

# **How Employers can Impact the Addiction Crisis *through the Recovery Friendly Workplace model***

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# Speakers

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# Learning Objectives

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1. Describe factors that influence the development of substance use disorders.
2. Define “Recovery”
3. Describe the Recovery Friendly Workplaces model and current pilot.
4. Q&A/ Feedback Session



# Maryland's Office of Overdose Response

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- Coordinates with state agencies
- Coordinates with local partners (*Overdose Prevention Teams*)
- Leads development of state's strategic priorities
- Grant funding to support high-priority projects
- Public outreach on behalf of the Governor



# Priorities

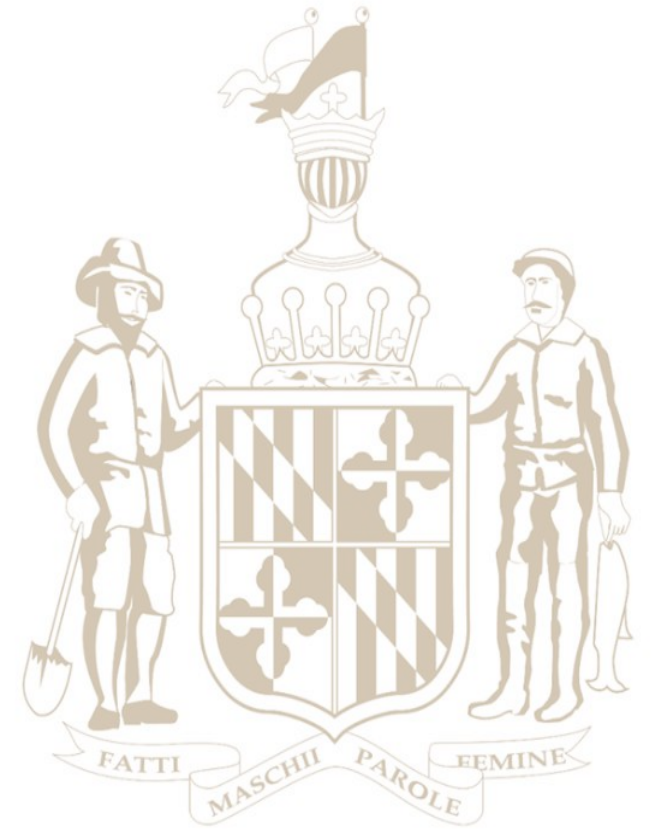
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PREVENTION • HARM REDUCTION • TREATMENT • RECOVERY • PUBLIC SAFETY



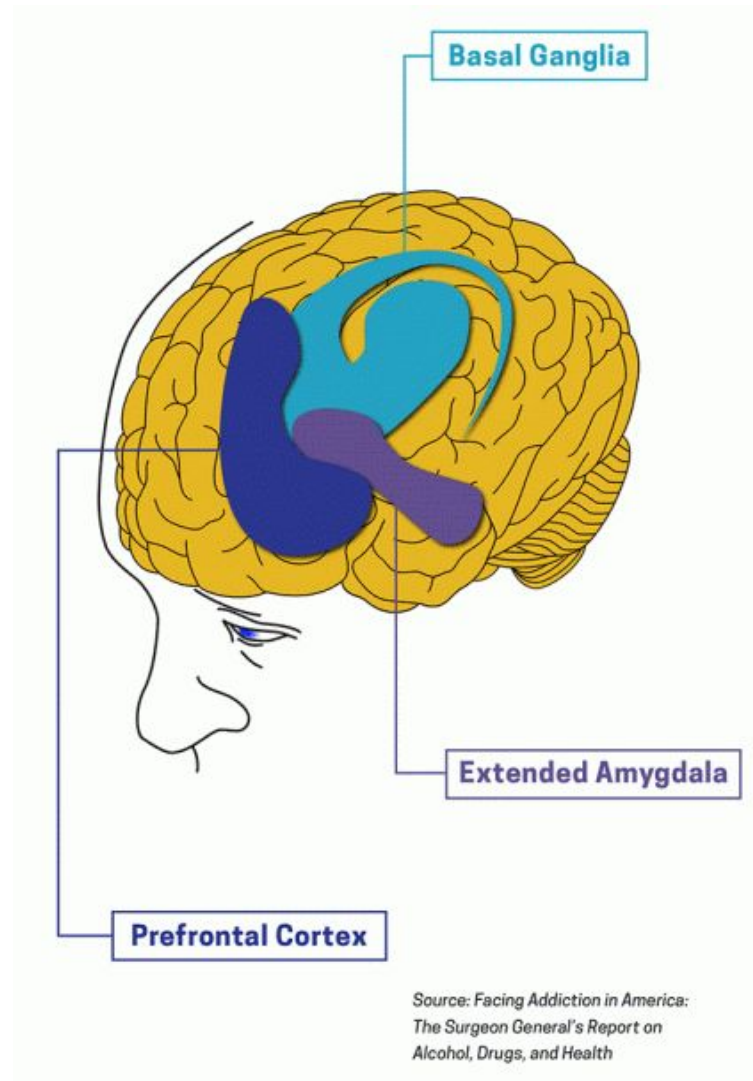
# What factors influence the development of substance use disorders?

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# Neurobiological Basis of Substance Use Disorder

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# Social Determinants of Health

Conditions in which people are born, grow, work, learn, worship, play, and age; the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life.

*“These circumstances are shaped by the distribution of money, power, and resources at the global, national, and local levels”  
(WHO, 2019)*



Source: <https://hitconsultant.net/2019/03/18/social-determinants-of-health-sdoh-collection>



# The social determinants of health



## Economic Stability

- Employment
- Income
- Expenses
- Debt
- Medical bills
- Support



## Neighborhood and Physical Environment

- Housing
- Transportation
- Safety
- Parks
- Playgrounds
- Walkability



## Education

- Literacy
- Language
- Early childhood education
- Vocational training
- Higher education



## Food

- Hunger
- Access to healthy options



## Community and Social Context

- Social integration
- Support systems
- Community engagement
- Discrimination



## Health Care System

- Health coverage
- Provider availability
- Provider bias
- Provider cultural and linguistic competency
- Quality of care

## Health Outcomes

Mortality

Morbidity

Life Expectancy

Health Care Expenditures

Health Status

Functional Limitations



# Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

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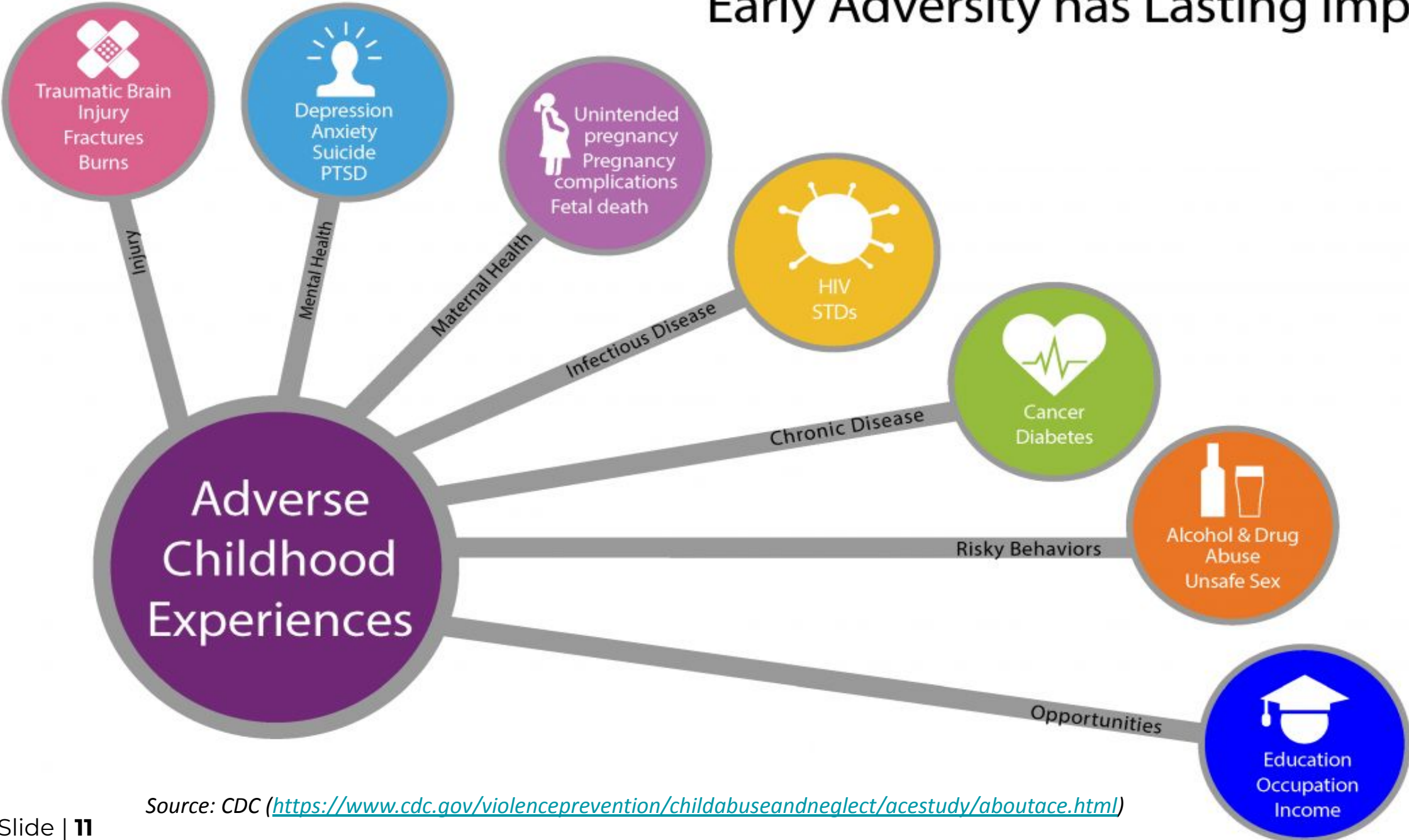
- Unfortunately common, >60% of adults report one or more ACEs
- Can lead to increased risk for SUD
- Some groups are more likely to experience ACEs
  - People of color
  - People without a high school diploma
  - People with income of < \$15,000 / year
- Each additional Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) increases relapse rate for opioids by 17%
- Adolescents with PTSD are 9 times more likely to develop substance use disorders

*International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies . (2017). Traumatic Stress and Substance Abuse Problems. Oakbrook Terrace, IL; American Institutes for Research (2022). Preventing Intergenerational Transmission of Substance Use Disorder.*



Maryland's Office of  
**Overdose Response**

# Early Adversity has Lasting Impacts



Source: CDC (<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/cestudy/aboutace.html>)

Recovery:  
a process of change through which  
individuals improve their health and  
wellness, live self-directed lives, and  
strive to reach their full potential.

- SAMHSA



# Multiple Pathways of Recovery

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- Clinical pathways
- Non-clinical pathways
- Self-managed pathways
- Behavioral therapy
- Pharmacotherapy
- Faith-based
- Support Groups

Can include but not limited to:

- Abstinence
- Harm reduction / Moderation
- Twelve-step
- SMART Recovery
- Recovery Dharma

<https://facesandvoicesofrecovery.org/2019/09/20/pathways-of-recovery/>



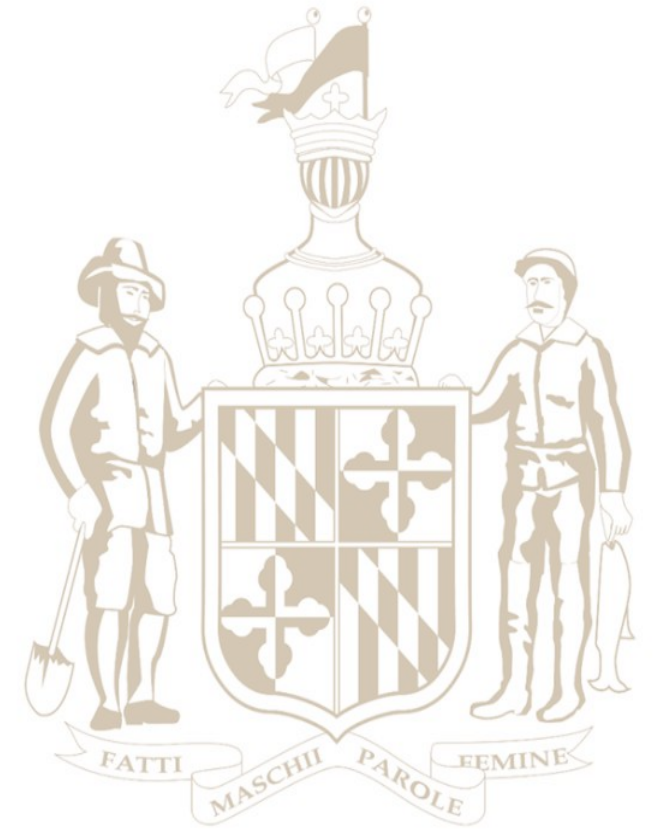
# What is Recovery Capital?



- Internal and external resources necessary to achieve and sustain recovery from alcohol and other drug problems.
- Differs between individuals and can change over time.



# Recovery Friendly WORKPLACE



*A project of the Dept. of Labor and MDH Behavioral Health Administration*



# What is a Recovery Friendly Workplace?

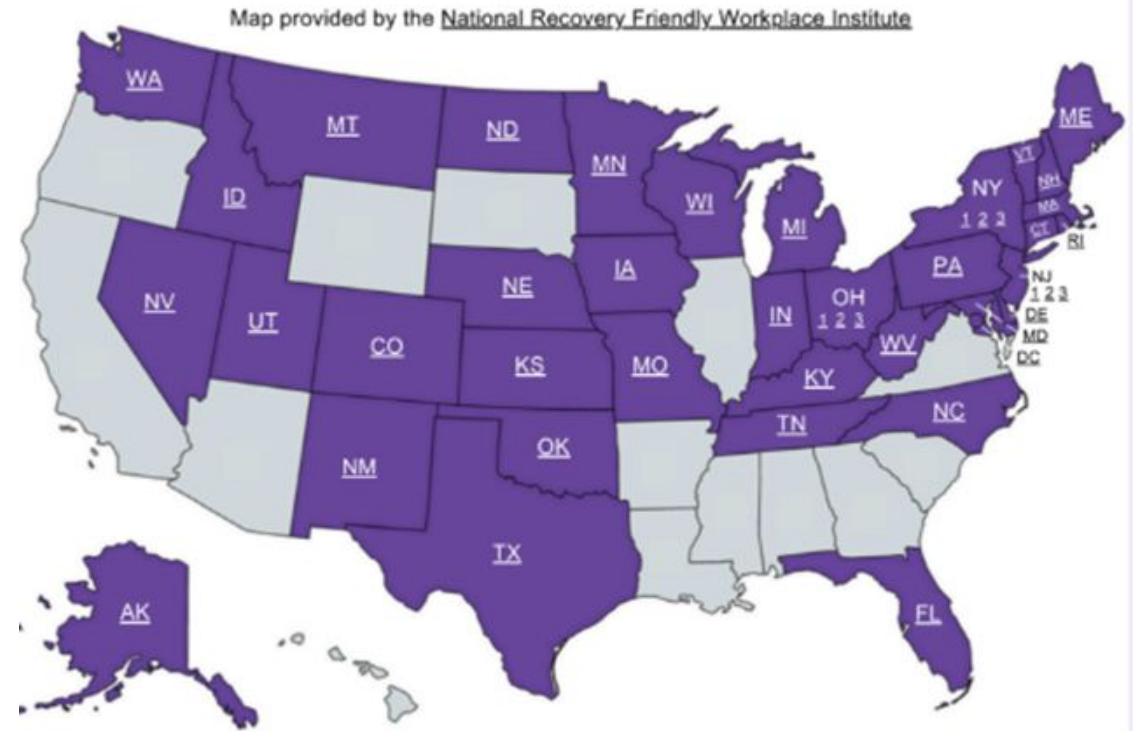
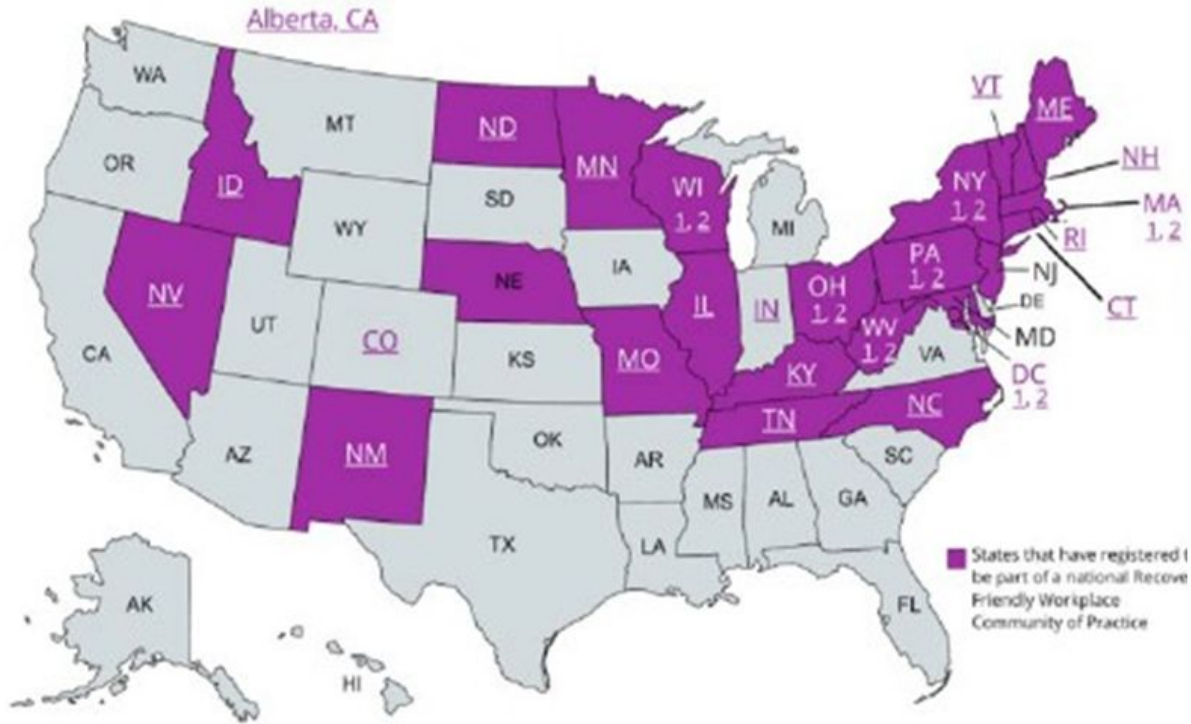
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A Recovery Friendly Workplace strives to create a healthy and safe workplace by providing education and support for employees, at all levels, who are directly or indirectly impacted by substance use and/or mental health challenges.

*“In a Recovery-friendly workplace, I hope that coworkers are **educated** on the disease aspect of addiction. I don’t want either party to feel like they’re walking on eggshells around one another. Being treated like a part of something has allowed me to expand my goals... It is my wish that every workplace was like this. **Kindness, compassion, and support** are key to any recovery-friendly workplace.”*

*– a Frederick County Employee in Recovery*

# RFW Model Nationwide



November 2021



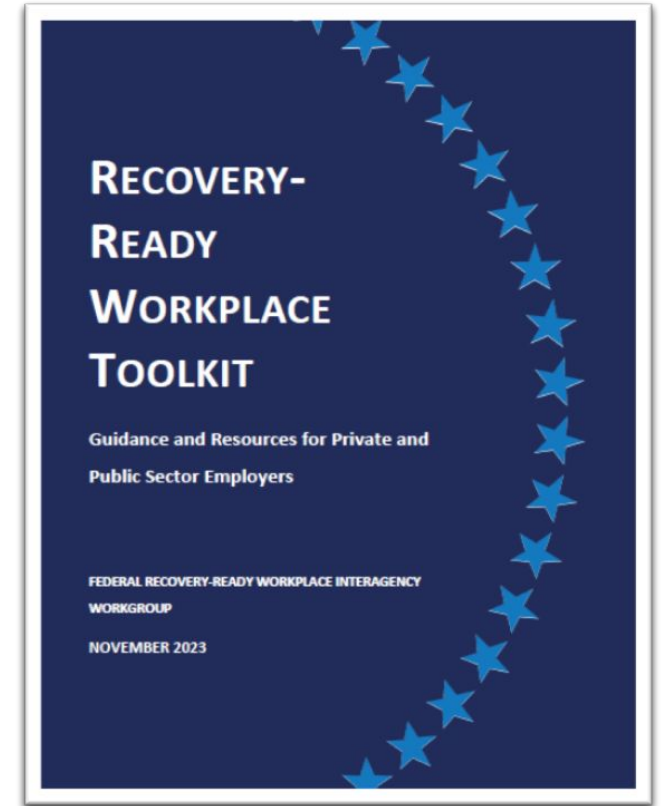
April 2025



# Federal Support

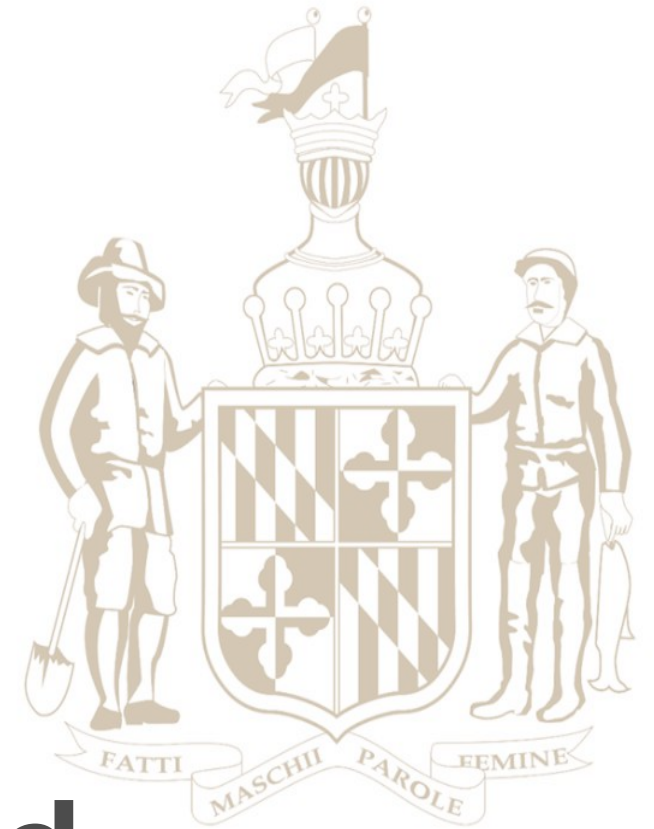
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- White House announced creation of the Recovery Ready Workplace Institute, a national source of resources, support, and growth of the model.
- Recovery-Ready Workplace Toolkit: Guidance and Resources for Private and Public Sector Employees
- RFW Model Legislation for State Governments



# Recovery Works – Thriving at Work & Beyond

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The benefits of RFWs for both employers and employees

# Work Supports Recovery



Employment & Income Positively Impact Recovery
Reduction in return to use <sup>1</sup>
Improved ability to transition from residential to community treatment <sup>2</sup>
High rates of abstinence <sup>1*</sup>
Increased quality of life, self-esteem, and happiness <sup>3</sup>

*\*Abstinence is not a goal of RFW but can be a benefit to those for whom abstinence is their goal*

# The Business Case for RFWs



## Recovery Impacts on Employers & Economy

Fewer days of unscheduled leave

Lower rates of turnover

Reduction in productivity loss

Decreased health care costs\*

*\*when compared to employees with untreated Substance Use Disorder*

# Recovery Works – It Just Makes Cents!

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## Most U.S. Adults with Substance Use Disorder are Employed

In 2022, 30.6 million adult Americans with a Substance Use Disorder were employed (78% FTE)<sup>1</sup>

## Untreated Substance Use Disorder is Costly

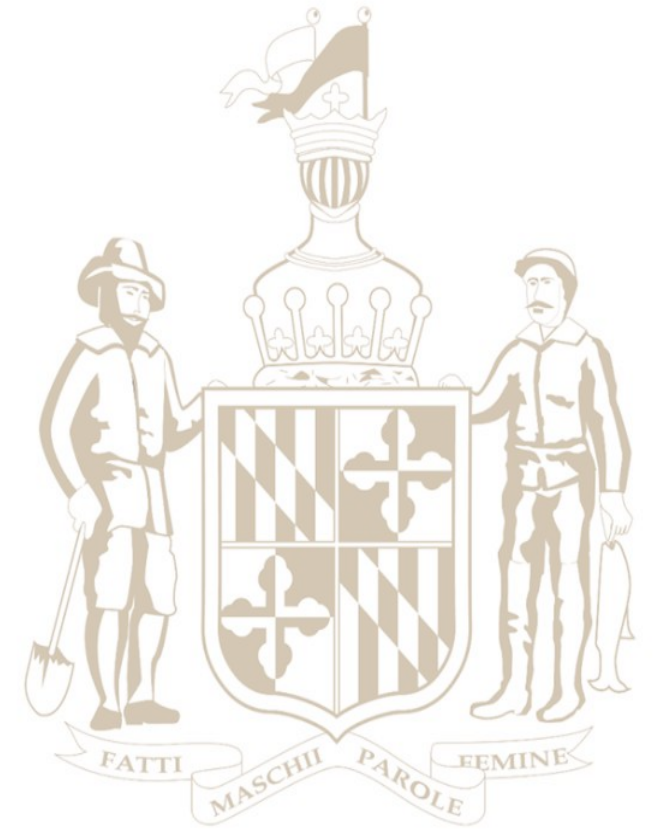
A CDC study found that opioid use disorder and fatal overdose cost the U.S. \$1.02 trillion in 2017<sup>2</sup>

Employers that support mental health see a **return of \$4 for every dollar invested** in mental health treatment. (National Safety Council)

Each employee in recovery **saves employers from \$1,155 annually per capita to \$8,466 annually per capita**, depending on the industry sector. (Goplerud et al., 2017)

*“If you have an employee with cancer, you’re gonna let that employee go for chemotherapy or radiation appointments. And if you have someone who suffers from SUD, you give them time to go to meetings, or mental health appointments.”*

*- RFW Designated Employer*



# Maryland's RFW Model

Maryland Department of Labor's model and current pilot

<https://labor.maryland.gov/employment/rfworkplace.shtml>

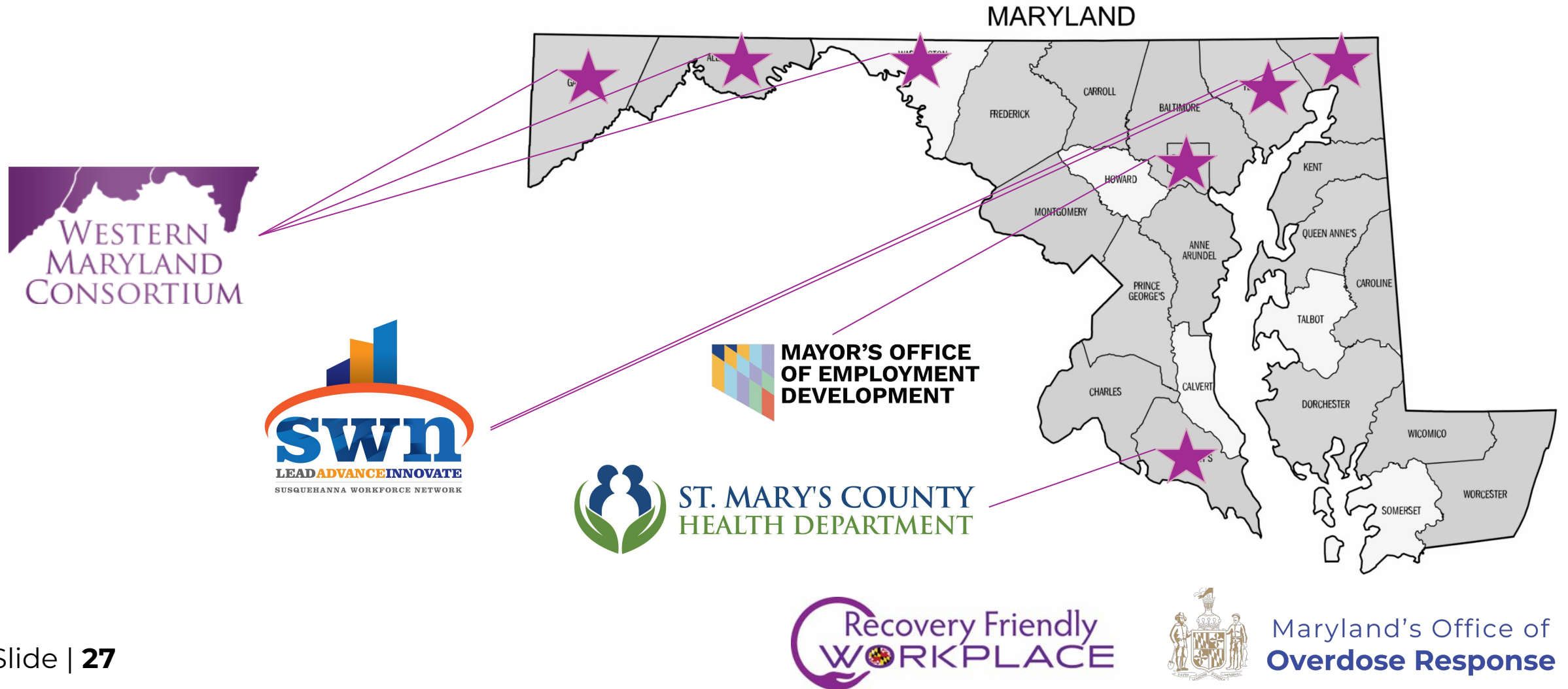
# Maryland's RFW Model

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Labor was approved to receive \$1.7m from MDH BHA via SAMHSA State Opioid Response IV funding to implement the RFW Pilot Program through September 2027.

# Maryland's RFW Pilot



# Outcomes through March 2025

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Businesses onboarded as RFW	33
Employees impacted by Recovery Friendly policies and practices through their employer's participation in the RFW program	1710
Individuals Served who have been impacted by OUD	192
Participants who receive supportive services and/or recovery services	128
Individuals placed into unsubsidized employment at RFW-designated employer or employer working toward designation	32
Individuals referred to RFA by behavioral health provider	77



*When asked about RFW's impact to the community, one RFW designated employer said,*

*“The rippling effect is astronomical!”*

# A Tiered Approach



# Role of the Recovery Friendly Advisor

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At no point are employers alone in determining which steps to undertake and resources to offer. Their Recovery Friendly Advisor is:

- A **guide** to help them through the designation process.
- A **resource broker** for employees who may want additional support.
- An **expert** in their region's local recovery community.
- An **accountability partner** to help them keep track of where they are in the designation process.

*“Recovery Friendly Workplaces goes along with our strategic planning.”*

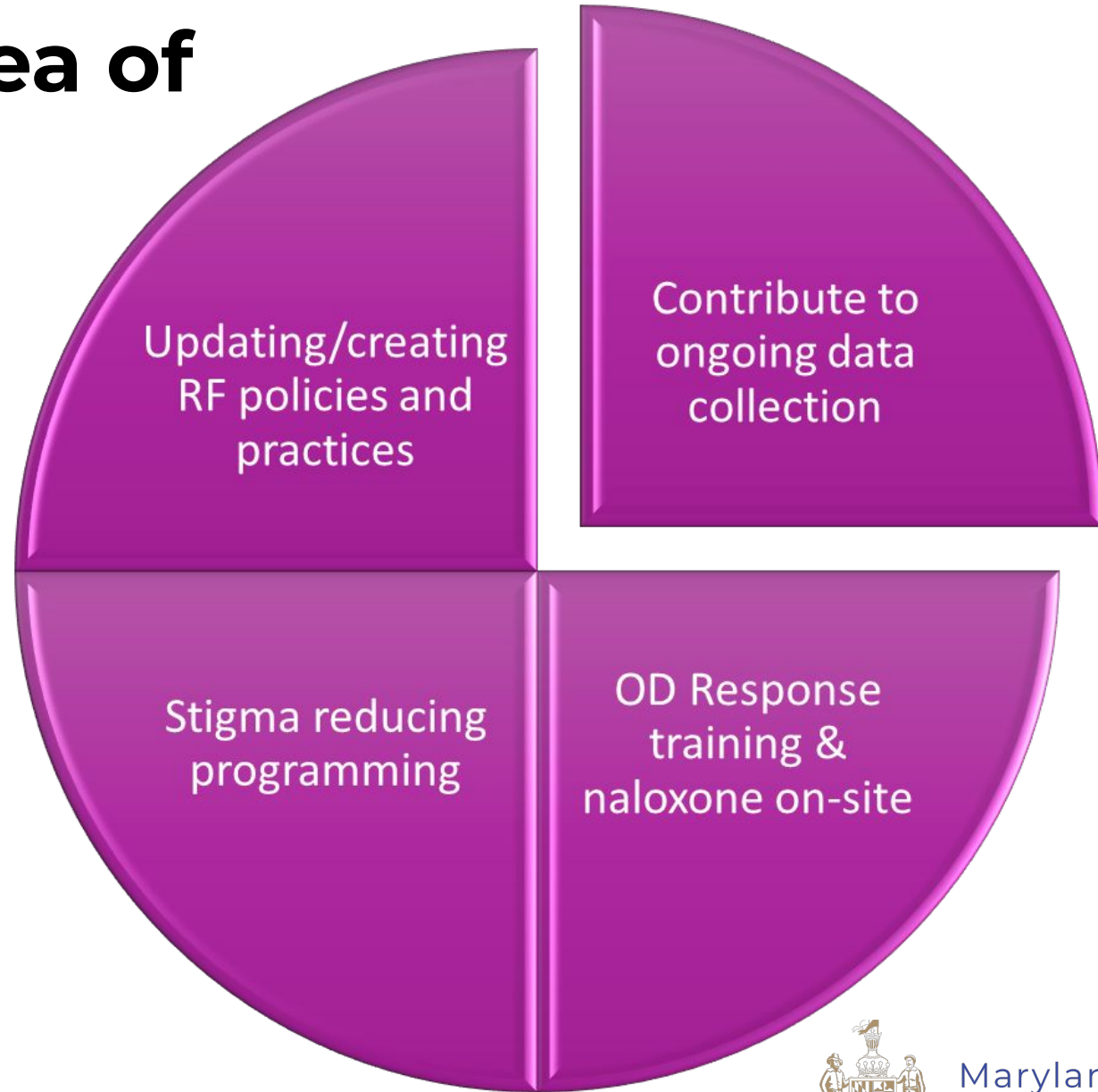
*- RFW Designated Employer*

# Key Activity Areas

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1. Ongoing data collection via surveys and communication with your Recovery Friendly Advisor.
2. Overdose response training for employees and have naloxone present in the workplace.
3. Stigma-reducing programming for the workplace.
4. Updating/creating policies/practices that address hiring, retention, and support of employees impacted by substance use.

# Choose Your Area of Need / Interest



# Getting Started: Bronze Designation

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## Contribute to ongoing data collection

1. Review the results of the Substance Use and Mental Health Cost Calculators.
2. Complete the Recovery Friendly Workplace Readiness Questionnaire.
3. Complete an orientation with a Recovery Friendly Advisor.



# Activity Area: Overdose Response

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**Provide overdose response training for employees and have naloxone present in the workplace.**

1. Staff training on overdose response and naloxone administration.
2. Have naloxone on-site and available to employees (i.e. first aid kits, co-located with AEDs, etc.)



# Activity Area: Reducing Stigma

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## Offer stigma-reducing programming for the workplace.

1. Visibly and accessibly post information for employees with available resources.
2. Provide stigma-reducing programming for all staff.

# Activity Area: Policies & Practices

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## Update/create policies/practice that address hiring, retention, and support of employees with a SUD.

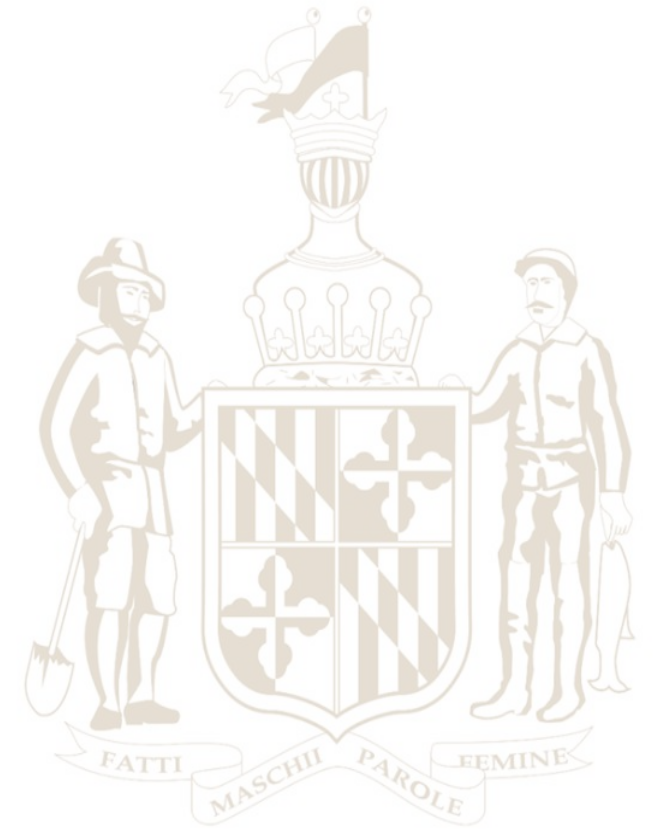
1. Identify, with support of RFA, how Recovery Friendly information and resources will be conveyed to employees.
2. Share current health insurance benefits and other available resources for substance use and/or mental health recovery to ensure employees have ready access to treatment, information, supports, and resources through the company.
3. Establish policies to address substance use as a health condition, emphasizing access to treatment and support and developing post-treatment return-to-work policies/plans and educate your staff on those policies.

# A Note on Recertification

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Workplaces that obtain recovery friendly designation will be encouraged to maintain their designation by completing recertification steps on an annual basis.

# Comparing the Drug Free Workplace Program and Recovery Friendly Workplaces



Federal guidance from the *Recovery-Ready Workplace Toolkit: Guidance and Resources for Private and Public Sector Employees*



## Drug Free Workplace Program Requirements

Prepare and distribute a formal drug-free workplace policy statement.

This statement should clearly prohibit the manufacture, use, and distribution of controlled substances in the workplace and spell out the specific consequences of violating this policy.

## Recovery Friendly Workplace Suggestions

Prepare a **combined DFWP and RFW workplace policy statement emphasizing that SUD is a health condition** and that it is the organization's **goal to help employees with SUD achieve and sustain recovery** so that they can fully contribute to the organization, their families and their communities.

The statement should **detail employee options for seeking information, resources, or help** regarding possible SUD.



# Get Involved

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1. Visit Maryland's RFW webpage for more information:  
<https://labor.maryland.gov/employment/rfworkplace.shtml>
2. Use National Safety Council (NSC) calculators to identify how much unsupported Mental Health and Substance Use concerns may be costing your organization:
  - [NORC, NSC Employer Substance Use Cost Calculator](#)
  - [NORC, NSC Mental Health Employer Cost Calculator](#)
3. Send interest to Recovery Friendly Workplace Program  
[dlwdaIRFW-labor@maryland.gov](mailto:dlwdaIRFW-labor@maryland.gov)
  - Follow-up will be in Fall 2025



# Resources Available in Maryland

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- **The Maryland Office of Harm Reduction** website contains information on where to find overdose response training, naloxone and other important resources  
(<https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/Pages/accessharmreduction.aspx>)
- Many local health departments are authorized as **Overdose Response Programs** by MDH, meaning they are able to *distribute naloxone for free*
- **Local health departments and local behavioral health authorities** are good places to turn for help and resources within your community
- **Findtreatment.gov** is a SAMHSA operated website that helps locate treatment providers by location. It can be filtered based on insurance type, treatment approaches, treatment setting, and more

<https://facesandvoicesofrecovery.org/2019/09/20/pathways-of-recovery/>



**988** | SUICIDE & CRISIS  
LIFELINE

# Need to talk?

We are here to listen and help with problems like stress, depression, anxiety, or drug and alcohol use. For you or a loved one.

**Free and confidential.**



**Call 988**



**Text 988**



**Chat online**

## **Call 988 Today**

Veterans - Press 1

Espanol - Marca 2

LGBTQ+ Youth - Press 3

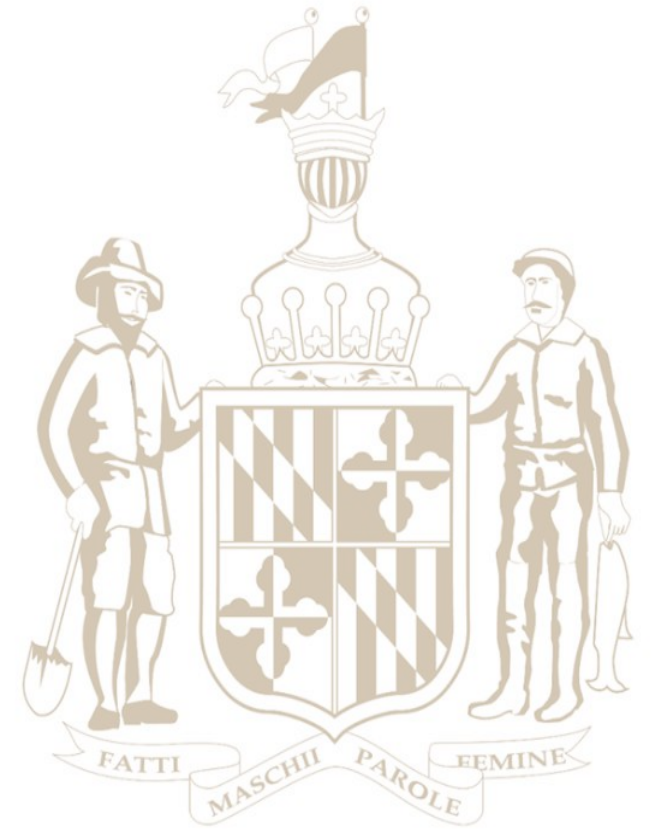
Learn more at  
<https://health.maryland.gov/bha/Pages/988md.aspx>



Maryland's Office of  
**Overdose Response**

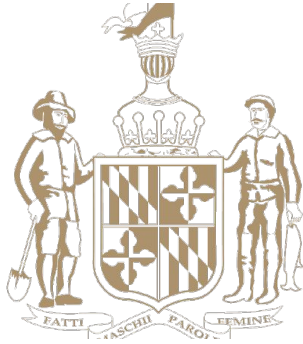
# Q&A/ Feedback Session

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# Stay In Contact

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## Maryland's Office of Overdose Response

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**100 Community Place, Crownsville, MD 21032**

**Web:** [StopOverdose.maryland.gov](http://StopOverdose.maryland.gov) | **Email:** [StopOverdose@maryland.gov](mailto:StopOverdose@maryland.gov)



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