 Recovery Month Report to the President of the United States will list nationally certified RFWs. If there are state-designated RFWs that you would like us to invite to be in the inaugural class of nationally certified RFWs, please email us at [certification@rfwinst.org](mailto:certification@rfwinst.org) and provide us the employer's contact information.

**Is there thought to including those who represent the peer recovery workforce in the RFW certification process?**

Yes, the Institute intends to include and collaborate with peer recovery organizations, such as Faces & Voices of Recovery, as we carry out our programmatic activities.

**Is there an opportunity to massage the definition of RFW?**

Yes. Interested persons may propose changes to the Institute's definition of RFW and future iterations of the certification criteria by emailing [certification@rfwinst.org](mailto:certification@rfwinst.org). At least once per year, the Institute will review the definition and certification criteria and make updates, as necessary, to reflect changes in the RFW landscape, lessons learned, and feedback received.