

# The Preferred Worker Program

## Demystifying Benefits With a Case Study

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Department of Consumer  
and Business Services

# Our goals for this training

You will learn about:



Preferred Worker Program (PWP) eligibility



PWP benefits



How to access PWP benefits

# What is the Preferred Worker Program?

Since 1990, the Preferred Worker Program has provided return-to-work benefits to qualified Oregon workers and hiring incentives to eligible Oregon employers.

# Goal of the Preferred Worker Program

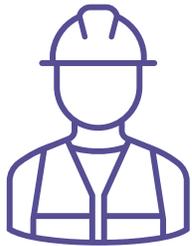
To help qualified Oregon workers return to the workforce.



# How is it funded?

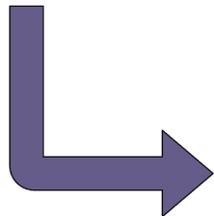
## The Workers' Benefit Fund (WBF)

A payroll assessment calculated on the basis of hours worked by all paid workers, owners, and officers covered by workers' compensation insurance in Oregon, and by all workers subject to Oregon's workers' compensation laws.



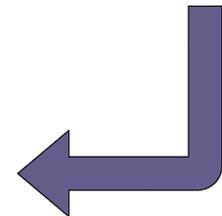
Worker

1.0 cents/hour worked



Employer

1.0 cents/hour worked



2.0 cents/hour worked into the WBF

# Preferred Worker Program eligibility



A person is designated a preferred worker because they have **permanent work restrictions** due to an accepted disabling Oregon workers' compensation claim that **prevents return to their job at injury.**

# Case study: Eligibility

- Linda works at Equamore Foundation, an equine sanctuary in Ashland as the executive director and barn manager.
- This job required rescue and transport, horse training, riding lessons, and horse care.
- She was hurt when a donkey kicked her.



# Case study: Eligibility

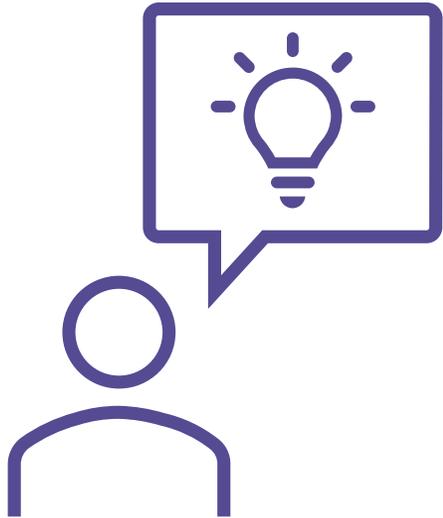
- Accepted conditions: right proximal femur intertrochanteric fracture, right distal radial fracture
- Permanent restrictions: no repetitive use of right hip and wrist
- Floor to waist 15 lbs.; waist to eye 6 lbs.; push/pull 25 lbs. occasionally
- No ladders or no repetitive trunk rotation
- Light work category



# What does it mean to be a preferred worker?

PWP provides benefits to help a worker:

- Dress for the job
- Be equipped to do the job
- Be trained to do the job
- Perform the job within their work restrictions



# Key point

Work restrictions prevent a worker from returning to their **job at injury.**

They do not prevent them from taking the **skills, knowledge, and experience** they have gained to another job.



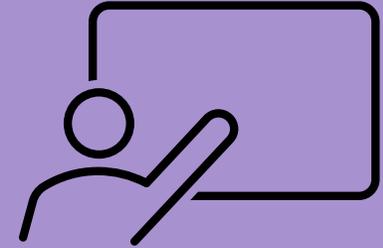
# Workers will be prepared to do the job



## Clothing

Available so a worker has appropriate work clothes.

**Tools and equipment**  
Resources that an employer requires their workers to have.



## Training

Helps a worker get training and certifications required for the job.

**All categories can be used as often as necessary until the lifetime maximum is reached!**

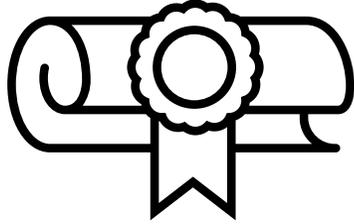
# Case study: Employment purchases

Linda received the following benefits:

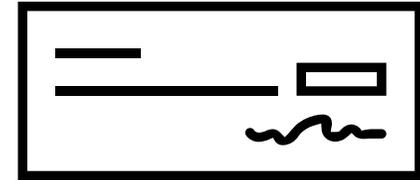
- Clothing
- Tools: rain gear, boots
- Training: grant writing class



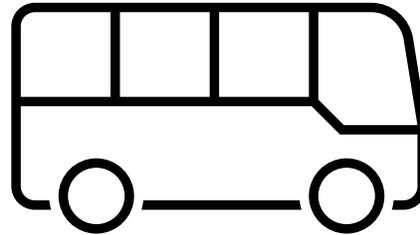
# Other possible assistance



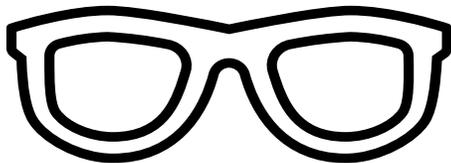
**Occupational certifications**



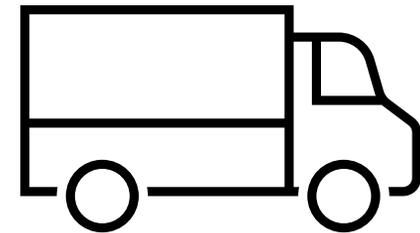
**Union dues**



**Transportation**



**Miscellaneous**



**Moving**

# To an employer, it means



## A preferred worker:

- Is the lowest cost applicant
- Comes with reduced risk for three years
- Can help a business grow
- Can potentially increase productivity and safety for the whole staff

# Lowered employer costs and risk



## Premium exemption

An employer does not pay workers' compensation premiums or premium assessments on a preferred worker for **three years**.



## Claims cost reimbursement

The employer is protected from the costs of a new claim if the preferred worker has a new injury during the **three-year** exemption period.

# Wage subsidy

**\$40,000 lifetime maximum**  
provides up to  
50 percent of the worker's gross wages  
reimbursed for up to six months.

A **second** wage subsidy may be used with the same employer if the majority of duties have changed, and at least **one year** has passed from the end of the first wage subsidy period.

# Case study: Premium exemption and wage subsidy

- Premium exemption period:  
08/26/2021 – 08/26/2024
- Total wages reimbursed to the employer: \$8,892.00



# Grow business with worksite creation



If a preferred worker is hired into a new position with an eligible employer, they may use a benefit of **up to \$5,000** to create a worksite.

# Case study: Worksite creation

The employer-at-injury modified her job-at-injury by more than 50 percent of the worker's job duties at injury. The PWP would consider this a new job and eligible for job creation.

- File storage
- Laptop
- Printer
- Docking station
- Monitors
- Software



# Worksite modification

Worksite modification means **altering a worksite** by purchasing, modifying, or supplementing equipment, or changing the work process, to **enable a worker to work within the restrictions** caused by a compensable injury or occupational disease.



# Worksite modification



**\$50,000**

lifetime maximum to provide worksite modification



**\$35,000**

per use maximum

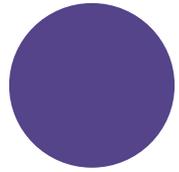
*Can be used until the benefit is exhausted.*

# Case study: Worksite modification

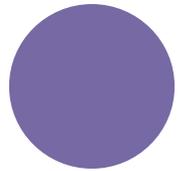
- Linda made her own ergonomic tools by adding ergonomic handles to existing tools (pitchforks, shovels) for her wrists – consultant discretion
- Camera system to monitor equine and staff activity – removed repetitive use of the right hip
- Barn doors retrofitted – reduced the push/pull force to less than the worker's 25 lbs. force restriction
- Shop vacuum – removed raking and allowed to work within her repetitive right wrist restrictions
- Utility task vehicle – removed repetitive use of the right hip when walking in soft and uneven terrain



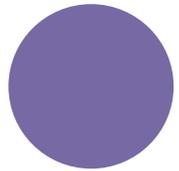
# Keep in mind



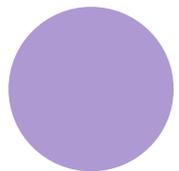
The premium exemption and transportation benefits must be requested **within 90 days of hire or eligibility for both the employer at injury and worker use.**



For employer-at-injury use of the program, employment purchases, modification, and wage subsidy must be requested **within 180 Days from claim closure.**



For worker use of the program, employment purchases, modification, and wage subsidy must be requested **within three years of the hire date.**



Be sure to visit program website at **[www.oregonpwp.com](http://www.oregonpwp.com)** for additional information and to access forms.

For more information:

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[www.oregonpwp.com](http://www.oregonpwp.com)