

Professional Monitoring Programs

A professional monitoring program may be a key part of retaining your professional license or certification if you have one. Monitoring includes an agreed upon length of time where the participant will check in on a daily basis, provide samples for random drug testing, attend a certain number of 12-step meetings per week, see a counselor a certain number of times per week or month, and file quarterly reports attesting to your fulfillment of these requirements.

Individual states have their own versions of professional monitoring programs. Michigan has the Health Professionals Recovery Program (HPRP), Indiana has the Indiana Professionals Recovery Program (IPRP), Florida has the Professional Resource Network (PRN), California has the California Health Professionals Recovery Program (Maximus), and so on. Also, the program available to you may depend on the license you have in your state. Texas has a different monitoring program depending on your license whereas Wisconsin has one program for all professional licenses. Use the search functions under the Resources tab of this website to help locate the program you need.

Just as the type of program varies by state, the requirements will vary by state as well. Some states may want a three year agreement, others may require a five year agreement, and there may also be a possibility that you do not need to have a monitoring agreement. The number of drug screenings per year will vary, the number of meetings to attend may vary, etc. Bottom line: you probably will not know all of the requirements until you are accepted into the program. A key word in that last sentence is “accepted”. You will likely have to apply for the program.

Professional monitoring may seem somewhat onerous, and it can be. It is disruptive to daily life as you constantly need to be ready to provide a sample for drug screening. This may not always fit into your schedule or daily plans, but that’s the way it is. It does provide you with the opportunity to keep your license though. It also shows accountability for actions. It may also give your employer a better sense of security knowing that you check in and have random screenings for drugs and alcohol. Arguably, you may now be one of the cleanest and safest employees on staff.

As I said earlier, you may not need a monitoring program and that may be up to the state depending on your situation. I would urge you to try to get yourself into a program though. It’s not only good for your license and your employment, but it is also good for you. This type of program adds another layer of security for your sobriety. In the section titled “Counseling and 12-Step Recovery” I mentioned some low-lying statistics on recovery. A cooperative effort between professionals and the FAA reported an 85% success rate in

maintaining sobriety with five years of monitoring.¹ Yet another reference sites 85% success rate of monitoring agreement without incident, 79% abstinence from alcohol after agreement completion, and 95% abstinence from illicit drug use after completion.²

As you can see by those statistics, your chances of maintaining your sobriety increase greatly with these programs. The ultimate outcome will, of course, depend on you. If you are motivated and truly want this for yourself you will succeed. You will need to decide how dedicated to yourself and your profession you are. Is this the right path for you? I hope your answer is yes because you are worth it.

1. Human Intervention Motivational Study. <https://himsprogram.com/background/>
2. Dupont and Merlo. (2018). Physician Health Programs: A Model for Treating Substance Use Disorders. The Judges' Journal, Vol. 57, No. 1.