

# Need Substance Addiction Help but Afraid to Lose your Job?

There's a common misconception that people struggling with drug abuse or a substance use disorder do not have jobs. However, according to the [National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence \(NCADD\)](#), nearly 70% of those abusing illicit drugs in the country are employed. The most commonly abused drugs abused on the job are cocaine and marijuana.

Drug addiction costs companies more than \$50 billion every year in healthcare costs, lost productivity, high turnover, and absenteeism. Yet according to statistics, few of those dealing with substance abuse get the help they need to turn their lives around.

Although there are various drug addiction treatment options available in the country few people enroll in these programs. The main barriers to receiving treatment include fear of stigmatization and most of all, fear of losing one's job. Many of those experiencing the latter often do not know that their rights are protected under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), should they choose to seek treatment. The FMLA makes it possible for such individuals to attend drug addiction treatment without fear of losing their jobs.

Here at Evolve Indy, we have had several people who call our helpline seeking assistance for their substance addiction express fear of losing their job should they go into rehab for an extended time. That's why we decided to clarify what the FMLA is and how it can support drug addiction treatment.

## What is the Family and Medical Leave Act?

This is an act that was signed into law in 1993. It allows qualified employees to take up to 12 workweeks of unpaid, job-protected leave due to specified medical or family reasons within a 12-month period. This includes taking leave to go receive treatment for drug use at a rehab facility. During the leave, employees will still have access to employer-provided health and medical benefits.

Now that we're clear on that, let's examine what else you need to know to seek leave and rehab treatment under the FMLA.

### Is your employer covered under the act?

To take leave under the FMLA, your employer must be covered. This act applies to:

- Any private-sector employers with 50 or more employees who work 20 or more weeks annually.
- Any state, local and federal employers.
- Any local education agencies including public and private schools.

### Are you eligible for leave under the FMLA?

After ascertaining that your employer has coverage, you need to find out if you are eligible for FMLA leave. You are covered if you work for a covered employer and have worked for them for 12 months or more –not necessarily continuously or consecutively. You're also covered if you have worked for at least 1250 hours during the 12 months before applying for your leave.

### What are the valid reasons for taking leave?

Next, ensure that your reasons for taking leave are acceptable under the FMLA terms. This act allows you to take leave for the following reasons:

- To bond with your newborn baby within their first year of birth.
- To bond with an adopted or foster child placed in your care within their first year of placement.
- To take care of a critically ill parent, son, daughter or spouse.
- To recover your health if you have a health condition that affects your ability to carry out your tasks at work.

If you want to seek treatment for drug addiction, the FMLA protects your right to take reasonable leave. This is because the act recognizes that addiction is a disease that affects your health and your ability to do your job to the best of your ability.

## What are the treatment options for drug addiction under FMLA?

The 12 weeks or about 3 months of unpaid leave provided by the FMLA might seem like little but for those struggling with drug addiction, it might make all the difference. It just depends on how you use it.

There are a variety of drug addiction treatment options available under FMLA including:

- Inpatient drug treatment.** This involves intensive 24-hour treatment where you'll have to reside at the residential facility, with round-the-clock supervision. It is often recommended for those with severe addiction and withdrawal symptoms. There are plenty of 3-month options available depending on the intensity of your addiction.
- Outpatient drug treatment.** These do not require patients to stay at the treatment facilities, making them ideal for those with busy schedules and commitments they can't leave for long periods. Outpatient drug treatment includes [partial hospitalization programs](#) and intensive outpatient programs.

### What the FMLA does not do.

While the FMLA provides employees in need of addiction treatment the valuable time needed to receive that treatment, there are some things the law does not do. The FMLA does not:

- Apply to you if you currently use drugs. FMLA leave only covers treatment for substance abuse. You do not qualify for this leave if you miss work because of substance use.
- Provide paid leave. FMLA leave is unpaid for the 12 weeks you'll be off from work. This means that you have to ensure you have adequate funds to cover your financial responsibilities.
- Guarantee that you will have the same job you had before when you resume work. You can be reinstated to your original job or an equivalent one in terms of benefits, pay and other employment terms and conditions.

## Take the First Step Towards Recovery Today

Recognizing that you have a drug addiction is one thing, getting help to kick the addiction is another. Beating an addiction isn't easy but it is possible with the right help.

We at [Evolve Indy](#) are ready to help you take the steps you need to get clean. We will walk with you every step of your recovery journey and through our aftercare treatment program, we'll even stay in touch with you after you complete treatment.

[Give us a call](#) today and take the first steps towards recovery.



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