



About Employee Assistance Programs

Provide Support

Providing support through an employee assistance program (EAP) or other means will help your drug-free workplace program succeed.

Employees' work may suffer not only from substance misuse or substance use disorders, but from marital and family turmoil; medical, financial, or legal problems; or psychological stressors. Providing employees with support for issues that affect their well-being will enhance the effectiveness of your drug-free workplace program.

Local drug-free workplace coalitions or other community-based groups may be able to provide assistance. Contact your state or county office for alcohol and drug misuse services and ask if these resources are available in your area. You can also use SAMHSA's [Drug-Free Workplace Helpline](#), 1-800-WORKPLACE (967-5752), as a resource.

Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs)

Employee assistance programs can help employees with personal problems that affect their job performance. EAPs can identify and address a wide range of health, financial, and social issues, including mental and/or substance use disorders. Some EAPs concentrate primarily on alcohol, prescription drug, and other drug issues.

To address such issues, EAPs usually offer services, such as employee education, individual assessments, organizational assessments, management consultation, referrals to treatment,

and short-term counseling. Counseling services help employees deal with personal problems such as grief, balancing work and family life, and stress management. Some EAPs offer services for the promotion of health and wellness. Some offer legal, financial, and retirement assistance. And some provide specialized trauma-intervention services for dealing with critical incidents in the workplace. Inquire whether your health insurance carriers provide EAP services or can help identify local, regional, national, and international EAP providers.

Types of EAPs

In-House/Internal Programs

In an in-house or internal program, the EAP professionals are onsite within the workplace to deliver their services. This kind of program is most often found in companies with large numbers of employees in concentrated locations. These professionals may be direct employees of the company, or they may be employees of an EAP vendor that has been contracted to provide onsite services in the workplace.

External Programs

An external program provides employees and their family members with access to a toll-free number for service intake. The EAP intake specialist verifies benefit eligibility and then refers the caller to its specialized network of EAP providers that are geographically convenient to the employee or to the employee's family member.

Blended Programs

Large corporations with dense pockets of employee concentrations, along with smaller concentrations in multiple locations, may want to consider a blended EAP. Under this structure, an employee can meet with an in-house employee assistance professional, if the location is convenient. Otherwise, the employee can use the vendor EAP network to access EAP counseling services near home.

Management-Sponsored Programs

A management-sponsored program is, as the name indicates, sponsored exclusively by management, as opposed to being sponsored by a union or by both management and a union.

Such programs can vary widely in design and scope. Some deal only with substance misuse. Some include proactive prevention and health and wellness activities, as well as problem identification and referral. Some are actively linked to the employee health-benefit structure.

Member Assistance Programs

A member assistance program (MAP) is provided by a union. Like EAPs, MAPs can vary widely in design and scope. Unions have a long history of addressing member, family, health, welfare, and working condition concerns. MAPs support a wide range of prevention, problem identification, referral, and counseling services and activities for workers and their dependents.

Peer-Based Programs

Less common than conventional EAPs, peer-based or coworker-based EAPs offer education, training, assistance, and referrals—all through peers and coworkers. This type of program requires extensive education and training for employees.

Selecting an EAP

Not every EAP will be right for every organization. To determine whether a particular EAP will meet your specific needs, ask the EAP provider the following questions:

- Do members of your staff belong to a professional EAP association?
- Do the staff who will be assigned to my organization hold the Certified Employee Assistance Professional (CEAP) credential?
- What is the education level of each member of your professional staff?
- Do you have references we may contact?
- Do you provide onsite employee education and supervisor training services?
- What fee programs do you offer?
- Will you do onsite visits? Are you able to conduct a needs assessment of our organization?
- What types of counseling services are available to employees? How many sessions?
- How easy will it be for employees to use the EAP? Where and how often is the EAP available to employees?
- To which programs and services do you make referrals, and why?

- Does the EAP have a system for evaluating the effectiveness of the program?

When seeking EAP services, be sure to provide prospective EAPs with information about your health benefits structure, your drug-free workplace policy, and a description of the service that you want the EAP program to provide. If you have a preferred budget range, share that information as well. You also might want to share characteristics of your workplace and employees, such as worksites, job categories, and the numbers and demographics of employees, supervisors, and covered family members.

Costs and Benefits of EAPs

Numerous studies have supported the business case for the purchase of EAPs and other workplace services, with many employers receiving positive returns on their EAP investments. Research on the prevalence, cost, and characteristics of EAPs suggests that EAPs are worthwhile and can also provide a valuable way for workers with personal problems to access appropriate health care.

External EAPs are typically priced on a fixed-fee basis. Under this pricing structure, an employer pays a fixed rate per employee per month, multiplied by the total number of employees across each contract year. The pricing is based on the total package of services that the employer ultimately selects, such as the total number of short-term counseling sessions available per employee or family member, per problem, and per year.

Sometimes an employer may be able to engage in a fee-for-service contract with EAPs. This pricing arrangement is typically available for EAP add-on services such as substance use professional evaluations, mental health debriefings, and crisis intervention.

For small employers, securing EAP services through a small-business EAP consortium can prove financially beneficial. The pricing is based on the services available through the consortium, but the total number of covered employees in the consortium drives down the per-employee cost.

Assessing Costs and Services

Be clear about what you want and can afford. Be specific if you are seeking EAP services for policy development, policy critique or legal review, or implementation planning. Let the EAP know if you would like them to develop educational materials, such as written materials for

employees or supervisor training sessions. Also communicate whether or not you want customized reports on EAP service utilization.

If the costs seem too high, ask what work could be done within your budget, or if payment plans are available. The work could also be done in phases. You may also want to approach other EAPs for bids to see if their fees are closer to your budget.

Be sure to ask questions about:

- Fees and how they are calculated
- What work will be done
- Who will do the work and what qualifications they have
- When work will be completed
- What results can be anticipated
- Who to call for references

Some Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs)

<http://www.eapassn.org/>

<https://www.easna.org/>