



# Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative



**We do recover.**

**Combating  
Stigma**

**Providing  
Resources**

**Supporting  
Employers**

## Toolkit for Employers



**ProjectHOW**  
Healing Our Workforce

**Golden LEAF**  
FOUNDATION



Appalachian  
Regional  
Commission



# Recovery Friendly Workplace Toolkit



Wilkes Recovery Revolution is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to create a community where recovery is possible through restoring hope, repairing lives, and rebuilding community.

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Thank you for taking this step towards learning more about Recovery Friendly Workplaces (RFWs) and their critical role in fighting the disease of addiction.

The bottom line is that recovery is good for business. In this toolkit we will share statistics on the economic, environmental, and social benefits of becoming an RFW, among other benefits that will be felt community-wide.

Together, we can fight the stigma associated with individuals who use substances and those in recovery, address barriers to employment and retention in our communities, and support each unique path toward wellness.

We can't do this without you—so again, we say, **THANK YOU!**

An employee in recovery saves their employer an average of \$8,500 per year

## Benefits of being a Recovery Friendly Workplace (RFW):

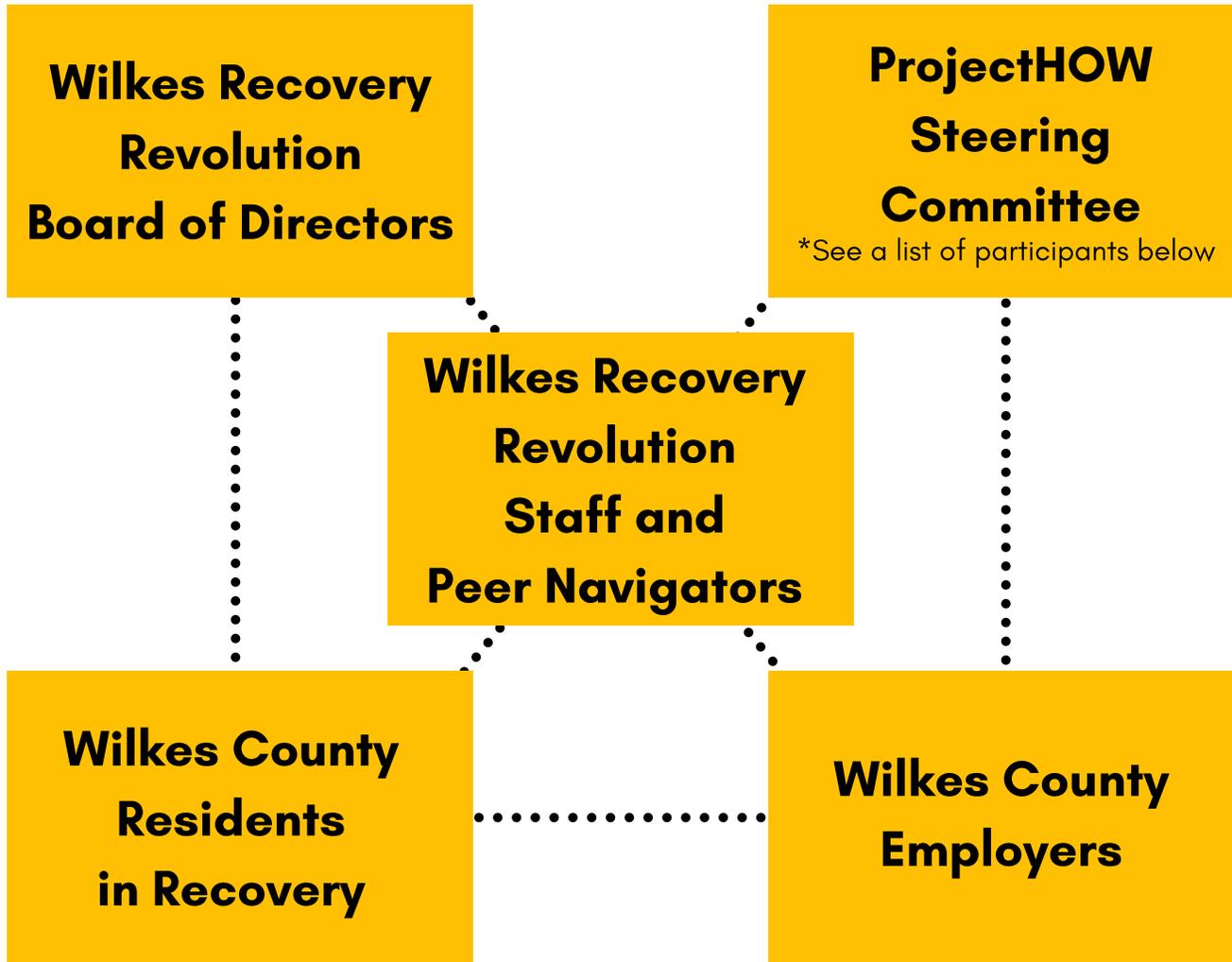
- Increased productivity
- Less absenteeism
- Healthier, happier employees
- A Recovery Friendly Advocate (RFA)
- Better retention/less turnover
- Community Partnerships/Exposure
- Established avenues for action if an employee shows signs for concern

70% of people who use substances are employed. Employers are incurring the costs.

1 in 3 people are affected by substance use personally or through the use of loved ones.



## Organizational Outline



## Steering Committee Members – Support for ProjectHOW

- Office of the Town Manager of Wilkesboro
- Office of the Town Manager of N. Wilkesboro
- NCWorks Career Centers
- The Health Foundation, INC.
- Sunrise Community for Recovery and Wellness
- Wilkes Regional Medical Center
- Wilkes Public Health Dental Clinic
- Goodwill Project Re-entry
- Goodwill Industries of Northwest NC
- NCDHHS Div. of Vocational Rehabilitation
- High Country Workforce Development Board
- Wilkes EDC
- Wilkes County Chamber of Commerce
- Finley Properties
- Mountain Health Solutions
- Wilkes Community College
- Vaya Health
- NC Department of Commerce
- Lowe's
- Tyson
- Daymark
- Dom Bakeries
- The Dispensary
- Goodnight Brothers
- Unified City Church
- Project Lazarus
- Promise Resource Network

## Process of Engagement

### Phase 1

#### Letter of Intent

Write a letter of intent stating your interest in becoming a Recovery Friendly Workplace (RFW). Preferably, this will be on your company's letterhead. Samples and templates are available.

### Phase 2

#### Orientation

One-on-one sessions or group events assessing your needs, introducing your toolkit and your Recovery Friendly Advocate (RFA), reviewing language and policies for a RFW, and more. This is customizable to each employer's needs.

### Phase 3

#### Implementation

Complete all requirements on the Initial Requirements Checklist, establish a working relationship with your RFA, address any barriers or concerns that may have been missed in initial planning during orientation.

## Designation and Stickers

Display this sticker in your window, in your office, on your website and on job postings!



Your employees and your customers in recovery now feel seen, welcome, and appreciated!



# Recovery Friendly Workplace Toolkit

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### **What is a Recovery Friendly Workplace (RFW)?**

A Recovery Friendly Workplace supports the health, wellness, and safety of its employees by educating about substance use and addiction, creating an environment conducive to the journey of recovery, and working to reduce the stigma often associated with the disease of addiction, substance use, and recovery.

### **What is the cost of participation?**

Our RFW program, this toolkit, and access to a Recovery Friendly Advocate at Wilkes Recovery Revolution (WRR) are free of charge. This also includes specialized services for successful implementation, connection with an organization of local agencies and businesses, and referrals for employment where appropriate.

### **What is a Recovery Friendly Advocate (RFA)?**

An RFA is an advocate who works in the recovery community. Whether they are staff at Wilkes Recovery Revolution or a peer navigator working directly with individuals in recovery, your RFA will be available to answer questions, support you in implementing and customizing your RFW toolkit, and more.

### **What are the benefits of working with individuals in recovery?**

There are many benefits to working with individuals in recovery. First, there are measurable economic benefits. Whether it is improved productivity, less days out of work, or increased job retention, hiring someone in recovery comes with savings for your organization. Further, the values of recovery - accountability, holistic wellness, assessing avenues for help when the need arises - are social benefits you will see affecting positive change, too.

### **Who is Wilkes Recovery Revolution and what do they do?**

Wilkes Recovery Revolution is a recovery community organization (RCO). An RCO works with individuals in recovery to re-establish connections in the community that may have been broken in a struggle with SUD. WRR supports Phases Transitional Housing, Revolution Thrift Store, R3 Recovery Center, Fresh Start Farm, Wilkes Fresh Mobile Market, and ProjectHOW-Healing Our Workforce, which is the project whose funding supports this program and toolkit. We are funded by Golden Leaf Foundation, Appalachian Regional Commission, and private donors.

### **Will I have to change policies or commit to hiring people in recovery?**

No. We are not asking that you change any specific policies. We do ask, however, that you use the information provided to you through engagement with this initiative to review your policies and ensure that they value the recovery process, that they do not contribute to the stigma surrounding those affected by substance use, and that they honor your employees' health, wellness, and ability to access available resources. In terms of hiring people in recovery, chances are you already have hired out of the recovery population and we don't encourage that you ask people to self-identify in the application or interview process. This program is designed to honor recovery, combat stigma, and provide resource navigation to employees and their loved ones.



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), cont.

## What will we receive after designation?

- **Support in tough situations with employees**
  - **Free contracted peer support services**
  - **Language and communication review**
  - **Free training for your staff and management - this toolkit, recovery coach, language matters, education on prevention**
- **Resources to share with job applicants and employees**
  - **Quick Reference Resource Guide included in this toolkit**
  - **A Recovery Friendly Advocate who can assist in finding additional resources as needed**
  - **Direct connections with resource agencies**
  - **Monthly emails with tips and info on upcoming training**
- **A network of like-minded organizations**
  - **Connect with other employers involved with this initiative**
  - **Receive support from other Recovery Friendly Workplaces**
  - **Choose how involved you want to be - there is no requirement for engagement with our initiative**
- **Exclusive access to job fairs, services, events, & resources**
  - **Monthly emails, free harm reduction supplies, networking events, feature on our website, and this toolkit!**

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), cont.

### How can we engage with this initiative if we can't change any of our policies?

#### **Raise Awareness**

About substance use and its risks, about stigma and the ways it affects those who use substances, those in recovery, and those suffering from mental health concerns.

#### **Promote**

Your workplace may have restrictions another does not. Help us affect change in our community!

#### **Educate**

We can provide your staff with training, posters, and data. You can politely interrupt stigma and share info!

#### **Create a Healthy Workplace**

Open and clear lines of communication, resource connection, evidence-based practices for addressing mental health needs, and frequent review of policies and practices support healthy workplaces!

#### **Sticker**

Display your sticker to say you are recovery-friendly!

#### **Innovate**

This work is new but very important. We love working with employers to make it their own!



# Recovery Friendly Workplace Introduction

## Checklist



Follow this checklist to ensure your enrollment in the RFW program. Don't hesitate to reach out to your RFA for help. You are taking the first steps to ensure the wellness of your employees. Thank you, and congratulations!

\*This Checklist was adapted from the New Hampshire Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative.

## Initial Required Components

- Submit a letter of intent and participate in orientation.
- Ensure senior staff and HR management receive trainings and information.
- Make a written declaration to all employees and staff. Sample text is available.

## Additional Components

- Provide employees with information and resources to promote their overall health and wellness, as well as that of their family and loved ones. We can help with this.
- Refer employees with signs of substance use disorder to WRR / local resources.
- Review your substance use policy annually - consider being a Drug Free Workplace.
- Educate employees on the components and risks of substance use and addiction.
- Track your completion of this checklist for the review of WRR and other agencies.

## Optional Components

- Create a taskforce to incorporate RFW values into existing health/safety practices.
- Participate in one recovery or prevention based community activity per year.
- Work with your assigned RFA to create RFW protocol specific to your workplace.
- Identify a peer based communication system for employees seeking recovery.