



CITY OF PROVIDENCE

7.4 RECOVERY FRIENDLY WORKPLACE POLICY

Purpose

This policy establishes the City of Providence as a Recovery Friendly Workplace (RFW), in alignment with the Rhode Island Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative. This Recovery Friendly Workplace Policy affirms our commitment to fostering a safe, healthy, and supportive workplace culture for employees in or seeking recovery from substance use disorder (SUD) and/or mental health challenges. Our goal is to reduce stigma, promote recovery, and enhance productivity and retention through inclusion and compassion.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, interns, fellows and contractors working for or on behalf of the City of Providence.

Nothing in this policy shall supersede, modify, or diminish any rights, benefits, or obligations contained within applicable collective bargaining agreements (CBAs), or laws. In the event of a conflict between this policy and a CBA, the CBA shall prevail for covered employees. For all other employees not covered by a CBA, this policy shall govern.

Definitions

Recovery: A process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential through the rehabilitation from substance abuse.

Recovery Friendly Workplace (RFW): A Recovery Friendly Workplace (RFW) promotes individual wellness by creating work environments that support people recovering from substance use disorder and those impacted by it. RFWs encourage the success of all employees by adopting policies and practices that reduce stigma and support recovery.

Substance Use Disorder (SUD): A medical condition defined by the recurrent use of alcohol and/or drugs causing clinically significant impairment.

Fair Chance Employment: is a commitment to equitable hiring and workplace practices that reduce barriers for individuals in recovery from substance use disorders, including those with prior criminal justice involvement.

Policy

The City of Providence supports employees experiencing substance use challenges by ensuring access to resources, raising awareness through education, and cultivating a stigma-free and inclusive work environment.

1. Guiding Principles

A. **Non-Discrimination and Confidentiality**

1. All employees will be treated with dignity and respect regardless of their health status.
2. Employees will not be discriminated against for past or present substance use or for being in recovery.
3. All employee health information, including issues related to substance use or recovery, will be treated confidentially in accordance with HIPAA, ADA, and other applicable laws.

B. **Supportive Policies**

1. Employees may use all applicable leaves including FMLA, RIFFMLA and other applicable City leaves of absence.
2. Employees are encouraged to seek assistance through the confidential Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) for treatment or recovery-related needs. Contact the Employee Assistance Program, Carelon Behavioral Health www.carelonwellbeing.com/cityofprovidence or via phone 833-556-7768.



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3. Call 9-8-8. The 988 Lifeline provides 24/7 free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones.
4. Visit www.PreventOverdoseRI.org for local treatment and resource information.
5. Partnerships with local recovery organizations will be fostered.

C. Education and Awareness

1. Use recovery-friendly, person-first language in all internal and external communications.
2. The City will regularly offer voluntary training and workshops on substance use, mental health, and recovery to reduce stigma and promote inclusion.

2. Safe and Healthy Workplace

- A. The City maintains a drug and alcohol-free workplace policy as mandated by federal, state and local laws, but that policy will be implemented alongside this supportive approach.
- B. Employees in recovery are encouraged to share their needs for leave of absence or applicable accommodation.

3. Fair Chance Employment

- A. Complies with "Ban the Box" laws by delaying inquiries into an applicant's criminal history until after the initial stages of the hiring process, ensuring that all candidates are first evaluated based on their qualifications and experience.
- B. Candidates will be assessed holistically, taking into account factors such as rehabilitation efforts and the time elapsed since an offense, in accordance with the City's Criminal Background Disqualification policy, which details disqualifying offenses and their applicable timeframes.
- C. Upholding anti-discrimination protections for individuals in recovery, in alignment with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the City's commitment to an inclusive workplace.

4. Responsibilities

A. Employee Responsibilities:

1. Seek support through the available resources, including EAPs and other community support programs.
2. Communicate their needs for leave or accommodations in a timely and respectful manner.
3. Promote a recovery-friendly workplace by fostering inclusivity and reducing stigma.
4. Participate in anonymous feedback mechanisms to help the City continuously improve its recovery-friendly practices.

B. Manager Responsibilities:

1. Supervisors and managers will support employees by connecting them with the Department of People and Culture to access available resources, support services, and reasonable accommodation.
2. Maintaining confidentiality regarding employees' recovery status or needs.
3. Participating in ongoing training on recovery-friendly workplace practices.

C. Department of People and Culture (DPC) Responsibilities:

1. Ensure recovery-friendly policies are integrated into organizational procedures and consistently applied across departments.
2. Develop and deliver training for supervisors and managers on recovery support, stigma reduction, fair chance hiring, and applicable leave or accommodation.
3. Monitor adherence to applicable laws and City policies related to fair chance employment, disability accommodations, and confidentiality.
4. Collaborate with supervisors and managers to connect employees in recovery with internal and external support resources, such as EAPs, community support programs, or community services.



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5. Safeguard employee privacy in accordance with HIPAA, ADA, and other relevant laws when handling sensitive information related to recovery or health status.
6. Promote a stigma-free, inclusive workplace culture through proactive communication, events, and engagement aligned with recovery-friendly principles.
7. Track outcomes related to recovery-friendly initiatives and recommend improvements based on data and employee feedback.

5. **Compliance**

- A. The City of Providence is committed to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment for individuals in recovery. Employees will not be subject to retaliation, discrimination, or adverse employment consequences for voluntarily disclosing a substance use disorder, mental health condition, or recovery status, or for seeking support or accommodations.
- B. All employees are expected to uphold the principles of a recovery-friendly workplace. Any violation of this policy including, but not limited to, discriminatory remarks, stigmatizing behavior, or breach of confidentiality will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment in compliance with the City's Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy and Discipline Policy.
- C. Concerns or incidents related to non-compliance should be reported to the Department of People and Culture. Reports will be handled promptly, confidentially, and in accordance with applicable laws and City policies and procedures.

Related Policies:

Non-Discrimination and Harassment Policy
Whistleblower – Anti-Retaliation Policy
Employee Reporting and HR Hotline
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) – Reasonable Accommodations Policy
HIPAA Policy
Drug & Alcohol-Free Workplace Policy
Discipline Policy
Code of Conduct
Open Door Policy
Criminal Background Disqualification Policy
Leave of Absence Policy
Paid Time Off Policy
Non-Union Sick Bank Time Donation Program