



Commissioner Brad Avakian
Bureau of Labor and Industries

PRESS RELEASE

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Employers Flock to Free Worker Classification Seminars

Enforcement agencies explain employee vs. independent contractor determinations to interested crowds

PORTLAND—Large audiences, including a handful of workers themselves, attended free seminars on proper worker classification in Portland today. Two identical 1.5-hour sessions combined for some 110 attendees at the event, organized by the Technical Assistance for Employers Program (TA) of the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) and its partners in Oregon’s Interagency Compliance Network (ICN). Each session featured presenters from BOLI, the Employment Department, Department of Revenue and the Workers Compensation Division to highlight the importance of accurate determinations and the resources available to help Oregonians understand who is, and who is not, an independent contractor.

“I’m so glad that I came to the presentation today,” said Caitlin Jeffery of VanderHouwen & Associates, Inc., who attended the later session. “Getting information from each of the different agencies really helped clarify the difference between an employee and an independent contractor.”

ICN’s website, www.oregonindependentcontractors.com, contains useful information about the agencies that make up the network as well as resources to help properly classify workers.

Oregon law often requires state agencies to assess back taxes, penalties, and interest against employers that have misclassified their workers. Misclassified employees run the risk of losing out on lawful benefits and protections like unemployment insurance, income tax withholding, workers compensation coverage for on-the-job injuries, minimum wage and overtime protections as well as other workplace protections under civil rights and wage and hour law. Misclassified employees will almost certainly forfeit benefits offered to properly classified employees such as sick leave, vacation pay and retirement benefits.

“Awareness of this issue is rising,” said Jennifer Germundson, BOLI’s TA Manager. “We’re hearing from more employers that they want to convert employees to independent contractors to lower costs, and it just doesn’t work that way.”

The Annual Employment Law Conference run by TA will also feature a session focusing on worker classification issues. A [complete schedule](#) is available at www.oregon.gov/BOLI, along with additional information about various Oregon employment laws and regulations, reference materials and related publications. For questions or to sign-up for the conference, please call 971-673-0825.

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