

NEW HAMPSHIRE'S RECOVERY FRIENDLY WORKPLACE INITIATIVE

Community Development Finance Authority

2018 – 2020



Contents

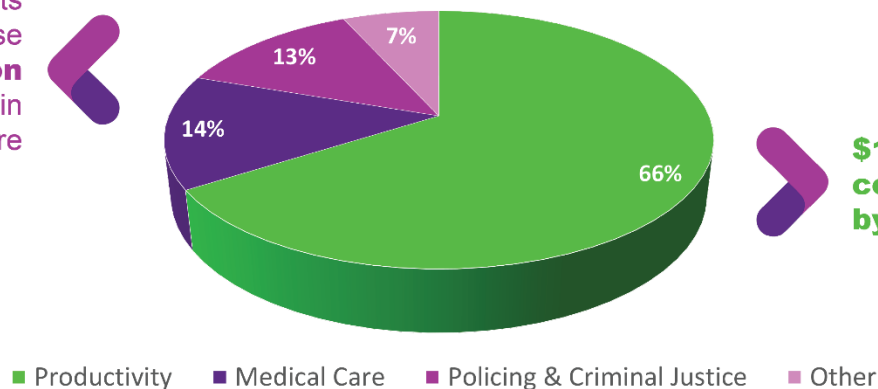
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New Hampshire's Recovery Friendly Workplace initiative empowers employers, employees, and communities to collaborate, create positive change and eliminate barriers for those impacted by substance use.

Together, we are challenging stigma and promoting healthy workplaces for all.

The economic costs of substance misuse are **\$2.36 billion annually** in New Hampshire

Cost of Substance Misuse in New Hampshire



\$1.6 billion of these costs are incurred by businesses

Initiative Outcomes

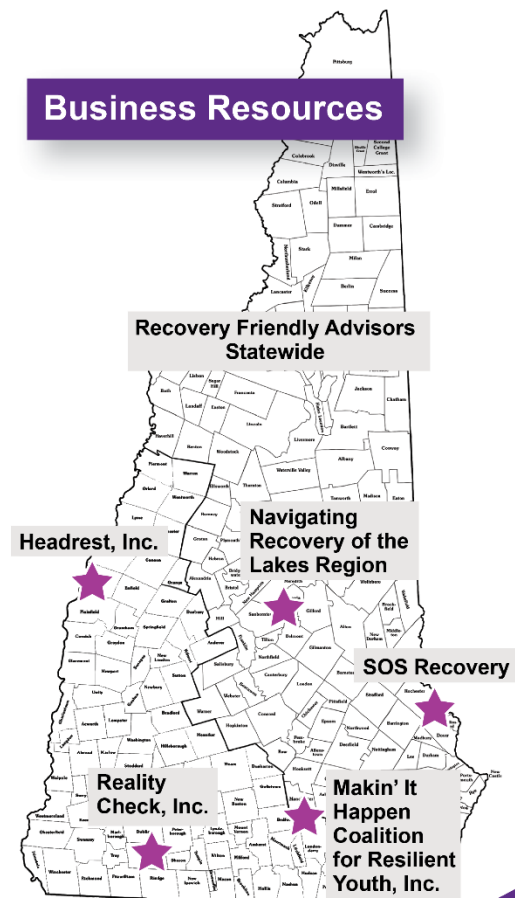
279 workplaces from across New Hampshire have joined the RFW initiative in strengthening our workforce and represent more than **70,000 employees**

13,429 individuals engaged in RFW activities

2,875 employees trained in one or more RFW training modules

More than **125 employees participated in new RFW services** at the workplace including recovery coaching, telephone supports, recovery meetings, and LADAC support

Business Resources



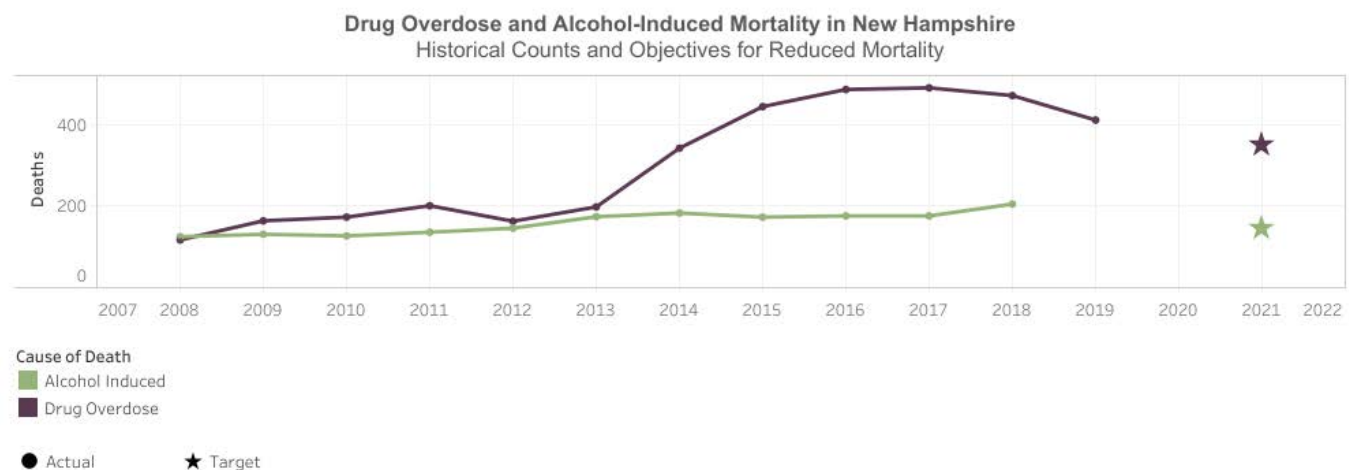
I. Why Recovery Friendly Workplaces?

Defining the Problem

The State of New Hampshire (NH) is often identified as one of the healthiest states in the nation and was recently ranked first in child well-being.¹ This ranking incorporates scoring within four domains: economic well-being, health, education, and family/community. New Hampshire consistently receives high ratings in other national surveys, most recently being named number two overall in U.S. News & World Report's 2019 Best States study, which ranks all 50 states based on criteria from eight categories, including education, health care, infrastructure and the economy.² The Granite State is often touted for its natural beauty and recreational opportunities, business-friendly environment, low taxes, skilled workforce, and overall high quality of living.

Despite the significant benefits of living and working in NH, residents are not immune to the myriad of challenges currently facing the country related to opioid misuse and addiction. New Hampshire has seen significant increases in the number of deaths from drug overdoses from 163 in 2012 to 488 in 2017 (See Figure 1). The number of total deaths has decreased slightly in 2018 (471) and 2019 (415). Over the last 10 years, there have been over 3,300 lives lost in NH from drug overdoses.³

Figure 1. Drug Overdose and Alcohol-Induced Mortality in New Hampshire



Source: NH Office of Chief Medical Examiner, Drug Death Data Report, as of May 2020. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Underlying Cause of Death on CDC WONDER Online Database, last accessed February 2020.

¹ The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2019). 2019 Kids Count Data Book. Baltimore, MD. Retrieved from <https://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-2019kidscountdatabook-2019.pdf>.

² U.S. News & World Report. (2019). Best States Ranking. Retrieved from <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/rankings>

³ National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2019). *New Hampshire Opioid Summary*. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/opioid-summaries-by-state/new-hampshire-opioid-summary>.

The vast majority of these overdose deaths involved opioids, with a significant increase seen in cases involving synthetic opioids other than methadone (primarily fentanyl). New Hampshire showed an increase from 30 deaths in 2013 to 374 deaths in 2017⁴ and is among the top five states with the highest rate of opioid involved deaths.⁵ In 2017, the age-adjusted rate of 34.0 deaths per 100,000 persons was more than twice the average national rate of 14.6 deaths per 100,000 persons.⁶

In addition to the devastating loss of life and the negative public health impacts, substance misuse negatively affects NH's economy:

- The economic costs of addiction are \$2.36 billion annually.⁷ These costs are primarily attributed to the loss of productivity among individuals and businesses, with additional costs related to criminal justice, health care, and other costs.⁸
- Nearly 75% of adults with alcohol or drug dependence are part of the workforce.⁹
- Past research from the Partnership at Drugfree.org and the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services stated approximately 10% of adults identify as being in recovery. Therefore, estimates for the number of people in recovery in NH is approximately 135,000.

Research often points to consistent employment as one of the key goals for people in recovery. Given that NH has traditionally had one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country,¹⁰ recruiting and retaining quality workers makes economic sense and is a major part of the recovery path for those individuals. In addition, people in recovery and those impacted by alcohol and other drug use are already part of our workforce. It is crucial that workplaces have policies and practices in place that support the health, wellbeing and safety of employees, while also improving outcomes related to recruitment, retention, and productivity. According to the results of a survey conducted by the National Safety Council, 75% of United States (US) employers feel that they have been directly affected by employee use of opioids, yet only 17% feel prepared to deal with the issue.¹¹

This report details the efforts and results of a NH initiative designed to empower businesses to promote health and wellness by creating work environments that further the mental and physical well-being of employees, proactively preventing substance misuse and supporting recovery from substance use disorders (SUD) in the workplace and community.

^{4,5} National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2019). *New Hampshire Opioid Summary*. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/opioid-summaries-by-state/new-hampshire-opioid-summary>.

^{6,7,8,9} PolEcon Research. (2017). *Substance Misuse in New Hampshire: An Update on Costs to the State's Economy and Initial Impacts of Public Policies to Reduce Them*. Retrieved from https://issuu.com/polecon/docs/2017_economic_report_final_0.

¹⁰ New Hampshire Employment Security. (2019). *Unemployment Rates for States in Rank Order: June 2019*. Retrieved from <https://www.nhes.nh.gov/elmi/statistics/documents/stranks.pdf>.

¹¹ B2B International. (2019). *National Employer Survey 2019: Opioid Usage in the Workplace. A Research Report for the National Safety Council*. Retrieved from <https://www.nsc.org/Portals/0/Documents/NewsDocuments/2019/PPW-survey-methodology.pdf?ver=2019-03-18-174024-837>.

II. Background

Governor Sununu's Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative

The first of its kind, the Recovery Friendly Workplace (RFW) initiative was established by Governor Sununu in 2018 to encourage an environment where employers, employees, and communities can collaborate to create positive change and eliminate barriers for those impacted by substance use. By supporting employers in developing a culture of wellness, employee retention, and productivity, businesses can address substance misuse concerns and stigma head-on.

The RFW initiative is a strong example of the public and private sectors coming together to develop creative solutions to meet the needs of NH residents and address and prevent the impacts of substance misuse in our state. Organizations of all sizes, types, and levels of readiness are encouraged to join the RFW initiative.

RFWs retain a healthier, more productive, and more motivated workforce through the delivery of research-based health and safety programs, policies, and practices. Businesses engaged in the RFW initiative send a strong message to current and potential employees about the positive culture of their workplace. Resources and trainings are customized to meet the unique needs of workplaces and are currently offered at no cost.

The RFW initiative incorporates a clear and concise process of engagement for businesses, following a checklist of basic requirements to acquire and maintain official "Recovery Friendly" designation status. Designation requirements include:

- Making a declaration to employees of the workplace's commitment to this effort;
- Communicating information to employees regarding workplace policies and how to access resources and supports;
- Offering trainings to supervisors and employees; and
- Getting connected to community-based public health and recovery organizations.

Key partners include the Governor's Office, the Department of Business and Economic Affairs, the Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA), Granite United Way, NH Works for Recovery, the Community Health Institute (CHI), as well as numerous other business partners, non-profit organizations, Regional Public Health Networks, and Recovery Community Organizations.

Funding to support the various aspects of the RFW initiative outlined in this report come from two main sources: a one-time, \$1 million allocation from the State of New Hampshire deployed to nonprofits providing RFW programming and federal Department of Labor funds to support Recovery Friendly Advisors, technical assistance and marketing activities.

Over a dozen other states have reached out to learn how to best replicate the RFW initiative to meet the needs of their citizens. There is broad interest across the country in these efforts, and NH is leading the way.

Recovery Friendly Advisors (RFAs)

Each workplace that joins the initiative is assigned a Recovery Friendly Advisor (RFA). The RFA role is that of a connector and sounding board. They connect employers to key community partners, peers, and SUD-related information, resources, and trainings, in order to assist them in the creation of their recovery-friendly cultures. Advisors also walk workplaces through an RFW checklist, which facilitates the development of key RFW outcomes and streamlines the process of culture change, helping to clarify what implementation looks like and bolstering workplaces' sense of self-efficacy.

Additionally, RFAs assist workplaces in becoming officially designated as an RFW by the Governor. This element adds a degree of formality, visibility, and excitement to the process, which furthers buy-in. Through ongoing outreach to workplaces and monitoring of engagement, RFAs also help businesses maintain momentum in this process. Overall, through the RFAs' efforts, the lift for workplaces is lessened, which allows them more capacity to focus on implementation and culture change.

For more information about the RFW initiative see: www.recoveryfriendlyworkplace.com.

Community-Based RFW Pilot Program Overview

On behalf of the State of New Hampshire, the Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA) was allocated a one-time, \$1 million appropriation to administer grant funds to nonprofit organizations to deliver pilot programs in support of the RFW initiative. According to the authorizing legislation signed into law June 2018, "recovery friendly workplace programs" include programs that:

- Educate employers in evidence-based practices that demonstrably reduce substance misuse in the workplace;
- Create work environments that are conducive to enabling persons in addiction and mental health recovery to sustain and re-enter the workforce as productive members of society;
- Train employees, including specialized training for human resources personnel, on these matters;
- Raise public awareness and provide information that supports health and safety for employees; and
- Promote active community engagement that will assist in reducing the negative impact of unaddressed substance misuse and untreated mental health conditions.

CDFA has a long history of successfully designing programs and deploying resources that encourage public-private partnerships. These partnerships strengthen the nonprofit organization's connection to the local business community and create long-lasting partnerships that enable New Hampshire businesses to make impactful investments in their communities. The organization has strong relationships with the New Hampshire business sector and the nonprofits serving the communities where their employees live and work. CDFA also has a long history of building the capacity of nonprofit organizations throughout the state.

Rogers Restaurant in Dover is a RFW designated workplace that has remained actively engaged with the initiative and SOS since their designation. Rogers contacted the SOS RFW team when they needed additional front of the house staff. Through this job posting, and in collaboration with the SOS staff, we were able to refer a candidate to the business who interviewed, received a job offer, and started working full time at the restaurant. This individual has worked out well as part of the restaurant staff and is still employed with Rogers Restaurant.

The RFW initiative pilot program leverages CDFA's strength and experience in these areas to deploy the one-time grants funds through a community-based approach that connects businesses with local nonprofits to support their employees. By creating this connection, the nonprofit can leverage their understanding of the local community and business needs to deliver valuable services.

CDFA's top priorities in the development and administration of the RFW pilot program, included:

- Collaborating with key stakeholders and subject matter experts;
- Delivering impactful Recovery Friendly Workplace programming and services to businesses;
- Creating a pilot program that can be replicated statewide and nationally; and
- Strengthening public-private partnerships between nonprofits and businesses in New Hampshire.

Community-Based RFW Pilot Program Administration

To meet the requirements and intent of the legislation, CDFA followed a diligent process to administer the funds and engaged in on-going collaboration with key stakeholders. A comprehensive program design and administration process, from June 2018 to January 2019, included: the completion of a landscape assessment to determine the readiness of nonprofits in the state and to inform the funding approach; the hiring of a program director to oversee the RFAs and support the statewide initiative and strategy; and engaging a technical assistance provider to develop content and provide subject matter expertise.

Following CDFA's development of program guidance, which included input from key stakeholder and subject matter experts, a notice of funding availability was issued in early 2019 to solicit applications from eligible organizations that demonstrated readiness to implement programming, as well as the following:

- Strong connection to the state's public health system;
- Outcomes achieved to-date, and ability to achieve proposed outcomes, related to current recovery friendly workplace practices;
- Alignment, or willingness to align, with the state-level strategy and best practice recommendations for Recovery Friendly Workplace programming;
- Ability to scale programming and services beyond current levels; and
- Plan for program and organizational sustainability.

Eligible nonprofits were encouraged to apply for Recovery Friendly Workplace grant funds within the following areas, which mirrors CDFA's program ecosystem:

- *Capacity building:* Funds used to strengthen organizational infrastructure to deliver increased value and impact to the communities served.
- *Planning and development:* Funds used to develop a business plan, implementation strategy and/or enhance outreach to further develop business partnerships.

Waypoint is a statewide child and family healthcare services organization with 14 locations and over 25 programs, headquartered in Manchester. RFW grantees and RFAs met with the leadership team at Waypoint and determined that they were very interested in the comprehensive aspects of the initiative, above and beyond designation alone. The organization has started a committee of leaders and employees to look at inclusion, equity, and parity. They are addressing mental health stigma including substance use disorders. The team also includes human resources members to evaluate how recovery enlightened their policies and procedures to include time off for self-care verses sick time. This committee has a subgroup developing an employee survey, another working on crafting their new values statement and RFW declaration.

- *Implementation:* Funds used to implement Recovery Friendly Workplace programming and services.
- *Support and optimization:* Funds used to evaluate, improve, and sustain programming and services.

CDFA received eight applications from nonprofit organizations throughout New Hampshire requesting about \$1.2 million in grant resources. Funding decisions were based on evaluation of the applicant's ability to meet key criteria, including: organizational and financial capacity; readiness; and impact.

The final recommended investments totaled \$900,000 to five organizations. These allocations include \$10,000 for each funded organization to participate in a Community of Practice to facilitate program sustainability and optimization. Awards were announced in April 2019.¹²

ORGANIZATION	AWARD
Greater Seacoast Community Health / SOS Recovery Somersworth	\$285,000
Headrest, Inc. Lebanon	\$235,000
Makin' It Happen Coalition for Resilient Youth, Inc. Greater Manchester	\$135,000
Reality Check, Inc. Jaffrey	\$135,000
Navigating Recovery of the Lakes Region Laconia	\$110,000

Community-Based RFW Pilot Program Implementation

Grantee organizations each offered a unique model to delivering RFW programming to local businesses. This was a key factor in leveraging the implementation of the pilot program to determine promising practices that best meet the needs of businesses and employees, the goals of the RFW initiative, and show the potential to be scalable statewide and nationally. The five models demonstrated innovative approaches and were based on each organization's strengths and understanding of local business needs.

"This pilot involves giving employees access to a Master Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor (MLADC) for a few hours each week, either onsite at the workplace or remotely."
– Headrest Inc.

The five pilot program selected implemented various RFW programming strategies, including:

- Business leadership engagement strategies
- Training of core RFW content
- Infusion of recovery coaching, recovery hotlines and access to clinical services in the workplace
- Supporting job placement and the hiring of people in recovery
- Recovery-friendly resource development

¹² An award of \$100,000 was made to Granite United Way in late 2018 to support the RFW statewide program director position, bringing the total amount allocated to the full \$1 million.

- Improving accessibility for workplaces to adopt policies and practices to create an environment that supports alcohol and other drug use prevention, treatment and recovery
- Business planning for RFW outcomes such as policy change and hiring and retaining employees in recovery

Each grantee organization was tasked with outreach to their local business community to provide RFW programming and services that aligned with their model. Through this community-based approach, businesses and their employees became connected to local resources and customized RFW services that met their specific needs and level of readiness. Businesses that received services from grantees were not required to become formally designated as a RFW.

Technical Assistance

As the technical assistance provider, the Community Health Institute (CHI) facilitated the development of evidenced-informed Recovery Friendly Workplace materials. These materials are an important element of the initiative as New Hampshire leads the way in the development of best practices for employers to implement Recovery Friendly Workplace programming. Evidence-informed slides, speakers notes, and handouts for four educational modules to be used with businesses were developed:

- Module 1: About Substance Use Disorders
- Module 2: About Recovery and Workplace Wellness
- Module 3: Community Resources for the Recovery Friendly Workplace
- Module 4: Building a Recovery Friendly Workplace

The modules provide the core and consistent content for education and training delivered to businesses as part of the RFW project.

In addition to module development, CHI provided technical assistance to grantees through a Community of Practice (CoP) model. A CoP is a group that is created with the goal of gaining knowledge and sharing information and experiences related to a specific topic.

The goals of the Recovery Friendly Workplace Community of Practice were to:

- Share lessons learned in an effort to refine and improve practice;
- Monitor outcomes; and
- Support sustainability.

To inform the CoP, a planning committee was formed which included representation from CDFA, the Governor's initiative and the grantees. The committee planned the content of ten in-person CoP sessions and three conference calls. Some of the topics covered were training sessions, presentation skills, and panel

Woven City Restoration in Rochester is a Recovery Friendly Workplace that restores, creates and sells unique, high quality furniture and art crafted from discarded and reclaimed materials. Woven also is heavily involved in the Community Toolbox which volunteers their time building and repairing various structures for people in need. Woven intentionally hires and works with individuals at all stages of recovery. Through their RFW designation they have utilized the connection to the recovery community to support several employees, as well as hire and retain another. Through this effort, Woven is now seeking to expand their staff, increase their production and recently has set a sales record for seasonal items, such as raised garden beds. Woven is also in the process of expanding their physical space to increase visibility and production.

discussions focused on sustainability. Both the in-person sessions and conference calls provided an opportunity for cross-sharing and problem-solving among the CDFA, grantees, and RFAs.

The following resources were developed as a result of the CoP:

- CDFA Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative Grant Implementation Guide
- RFW Talking Points
- One-pager on the Governor's Initiative
- Assessment tool for determining workplace readiness
- A chart describing the levels of engagement for businesses
- A running list of businesses in the designation process
- A fidelity checklist for RFW-related trainings
- A process fidelity checklist for RFW-related trainings
- Meeting minutes and relevant presentation slides from community of practice in-person meetings and conference calls

Public Relations and Marketing Support

CDFA partnered with Matter Communications to execute a public relations program to elevate visibility for the RFW initiative, engage new businesses, and share impactful stories to help breakdown the stigma around addiction and recovery. The partnership included the creation and implementation of a strategic plan to raise RFW's profile through traditional media relations, leveraging thought leaders and highlighting success stories from the initiative's participating employers and their employees.

Table 1. RFW Public Relations Campaign Coverage

Publication	Headline
<i>Concord Monitor</i>	My Turn: Employer support is critical for workers struggling with addiction
<i>New Hampshire Business Review</i>	This is our fight
<i>Addiction Professional / Psychiatry & Behavioral Health Learning Network</i>	Governor's Initiative Engages Businesses on Impact of Substance Use
<i>Manchester Ink Link</i>	State's opioid support network adapts to COVID-19 pandemic challenges
<i>Union Leader</i>	Recovery-friendly workplaces trying to help employees stay sober during pandemic
<i>New Hampshire Business Review</i>	Support continues for recovery-friendly workplaces in Covid-19 era
Total media impressions: 1,199,016	

In addition to media relations, Matter Communications developed a versatile suite of marketing, recruiting and educational materials to support RFW's mission and fast-paced growth. A video profiling RFW's vital mission is currently in production and will feature key stakeholders, including participating employers and employees. Materials created include: poster campaign, trifold brochure, FAQ sheet, email nurture series, employee flyer, branded PowerPoint presentation, resource card for employees, and social media graphics. These assets will be leveraged by RFAs, CDFA grantees, and participating RFW businesses in their efforts to continue to raise awareness of the program, the resources available, and create cultural changes that break down barriers and stigmas.

THIS IS OUR FIGHT



Our workplace is participating in the Recovery Friendly Workplace (RFW) initiative.

RFWs promote the health, safety, and well-being of employees by challenging the stigma around addiction and providing support to those who have been affected by substance use disorder. This includes those in recovery, those who are seeking help, and those who may be indirectly impacted due to having a loved one with an addiction.

We are stronger together, and hope that you'll join us in the fight to create a safer, more inclusive workplace for all.



Mark Bonta, Plant Manager,
Genfoot America

The Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative

Building a Supportive, Stigma-Free Workplace Together

As a result of participating in the initiative, our workplace will be:

- Providing resources that promote health, well-being, and recovery for employees and loved ones
- Ensuring supervisors and employees are educated on policies around substances so they know their rights and what supports are available to them
- Connecting with a local Recovery Community Organization (RCO) that provides free peer-based recovery supports, such as recovery coaching and recovery meetings
- Participating in trainings designed to raise awareness, challenge stigma, and create a more supportive workplace culture

To get connected to help or learn more:

General Information & Referral: Call: 2-1-1 211nh.org	Treatment Resources: Call: 2-1-1 thedoornway.nh.gov	Recovery Resources: nhrecoveryhub.org
Public Health Networks: nhphn.org	Prevention Resources: dhhs.nh.gov/dcbcs/bdas/prevention.htm	Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative: recoveryfriendlyworkplace.com

We are creating a workplace that is more open, transparent, and supportive – a workplace that benefits us all.

III. Outcomes

The RFW initiative has offered the NH business sector the unique opportunity to be part of a comprehensive solution to address and prevent the negative impacts of alcohol and other drug use in our state. By participating in this innovative approach, businesses have been able to publicly challenge stigma associated with substance use disorder (SUD), while demonstrating their strong commitment to the health, safety, and wellness of their employees. Through evidence-informed trainings and presentations, the RFW initiative helps participating workplaces understand SUD as a chronic health condition. In addition, it equips employers with the tools, resources, and information to develop their own workplace cultures that support those in or seeking recovery, in addition to those who may have loved ones with SUD. This initiative brings light to the darkness surrounding SUD, demystifying it, empowering workplaces to take action and provide support, and letting employees know it is ok to ask for help.

The array of activities offered through the RFW initiative were developed following best practice approaches and research in the fields of public health, prevention, recovery, workplace wellness, and stages of change. These activities were designed to achieve improvements in perceptions, knowledge, and engagement among workplace. This leads to behavior changes such as improved communication, access to SUD services, policy change and implementation, which ultimately leads to less absenteeism, higher workplace productivity, and an overall healthier workplace culture.

These activities include strategies such as education, training, policy development, and direct connections to local services and supports for employees. Part of what makes this initiative most appealing to NH businesses is that, within the framework of the RFW checklist, workplaces are encouraged to implement the initiative in a way that best meets their unique needs, readiness level, and culture.

The RFW initiative focused significant attention on the outreach and engagement process in reaching a diverse group of NH businesses and organizations. Businesses of all sizes and industries from across the State of NH were offered the opportunity to join this initiative.

Since its launch in March 2018, 279 workplaces from across NH have joined the RFW initiative in strengthening our workforce. Those 279 businesses have been designated RFWs, or are in the process of being designated, and represent more than 70,000 employees.

Outreach and Engagement

The majority of the activities recorded by the pilot program grantees and RFAs were related to outreach and ongoing strategic relationship development. From January 2019 through July 2020, the following outcomes have been achieved:

- 13,429 individuals engaged in RFW activities;
- 91 businesses and organizations trained in one or more RFW training modules;
- 2,875 employees trained in one or more RFW training modules; and
- More than 125 employees participated in new RFW services at the workplace including recovery coaching, telephone supports, recovery meetings, and LADAC support.

Results from trainings that were evaluated showed that some of the most valuable take-aways for participants were:

- The amount/availability of resources
- Understanding more about addiction/those with an addiction
- Understanding that their employer provides a supportive environment
- Those indirectly impacted can have a recovery journey as well

When asked how training participants could apply what they learned to their workplace, some responses included the following:

- Knowing how to better help others (e.g., directing them to resources)
- Being more understanding and supportive and less judgmental
- Being better equipped to talk about [substance use disorder]
- Knowing what to do in the event of an overdose

RFAs and grantees developed meaningful relationships with nearly 500 businesses across the state during this same time period. This included in-person meetings, email correspondence, phone and video conference meetings, as well as presentations and trainings. The grantees attended and hosted numerous outreach and networking events for employers to build and garner interest in the RFW initiative. Given the collaborative approach to this work, many businesses were engaged by both the grantees and the RFAs. In addition, hundreds more were contacted as part of proactive outreach to raise awareness of the program and the opportunity to access the significant resources available to them through the RFW initiative.

Between the RFAs and grantees, workplaces had access to over 10 training modules and a variety of direct recovery supports. In addition to training, the grantees and RFAs provided ongoing consultation and support to RFW businesses when they had questions or needed resources.

As part of our evaluation plan, grantees and RFAs tracked the level of engagement of participating businesses on a bi-monthly basis. Moving forward, this data will allow us to determine how level of engagement influences other longer-term outcomes, such as absenteeism, productivity, recruitment/retention, treatment/recovery access and overall health and wellness.

As demonstrated in Table 2 below, the majority (85%) of businesses were engaged in RFW activities at a beginner to intermediate level over the course of the pilot program. In addition, 10.42% of businesses rose to the advanced level of engagement, while less than 5% did not engage with the RFW initiative after expressing an initial interest and the first contact was made.

Table 2. Average Business Engagement Level

Engagement Level	Description	Count	% of Businesses engaged at this level
No Engagement	Businesses expressed initial interest, were contacted by the RFA, but did not maintain a formal connection to the initiative.	11	4.58%
Beginner to Intermediate	Businesses engaged with the RFAs and/or pilot programs to expand their RFW approach beyond designation.	204	85%
Advanced	Businesses took ownership over the RFW and institutionalized RFW practices.	25	10.42%

As a result of this engagement, many businesses have taken steps to change their **workplace policies or to create an environment supportive of alcohol and other drug use prevention, treatment and recovery to increase productivity and hire and retain employees in recovery.**

To protect the privacy of individuals, it was not feasible to specifically measure the number of individuals hired and retained who are in recovery. However, the stories below illustrate how businesses across the state have taken action to modify or adopt workplace policies and practices that contribute to a recovery-friendly environment, including hiring and retaining employees in recovery.

Chameleon Group in Portsmouth has leveraged their RFW designation in a variety of ways to compliment policies and provide a comprehensive environment of recovery support and advocacy for their entire staff. Most notably, they have implemented bi-monthly two-hour, in-house access to SOS RFW Coordinators who conduct All Recovery Meetings, on site recovery coaching, and referrals for all employees. This has empowered staff to take a more active role in their own recovery as well as stay closely connected to recovery services and information at their place of work. This has resulted in staff successfully understanding and working through many barriers in their personal lives that could affect not only their recovery, but also their jobs. Providing these supports in the work environment has allowed staff to focus on their recovery while also increasing their productivity at Chameleon Group. After almost a year of providing these services, SOS RFW coordinators have developed long-term relationships with Chameleon Group employees as a result of Chameleon Group's intentional effort to support employees that are in recovery. These lasting relationships made with both employees and management have certainly changed the work environment, culture, and overall attitudes towards recovery at Chameleon Group.

Kendal at Hanover (KaH) in Hanover employs over 300 people and specializes in offering attentive and vibrant living options for an aging population. We have been able to work closely with their Director of Human Resources, to implement the initiative. In addition to being interested in learning more about recovery, substance use disorder, stigma, and related resources, KaH also wanted to review their policies in light of the initiative. Upon review, they decided to make some updates. They already had some substance-related policies in place regarding employees being able to access support; but due to being an RFW, they now have a Return to Work Agreement portion where, if the employee agrees to get help from an outside third party (such as a recovery center, agrees to attend a certain number of meetings, etc.) and follows through with the plan, they will not face disciplinary action. KaH has been generous in sharing their Return to Work and Reasonable Suspicion policies with us so that we may share them with other RFWs.

Genfoot America, based out of **Littleton**, employs 100 people on average and is a manufacturer of Kamik Outdoor Footwear. They have been incredibly involved in the RFW initiative, with their Plant Manager being a peer leader in this space, in addition to serving on the RFW Advisory Council. They have dedicated a significant amount of time to getting their staff trained on topics related to recovery, SUD, and stigma, doing two all-day trainings dedicated to these topics – one for management and one for their production employees. They have worked hard to create a culture where employees feel safe and supported, which is further undergirded by several key Recovery Friendly policies and practices, including the Plant Manager being available to talk through concerns and even help with resource navigation, the existence of a Return to Work Agreement, treating SUD with parity to other health conditions, and actively hiring from the local recovery home. Since beginning the initiative, Genfoot has seen some powerful outcomes: five employees have come forward for help with an SUD, several employees have been hired from the local recovery home, two of whom are now Shift Leaders who are excelling in their duties, and they have created a Helping Hands Committee to further engage employees in shaping the

implementation of the initiative. Furthermore, regarding productivity, in 2019 and 2020, as compared to the previous three years, Genfoot saw decreases in accidents/injuries, lost days, and light duty days.

DCI, Inc., a furniture manufacturer with its headquarters based in **Lisbon**, employs around 180 people in 6 states across the country. The lead of their HR Department, has worked closely with us to implement the initiative, and they have done a lot to build a culture of support and open communication, especially around recovery and substance misuse. The HR Department has spread the word about the initiative and has emphasized that she is available to connect with employees should they need help. As a result, employees have felt more comfortable to come forward if they need assistance. DCI, Inc. has also brought several key supports to the workplace. In addition to the HR Director being available to meet with employees, they have also partnered with the North Country's Wellness and Recovery Model (WARM) program to provide employees with access to Recovery Coaches and offer employees access to a Master Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor (MLADC) through an RFW pilot program being offered by Headrest and the Hypertherm Hope Foundation. They have seen increases in productivity, which they attribute to having more high-quality employees and better attendance, both of which are trends they feel have been bolstered by participating in the RFW initiative. They have also shared some anecdotes around employees who have had substance use issues, came forward for help, and are now succeeding in their employment, which of course also exemplifies how productivity can be benefited through this work.

The exploratory nature of the RFW pilot programs led to the discovery of outcomes beyond those required to be measured.

The following outcomes were noted by the majority of the organizations implementing pilot programs:

- Increased knowledge related to alcohol and other drug use among employers
- Increased awareness of the stigma associated with addiction among employers
- Increased problem-solving efforts among employers related to the adoption of alcohol and other drug prevention, treatment, and recovery practices/activities in the workplace
- The development of business structures, models, and systems to adopt Recovery Friendly Workplace practices
- The development of plans for businesses to address the workplace factors that contribute to stigma
- The development of partnerships between RFW pilot program grantees and the RFAs to engage businesses
- Increased outreach by businesses to the grantees and RFAs for resources
- Increased collaboration between businesses to support each other in RFW initiatives
- Increased number of services grantees were able to provide

Since a Seacoast library's RFW designation, they have taken considerable steps to make sure their staff are well versed on recovery and mental health basics. Not only that, but they have also extended that awareness to the public who visits the library through posting signs about safe language, keeping information on recovery services visible and readily available to all who use the library, and by implementing harm reduction practices such as sharps containers in their restrooms. The library also maintains a close relationship with their local Recovery Community Organization through the RFW program. Library staff often reach out to RFW coordinators for recommendations on how to navigate certain crisis situations, to discuss growing trends amongst library visitors, as well as staying up to date on all programs and resources available currently for their guests.

It is worth noting the momentum of the RFW initiative, including outcomes related to business recruitment and engagement, was impacted by the onset of Covid-19 and the subsequent social distancing practices, including a statewide lockdown that is still impacting businesses today. The RFW initiative was able to successfully pivot its efforts quickly to provide an array of digital resources to best meet the needs of businesses impacted by Covid-19 and will continue to build out this capacity through the use of CARES Act resources. In addition, as a result of the

disruption in programming, grantees will have the potential to continue to serve their communities and RFW businesses with CDFA funding through June 2021.

IV. Conclusion

Today – as a state, within our communities and workplaces – we are engaged in conversations around substance use and mental health in ways that many may not have imagined only a few years ago. New Hampshire is taking on these challenges together, working to ensure impacted individuals, families and employers are empowered to access resources, create healthy and productive workplaces, and break down the barriers of stigma.

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic and challenges that any pilot initiative would face when engaging the business sector in unfamiliar policies and practices, the program continues to be immensely successful in supporting employers and employees, as well as identifying promising practices for engaging businesses to create workplaces that support alcohol and other drug use prevention, treatment and recovery. In many ways, the pandemic has further illuminated the need for RFW programming and services as employers and employees alike adjust to a Covid-19 environment. These include significant new stressors on individuals mental health and well-being, as well as concerns about an increasing number of opioid-related overdoses and for those maintaining their recovery.¹³

The Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative demonstrates New Hampshire's ability to work with public and private partners to collaboratively solve challenges facing our communities. Through the RFW initiative and pilot program, NH has built a model that connects businesses to local, community-based resources – enabling employers and employees to access critical services where they live and work, create positive changes, and eliminate barriers for those impacts by substance use.

WHAT WORKED?

- Providing businesses with a “menu” of training options to meet the specific needs of each business
- Tailoring the approach and working with businesses of all sizes and types at their unique level of readiness to articulate what RFW means to them
- Creating and utilizing a working partnership between the community organizations and the Recovery Friendly Advisors
- Leveraging previously scheduled employee/staff meetings to provide training
- Spending time building relationships and leveraging existing relationships in the community to engage businesses
- Providing resources (print material, online material, trainings, conferences)
- Communicating with businesses frequently

At **Huggins Hospital** the Human Resources Director has provided a conference room on campus that the employees use to meet daily on their lunch break to have recovery-related meetings. Huggins Hospital has also been able to retain employees due to their open dialogue about recovery and what they can do to assist in that process.

Future of the Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative

Moving forward, the RFW initiative will continue to increase the number of businesses engaged with this effort, as well as focus on enhancing the quality of the business experience and level of engagement. To assist in these efforts, a strong evaluation plan to track outcomes that align with our logic model will be implemented. Outcomes

¹³ American Medical Association. (2020). *Issue brief: Reports of increases in opioid related overdose and other concerns during COVID pandemic*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/2020-09/issue-brief-increases-in-opioid-related-overdose.pdf>.

to be tracked include: decreases in absenteeism, increases in productivity, improvements in retention and recruitment efforts, as well as increases in knowledge concerning SUDs and other training topics, and decreases in stigma among workplaces. Over time, the RFW initiative will also track other factors, potentially including insurance claims data and workers comp claims.

The RFW initiative needs to continue to be multifaceted. This includes providing direct support and technical assistance to business partners in establishing and maintaining RFW designation. The RFAs are well positioned to serve as the key point of contact for each business engaged in this effort to guide them through the designation process and effectively connect them with the customized resources, local connections, and services to meet their needs throughout their involvement with the RFW initiative. In addition, it will be important to continue to partner with Recovery Community Organizations, Public Health Networks, and other local resources on trainings, policy development, and direct recovery supports and services for employers and employees.

Riverworks Tavern in Newmarket have been a very valuable member of the RFW initiative since their designation. The owner and management team at the Riverworks has created a very open culture and work environment. They employ several people that are in recovery or living with substance use disorder. Through this openness and collaboration between the Riverworks and Recovery Friendly Workplace we have been able to increase recovery capital directly for two employees, provide immediate crisis navigation support for management, provide assistance and guidance to help an employee stay employed and educate staff and the community on recovery and SUD to better support the staff.

Public Health Networks have significant expertise in prevention, policy, education, and training related strategies, while RCOs have the qualifications to provide direct recovery support services, including telephone/digital supports, recovery meetings, peer assisted recovery/recovery coaching, and related supports.

Additional key elements to be implemented and expanded over the coming years include the following:

- Overall strategic planning process in partnership with RFW Advisory Council and key stakeholders
- Full digitization of existing in-person training modules
- Development and digitization of new training topics as requested by business community
- Exploration and strategic planning concerning alignment with other related efforts, including Work United
- Development of systems and processes to formally expand initiative across country
- Service to Science process to become an evidence-based strategy
- Ongoing identification of resources to support core Governor's RFW initiative, public health networks, recovery community organizations, nonprofit organizations, as well as incentives that encourage business participation.

"Some workplaces have a large number of employees and several shifts per day, others have a smaller workforce at work only one shift. The way we presented our materials and built recovery-friendly practices was different based on the environment & pre-existing workplace culture. We learned to be effective. We needed to conduct a comprehensive effort in our implementation activities for outreach using multiple angles: email, mail, media, partner websites, through conferences, social media, newspapers, chambers of commerce, online materials, etc. In some cases, we could dive in deeper with policy work and beginning supervisor & employee training. It was dependent on the situation, and it didn't always move in a forward direction. Sometimes we lost touch with employers and sometimes they took a break due to other obligations. In these instances we were flexible and responsive to meet their agenda, not our own."

— Reality Check

Based on key learnings from the RFW initiative and pilot programs to-date, success for the initiative requires gaining initial support

and buy-in from business leaders. Once the business leaders are on-board, it is important to proceed with flexibility, variation and customization in how the RFW initiative is delivered. The RFW initiative is most successful as a system of support to businesses which includes both the RFAs along with the programming and services offered by local, community-based organizations. To continue to build on the momentum and success of the program, continued funding is needed to support additional RFAs as well as community-based partner organizations with dedicated RFW staff as the initiative grows.