2015 Return-to-Work Assistance table updates

Employer-at-Injury Program placements approved, CY 1995-2014

Year	Disabling claim placements	Nondisabling claim placements	Total worker placements	Employers	Mean cost per placement
1995	3,733	5	3,738	1,190	$1,326
1996	4,287	1,790	6,077	1,348	$1,244
1997	4,454	3,905	8,359	1,513	$1,180
1998	4,981	5,087	10,068	1,791	$1,167
1999	4,385	5,057	9,442	1,837	$1,132
2000	3,580	4,274	7,854	1,579	$1,215
2001	4,222	4,386	8,608	1,657	$1,292
2002	3,306	3,101	6,407	1,236	$1,412
2003	3,101	2,857	5,958	1,334	$1,478
2004	3,512	3,097	6,609	1,499	$1,472
2005	3,491	2,984	6,475	1,494	$1,553
2006	3,901	3,523	7,424	1,626	$1,604
2007	4,327	3,443	7,770	1,800	$1,787
2008	5,053	3,762	8,815	1,993	$2,066
2009	5,066	3,542	8,608	2,005	$2,168
2010	4,476	3,095	7,571	1,865	$2,184
2011	4,882	3,505	8,387	1,932	$2,292
2012	5,135	3,817	8,952	1,990	$2,321
2013	5,469	3,630	9,099	2,147	$2,503
2014	5,183	3,321	8,504	2,073	$2,396

The Employer-at-Injury Program was created to encourage placement of injured workers into transitional work while they recover from their injuries. Benefits available to employers and their workers include wage subsidy, worksite modification, and purchases. SB 369 of 1995 allowed benefits to become available for nondisabling claims.

Higher counts of workers and employers with placements after 2005 are evidence that recent law changes are promoting use and access to the program, despite declining claim counts. Modifications and purchases are being used more often due to administrative law changes in late 2007.

Historical data are subject to small changes. Disabling and nondisabling placements are counted by current claim status.

Preferred workers, CY 1991-2014

Year	Eligibilities	Eligibilities with benefit use	Percent of eligibilities with benefit use
1991	4,189	1,523	36%
1992	3,548	1,116	31%
1993	3,104	990	32%
1994	3,351	981	29%
1995	4,459	1,334	29.9%
1996	3,708	1,107	29.9%
1997	3,120	912	29.2%
1998	2,946	738	25.1%
1999	2,549	645	25.3%
2000	2,267	586	25.8%
2001	2,375	565	23.8%
2002	1,858	501	27.0%
2003	1,821	499	27.4%
2004	1,779	482	27.1%
2005	1,794	476	26.5%
2006	1,755	471	26.8%
2007	2,010	562	28.0%
2008	1,940	401	20.7%
2009	1,615	335	20.7%
2010	1,340	272	20.3%
2011	1,147	248	21.6%
2012	1,179	245	20.8%
2013	1,718	Available August 2016	
2014	1,025	Available August 2017	

Preferred workers have permanent work restrictions that prevent return to unmodified regular work. Preferred worker eligibilities in 2007 and 2008 were at their highest number since 2001, but declined to a record low in 2011.

Eligibility entitles a preferred worker to many years - unlimited since December 2007 - in which to begin using benefits. Counts of eligibilities with benefit use do become relatively stable within about three years of the eligibility date. The percent of eligibilities with benefit use fell below 29 percent in 1998; it averaged 26 percent for over a decade. The percent of eligibilities with use has averaged 21 percent over 2008-2012, the latest five years with available data.

The large jump in eligibilities in 2013 was due to a one-time event to find PWP-eligible claimants missed by the insurers' closing orders.

Historical data are subject to small changes.

Preferred Worker Program contracts started, CY 1988-2014

Year	Workers starting one or more contracts	Wage subsidies	Worksite modifications	Purchases
1988	312	1,272	293	0
1989	744	1,041	133	2
1990	833	1,000	135	35
1991	1,046	999	201	88
1992	1,043	957	379	215
1993	1,005	965	396	225
1994	979	1,040	513	317
1995	1,379	1,110	418	527
1996	1,448	1,111	515	638
1997	1,380	1,063	448	602
1998	1,273	957	448	668
1999	979	734	293	462
2000	871	673	282	344
2001	718	539	232	310
2002	594	473	200	250
2003	620	517	200	235
2004	620	488	265	249
2005	594	458	245	252
2006	573	482	232	225
2007	604	495	218	237
2008	697	463	231	583
2009	541	342	187	415
2010	493	305	185	382
2011	527	351	162	410
2012	422	277	136	295
2013	433	315	164	293
2014	451	298	173	345

Preferred Worker Program benefits include premium exemption and claim cost reimbursement, plus wage subsidy, worksite modification, and employment purchase contracts or agreements. Workers may use all these benefits more than one time.

Administrative law changes provided for use of program benefits at the injury employer's initiative beginning July 2005, and worksite creation purchases in December 2007. The number of workers starting contracts in 2014 was among the lowest on record but an increase since 2012.

Workers may start contracts in multiple years. Historical data are subject to small changes.

Vocational assistance determinations, CY 1987-2014

Year	Total determinations	Ineligible	Eligible
1987	13,037	3,177	9,860
1988	6,487	3,228	3,259
1989	6,406	3,575	2,831
1990	7,334	5,123	2,211
1991	6,921	5,231	1,690
1992	6,087	4,644	1,443
1993	5,847	4,414	1,433
1994	5,302	4,050	1,252
1995	4,447	3,168	1,279
1996	4,084	2,975	1,109
1997	3,547	2,698	849
1998	3,441	2,647	794
1999	3,299	2,555	744
2000	2,421	1,705	716
2001	2,046	1,291	755
2002	2,046	1,308	738
2003	2,108	1,324	784
2004	2,495	1,723	772
2005	2,668	1,929	740
2006	2,439	1,749	690
2007	2,293	1,539	754
2008	2,665	1,960	705
2009	2,267	1,626	641
2010	1,138	566	572
2011	903	439	464
2012	725	351	374
2013	695	315	380
2014	609	319	290

Insurers determine eligibility or ineligibility for vocational assistance for workers with permanent partial disability who do not return to permanent work with the employer at injury. The department audits claim closures to assure that insurers determine eligibility.

In general, workers are eligible for vocational assistance if they have a substantial handicap that prevents re-employment in any job that pays at least 80 percent of the job-at-injury wages. Eligible determinations include insurer letters, eligibility orders, and eligibility restorations.

Although the total number of determinations in 2010 was the lowest on record to that time (about half the previous year), most of the change was among the ineligible workers. HB 2705 (2009) allows forgoing a determination when the worker has a regular work release.

Data may be reported by the insurer several months after the determination.

Vocational assistance eligibility closures, plans, and outcomes, CY 1995-2014

Year	Total eligibility closures	Closed, no plan	Closed, direct employment plan	Closed, training plan	Outcome: return to work	Outcome: maximum services or job ended	Outcome: CDA	Outcome: other
1995	1,404	832	51	521	340	87	631	346
1996	1,243	698	39	506	337	58	582	266
1997	993	512	23	458	248	59	441	245
1998	874	455	6	413	208	50	424	192
1999	781	416	7	358	157	41	354	229
2000	725	395	4	326	171	46	323	185
2001	714	387	4	323	154	46	312	202
2002	787	453	7	327	140	70	390	187
2003	735	423	8	304	123	75	371	166
2004	779	449	5	325	128	60	375	216
2005	749	441	4	304	135	48	358	208
2006	743	410	7	326	143	48	368	184
2007	724	394	3	327	152	46	319	207
2008	714	412	5	297	109	45	351	209
2009	689	376	12	301	95	70	314	210
2010	635	336	10	289	81	62	325	167
2011	563	285	10	268	66	64	278	155
2012	456	232	2	222	68	46	223	119
2013	407	227	1	179	63	30	212	102
2014	380	216	4	160	58	16	192	114

Eligibility closures include insurer eligibility closures and eligibilities where there is a claim disposition agreement in full, but no eligibility closure. No-plan closures continue to account for 50 percent or more of eligibility closures. The claim disposition agreement continues to account for about 50 percent of eligibility closure outcomes.

Data may be reported by the insurer several months after the closure.

Employment and wage recovery advantage for return-to-work program users, FY 1997-2014

Fiscal year	Employer-at-Injury Program	Preferred Worker Program	Vocational Assistance	All return-to-work programs	Employer-at-Injury Program	Preferred Worker Program	Vocational Assistance	All return-to-work programs
1997	7	24	24	10	3	24	17	4
1998	5	23	28	11	2	22	27	9
1999	3	22	28	10	2	21	25	9
2000	6	24	30	12	6	22	26	12
2001	5	24	24	11	5	15	19	11
2002	4	21	21	9	8	18	28	14
2003	3	20	35	10	9	20	27	14
2004	4	23	35	11	8	14	33	14
2005	4	24	29	11	5	29	19	12
2006	6	29	34	13	9	33	26	16
2007	5	23	31	10	6	20	40	12
2008	4	27	39	11	4	27	30	11
2009	4	27	35	11	3	24	41	11
2010	6	26	21	12	6	28	28	14
2011	6	32	34	12	6	28	17	13
2012	3	44	19	11	3	51	8	12
2013	2	39	27	10	5	43	10	13
2014	1	42	20	8	6	44	26	14

The department analyzes data from the Oregon Employment Department to calculate percentage-point differences in employment and wage-recovery rates between workers with accepted disabling claims who used return-to-work programs and similar workers who did not. The measures are based on wages reported in the 13th quarter after the disabling injury or exposure, when most workers have recuperated and used return-to-work programs. Since 2000, at least 87 percent of the program use at that point has been the Employer-at-Injury Program.