



Department of Consumer
and Business Services

May 17, 2023

To: Management-Labor Advisory Committee

From: Matt West, Deputy Administrator

Subject: Follow up information on Return to Work Programs

At your May 12 meeting, a member asked if the department had data to illustrate the effectiveness of return to work programs. This memo summarizes the information we track about outcomes for our two largest programs (Employer at Injury and Preferred Worker Programs) as well workers that participated in a vocational assistance program. The vocational assistance program is a claim cost and is not funded by the Workers' Benefit Fund. However it is under the umbrella of our return to work programs, so we have included information about outcomes for those workers as well.

One way we track the success is with a wage recovery measure. We compare the wages for workers with accepted disabling claims who did not use any return to work programs to workers with accepted disabling claims who used one of our programs. To see the long-term effects, the evaluation looks at worker wages 13 quarters after the worker's injury compared to their wage at injury. Table 1 shows the data for the most recent ten years. Over all, workers who use one of the return to work programs have ranged from 6 to 14 percent higher post-injury wages than workers who do not use a program.

We do the same analysis for the employment rate of return to work program users versus non-users. The employment rate data is also 13 quarters after the injury for the same reason noted above. Table 2 shows the data for the most recent ten years. Over all, workers who use one of the return to work programs have employment rates from 7 to 11 percent higher than workers who do not use a program.

Please let us know if you have additional questions.

Table 1. Wage Recovery
Differences between return-to-work program users and non-users, 13th quarter after injury
 Source: Information Technology and Research Section, Department of Consumer and Business Services

	Total, all programs			Vocational assistance			Preferred Worker Program			Employer-at-Injury Program		
	<i>Percentage point difference</i>	Program users	Non-users	<i>Percentage point difference</i>	Program users	Program non-users	<i>Percentage point difference</i>	Program users	Program non-users	<i>Percentage point difference</i>	Program users	Program non-users
2021	10%	92%	82%	33%	66%	33%	32%	88%	56%	5%	92%	87%
2020	10%	101%	91%	60%	106%	46%	34%	105%	71%	5%	101%	95%
2019	14%	108%	94%	50%	86%	37%	45%	108%	63%	7%	108%	101%
2018	6%	104%	98%	27%	68%	41%	32%	106%	74%	-1%	105%	105%
2017	11%	108%	97%	6%	41%	36%	35%	100%	65%	4%	109%	105%
2016	12%	100%	88%	8%	52%	43%	42%	106%	64%	5%	100%	95%
2015	12%	102%	90%	35%	69%	33%	31%	90%	59%	3%	103%	99%
2014	14%	104%	91%	22%	62%	39%	46%	108%	62%	6%	105%	99%
2013	13%	105%	92%	10%	46%	35%	43%	111%	69%	5%	105%	100%
2012	12%	100%	89%	8%	44%	35%	51%	105%	55%	3%	101%	98%

Table 2. Employment Rate
Differences between return-to-work program users and non-users, 13th quarter after injury
 Source: Information Technology and Research Section, Department of Consumer and Business Services

	Total, all programs			Vocational assistance			Preferred Worker Program			Employer-at-Injury Program		
	<i>Percentage point difference</i>	Program users	Program non-users	<i>Percentage point difference</i>	Program users	Program non-users	<i>Percentage point difference</i>	Program users	Program non-users	<i>Percentage point difference</i>	Program users	Program non-users
2021	10%	73%	64%	25%	53%	28%	30%	77%	46%	5%	73%	68%
2020	8%	77%	70%	42%	81%	39%	32%	88%	56%	4%	77%	73%
2019	9%	76%	66%	43%	77%	34%	32%	79%	47%	5%	76%	71%
2018	7%	75%	68%	18%	52%	35%	39%	88%	49%	2%	75%	73%
2017	9%	70%	61%	25%	48%	23%	31%	73%	42%	2%	70%	68%
2016	8%	74%	66%	21%	52%	31%	29%	78%	49%	3%	74%	71%
2015	9%	74%	65%	36%	63%	27%	27%	73%	47%	2%	74%	72%
2014	9%	72%	63%	18%	50%	32%	42%	84%	42%	2%	72%	70%
2013	10%	71%	62%	27%	53%	26%	39%	83%	45%	2%	71%	69%
2012	11%	69%	58%	19%	46%	27%	44%	80%	36%	3%	68%	66%