

Program Eligibility for Employers

To be eligible to participate in the Preferred Worker Program, employers must:

- Be in good standing with WSI
- Have and maintain an account providing WSI coverage

Note: *The employer of injury is not eligible for program participation with its own employees unless the employer of injury has identified permanent alternate work for the injured employee. Alternate work is considered permanent work that is provided to the employee that is outside of the pre-injury position and requires the employee to perform work duties in another role.*



Program Eligibility for Injured Workers

To be eligible to participate in the Preferred Worker Program, an injured worker must have:

- Sustained a compensable work injury in North Dakota, resulting in an obstacle in their ability to return to work.
- Not released for, nor have returned to, "regular" work.
- Not refused an offer of appropriate employment with the employer of injury.

It's Easy - We're Online!

Our Preferred Worker Program is listed in the Online Services section of our web site at

<https://www.workforcesafety.com/online-services/onlineservices.asp>

Please visit our web site often for updated program information.

Registration Forms

Workers and employers can complete the registration process online to be considered for program participation.

Job Search Tools for Preferred Workers

Workers may also reference a number of employment-related web sites and also view available job-seeking workshops.

For More Information On This Program

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WSI
North Dakota Workforce
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Preferred Worker Program

The Preferred Worker Program offers a unique concept as part of our return-to-work services. While this program is designed to encourage the re-employment of North Dakota's injured workers, it also offers cost-saving incentives to employers participating in the program.

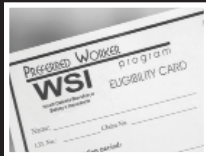
How the Program Works

For a WSI injured worker to participate in the Preferred Worker Program, they must be approved by WSI. This assures that the injured worker is an appropriate candidate for the program.



Identification (ID) Card

At the time a worker is approved for the program, they will receive an **Identification (ID) Card**. This is the first of two cards that will be issued to the preferred worker. The worker carries this card with them when they are looking for work. At the time the preferred worker is hired under the Preferred Worker Program, the ID Card will be completed by the employer and returned to WSI. Once approved, a Preferred Worker Agreement will be generated. Upon the agreement being signed by the employer and the preferred worker, the benefits are activated.



Eligibility Card

Once the Preferred Worker Agreement is in effect, WSI will issue the preferred worker a second card, which is an **Eligibility Card**. If the worker changes jobs or obtains an additional job, the preferred worker may present this card to the new employer.

Preferred Worker Program Benefits

Work Search Allowance

Once the injured worker is deemed eligible for the program, and is actively searching for employment, a work search allowance will be provided to the preferred worker in the amount of \$250 to be utilized for appropriate interviewing clothing, uniforms, travel expenses, or other items deemed mandatory for employment. Maximum benefit in this category is \$250.

Certification, Licensure or Related Testing Costs

Testing for certifications, licensure or related testing requirements for employment may be reimbursed. This includes physical examinations or membership fees required for the job. Maximum benefit in the category is \$500.

Moving Expenses

Relocation expenses to move the household to the locale where the preferred worker has actually located work and the distance is equal to or greater than 35 miles from their primary residence. Moving expenses shall be paid in accordance with N.D.C.C. 65-05.1.

Wage Reimbursement

WSI may reimburse the employer up to 50% of wages (not to exceed the States Average Weekly Wage) at the time of employment start date. The wage reimbursement period is not to exceed 26 consecutive weeks. **Benefit is not available to the employer of injury who provides alternate work for an injured worker.**

If a worker has a catastrophic injury as defined in N.D.C.C. 65-05.1-06.1 (2) (1), the wage subsidy duration is 52 consecutive weeks with a reimbursement rate of 75 percent. **Benefit is not available to the employer of injury who provides alternate work for an injured worker.**

Reimbursement for Lodging, Meals and Travel Expenses Relating to On-The-Job Training

Upon WSI approval, the preferred worker or employer may be reimbursed for lodging, meals and travel expenses (public transportation or mileage) to attend training required for the employment of the preferred worker. Reimbursement shall be paid at the ND state rate existing at the time of travel.

Tools and Equipment

Upon WSI approval, the preferred worker may be reimbursed for tools, equipment or starter sets deemed mandatory for employment. Maximum benefit in this category is \$2,500.

Union Dues

Includes initiation fees and one month's current dues.

On-Site Job Analysis

Upon request, WSI will conduct an on-site job analysis/ergonomic assessment involving the preferred worker, at no cost to the employer.

Worksite Modification Reimbursement

Upon WSI approval, participating employers or Preferred Workers may be reimbursed for modifications deemed necessary for employment or retraining.

Premium Exemption

No premium charge to employer on the preferred worker's salary for up to three (3) years. **Benefit is not available to the employer of injury who provides alternate work for an injured worker.**

Claim Cost Exemption

If the preferred worker sustains a new on-the-job injury during the premium exemption period, WSI shall not charge the claim costs to the employer. **Benefit is not available to the employer of injury who provides alternate work for an injured worker.**

