

Oregon Preferred Worker Program fact sheet

The State of Oregon Preferred Worker Program promotes re-employment of qualified Oregon workers called preferred workers. The program gets funds from worker and employer payments into the Workers' Benefit Fund. Preferred workers can offer Oregon employers a chance to save money by hiring them.

Who is eligible?

Both employers and workers may be eligible for preferred worker benefits.

Employers

Must have and keep Oregon workers' compensation insurance and follow Oregon workers' compensation laws.

Workers

Must have an on-the-job injury that keeps them from going back to their regular work and leaves them with permanent restrictions.

What kind of help can I get?

Premium exemption: Premium exemption saves an employer the costs of workers' compensation insurance premiums and premium assessments on a preferred worker for three years. During the premium exemption period, the employer does not report, and the insurer cannot use, the preferred worker's wages to calculate insurance premiums or premium assessments. To use this benefit, the employer must notify the Workers' Compensation Division within 90 days of hiring the preferred worker.

Claim cost reimbursement: WCD repays an employer's insurer for costs of a new workers' compensation claim if a preferred worker files one during the three-year premium exemption period.

Wage subsidy: WCD repays the employer 50 percent of the preferred worker's wages for 183 days. Wage subsidy may be used as many times as needed, up to a maximum total reimbursement of \$40,000.

Employment purchases: Required to help a worker find, accept, or keep a job in Oregon:

- ◆ **Tuition, books, and fees** for classes to update existing skills or meet job requirements (\$1,000 per use, up to \$2,000).
- ◆ **Temporary lodging, meals, and mileage** for overnight travel if required to attend classes (up to \$1,000).
- ◆ **Tools and equipment** required for the job (\$2,500 per use, up to \$5,000).
- ◆ **Clothing** required for the job and not provided by the employer (\$500 per use, up to \$1,000)
- ◆ **Transportation-related purchases** that enable the worker to commute, excluding vehicles, up to \$1,000 within the first 90 days of employment.
- ◆ **Union initiation fees or dues owed**, plus one month's current dues (up to \$1,000).
- ◆ **Moving expenses** for a job in Oregon if the new job is 50 miles or more from the worker's home.
- ◆ **Occupational certification, licenses, and related testing costs** (\$500 per use, up to \$1,000).
- ◆ **Worksite creation costs** when an employer creates a new job (\$5,000 per use, up to \$10,000).
- ◆ **Placement assistance** to help a preferred worker find a job.
- ◆ **Miscellaneous** other purchases (up to \$2,500).

Worksite modification: WCD can purchase items needed to overcome injury-caused permanent limitations (\$35,000 per use, up to \$50,000).

Want to know more?

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