

Back to Work Oregon

Background

The Back to Work Oregon program is one of Governor Kitzhaber's first 5 initiatives to get Oregon's economy back on track. The program is resourced with a \$3.4 million investment from Oregon's general fund to place 663 Oregonians into long term jobs matched by Local Workforce Investment Boards putting an additional 662 unemployed Oregonians back to work using local federal and non-federal resources. The program consists of 2 components:

- *On-the-Job Training (OJT)* which is a "hire-first" program that reimburses a company for the cost of training a new employee. A rigorous training plan is put in place by the company which leads to employee retention in the job. The employee becomes a taxpayer by drawing a paycheck during training and beyond.
- *Oregon's National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC)* which demonstrates that an individual has the foundational skills necessary to succeed in the training plan and on the job, and provides the individual with a portable credential for future career growth.

The Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development (CCWD) will oversee and manage the program from the state level and Oregon's 7 Local Workforce Investment Boards will operate the program locally. This program is intended to help recovering Oregon companies open more job vacancies while helping Oregonians get back to work sooner. It addresses both the needs of business for skilled workers and the needs of Oregonians to have job-specific, certified, transportable skills.

Program Overview

The intent of this program is to place unemployed Oregonians who are at least age 18 into long-term, permanent job positions. Trainees are hired into full-time, long-term employment with a portable certificate and receive employer provided training. The trainee is a paid employee of a company.

The trainee will be given an opportunity to earn an NCRC prior to placement in OJT, or during the training period. Since some employers may "prefer" OJT candidates with and NCRC, the opportunity to earn an NCRC prior to OJT placement may be a benefit for the trainee.

Partnership between CCWD and Department of Corrections (DOC)

CCWD received a 2011-2013 legislative budget note requiring coordination with DOC to assure that persons released from prison are included as a target population for OJT funds for the purpose of expanding job opportunities for this population. The Re-entry Employment and Education Workgroup is developing an implementation plan to facilitate the connections between Local Workforce Development Boards and state and community corrections staff in placing persons released from prison into OJTs in Marion and Multnomah counties through the Back to Work Oregon program.

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