



Through the Preferred Worker Program, you could provide a job for worker with permanent disabilities and receive financial benefits for doing so.

What is the Preferred Worker Program?

The state of Oregon Preferred Worker Program encourages the re-employment of qualified Oregon workers who have permanent disabilities from workplace injuries and who are not able to return to their regular employment because of those injuries.

The program is funded by worker and employer contributions to the Workers' Benefit Fund. Preferred workers can offer cost-saving options to Oregon employers who hire them.

Eligibility

Employers

To be eligible for PWP, you must maintain Oregon workers' comp insurance and comply with the Oregon workers' comp law.

Workers

To be eligible for PWP, a worker must have permanent disability as a result of a disabling (and compensable) injury sustained on the job in Oregon, and must not be released for regular employment.

Types of assistance

Premium exemption

An employer does not pay workers' comp insurance premiums or premium assessments on a preferred worker for three years from the date of hire or date of eligibility.

Claim cost reimbursement

This protects the employer from the costs of a new workers' comp claim if the preferred worker files one during the premium exemption period.

Wage subsidy

The employer receives a 50 percent wage reimbursement for the preferred worker for 183 days. The wage subsidy may be used one time each with two different employers or twice with the same employer for two different jobs.

Employment purchases

Assistance necessary for a worker to find, accept, or retain employment in Oregon:

- Tuition, books, and fees for instruction to update existing skills or to meet the requirements of a job (\$1,000 maximum expenditure)
- Temporary lodging, meals, and mileage to attend instruction when overnight travel is required (\$500 maximum expenditure)
- Tools and equipment mandatory for employment (\$2,500 maximum expenditure)
- Clothing required for the job (\$400 maximum expenditure)
- Moving expenses for a job in Oregon if the new worksite is more than 50 miles from the worker's primary residence
- Initiation fees, or back dues and one month's current dues, required by a labor union
- Occupational certification, licenses, and related testing costs (\$500 maximum expenditure)
- Worksite creation costs that occur with creating a new job for a preferred worker (\$5,000 maximum expenditure). All items purchased in this category belong to the employer.
- Miscellaneous purchases that don't fit in any other categories but are necessary for the preferred worker to find, accept, or retain employment in Oregon (\$2,500 maximum expenditure per claim opening)

Worksite modification

Modifications can include tools, equipment, and a worksite redesign needed to overcome injury-caused permanent limitations so the worker can do the job.

Modifications may be used once with one employer and once with a second employer, or twice with the same employer if a job change occurs. Modifications are limited to a maximum of \$25,000 on the claim that qualified the worker for assistance.

All program benefits are subject to review and approval by the Oregon Workers' Compensation Division. To learn more about this program contact the Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services or your local SAIF representative.