

Helping Workers Keep Their Jobs After an Injury, Illness, or Disability: State Strategies

WASHINGTON

Washington's **Centers of Occupational Health and Education** program, administered by the state's Department of Labor and Industries, contracts with community-based entities affiliated with health care delivery organizations. These entities work with medical providers, employers, and injured workers in the first three to six months after an injury. Activities include care coordination, training and incentives for physicians, and access to consultants who specialize in occupational medicine. The **Stay at Work** program pays employers 50 percent of injured workers' base wages (up to a cap of \$10,000), as well as the costs of certain accommodations.

OREGON

The **Oregon Employer-at-Injury Program** provides employers with wage subsidies, reimbursement for worksite modifications, and other costs associated with providing accommodations to help workers stay at work. The **Preferred Worker Program** provides similar benefits to employers who hire injured workers. Both programs are funded by worker and employer contributions to Oregon's Workers' Benefit Fund.

OHIO

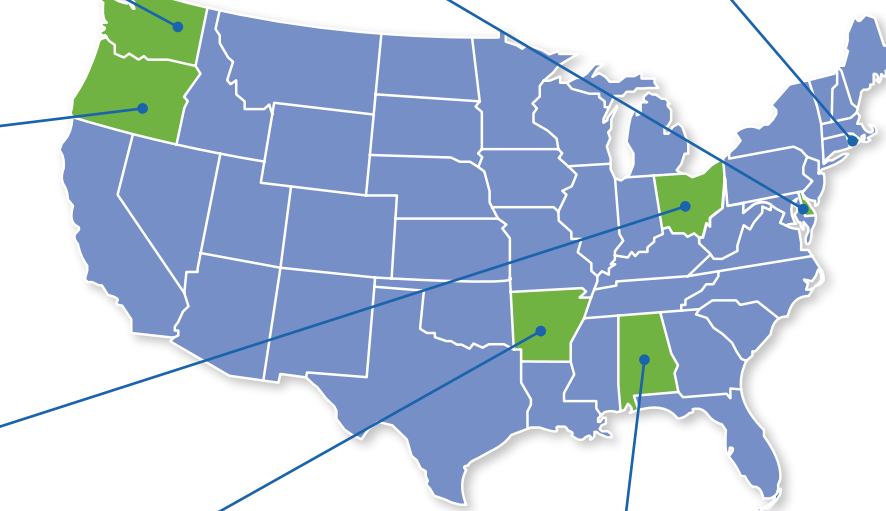
The Ohio **Transitional Work Grants** program, administered by the state's Bureau of Workers' Compensation, provides eligible employers with funds to develop a worksite program that helps injured workers perform transitional work while they recover from their injury. The **Transitional Work Bonus** program rewards employers who successfully provide transitional work to their injured employees.

DELAWARE

The Delaware **Return-to-Work** program helps state employees who want to stay at or return to work after claiming disability insurance benefits. It includes a coordinator who works with insurance carrier staff, physicians, and supervisors to help employees return to work.

RHODE ISLAND

Rhode Island's **Temporary Disability Insurance** program implemented changes in 2006 to improve job-retention outcomes among claimants. This includes a **Partial Return to Work Program** that provides benefits to encourage workers to return to work sooner than they might otherwise do, and offers **medical disability duration guidelines** that can be used to determine the appropriate duration of benefits for each claimant based on his specific illness or injury.



ARKANSAS

The Arkansas **Stay-at-Work/Return-to-Work** program is an initiative within the state vocational rehabilitation agency. An accommodation specialist evaluates the worker's functional limitations and collaborates with the employer and employee to provide modifications to workstations, assistive technology, and other adjustments.

ALABAMA

Alabama's **Retaining a Valued Employee** program, administered by the state's Department of Rehabilitation Services, offers a single point of contact for employers and employees; a coordinator assesses an individual's needs and arranges assistance. The program also provides guidance to employers about job retention strategies.

Every year, more than 2 million workers in the United States lose their jobs or leave the workforce because of a medical condition. A number of states have adopted promising early-intervention strategies designed to help these workers keep their jobs. States have a variety of systems in which they can identify and engage individuals who are at risk of job loss; these systems include workers' compensation, public short-term disability insurance programs, vocational rehabilitation agencies, and state employee benefit programs. This map shows selected strategies in use that could serve as models for other states.

Since 2013, the Office of Disability and Employment Policy (ODEP) at the U.S. Department of Labor has supported the **Stay-at-Work/Return-to-Work (SAW/RTW) Policy Collaborative**, whose work is guided by a community of practice and by policy work groups of subject matter experts. Through this collaboration, ODEP identifies effective practices that can inform federal, state, and private sector approaches to helping injured, ill, or disabled workers keep their jobs.