

Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention

Recovery Friendly Workplace Work Group Meeting

September 16, 2024 via Zoom

Participants:

David Shapiro and Dave Secunda, Co-Chairs
Sarah Levine, Center for Health, Work and Environment
John Narine, Recovery Friendly Leader
Danny Nelson, City of Fort Collins
Deirdre Sage, Colorado Office of Employment First
Imo Succo, Indigenous Wellbriety Program
Kyle Tibbett, Gunnison County
Laura Allem, Advocates for Recovery Colorado
Maddy Smith, AGC of Colorado
Michele Koppinger, AmeriCorps/VISTA
James Noone, Denver University
Rachel Hoard, Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Kourtney O'Connor, Travelport
Liz Herod, Serenity Recovery Connection
Elizabeth Pace, Peer Assistance Services
Stephanie Halvorson, The Steadman Group
Alia Andrews, BHA
Colorado State University: Ryan Lizerbram, Fred Palmer
Face it Together: Wendy White, Megan Colwell
CDPHE: Chuck Storrs, DeAnna Mathis
Community Members: Jessica Angleson, Charles Cofer, Cole Cooper
Consortium: Gina Olberding, Jen Place, Eric Barker, Michael Davidson, Jessica Eaddy, Kristin Carpenter, Teresa Cantwell
Absent: See attached roster.

Co-Chair David Shapiro called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made to approve the July 2024 work group meeting minutes. Motion approved.

Marketing/Communications Update (David Shapiro):

Logo designs and company badges were reviewed during the meeting.

The following domain names were selected during the July work group meeting:

- corecoveryfriendlyworkplace.org (the main website)
- corecoveryfriendlyworkplace.com (will redirect to the main website).

If necessary, the names can be shortened in the future. The trademark is in the process of being finalized.

Work group participants reviewed two logos and badge examples (see attached meeting slides for examples). The color purple represents recovery and will be used in the designs.

Comments:

- Meeting participants expressed preferences for a mountain and sun design.
- Some participants felt the mountain and sun design seems dated.
- The font design could be more professional looking.
- A preference for the pin drop as a metaphoric symbol for a recovery friendly workplace was mentioned.
- A pin drop on a map showing a business location was suggested.
- Some other states have the shape of their state in their logos.
- Fonts should adhere to ADA guidelines.
- A circle with a triangle is another symbol for recovery in 12-step groups.

Plans are to launch the websites by the end of November, with the latest launch date on January 1, 2025. Work group members will have the opportunity to review the website before it is officially launched. The Wordpress platform is being used for the website and will include Formstack capabilities for companies to use.

Business Incentives:

The original legislation included a tax credit for enrolled businesses; however, this was later removed. The political landscape related to tax credits is complicated. Other incentives are being investigated, including grant programs offered through the Office of Economic Development and International Trade. <https://choosecolorado.com/>

For example, a grant program exists for companies that achieve dark sky certification by restricting the amount of upwardly directed light and over-lighting in order to protect the night sky from light pollution. Another program involves a training grant, which involves sending employees through a skill advancement program. Funding is available for businesses to apply on a first come, first served basis. Businesses that are certified, or if they support training for employees, can apply for funds through the grant program.

One of the grant program advantages is that nonprofits can apply, while tax credits are only available to companies that pay taxes. Nonprofit treatment organizations would be able to apply for a recovery friendly certification grant.

The work group plans to continue the conversation regarding business incentives with plans to include them in future legislation. David said he believes legislators would prefer to model and duplicate another program already in existence rather than create something new.

John Narine mentioned possibly partnering with Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) willing to discount their services. David said discounts towards programs that companies already pay for could represent another incentive to participate in full certification.

Imo Succo's nonprofit organization for native Americans is focused on growth. The organization's peer coaches (including Imo) are Native American. For the past two years they have engaged a traditional healer to provide a ceremony in talking circles. Funding for the program is from the First Nations Development Institute grant, which focuses on native

American health and healing. <https://www.firstnations.org/> Imo suggested this program could be included in some of the grants. David commented that recovery friendly workplaces can function as healing spaces.

Women, minority, veteran, and disability-owned businesses are allowed contracting preferences. The work group had discussed adding recovery friendly certified workplaces to this list, but is now leaning away from this and possibly looking into contribution tax credits for nonprofits doing work in recovery. Credits could apply to fundraisers such as dinner events, etc. Donors to these events could receive a tax credit up to a certain percentage of the total donation. Physical goods (land, etc.) could also be donated. Contribution tax credits could be a way to raise funds for the recovery community.

The work group continued to discuss incentives and the importance of the political landscape and carefully choosing appropriate language. David said he preferred framing incentives as opportunity grant programs relevant to nonprofit and for-profit organizations versus tax credits.

A certification program requires strict compliance policies and practices for auditing purposes. David said the School of Public Health is in a unique position to verify companies as recovery friendly and that no other state has a university or school partner performing the background work necessary to eliminate possible “bad actors.” He mentioned workforce development programs in other states that place out of work individuals in the recovery community in positions with recovery friendly workplaces and the importance of ensuring that the companies have recovery workplace supports in place. In some instances, the background work required was not done properly before people were placed, and this resulted in difficult outcomes for the employees, (including return to use).

John Narine mentioned the concerns raised by other states regarding competition within units involved in administration of recovery friendly initiatives. He suggested that Colorado’s RFW initiative’s successful collaboration with Yampa Valley could set an example of moving from competition to collaboration. Collaboration will be especially important when the number of RFW certifications increase beyond one organization’s capacity.

Upcoming Presentations and Events:

- September 28th: The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) is hosting an event in recognition of National Recovery Month. Recently certified recovery friendly workplaces and leaders from three state government initiatives working to promote the adoption of recovery-ready workplace policies in their state will discuss efforts to support recovery in the workplace. David will be representing Colorado during a facilitated discussion and will address the legislation modeled after the Recovery Ready Workplaces Act.
- September 18th-20th: David and Dave Segunda will be attending the Colorado Society for Human Resource Management conference in Keystone.
<https://co.shrm.org/events/2024/09/2024-colorado-state-conference>
- September 30th: John Narine and David will be attending the Colorado Opioid Abatement Council meeting in Loveland to discuss the RFW initiative and will be speaking during their council meeting on October 1st:
- October 1st: Opioid Abatement Council Meeting in Denver.
<https://coag.gov/opioids/colorado-opioid-abatement-council/>

- October 1st: International Health Facility Diversion Association Annual Conference. <https://ihfda.org/events/2024-annual-conference/>
- October 8th: John and David will be presenting at the University of Colorado Social Justice Summit in Colorado Springs <https://dei.uccs.edu/cu-social-justice-summit-2024>
- October 11th: David will be addressing the Colorado School of Public Health Research Exchange <https://calendar.cuanschutz.edu/event/coloradosph-research-exchange>
- October 16-17th: University of Denver Diversity Week summit. Cheryl Brown Merriweather from Florida will be joining the conversation. <https://www.du.edu/diversitysummit/content/2023-summit-schedule>
- October 31st: Consortium 12th Annual Meeting's afternoon breakout session will include RFW Panel. Grayson Long will be speaking about his recovery journey. Diana Aqra will speak about her recovery and experience in the marketing and communications field, and Al Secunda will speak about his recovery experience. A fourth person from the healthcare field may also join the panel. For more information and to register: <https://corxconsortium.org/2024-annual-meeting/>

Other Business/Announcements:

Imo Succo announced that her organization was recently approved for a state and regional grant that will support hiring two peer recovery coaches for youth and female elders. By the end of the year, the organization will employ 8 team members.

David announced a position opening for an advisor and outreach/engagement specialist for the RFW program. The university requires a background check as part of the application process. Consideration will be given to all applicants regardless of how they respond to the background question.

Approximately 70 companies have signed the RFW pledge, which represents the first group of employers to be certified. The Colorado Department of Law and the Colorado Attorney General's office will be signing the pledge before the Opioid Abatement Council meeting on September 30th. The Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has also signed the pledge and will be added to the list.

To sign the pledge: <https://coloradosph.cuanschutz.edu/research-and-practice/centers-programs/chwe/practice/rfw>

Adjournment/Next Meeting:

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m. The next work group meeting will be held on Monday, November 18, 2024 from 2–3 p.m. (MT).

Attachments: Work group roster, presentation overview