



OREGON WORKFORCE
PARTNERSHIP

Better Skills • Better Jobs

Back to Work Oregon Fact Sheet

The Goal: To get 1,325 unemployed Oregonians back to work by June 30, 2012 using a program that consists of On-the-Job training paired with a National Career Readiness Certificate.

The Program: The program was identified by Governor Kitzhaber as one of his first five initiatives to get Oregon's economy back on track. The Governor requested and received \$3.4 million from Oregon's general fund to place 663 Oregonians into long term jobs using this program. Local Workforce Investment Boards agreed to match the Governor's investment by putting an additional 662 unemployed Oregonians into the program using local resources.

- *Oregon's National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC)* 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.
- *On-the-Job Training (OJT)* is a "hire-first" program that reimburses a company for the cost of training a newly employee. A rigorous training plan is put in place by the company which leads to employee retention in the job. The employee becomes a tax payer, by drawing a paycheck during training, and beyond.

Back to Work Oregon, which consists of both the state funded and locally matched components of the program, integrates OJT with NCRC for maximum benefit for the employee and the company. Participants are brought into the program through WorkSource Oregon.

Timeline: The program began on July 1, 2011. This applies for both the portion of the program funded with state general funds and the portion of the program funded by Local Workforce Investment Boards with other funds. Local Workforce Investment Boards are expected to have all 1,325 workers placed into the Back to Work Oregon program by June 30, 2012, although participants may complete the program after that date.

How is the program administered: The Oregon Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development administers the program at the state level. Oregon's seven Local Workforce Investment Boards implement the program locally in collaboration with WorkSource Oregon, Oregon Employment Department, Veteran's groups, Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Human Services, and Community Colleges, Community Based Organizations and other partners.

What does is the cost: There is no direct cost to the company or the job seeker.

Back to Work Oregon Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *Who may qualify for the program?*

A: Any unemployed Oregonian who has been determined eligible and enrolled in the Workforce system and who is deemed eligible for training services under the Workforce Investment Act's Title 1B.

Q: *Is the National Career Readiness Certificate required for both the state and locally funded components of the program?*

A. Yes. Both the general fund component and local match component consist of an OJT paired with the NCRC.

Q: *What if someone cannot earn a National Career Readiness Certificate?*

A: Potential applicants are given an Initial Skills Review prior to NCRC testing and have the opportunity to improve their skills using free on-line WIN courseware. Individuals may also have opportunities to retest under the state's NCRC Guidance letter 06-10. However, there may be some applicants who cannot earn an NCRC. In these cases, the entity administering the program should record the individual's inability to earn an NCRC. However, an individual's inability to earn an NCRC should not disqualify him or her from applying for an OJT if s/he meets other job requirements.

Q: *Does the applicant have to earn the NCRC prior to placement into the OJT?*

A: It is up to the entity administering the program to determine whether an applicant must earn an NCRC prior to placement into the OJT or during the placement.

Q: *Does the individual have to qualify as a "Dislocated Worker" to participate in the program?*

A: No. Any unemployed Oregonian who has been determined eligible and enrolled in the Workforce system and who is deemed eligible for training services under the Workforce Investment Act Title 1B may participate.

Q: *Does a job seeker have to register in I-MatchSkills?*

A: Participants determined eligible and enrolled in the Workforce system typically participate in the statewide "welcome process" which includes an Initial Skills Review and registration into I-MatchSkills.

Q: *Are there any restrictions on the type of employers who may participate in the program?*

A: Local Workforce Investment Boards should follow their existing policies to determine which employers are eligible for the program.

Q: *What are the requirements for the OJT Program?*

A: Local Workforce Investment Boards should use their existing OJT policies for both the state funded and matching components of this program. Typically, the program requires some evaluation of the company's ability to administer the program, the creation of an agreement/contract, the selection and hiring of an applicant by the company, the development and monitoring of a training plan, and the completion of an agreed upon retention period following completion of the training plan. Typically, companies do not receive full reimbursement for the cost of the OJT until the retention period has been completed.

Q: *Does the Local Workforce Board match have to match the \$3.4 million state investment dollar for dollar?*

A: No. Local Workforce Investment Boards have agreed to fund 662 OJT/NCRC with local resources as the match to the 663 OJT/NCRC funded portion by the state. There is no requirement for a dollar to dollar match.

Q: Which resources may Local Workforce Investment Boards use for the local matching OJT/NCRC component of the program?

A: Workforce Boards may use Workforce Investment Act formula funds, the OJT National Emergency Grant, other state or federal grants, or any other resources for their matching component of the program. Each of these funding sources may have additional eligibility requirements associated with them, which Local Boards will have to take into account.

Q: Which OJT/NCRC can be counted toward match at the local level?

A: Any OJT with an NCRC that was not funded with the state general fund investment and was in process on 7/1/11 counts as match to the program.

Q: Does the program target specific jobs or wage levels?

A: The goal of the program is to place people in jobs with good wages and/or career pathways to the greatest extent possible. Each Local Workforce Investment Board should follow its policies related to placement wages and target industries/job titles.

Q: How will this program be sustained?

A: Currently, the Governor and Legislature have made a one-time investment into the program. Successful performance within the identified timelines will allow OWP and CCWD to make future requests to support the program.