

Oregon Workers' Compensation

Topic of Interest

Preferred Worker Program _____

The State of Oregon Preferred Worker Program encourages the re-employment of qualified Oregon workers who have permanent disabilities from on-the-job injuries and who are not able to return to their regular work because of those injuries. The program is funded by worker and employer contributions to the Workers' Benefit Fund.

Eligible employers

Employers must maintain Oregon workers' compensation insurance and comply with the Oregon workers' compensation law.

Eligible workers

- ◆ Must have permanent disability as a result of a disabling, compensable injury or disease sustained on the job in Oregon.
- ◆ Must not be released for unrestricted regular work.

Major program benefits

Premium exemption: An employer does not pay workers' compensation insurance premiums or premium assessments on a Preferred Worker for up to three years. If a worker has already started premium exemption, subsequent employers will be allowed to use the remaining time.

Claim cost reimbursement: This protects the employer from the costs of a new workers' compensation claim if the Preferred Worker files during the premium exemption period.

Wage subsidy: The employer receives 50 percent wage reimbursement for the Preferred Worker for six months. Wage subsidy may be used one time each with two different employers.

Obtained employment purchases: These are items the worker is required to purchase for a job. These items must be required of all workers performing the job for which the worker is employed and must be items not normally provided by the employer:

- **Tuition, books, and fees** for instruction to update existing skills (\$1,000 maximum reimbursement).
- **Tools and equipment** mandatory for the job, such as tool starter sets (\$2,000 maximum reimbursement).
- **Clothing** required for the job (\$400 maximum reimbursement).
- **Moving expenses** for a job within Oregon more than 50 miles from the worker's primary residence.

Worksite modification: Modifications can include tools, equipment, and worksite redesign needed to overcome injury-caused limitations so the worker can do the job. They may be used once with one employer and once with a second employer or twice with the same employer if there is a job change. Modifications are limited to a maximum of \$25,000 on the claim that qualified the worker for assistance.

For more information contact:

1-800-445-3948, (503) 947-7588 (Salem office)
1-800-696-7161 (Medford office), or (503) 947-7993 (TTY)