

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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HOUSE BILL 351

Short Title: Recovery-Friendly Workplace Program/Funds. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Huneycutt, K. Hall, Chesser, and Rhyne (Primary Sponsors).
For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: Appropriations, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

March 11, 2025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE RECOVERY-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE PROGRAM AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THAT PURPOSE.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1.(a) Definitions. – The following definitions apply in this act:

- (1) Certified Recovery-Friendly Workplace. – A workplace that meets the criteria for certification as established by this act, attains designation as certified by the Recovery-Friendly Workplace Program, and receives written documentation from the Program of such designation.
- (2) Employee. – Any person who works for salary, wages, or other remuneration for an employer subject to the provisions of this act and includes individuals in managerial positions, those working for or on behalf of the State, contractors, and individuals in work-from-home positions.
- (3) Employer. – Any public or private person or entity that has one or more employees who are residents of the State and who are covered by the State's workers' compensation act or that conducts business in or within the State. The term includes the State and any department, agency, or instrumentality of the State; any county; any municipal corporation; and any employer that is self-insured.
- (4) Participant. – A workplace that meets the criteria for participant status as established by this act, attains designation as a participant by the Recovery-Friendly Workplace Program, and receives documentation from the Program of such designation.
- (5) 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.
- (6) Recovery-Friendly Workplace Advisor. – An individual who is an employee of or contractor for the Recovery-Friendly Workplace Program and whose duties include assisting employers through the process of becoming a Recovery-Friendly Workplace participant or a certified Recovery-Friendly Workplace.

SECTION 1.(b) Program Established. – There is established the Recovery-Friendly Workplace Program (Program). The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services shall task an appropriate professional organization with demonstrated expertise in promoting recovery-supportive practices, engaging with employers, and implementing evidence-based



strategies to support individuals in recovery. The organization must have a proven track record of working collaboratively with businesses and recovery communities across the State to foster inclusive and supportive workplace environments.

The Program shall also prioritize collaboration with an accredited Recovery Community Organization (RCO) that has direct experience in implementing Recovery-Friendly Workplace initiatives in North Carolina to ensure the successful integration of peer-driven approaches and lived experience in the Program's design and execution.

At a minimum, the Program shall do all of the following:

- (1) Develop a process for employers to apply to become Recovery-Friendly Workplace participants or certified as a Recovery-Friendly Workplace;
- (2) Develop an orientation process with training materials for new employers, including information on the science of addiction, stigma reduction, and evidence-based practices for supporting employees in recovery;
- (3) Provide consultation, guidance, and support to employers seeking to become participants or certified Recovery-Friendly Workplaces;
- (4) Conduct outreach to key stakeholders within the State, including labor unions and recovery support organizations;
- (5) Hire or contract with Recovery-Friendly Workplace Advisors;
- (6) Assign a Recovery-Friendly Workplace Advisor to each participating employer;
- (7) Provide certificates to participating employers;
- (8) Develop a Program website with resources and information;
- (9) Develop educational and training resources for employers and employees, including materials on naloxone administration and overdose prevention; and
- (10) Develop model Recovery-Friendly Workplace policies and procedures for use by employers, including guidance on nondiscriminatory hiring practices and reasonable accommodations.

SECTION 1.(c) Requirements. – An employer may choose to participate as a participant or as a certified Recovery-Friendly Workplace:

- (1) To become a participant, an employer must do all of the following:
 - a. Submit a letter of intent;
 - b. Complete the orientation process;
 - c. Prepare a Recovery-Friendly Workplace pledge; and
 - d. Notify all employees and board members of the intent to become a participant.
- (2) To become certified as a Recovery-Friendly Workplace, an employer must do all of the following:
 - a. Complete all steps for becoming a participant.
 - b. Complete a standardized assessment of current policies and practices.
 - c. Establish a framework for setting and pursuing workplace improvements that support recovery-friendly practices, with flexibility to adapt goals as needed.
 - d. Implement evidence-informed policies to support employees in recovery, including flexible leave policies and confidential access to treatment and recovery services.

SECTION 1.(d) Certification. – The Program shall recognize certified Recovery-Friendly Workplaces through press releases and/or Program-sponsored events.

SECTION 1.(e) Renewal. – Employers must complete an annual review process to maintain their status, including:

- (1) Reviewing activities from the past year to assess alignment with recovery-friendly practices.

(2) Identifying opportunities for continued improvement and updating workplace strategies accordingly.

(3) Completing a Program satisfaction survey.

SECTION 2. Appropriation. – There is appropriated from the Opioid Settlement Fund the sum of three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) for the 2025-2026 fiscal year to implement the Recovery-Friendly Workplace Program. These funds shall be allocated to the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services for the purpose of subcontracting with a qualified professional organization, as outlined in this act, to oversee and administer the program.

SECTION 3. Effective Date. – This act becomes effective July 1, 2025.