



Components of a Drug-Free Workplace

Drug-free workplace programs can help employers create cost-effective, safe, and healthy workplaces. Early studies have indicated that successful drug-free workplace programs generally have at least five key components:¹

1. A written policy
2. Employee education
3. Supervisor training
4. An employee assistance program (EAP)
5. Drug testing

The demonstration program offered by the Small Business Administration under the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1998 specified the following six components:

1. A clear written policy
2. A minimum of 2 hours of training for all employees
3. Additional training for working parents
4. Drug testing by a certified institution
5. Access to an EAP
6. A continuing drug and alcohol abuse prevention program

Notable are the minimum of 2 hours of training for all employees (with additional training for working parents) and the need for prevention programs.

There are other types of drug-free workplace programs that include these components along with others in their design. Variations consist of using health and wellness programs (including



alcohol and prescription drugs as a major prevention and early intervention component) and providing ongoing interactive Web sites (e.g., GetFit in the

online Drug-Free Workplace Kit) for employee, supervisor, and provider education and training.

Another way employees can enhance these general components is to adapt to changes in the modern workplace. Such changes can include more employees telecommuting, the increasingly multigenerational nature of the workforce, and a culturally and linguistically diverse workforce.

Successful drug-free workplace programs, in addition to having the five key components listed above, often provide access to diversified EAPs. SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP) identifies many well-researched drug-free workplace programs.



NREPP programs and all components should be assessed when initiating or enhancing a drug-free workplace program. Drug-free workplace programs range from basic to

comprehensive. The size of the organization, the nature of the workforce, and the resources available all contribute to how the program is tailored. Conducting a needs assessment first will help employers determine which components are the most feasible and beneficial.

Needs Assessment

Before considering the five components, employers should examine the needs of their organizations and take steps to ensure that the programs they design will work well in their workplaces. There are numerous reasons why



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employers and unions establish drug-free workplace programs. Among the leading reasons are

- To comply with laws or regulations
- To qualify for insurance discounts, rebates, and other incentives
- To prevent associated problems (e.g., absenteeism, accidents, injuries, productivity loss)
- To respond to an incident or pattern of substance abuse
- To express support for the majority of employees who do not abuse alcohol or other drugs
- To invest in worker health, safety, and productivity
- To market drug-free workers and services

A needs assessment can determine whether alcohol or other drugs are affecting the workplace, can identify resources and strengths, can examine appropriate policy and program options, and can help illuminate cost-effective strategies for achieving organizational goals.

When beginning to assess the needs of the workplace, some key things to consider are

- Does the workplace fall under specific legislation?
- Are employees in safety-sensitive roles? For example, do they drive vehicles, operate machinery, handle chemicals, or work with the public—particularly with children?
- Are employees in jobs that are security sensitive? For example, are they responsible for confidential ideas, products, plans, or documents? Are they responsible for accounting, cash, inventory, or stock? Do employees work

offsite, such as traveling salespersons, home workers, or home health care workers?

- Do certain employees perform key functions of the organization (such as accountants who handle large sums of money; salespersons who represent the company; employees who monitor computers, nuclear power dials, etc.; or supervisors who manage many employees)?
- What kinds of drug-free workplace resources are available within and outside the organization, and at what cost? That is, what are the costs and benefits of implementing different types of drug-free workplace programs?

Written Policy

A written policy is the cornerstone of a drug-free workplace program. This Kit will assist you in designing a policy specific to your workplace. At the minimum, the policy should include the following:

- Rationale (e.g., laws, regulations, organizational goals)
- Expectations for compliance (e.g., who, what, when, where)
- Options offered for assistance (e.g., an EAP, community resources)
- Consequences for violating the policy (e.g., discipline, referral for assistance, termination)

Employee Education

The entire organization should know about the benefits of the drug-free workplace policy and program. Owners, top management, supervisors, and nonsupervisory employees at all levels should be prepared for the implementation of the policy and program. Everyone in the workplace needs information about the problems associated with

the use and misuse of substances. They all can benefit from education and training that reinforces and deepens that awareness. And they can benefit from activities that motivate them to adopt safer and healthier attitudes and behaviors. It is especially important that the entire workforce be familiar with the benefits of the drug-free workplace policy and program, particularly when they are supported by other health and wellness programs and activities.²

For the policy and program to effect positive change, everyone must be on board. Research shows that the best way to encourage positive change is to involve everyone in understanding and actively supporting the process.³

Supervisor Training

Customized supervisor training that takes into account the particular characteristics of your workplace is strongly suggested to maximize the effectiveness of your drug-free workplace policy and program.

Seven General Guidelines Found to be Useful for Many Employers, Supervisors, and Human Resources Staff

1. Know the policy and program.
2. Be aware of legally sensitive areas.
3. Recognize potential problems.
4. Document in a systematic and fair manner.
5. Act in a confidential way.
6. Refer to appropriate services.
7. Reintegrate into the workplace.

Employee Assistance Programs

Employee assistance programs are programs, sponsored by the organization or a union, that help employees by identifying and addressing a broad spectrum of health, economic, and social issues, including substance abuse and mental health. An EAP can enhance the work climate of an organization and promote the health and well-

being of everyone involved.

EAPs usually are multifaceted programs that are designed to help employees with personal problems that affect their job performance.

Though some EAPs concentrate primarily on alcohol and other drug problems, most EAPs address a wide range of employee problems: stress, marital difficulties, financial trouble, and legal problems. Most EAPs offer a range of services: employee education (onsite or offsite), individual and organizational assessment, counseling, referrals to treatment. EAPs can also train supervisors for your program. Contracting with an EAP has been found to be a cost-effective approach to providing assistance to employees. There are also free and low-cost ways to provide assistance. To cut costs, some employers use SAMHSA's helpline (1.800.WORKPLACE), partner with other organizations, or rely on community-based, drug-free coalitions. For help with finding local initiatives and coalitions:

- Look in the phonebook, under your city's name, for entries like "Drug-Free Business Initiative" or "Coalition for Drug-Free Workplaces."
- Call or write your State or county office for alcohol and drug abuse services, and ask the office if it has a list of groups near your workplace.
- Call or write your local mayor's office, the police department's community relations office, or the office of economic development, and ask if the office has a list of coalitions.
- Call or write your chamber of commerce or business or trade association, and ask if it has services to help employers start a drug-free workplace program.

- Call SAMHSA's Workplace Helpline at 1.800.WORKPLACE (1.800.967.5752).

Different Types of EAPs	
■	Internal/in house
■	Fixed-fee contract
■	Fee-for-service contracts
■	Consortia
■	Management-sponsored programs
■	Peer-based programs
■	Member assistance programs

How Can You Find a Qualified EAP Provider?

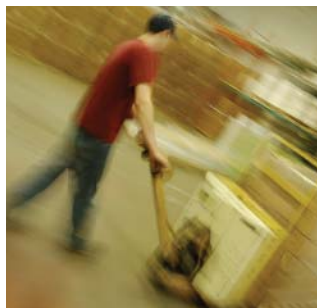
The first step in implementing an EAP is to find a qualified service provider. EAPs can either be separate from or combined with insurance/health care plans.

Currently there are no national licensure programs for EAP providers. However, several States are considering such programs. Two professional associations—the Employee Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA) and the Employee Assistance Society of North America (EASNA)—have developed certification procedures for EAP providers. The Certified Employee Assistance Professional credential indicates satisfactory knowledge about addictions, intervention, and related skills. For a fee, EAPA or EASNA can also provide directories of EAP providers by area or region. Call EASNA at 763.765.2385 between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, Central Standard or Daylight Time. Call EAPA at 703.387.1000 between 8:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, Eastern Standard or Daylight Time.

Drug Testing

An increasing number of businesses across the country are instituting drug-free workplace policies that include workplace drug testing programs, for a host of reasons. Some do it to comply with Federal regulations, customer or contract requirements, or insurance carrier requirements. Others wish to improve safety, minimize the

chance of hiring employees who may be users or abusers, deter “recreational” drug use that could lead to addiction, identify current users and abusers and refer them for assistance, or reduce the costs of alcohol and other drug abuse in the workplace. Drug testing is one way to protect your workplace from the negative effects of alcohol and other drug abuse. A drug testing program can deter employees from coming to work unfit for duty. It can also discourage alcohol and other drug abusers from joining your organization in the first place.



References

- ¹ Donna M. Bush and J.H. Autry III. 2002. “Substance Abuse in the Workplace: Epidemiology, Effects, and Industry.” *Occupational Medicine: State of the Art Reviews* 17:13–25.
- ² Royer F. Cook and William E. Schlenger. 2002. “Prevention of Substance Abuse in the Workplace: Review of Research on the Delivery of Services.” *Journal of Primary Prevention* 23:115–42.
- ³ Laura Ferrer–Wreder, Hakan Stattin, Carolyn Cass Lorente, Jonathan G. Tubman, and Lena Adamson. 2003. *Prevention and Youth Development Programs: Across Borders*. New York, New York: Kluwer/Plenum Academic Publishers.