



# Federal Policy & Rural Recovery Ecosystems

## OFFICE OF NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL POLICY

---

Building Rural Recovery Ecosystems Summit

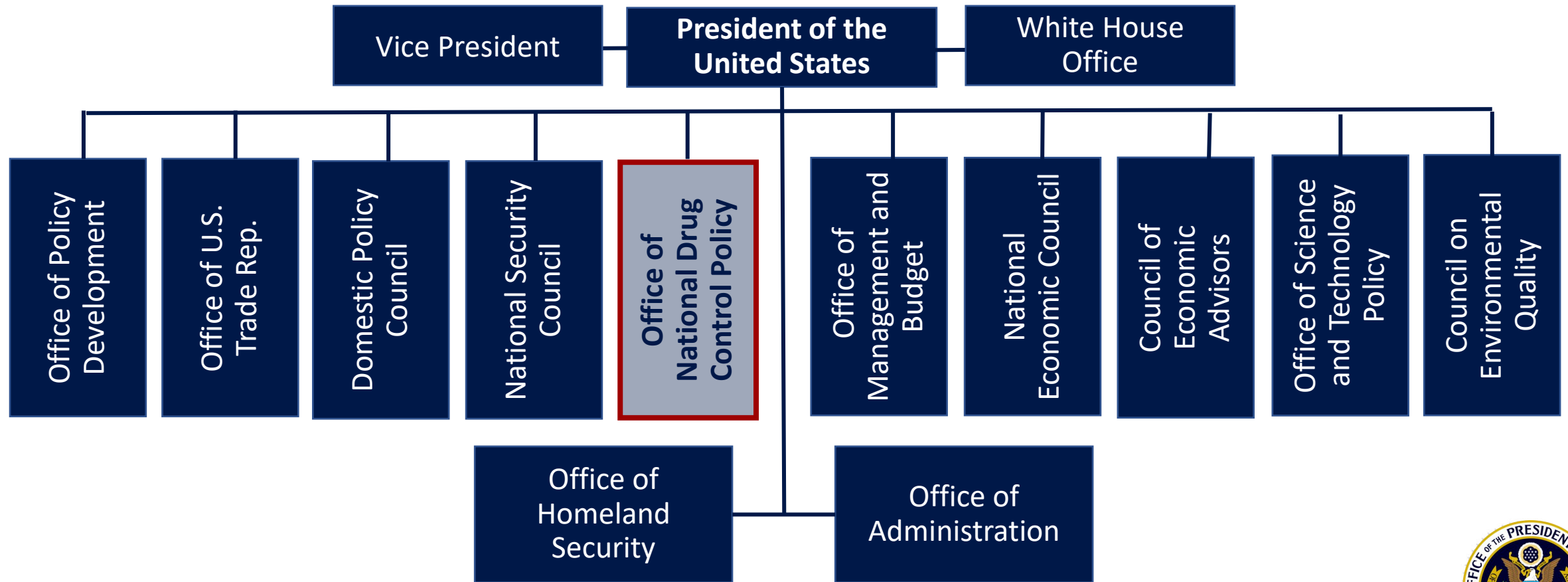
---

**Peter Gaumond**

Memphis, Tennessee

*June 9, 2022*

# Executive Office of the President

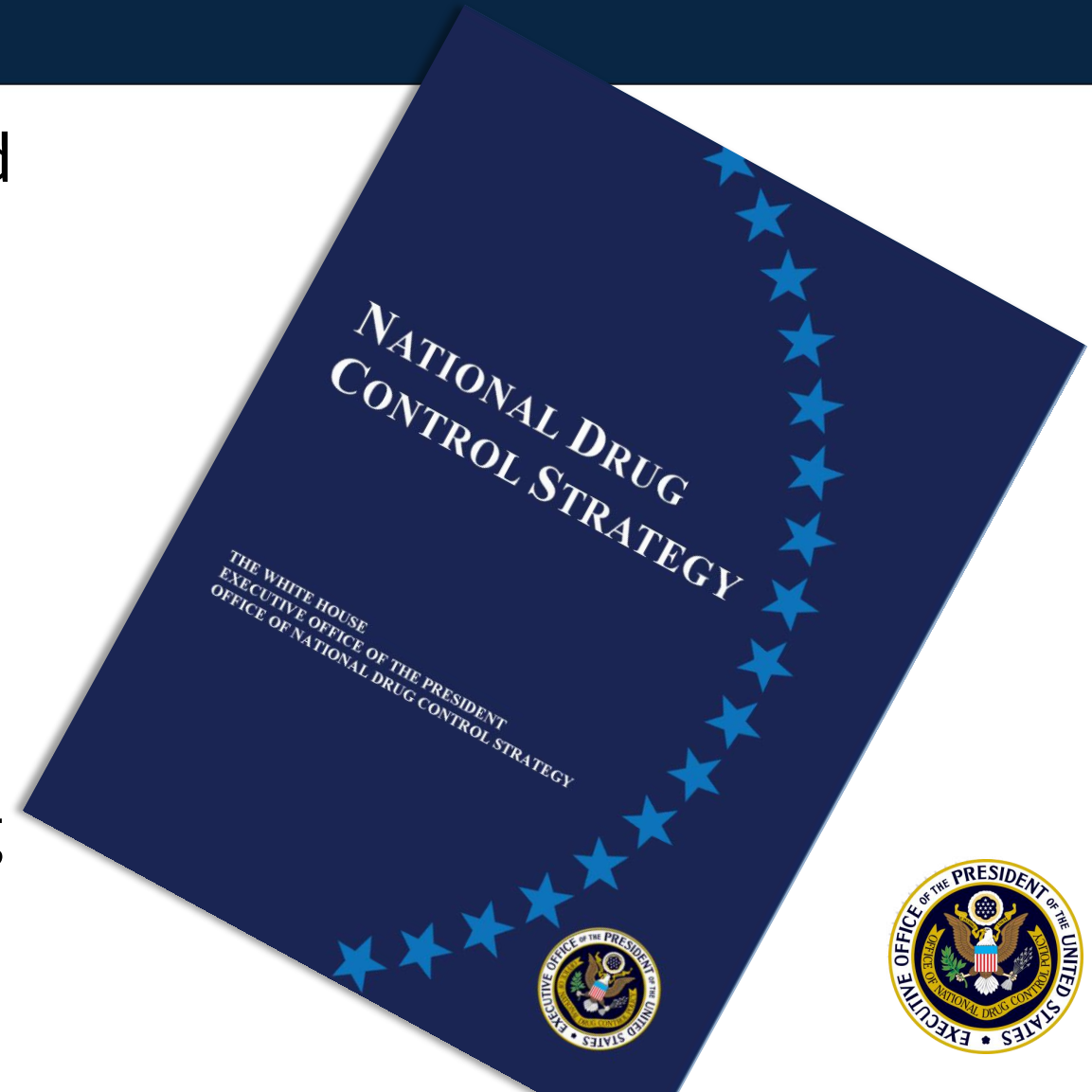


Office of National Drug Control Policy



# National Drug Control Strategy

- Expanding high-impact evidence-based harm reduction interventions like SSPs naloxone
- Ensuring those at highest-risk of an overdose can access evidence-based treatment, including MOUD
- Improving data systems and research
- Tackling drug trafficking and illicit drug profits



# National Drug Control Strategy

- Promoting recovery-ready workplace (RRW) policies
- Expanding the treatment and recovery support workforces and access to services
- Addressing stigma and misunderstanding to eliminate barriers
- Advancing harm reduction and recovery research
- Supporting evidence-based prevention efforts to reduce youth substance use



# What do we mean by “recovery”?

- SAMHSA (2010): Recovery is a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential.
- Four primary dimensions: home, health, purpose, and community
- Recovery is not synonymous with “abstinence” or “remission”
- Recovery is defined by what it brings:
  - Recovery capital
  - Health, wellness, quality of life
  - Social engagement, including family, work, school



# What do we mean by recovery? (cont.)

- **Any positive change** as a person defines it for him or herself is our definition of recovery.” Dan Biggs – CRA
- Our tent is big enough for everyone.’ We don’t really pay attention to what your illness is, your drug of choice, your recovery support, the medication you may be on (or not on), etc. ‘***You are in recovery if you say you are***’ and you are welcome. – Phil Valentine, CCAR
- Recovery has family and community dimensions



# Ecosystem

## **'ē-kō-si-stəm (noun):**

1. the complex of a community of organisms and its environment functioning as an ecological unit
2. something (such as a network of businesses) considered to resemble an ecological ecosystem especially because of its complex interdependent parts

*Mirriam-Webster*

## **Ecological Perspective:**

“Seeing the relationship and connection between the individual, family, group, and/or community and the physical, social, and cultural environments and how each influence and shape one another.” (Gitterman, 2009; Teater, 2014)





# Interventions

- Interventions—harm reduction, primary prevention, treatment, recovery support, housing, employment assistance, etc.—should comprise a service system ecosystem that leverages and is subsumed by the social ecosystem
- Too often, they are siloed and poorly coordinated
- Rural communities' lack of access to many specialized services and systems may offer unique opportunities to create organic recovery ecosystems
- Stigma, shame, and lack of understanding of SUD may lead not only to individual reluctance to seek help, but to community-level resistance to policies and interventions that would benefit the community





# The Medical Prevention Model

- **Primary Prevention**—intervening before health effects occur, through measures such as vaccinations, altering risky behaviors (poor eating habits, tobacco use), and banning substances known to be associated with a disease or health condition.
- **Secondary Prevention**—screening to identify diseases in the earliest stages, before the onset of signs and symptoms, through measures such as mammography and regular blood pressure testing.
- **Tertiary Prevention**—managing disease post diagnosis to slow or stop disease progression through measures such as chemotherapy, rehabilitation, and screening for complications

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*



# Spectrum of “Prevention”

- Influencing policy and legislation
- Mobilizing neighborhoods and communities
- Fostering coalitions and networks
- Changing internal practices and policies of agencies and institutions
- Educating healthcare providers and other professionals
- Promoting community education
- Strengthening individual knowledge and skills

Figure 1. The Spectrum of Prevention<sup>a</sup>



# Partnership

1. **Step One:** Meet the community where it is at:
  - a. What does it seek? How does it view its strengths, opportunities, and challenges?
  - b. Don't come with pre-packaged solutions in hand, rather jointly assess needs and opportunities
2. **Step Two:** Jointly develop strategy, implementing in concert with the community, including families, schools, employers, faith groups, law enforcement, EMS, local and state governments
3. **Step Two:** Build sustainable local capacity through partnership
  - a. Allow community to identify unique opportunities/change levers
  - b. Foster organic approaches that are self-sustaining, emerging from and strengthening local ecosystems
  - c. Transfer leadership, service provision, and capacity building to the community as feasible



# Building a federal policy and program ecosystem

- Convening diverse agencies to identify overlaps, opportunities for increased coordination, and synergies (e.g., *ARC, USDA RD, SAMHSA, HUD, AmeriCorps, and Labor*)
- Identifying and working to address procedural, structural, policy, practice, legal, and regulatory barriers to collaboration and coordination
- Soliciting stakeholder/community input
- Establishing and implementing joint action plans to achieve key NDCS goals, cutting across systems/sectors
- Monitor and evaluate progress and adjust in response to data, experience, and evolving needs and opportunities



# Example: Recovery-Ready Workplace (RRW) Policies

- Employment is a critically important form of recovery capital that helps build & sustain recovery
- People in recovery can be among the most motivated and dependable workers
- Termination or threat of discipline in response to substance use in the workplace costs employers and discourages help seeking
- Companies that hire people in recovery and adopt RRW policies can be recognized as a community partner and asset.
- Today's workforce shortages only strengthen the case for adopting these policies

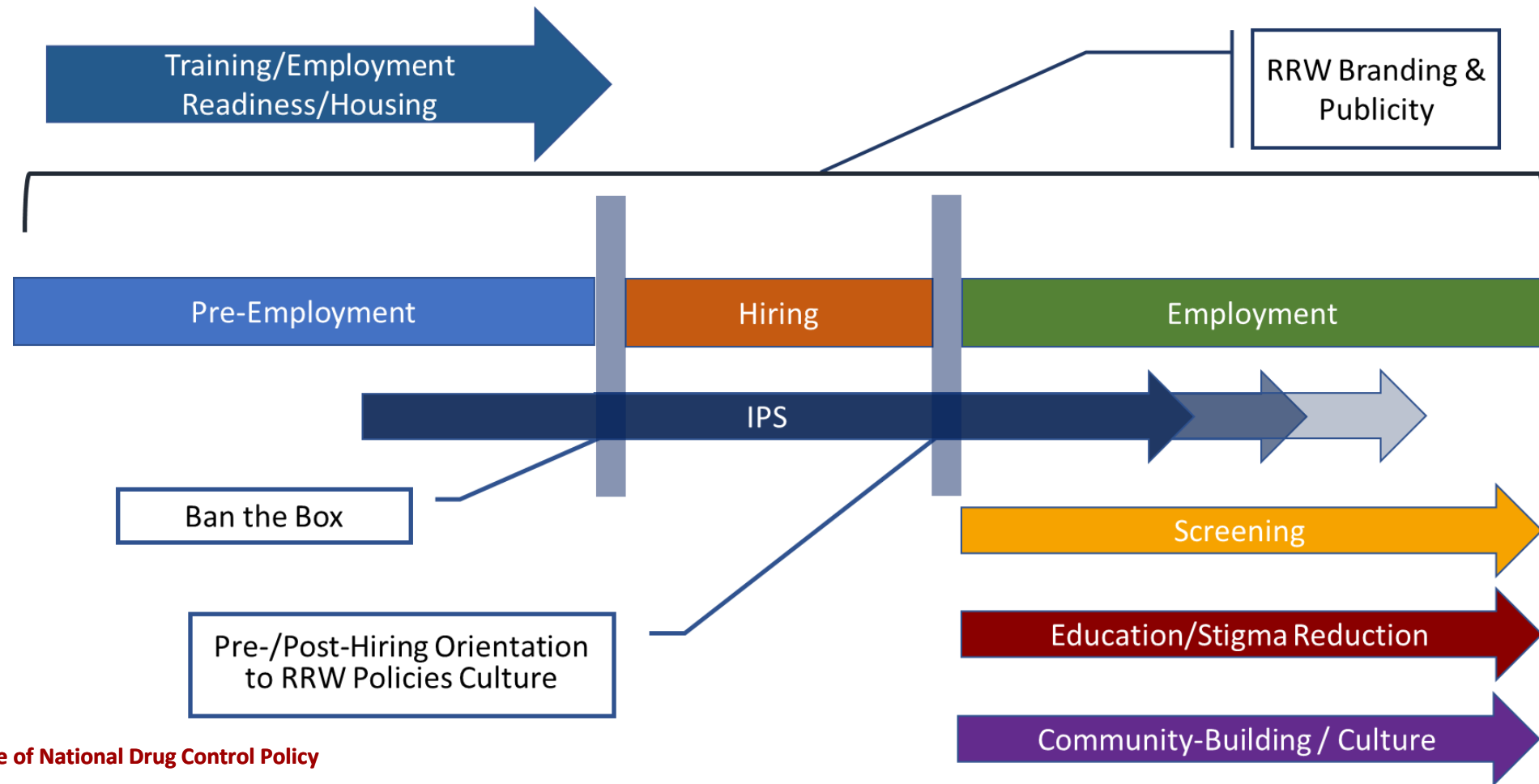


# Overview: RRW Policies

- Emphasize hiring of people in recovery
- Provide ongoing education, information and work to reduce stigma and misunderstanding
- Identify and address risk factors in the workplace
- Recognize that SUD in the workforce is common and encourage/facilitate help-seeking
- Accommodate treatment and ongoing support needs
- Build an informed and supportive workforce, including through volunteer or dedicated peer mentors/consultants

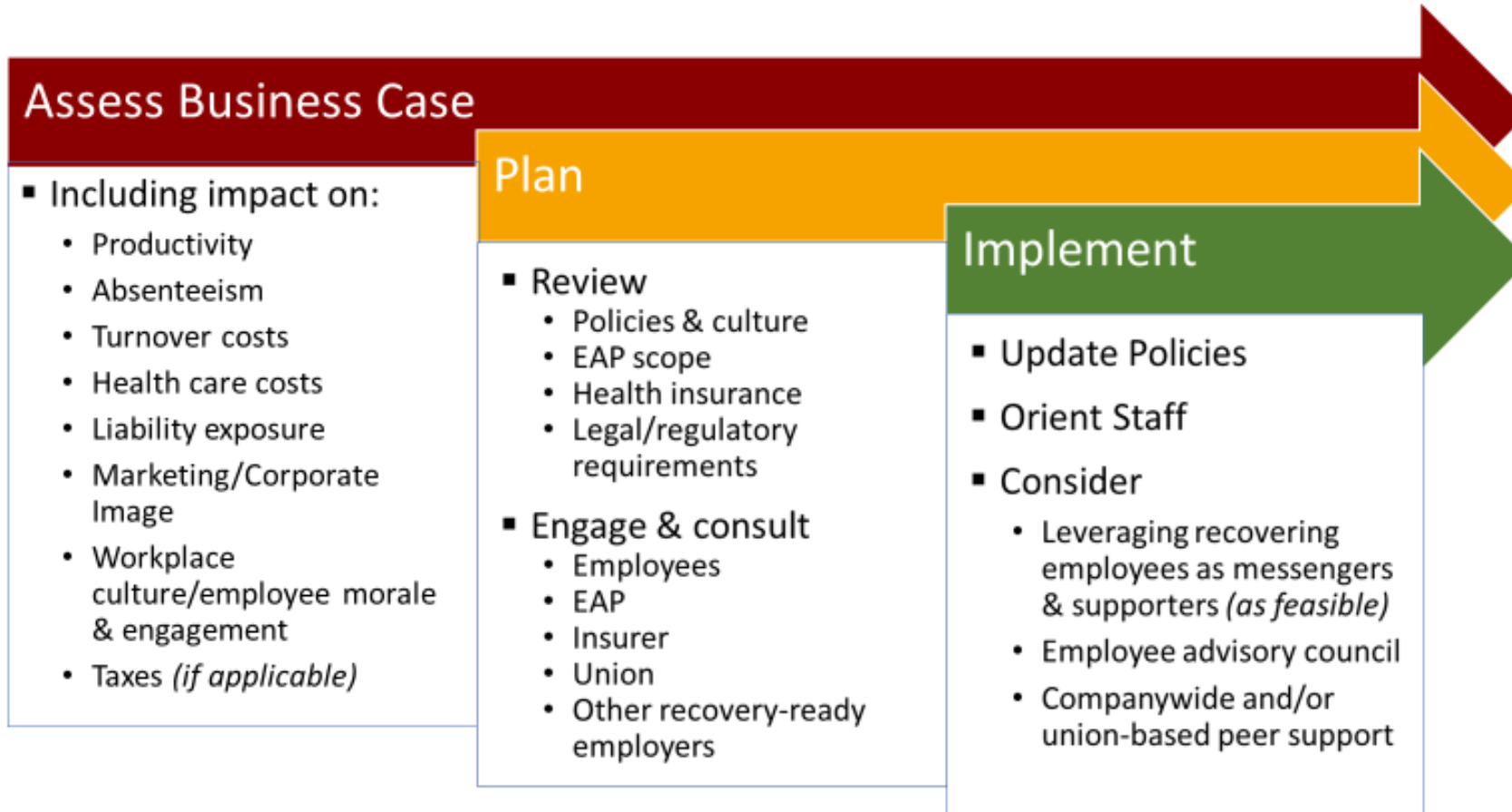


# RRW Elements





# Employer-level Process



# Rural ecosystem supporting recovery-ready workplaces

- Prevention, education, harm reduction, treatment, peer support, recovery housing, mental health and social services, including employment-related initiatives (*e.g., training, IPS, etc.*)
- Employer incentives and protections (*e.g., recovery-ready/recovery-friendly certification, federal bonding program, WOTC or other tax incentives, employment specialists to jointly serve recovering employees and employers*)
- Local recovery and faith communities, schools, childcare, transportation
- Drug courts, LE and other first-responder deflection, jail-based treatment and recovery support
- MOUD in emergency departments, primary care, and specialty treatment
- Coordinated funding strategies



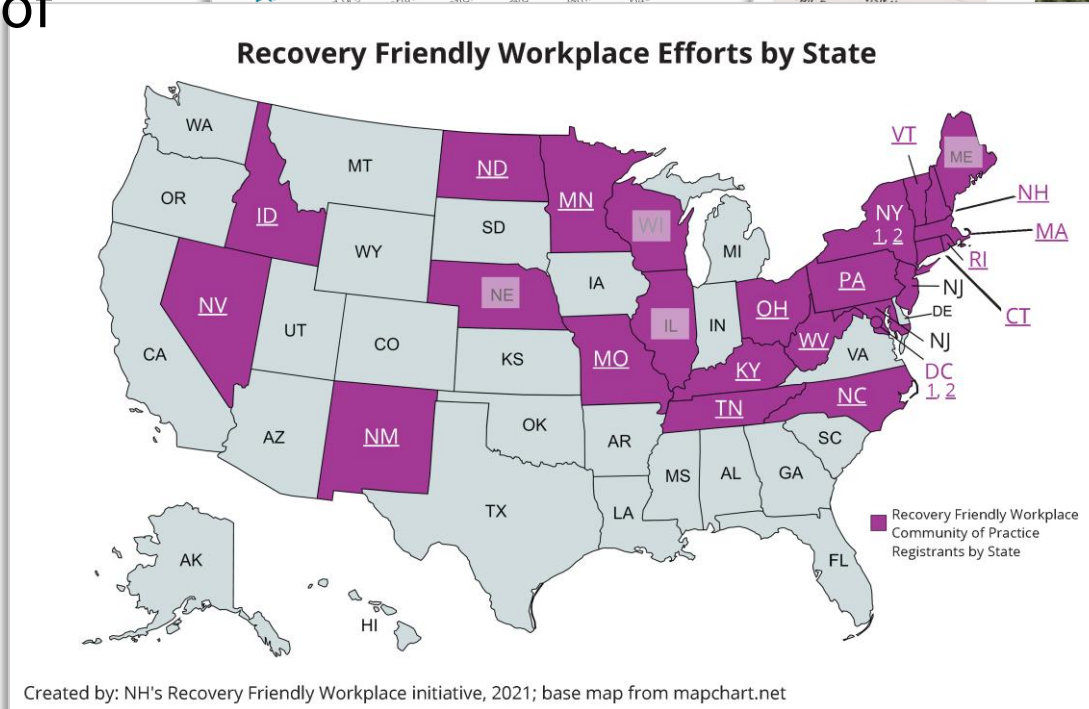
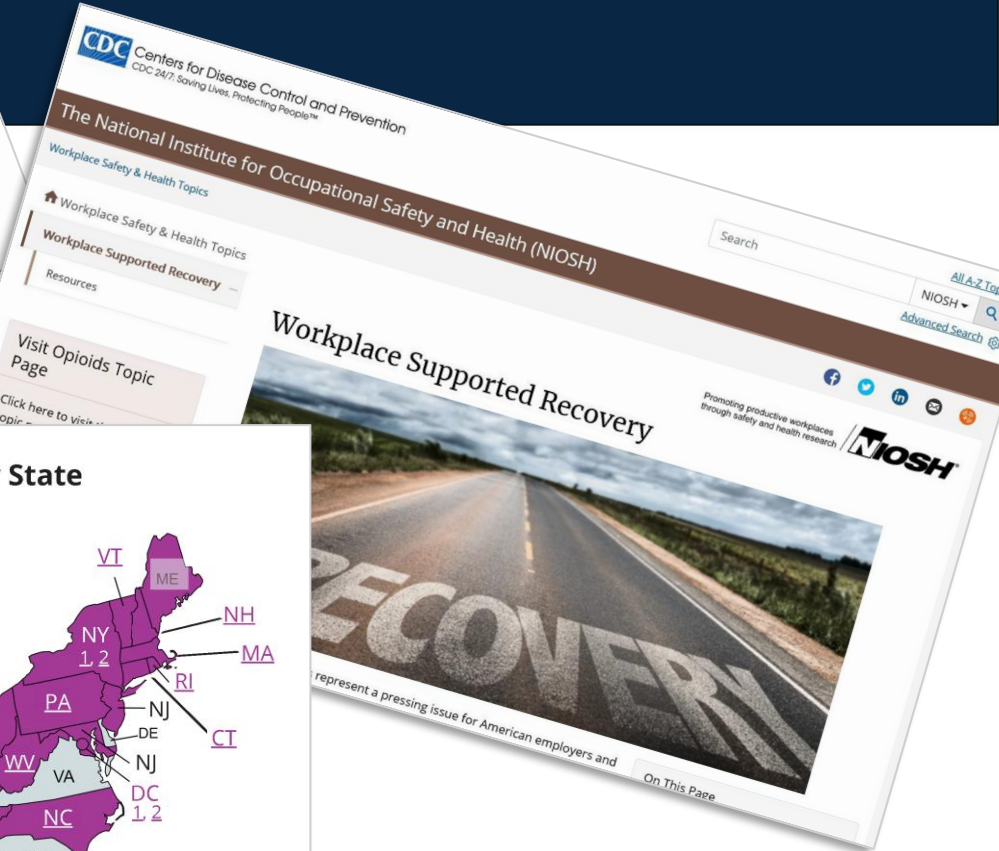
# Spread of State-level RRW Initiatives

- Recovery-Friendly New Hampshire
- Indiana Workforce Recovery
- Kentucky Workforce Recovery Program
- NY OASAS Return to Work Readiness Guidelines & Recovery Tax Credit
- Leidos CEO Challenge



# Scaling Recovery-Ready Workplace Policies

- Leidos CEO Pledge
- NH Recovery-Friendly Workplace Community of Practice
- Workplace Supported Recovery – CDC/NIOSH
- NIH/NIEHS resources
- ONDCP-DPC IWG





# Questions/Discussion

- What questions to you have about the Administration's response to addressing substance use and its consequences in rural communities?
- Are there key opportunities for expanding naloxone distribution and other harm reduction efforts in rural communities?
- What about promoting RRW policies? Expanding peer support, recovery housing and access to treatment, including MOUD?
- What are the obstacles and how might we address them?
- How do efforts to educate, reduce stigma, and increase equity relate to the success of efforts to build rural recovery ecosystems?



# Thank You

**Peter Gaumond**, Senior Policy Analyst, Office of  
Public Health, ONDCP

Email: [ggaumond@ondcp.eop.gov](mailto:ggaumond@ondcp.eop.gov)

