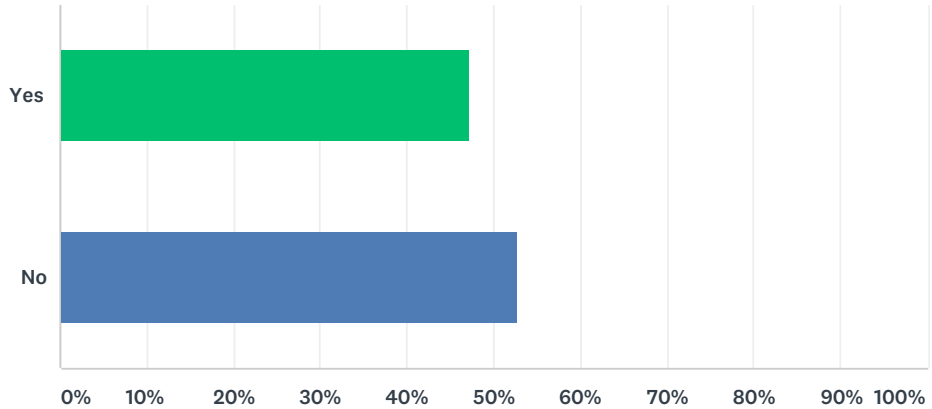


Q1 Is the current maximum training period adequate for most workers to obtain meaningful vocational training?

Answered: 72 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	47.22%	34
No	52.78%	38
TOTAL		72

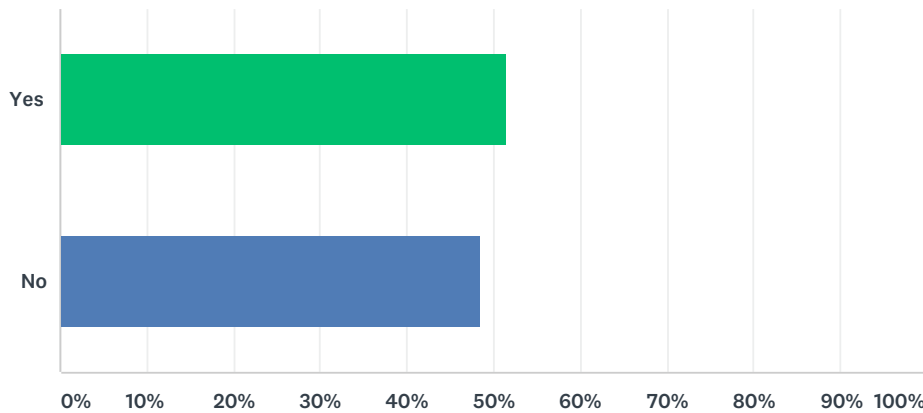
#	COMMENTS:	DATE
1	If the insurers would agree to the maximum services if justified under the rules.	6/24/2019 1:54 PM
2	Not even close.	6/19/2019 11:15 AM
3	Since we received the increased number of months from 16 to 18 we are better prepared to offer academic programs (i.e. Two-year degree options) and occupational skills and on-the-job training programs have been suitable at around 12 to 16 months.	6/19/2019 9:50 AM
4	Most actual college level training classes are two years.	6/19/2019 8:46 AM
5	Except for very high wage earners.	6/19/2019 8:36 AM
6	It depends on what the worker's wage was at injury. It is adequate for people earning less than \$18 per hour. For higher wage earners we need 21 months so they can obtain either a Associate Degree or a Certificate and get hands on training to accompany it. This is not really a yes or no answer.	6/19/2019 7:01 AM
7	I suggest a maximum two years with justification of why two years is required. WA LNI is a good example. Client need to start skill development before they are MMI for example start vocational programs prior to MMI in optional services so they can get their GED during this time frame or start computer classes. If insurers would be required to utilize optional services then a 16 month program would be adequate if a client gets started, but there is no motivation for insurer or client to start optional services early	6/18/2019 11:11 PM
8	There's not enough time to obtain even an associate's degree especially if there's any prerequisites	6/18/2019 7:48 PM
9	Even middling wage jobs now require skills training which is often beyond even the maximum allowed by statute.	6/4/2019 11:08 AM
10	No because in the emerging technological labor market (aside from booms and busts) a certificate for less than two years of voc training is not going to cut it.	6/3/2019 4:54 PM

Workers Compensation Vocational Issues Survey

11	The counselor's I use have been very successful returning workers to suitable employment. Picking a counselor who really wants to provide quality services is crucial and in everyone's best interest.	5/21/2019 9:57 AM
12	Most of the jobs out here require more.	4/25/2019 12:03 PM
13	Most workers don't get 16 months of retraining and most 1 year programs don't adequately train people to replace the wage that they have lost.	4/24/2019 2:47 PM
14	All to often workers come to us with little or no formal education beyond high school and many time not even that. Training is geared to the worker and the current limit of 16 months is too short. I would recommend that workers be allowed 24 months for training.	4/23/2019 11:51 AM
15	I have found that most require two full years.	4/23/2019 11:45 AM
16	21 months minimum is necessary to synchronize with educational institutions	4/23/2019 10:40 AM
17	The maximum training period should be extended to at least 2 years to allow for the completion of a community college associate's degree.	4/23/2019 9:31 AM
18	Too long.	4/22/2019 6:58 PM
19	workers should have access to an associate degree and with prerequisites 24 months of training is often needed, spinal cord injuries need a bachelor degree to maximize future independence	4/22/2019 5:48 PM
20	Generally, no. Specifically, high-wage earners who may be justified in additional time and funding still have a maximum of 21 months of training. This is insufficient. In my opinion, the maximum should be 24 months of training with timeloss. Not all injured workers need that kind of time, but it should be there for those that do. Rules are already in place to prevent the injured \$14/hour worker from accessing the ideal max of 24 months of training when 6 months would do.	4/22/2019 5:16 PM
21	very hard to get 21 month programs because insurers won't pay time-loss past 16 months.	4/22/2019 4:55 PM
22	It is adequate in some circumstances, though not all circumstances. More seriously injured workers earning high wages, often need more training.	4/22/2019 4:44 PM

Q2 Are workers receiving adequate vocation training under the current spending limits for a vocational program?

Answered: 72 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	51.39%	37
No	48.61%	35
TOTAL		72

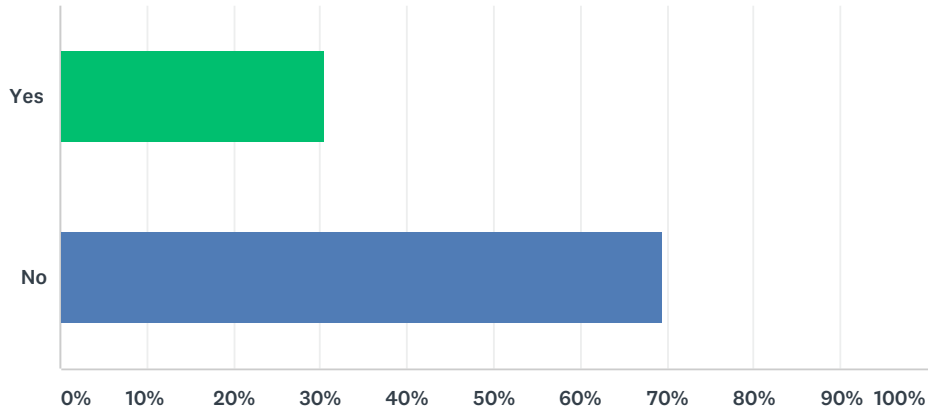
#	COMMENTS:	DATE
1	Usually, there are some programs at vocational schools that cost more, which lead to high paying jobs when you have a worker approved for medium work range occupations, such as Respiratory Therapist, Surgical Technician, and Licensed Practical Nurse.	6/24/2019 1:54 PM
2	Many of Oregon's injured workers live in remote parts of the state, and do not have local access to educational institutions, thus requiring them to relocate or travel if they wish to attend an academic program. A second residence or lots of travel for training is devastating to the budget.	6/19/2019 11:15 AM
3	Speaking for myself I have not required additional funding. All training funds available under OAR436-120 have been suitable.	6/19/2019 9:50 AM
4	Claimant often cannot chose the program they want as it does not fit the time/ cost parameters.	6/19/2019 8:46 AM
5	I have not run into problems with the Direct Worker Purchase Limitations on most cases. The rules allow for an increase in the DWP's if the training is longer.	6/19/2019 7:01 AM
6	24k is adequate for a two year community college degree for the higher wage earner that has an exceptional disability add 30 percent and that helps. I did a two year program for 22k, then I have done a higher wage plan for 29k.	6/18/2019 11:11 PM
7	Not always. Because of the limits some shorter-term technical programs are cost-prohibitive	6/18/2019 7:48 PM
8	See above	6/4/2019 11:08 AM
9	Certificates are no substitute for degrees.	6/3/2019 4:54 PM
10	No see the comments above.	4/24/2019 2:47 PM
11	This really depends on how long the program is.	4/23/2019 11:51 AM
12	The limits need to be increased, I have seen some programs changed due to cost reasons, which is unfair to the worker.	4/23/2019 11:45 AM
13	College tuition costs are going up faster than the spending limit.	4/22/2019 7:18 PM
14	Rules too restrictive. Insurer has incentive to hide behind rules, or make few referrals.	4/22/2019 6:58 PM

Workers Compensation Vocational Issues Survey

15	see above	4/22/2019 5:48 PM
16	A few are, but a huge number are not. Too many settle for a training and occupation that fits within the current maximums and return to work at wages far lower than sits well with this counselor.	4/22/2019 5:16 PM
17	Many good jobs are in medical fields (x-ray tech, respiratory therapist, ect.) but training for these types of jobs exceeds spending limits.	4/22/2019 4:55 PM

Q3 Do the rules which determine a worker's average weekly wage/adjusted weekly wage adequately assess a worker's actual compensation package?

Answered: 72 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	30.56% 22
No	69.44% 50
TOTAL	72

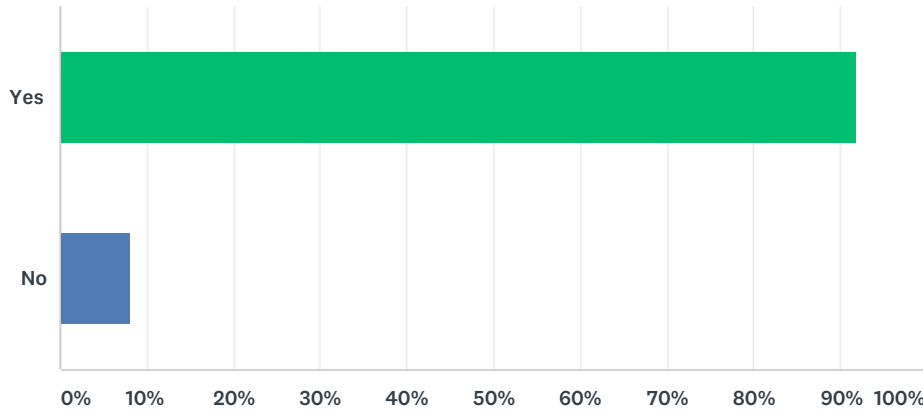
#	COMMENTS:	DATE
1	It doesn't include the cost for the medical coverage, which workers no longer have when terminated by their employer.	6/24/2019 1:54 PM
2	Compensation package? You mean their eligibility? How would you do on 80% of your current income? Probably throw a tantrum, just like I would. The benchmark suitable wage should be higher. At least 90%.	6/19/2019 11:15 AM
3	Wages do not seem to adequately assess an individual's earnings. At least not in most cases.	6/19/2019 9:50 AM
4	Employers always claim that payments they make towards health insurance, pensions, and other benefits are part of your "compensation package" so these should be included in the AWW calculation. Maintaining health insurance is one of the biggest hurdles for injured workers, and lack of insurance (like after your claim is denied/partially denied yet you need treatment to get back to work) is one of the things that keeps workers out of work longer.	6/19/2019 8:46 AM
5	AWW does not take into consideration benefits such as insurance, vacation, sick leave, long & short term disability or retirement. For example union workers generally have anywhere from \$10 to \$15 an hour in benefits on top of their wage. They simply lose all of that without compensation or it being considered.	6/19/2019 7:01 AM
6	my opinion is the rule is adequate but the insurers are calculating the aww wrong often because they do not get adequate records from the employer so bonuses are missed or overtime is missed.	6/18/2019 11:11 PM
7	No because benefits are not taking into consideration	6/18/2019 7:48 PM
8	Health insurance premiums are part of a worker's actual compensation package, and the increases in premiums over the years have prevented many employers from being able to add to a worker's wages. Employer paid health insurance is one of the major differences between higher paying employment and lower paying employment, and is often lost in the transition as a result of the injury.	6/5/2019 11:51 AM
9	However, insurers often fudge the rules to provide a lower-than-required rate.	6/4/2019 11:08 AM

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10	The question should be whether the worker has still physical ability, skill and resources to return to the workforce in a meaningful position.	6/3/2019 4:54 PM
11	The change in the minimum wage is excluding some people who still need assistance even to find work at minimum wage.	5/21/2019 12:13 PM
12	This is a puzzling question. It seems to bare on whether or not the AWW with adjustments is fair at all, not just for vocational programs. This should be taken with the Legislature. I note that the TTD rates are better than most Short Term Disability benefits.	5/21/2019 9:57 AM
13	This is the biggest issue in my opinion as there is no consideration of benefits. A worker who loses a valuable union job should have his or her significant benefits considered.	5/20/2019 6:25 PM
14	It is measured against the time loss rate, which allows the use for the same measure in all circumstances.	5/20/2019 3:42 PM
15	People take jobs for a variety of reasons, not simply limited to wages. Some people value time off (i.e. they work less than 40 hours a week or less than 12 months a year) and they are evaluated solely on the basis of income. Also insurance benefits are not counted despite the tremendous value most people place on them. All of the fringe benefits should be evaluated. It is bad enough that an eligibility evaluation is based on 80% of the AWW, but to exclude the other benefits is ridiculous.	4/24/2019 2:47 PM
16	This is especially true for workers whose compensation is determined thru a collective bargaining agreement.	4/23/2019 11:51 AM
17	Often times a worker receives more benefits while employed that he loses during training, i.e. health care for themselves and their family, etc. Those items now must be purchased while the worker is on time loss and in the ATP.	4/23/2019 11:45 AM
18	It undervalues in many cases the IW's actual value in the market place at time of injury and always favors the employer/insurer by dragging into the mathematical equation prior unrelated work experiences.	4/23/2019 10:40 AM
19	A big gap for worker's who need to pursue vocational retraining, is that for those that received health insurance benefits no longer have medical coverage, nor does their adjusted weekly wage include the former cost for insurance, so they can purchase it on their own.	4/22/2019 7:18 PM
20	Injured workers should be treated equally. The tragedy of losing one's trade or profession hits neurosurgeon and minimum wage worker equally as far as the emotional toll. Economically, the neurosurgeon may well have savings. The minimum wage worker won't.	4/22/2019 6:58 PM
21	minimum wage worker's and part time workers are suffering inequities	4/22/2019 5:48 PM
22	Only in cases where an employer is providing additional "earned income" do these cwage calculations include the value of those additional components to the compensation package. Ranch workers who get half a beef per year, fuel and lodging, etc. can have the value of those things included in their AWW and AdjWW calculations. BUt thier 401K, health benefits, etc. do not find their way into the calculations, resulting in an inaccurate picture of their earnings. To assume their next employer will also offer those benefits is asinine and usually completely unrealistic.	4/22/2019 5:16 PM
23	Inclusive of recent case law	4/22/2019 4:56 PM
24	No. Workers who got health benefits as part of their package are significantly impacted when their adjusted weekly wage doesn't include the value of health insurance.	4/22/2019 4:55 PM
25	No, because only wages from the employer at injury should be determined in evaluating vocational benefits (not wages of secondary employment).	4/22/2019 4:47 PM
26	Health insurance is a big ticket item left out.	4/22/2019 4:42 PM

Q4 Would more workers be eligible for an ATP if value of medical benefits, 401K benefits, pensions, etc. are computed in the average weekly wage/adjusted weekly wage in determining eligibility for vocational training? Please explain.

Answered: 62 Skipped: 11



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	91.94%	57
No	8.06%	5
TOTAL		62

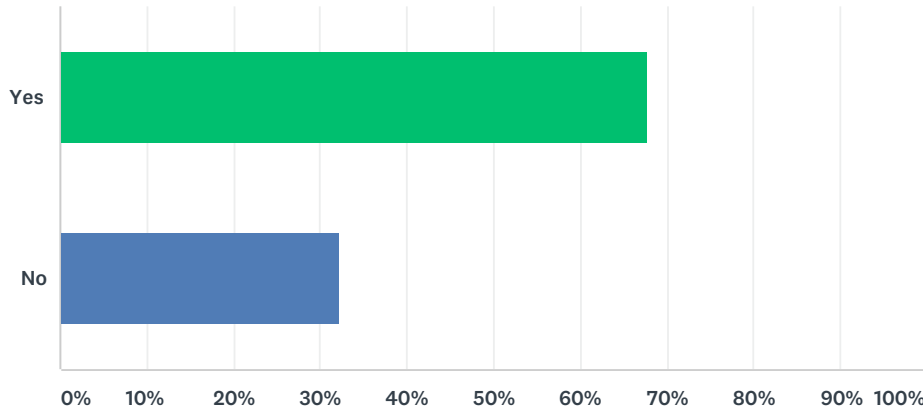
#	COMMENTS:	DATE
1	I would be happy if just the amount of the medical benefits were included.	6/24/2019 2:09 PM
2	An AWW, which included the value of benefits described above, would likely be increased at least, and probably more, than 28%. This increase would result in more worker's being eligible for vocational assistance. Given that training is authorized if it can be shown that, through the provision of training, the worker would become employable at a wage "as close as possible" to the AWW calculated.	6/20/2019 10:14 AM
3	Maybe. I doubt the number of injured workers that have such a benefit package is very high in some parts of the State, but for those who do, it would likely make a difference in their eligibility. That said, jobs that offer benefit packages like that may ask for more education and experience, so the transferable skills may be higher. Overall, I'd have to say yes.	6/19/2019 11:30 AM
4	It's a "maybe". But many of the injured workers I've dealt with don't have benefits with the employer-at-injury. The issue has more to deal with the 80% of their average weekly wage...lowing someones earnings to jobs that pay within 20% of their wage at injury seems unfair and doesn't take into consideration the number of years some of these folks have been working at the same occupation. Heck, we already use the 10th percentile for wages under OLMIS.	6/19/2019 9:58 AM
5	Of course as higher values.	6/19/2019 8:39 AM
6	Eligibility is based on whether a person can earn 80% of their AWW in the open market. Anything that raises their AWW would make them more likely eligible.	6/19/2019 7:17 AM
7	See previous.	6/5/2019 11:51 AM
8	For many workers, wages without benefits fails to adequately capture the actual value of their compensation.	6/4/2019 11:11 AM

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9	The attractiveness of a particular job is often based on benefits other than simply wages. Cost of living is different in different locales.	6/3/2019 4:59 PM
10	That would be more of a true reflection of what they were earning at the time they were hurt, and what they would be earning had they not been hurt.	6/3/2019 4:56 PM
11	True for the limited number of workers who received those benefits from the employer at injury but not the majority of workers, especially minority workers, who have no excess to those employment benefits.	5/21/2019 12:19 PM
12	Not that I have seen. Most workers who do not qualify are low paying workers without 401(k) or pensions. They low paid workers qualify for an ATP as it is easier to find them employment within 80% of their wage at injury.	5/21/2019 10:17 AM
13	hard to say, depends on the maximum rate.	5/20/2019 3:43 PM
14	Most workers retrain for entry-level jobs, after coming from career jobs. Many entry level jobs do not offer the same benefits of career jobs, particularly for injured workers who have been in the same career for decades.	5/20/2019 3:37 PM
15	See comments above. Most people lose out on the job at injury and they are starting over which generally means a lower wage. If they are evaluated on all the benefits of the job they will likely be seen as losing more, and therefore entitled to more/better vocational assistance.	4/24/2019 2:55 PM
16	The wage calculations would be considerably higher. This could also make a difference for those workers who may have had a lay off within the 52 weeks prior. If the wages were calculated with additional benefits, it could increase the wage threshold for determining eligibility	4/23/2019 12:04 PM
17	Possibly, but would more accurately demonstrate their full loss of wages and benefits.	4/23/2019 11:52 AM
18	We need to value what the worker had accomplished to be in the situation they were in when injured and not some hypothetical previous life.	4/23/2019 10:43 AM
19	The worker's wage would certainly be higher with those values included, but I am not sure it would be a helpful comparison since the prospective jobs probably would not have those values clearly defined.	4/23/2019 7:31 AM
20	If only the value of medical benefits was included in their adjusted weekly wage, many workers currently found ineligible would be eligible because their 80 % wage would be higher, than without it.	4/22/2019 7:29 PM
21	Yes, because this would increase their average weekly wage and therefore their "suitable" vocational wage.	4/22/2019 5:19 PM
22	Possibly. Often minimum wage workers do not receive these benefits, but many workers with slightly higher hourly wages do receive these and failure to consider them in benefits (TTD as well as Voc) is devastating and limiting benefits.	4/22/2019 4:47 PM

Q5 Given current minimum wage laws, do you believe that the 80% threshold for vocational eligibility should be changed or modified? By 2022, the minimum wage in the Tri-County area will be \$14.75. How will this affect vocational eligibility?

Answered: 59 Skipped: 14



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	67.80%	40
No	32.20%	19
TOTAL		59

#	COMMENTS:	DATE
1	The 80 percent threshold was pulled out of thin air as being reasonable to greatly lower the number of injury workers who would be eligible, and it worked. Now with the steadily increasing minimum wage in the Portland area, worker's (especially non-union) who have vocations such as roofers, truck drivers, machinists, carpenters, construction workers, welders, etc. who earn as much as \$18.00 per hour will not be eligible. We see injured worker's at \$16.00 to \$18.00 per hour, with vocations they like, who will be looking at entry level, minimum wage jobs such as car wash worker, cashier, barista, parking lot attendant, etc.	6/24/2019 2:09 PM
2	By 2022, due to the increase in minimum wage, substantially fewer workers will be found eligible. At present, minimum wage workers, are generally found NOT eligible. With the increase in minimum wage, worker's earning \$18.50 per hour will not likely be eligible, since 80% is approximately minimum wage level.	6/20/2019 10:14 AM
3	It will potentially see skilled workers being found ineligible and left to unskilled minimum wage jobs without the growth potential of their job at injury.	6/19/2019 12:07 PM
4	The increase of minimum wage will only limit the number of workers approved for vocational services. I'm sure the insurers are VERY excited to get the wages increased...heck, they will get off big time and Vocational Counselors (PRO's) will disappear.	6/19/2019 9:58 AM
5	With a higher minimum wage, workers are less and less eligible, especially those with older claims that are finally being closed. There should be a rule that if the 80% will take you down to minimum wage or below minimum wage, we just use the actual AWW.	6/19/2019 8:48 AM
6	Yes, too few workers will meet eligibility given those changes.	6/19/2019 8:39 AM

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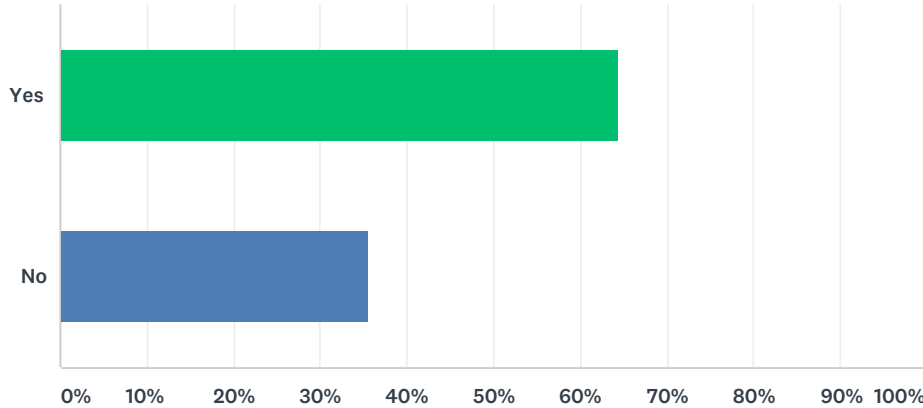
7	Right now anyone earning less than \$16 per hour is not eligible and as the minimum climbs less people become eligible. By 2022 someone would need to earn over \$18 per hour to be eligible. If you are making \$18/hour (\$720/week) and you are ineligible that makes \$15/hour (\$600/week) your suitable wage. A person cannot find housing in the metro area with a wage before takes of \$600 per week. So we are potentially creating more homeless people. I have had injured workers go homeless for this very reason now.	6/19/2019 7:17 AM
8	Adjusted AWW takes this issue into consideration however this does not help the worker who is earning 17 per hour because he/she did not see a raise when wages went up so this person ends up being ineligible because they became under employed as soon as Oregon started raising wages. Adjusted AWW helps some but not enough due to this differential	6/18/2019 11:27 PM
9	I believe less workers will be eligible and will be destined to unskilled jobs not utilizing their skills. Many workers go back to the old work of what they know and end up either being re-injured or working outside of the permanent restrictions	6/18/2019 7:50 PM
10	The higher the minimum wage, the more workers will be told that they are ineligible for services because they can perform minimum wage work with no retraining. This ignores the differences between minimum wage work and higher paying work in terms of benefits and upward mobility.	6/5/2019 11:51 AM
11	Many low wage workers will not qualify for vocational services, even if they are unable to return to the kind of work they did at the time of their injury.	6/4/2019 11:11 AM
12	Fewer workers will be eligible for assistance as the minimum wage increases. Perhaps another level of vocational assistance should be available for minimum wage workers.	6/3/2019 4:59 PM
13	Yes at least to include other benefits, when calculating eligibility of 80% of what they would be making had they not been hurt.	6/3/2019 4:56 PM
14	It should be eliminated and replaced with a provision that requires an assessment to return worker's to a job that meets the requirements for self sufficiency and self support for the geographic area in which they reside.	5/21/2019 12:19 PM
15	No. I think it is a reasonable threshold. I would agree that there should be job placement services associated with that standard so the worker will actually have a job and not just fail to qualify. Thus, even if the injured worker does not qualify for an ATP or Training Program, they should be shown how to create a Resume' and where to look for work. No one knows how the increase in the minimum wage change will affect services. I believe the increased wage will reduce the number of minimum wage jobs. It will be more cost effective for employers to use technology rather than workers. If that is correct then more workers will qualify for services due the lack of jobs available in their job market. On the other hand, if the minimum wage jobs remain available, the increased minimum wage may result in more workers finding suitable employment thereby reducing the need for services. I tend to believe the former possibility but my crystal ball is fuzzy. I would leave it alone until more is known.	5/21/2019 10:17 AM
16	Compound question.	5/20/2019 3:45 PM
17	It should not be changed.	5/20/2019 3:43 PM
18	This remains a reasonable calculator.	5/9/2019 2:03 PM
19	This will make it much more difficult to qualify for vocational training, since even low education/low training jobs will meet more job wages.	4/25/2019 12:08 PM
20	The 80% threshold was put in to statute to give a bright line test rather than the squishy test of substantial handicap. Bright lines are nice for decision makers, but don't always do substantial justice to the worker. As the minimum wage climbs people making a good (but not great) wage will start to lose out on retraining. Also, we should begin to find people in rural counties eligible for vocational assistance more frequently than in the tri county area. Not fair and not appropriate.	4/24/2019 2:55 PM
21	The 80% rule is inconsistent with the steady increase in minimum wage. This rule never took into consideration minimum wage increases and until the job market and economy catch up, fewer workers will be eligible.	4/23/2019 12:04 PM
22	Should be changed and modified, fewer and fewer workers are qualifying for ATPs.	4/23/2019 11:52 AM
23	80% is already a significant cut in pay for most workers and any less of a standard would render more and more deserving IW's ineligible.	4/23/2019 10:43 AM
24	The threshold should be raised to 90 percent	4/23/2019 8:13 AM

Workers Compensation Vocational Issues Survey

25	Right now a worker employed in a vocation for which they had to acquire background and skills is ineligible if their adjusted wage is \$15.00 plus per hour. When the minimum wage is \$14.75 per hour, skilled workers, including welders, machinists, roofers, truck drivers, etc. who earn \$18.00 per hour plus, will be ineligible because they can work as a car wash attendant, parking lot cashier, dishwasher, etc.	4/22/2019 7:29 PM
26	There should be no limit on people who work more than 20 hours a week. Why is there any limit? Is it the fear of betterment? Penurious insurers and go along legislators have no shame when it comes to screwing injured workers.	4/22/2019 7:00 PM
27	Fewer and fewer workers who need voc assistance will be eligible the higher the minimum wage goes without an appropriate corresponding adjustment to the suitable wage threshold.	4/22/2019 5:19 PM
28	I think the 80% threshold is wholly arbitrary. While they need it, it disproportionately favors low wage earners and works to divest this benefit from workers who earn more at the time of injury.	4/22/2019 4:58 PM
29	Low-wage workers are more likely to benefit significantly from vocational training or even direct worker services. Yet with rising minimum wages, fewer injured workers will even qualify for voc benefits unless the system is changed.	4/22/2019 4:57 PM
30	Because there is not requirement to assist a worker to find actual work (and it is too easy for the employer to terminate the worker), the threshold is not determinative at all of whether a worker would benefit from vocational assistance. If the worker is not taken back by the employer at injury, the worker should receive placement assistance. If the provider is not successful with placement, then retraining should be considered.	4/22/2019 4:47 PM

Q6 Have you noticed a change in the number of vocational referrals? If so, are you concerned that the change in the number of file referrals may ultimately result in a change in the number of vocational providers in the state? What do you perceive as the cause(s) of such change?

Answered: 59 Skipped: 14



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	64.41% 38
No	35.59% 21
TOTAL	59

#	COMMENTS:	DATE
1	There has been a significant change in the number of vocational referrals and vocational providers. This has been a steady decline for a number of years. I believe this is due to the following reasons: (1) SAIF Corporation wants to eliminate vocational services and have convinced the Management Labor Committee that they are the experts of vocational assistance (2) other insurers don't follow the rules and refer workers for eligibility evaluations when they are likely eligible for vocational assistance, WCD EST doesn't audit insurers and if they did, the fines are not high/preventative, (3) insurers are settling early and pre-voc referral for far less than the real value of the claim, (4) Lou Savage won't take a stand on vocational assistance issues unless SAIF agrees.	6/24/2019 2:09 PM
2	Emphatically yes! A primary reason for less referrals is that insurers are allowed to enter in "pre-closure CDAs." I highly recommend that practice be examined closely. Additionally, there is little in the way of monitoring whether the insurers are referring people for eligibility evaluations as required, per OAR 436-120. There needs to be some mechanism to assure that the referrals that should be going out are going out.	6/20/2019 10:14 AM
3	I have essentially stopped receiving voc rehab referrals because: (1) I don't have national contracts and most insurers only use national firms; (2) Oftentimes insurers do their own eligibility determination, despite the rules, and many workers are not referred who should be; (3) workers settle with claims disposition agreements, ending any voc rehab.	6/19/2019 11:57 AM
4	We have seen a change in referral numbers. If it continues, there may not be enough work to sustain the counselors. I don't know that this is relevant to everything asked in this survey thus far though. It is what it is. Some PRO's may not be able to make it and that's tough. Ethically, I would not support any effort to change rules for the purpose of providing more work for counselors. As to the reason for the decrease in referrals, I don't know.	6/19/2019 11:30 AM

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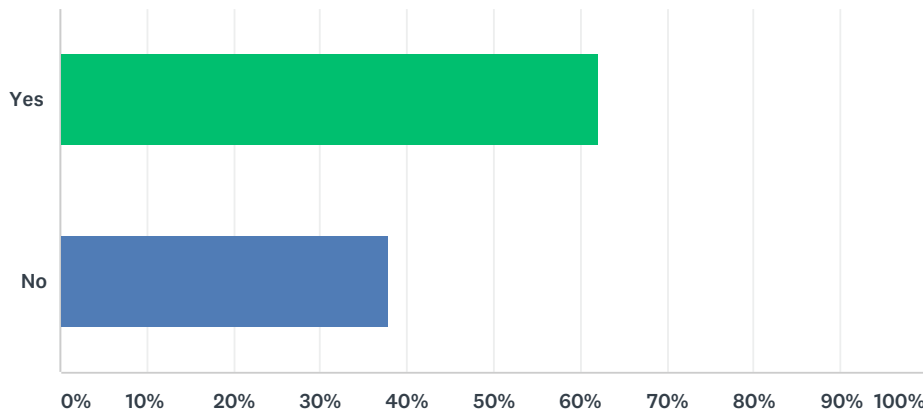
5	The insurers have been limiting referrals for the past few years. Sadly, most of the insurers in Oregon simply ignore claims and let the workers starve out till someone jumps in and makes them do seeming or the worker accepts pennies on the dollar as a CDA. The largest insurers are working to keep more work in house and the rest are simply denying service.	6/19/2019 9:58 AM
6	It is very rare to see voc referrals. The counselors we have are great, but there are only a handful of them and they have all been in the business a long time.	6/19/2019 8:48 AM
7	Referrals are lower. I think noncompliance involving following rules is an issue for smaller insurance companies.	6/19/2019 8:39 AM
8	I started in 1982 and the system was too generous at that time and there were hundred's of vocational counselors spread around the state. I supervised a total of 22 counselors in one company. The changes made in the late 1980's and early 1990's reduced that number substantially. We still had several hundred counselors around the state. Now we are down to less than 40 that provide direct vocational rehabilitation to worker's compensation clients. I hired and tried to mentor new counselors because the core group working in this field is aging. I could not get enough referrals and went from 5 employees to working alone because they could not build a case load due to the lack of referrals. Referrals have diminished to the point of no new people entering the field. The cause is a number of things: A large number of injured worker's never get to the Eligibility Evaluation process because the insurer simply does not tell them it is available. The Claims Disposition Agreement allows for settlement prior to the worker being medically stationary or released. It is also set up to be the primary way the worker's AAL can earn a living on WC cases so they have a real incentive for settle. The 80% rule regarding eligibility and the diminishing number of people of are eligible. I have heard insurers say that they do not refer for vocational rehabilitation unless an attorney or worker request it and the State demands it. Also, the WC Department has not been auditing insurers regarding Vocational Rehabilitation. So a lot of workers never knew it was available or they might be eligible. Some of the reason is also because employers have done a much better job of re-employing their own injured worker and because of the benefits under the Preferred Worker Program. It is complicated but Vocational Rehabilitation in Worker's Compensation is definitely on the decline unless changes are made.	6/19/2019 7:17 AM
9	Insurers wait till MMI to make voc referrals Insurers attempt to settle claims pre-NOC and they try to avoid referring for voc by just assuming eligibility or even making the eligibility determinations themselves There would be more voc counselors in WC if referrals were a reliable source, I have seen a decline over the years, claims adjuster don't trust voc they look at it as a failed system that nobody succeeds but this is because all they see is the 85 percent of client who take cda's and the other 15 percent that might go to school they don't pay attention to these successes. I have always wondered why there isn't a platform for VRC's to showcase their successful placements. I put together a portfolio for one of my clients successful plans. My employer didn't care, the insurer made sure I didn't bill for it and did not respond when it was sent to them, the division did not respond with any kudos or recognition. We have a system that encourages CDA above all else. And a system that focuses on managing medical instead of focusing on return to work early in process of recovery and all along the way. Insurers just pay time loss until clients are determined MMI like they are blind to it, thinking it will end someday not seeing that proactive vocational services can reduce ttd benefits paid by coordinating rtw even before MMI. Clients can participate in return to work activities prior to being MMI. GED prep, skill building, vocational exploration, etc.	6/18/2019 11:27 PM
10	There are less referrals because insurers are trying to settle before the worker knows if they're eligible or not. This is an unethical practice in my opinion	6/18/2019 7:50 PM
11	Referrals have gone down and I think that it will result in many providers finding new careers	6/18/2019 7:46 PM
12	The risk and difficulty involved in obtaining impairment compensation has caused many workers to opt for a CDA prior to an eligibility determination, which usually occurs post closure.	6/5/2019 11:51 AM
13	Fewer referrals means fewer counselors.	6/4/2019 11:11 AM
14	There seem to be fewer vocational providers available than in years past. That would suggest that compensation to many providers is no longer adequate.	6/3/2019 4:59 PM
15	I haven't seen a change in the referrals for eligibility determination. There is an increase in the percentage of ineligibility findings, at least in my perception.	5/21/2019 12:19 PM

Workers Compensation Vocational Issues Survey

16	Only because the State is requiring less Vocational Evaluations. At one point every worker who received PPD had to have an evaluation even if they had located suitable employment. Often the injured worker did not want the evaluation. The increased vocational evaluations were costly and frequently entirely unnecessary. Also, the vocational assessment requirements should not become a full employment act for Vocational Providers. The services need to be provided where needed not when a worker has already returned to a job. Vocational Services are an expensive benefit and should be used judiciously.	5/21/2019 10:17 AM
17	There are less. I think this might be based on the economy and also on the fact that it is not appealing to workers' because the program is limited as a benefit.	5/20/2019 6:26 PM
18	Referrals have increased. The state licensed vocational providers are not just WC specific. However, with the economy as it is and low unemployment rate, it would not be surprising to see fewer vocational providers - across unemployment services particularly.	5/20/2019 3:59 PM
19	Compound question.	5/20/2019 3:45 PM
20	Not concered	5/20/2019 3:43 PM
21	I am concerned that some of our most experienced and business-connected vocational service providers will drop out of the workers' compensation area of practice. There are too many pre-closure CDAs and not enough eligibility evaluations being done. Also the 80% threshold is unreasonable. It should be higher.	5/20/2019 1:52 PM
22	Fewer referrals. Yes I am concerned that the number of vocational providers around the state will shrink. I am also concerned that the providers will have difficulty being independent of carriers and lose some of their ability to advocate for workers.	4/24/2019 2:55 PM
23	There are far fewer referrals. There are also more CDA's which also impact our work and in my opinion do not resolve a workers job status. It provides temporary financial relief. I have not seen any new counselors coming into the private sector. Those I meet from the graduate programs are typically looking to work in the public sector.	4/23/2019 12:04 PM
24	CDA's of course is one factor, but the sheer number of ineligibility findings is also a contributing factor.	4/23/2019 10:43 AM
25	One cause of the radical reduction in vocational referrals has been the heavy-handed use primarily by SAIF Corporation of so-called "early returned to work programs". These early returned to work efforts are nothing more than a poorly disguised attempt to bully injured worker's into returning to work and if they don't radically reducing their permanent disability awards and their eligibility for vocational assistance.	4/23/2019 9:34 AM
26	The primary change up to this point, has been due to pre-closure settlements. Many worker's accept low settlements having no idea what they are giving up. The change in the minimum wage, without significant increases in wages for non-union jobs will eliminate many more workers.	4/22/2019 7:29 PM
27	Restrictive rules, CDAs and employer/insurer oriented vocational counselors. Also, insurers like to keep eligibility evaluations on the downlow.	4/22/2019 7:00 PM
28	there need to be limitations on CDAs	4/22/2019 5:48 PM
29	My answer should be no, but I want to explain a bit. Referrals and caseloads fluctuate all the time. I have seen a change over the past 5 to 7 years in the type of referral though: Significantly fewer eligibility evaluation and plan development referrals, and a lot more Optional Services and Job Analysis referrals.	4/22/2019 5:19 PM
30	Where to begin. The system is so broken, workers want out as soon as they can. They are so harassed and have to fight so hard for the few benefits they get, they aren't going to wait around to be cheated out of vocational benefits, too. You want workers in voc, then you need to fix the ppd and recon process that now prevents ppd too often.	4/22/2019 4:47 PM

Q7 Have you noticed a change in the number of workers being found eligible for an ATP? If so, what is the likely cause(s) of such change?

Answered: 58 Skipped: 15



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	62.07%	36
No	37.93%	22
TOTAL		58

#	COMMENTS:	DATE
1	Same as the last question. Insurers would like vocational assistance go away. They won't have to pay for a training program or settlement over the value of a training program. So, they will save a lot of money.	6/24/2019 2:15 PM
2	see my answers to #6	6/19/2019 12:01 PM
3	No...not of the referrals I've received but I've also seen referrals decline over the past two years.	6/19/2019 10:05 AM
4	I think it would be a good idea for workers to understand what they may be giving up regarding training before they give it up. For example, would be worthwhile for worker to have one meeting with a vocational counselor before entering in to CDA simply so they are informed of their choice.	6/19/2019 8:58 AM
5	increasing minimum wage, settlements, PPD apportionment games robbing claimants of their actual impairment.	6/19/2019 8:50 AM
6	80% of AWW rule. Settlements prior to the worker being medically stationary and entitled to an Eligibility Evaluation. Many workers never know they could have gotten training.	6/19/2019 7:21 AM
7	Ive noticed a decline in clients being made eligible especially that 15-17 dollar an hour worker who is being effected by no wage increase	6/18/2019 11:28 PM
8	Less are eligible because of the higher minimum wage	6/18/2019 7:52 PM
9	Most would rather settle	6/18/2019 7:50 PM
10	Too many workers at the low end of the wage scale.	6/4/2019 11:12 AM
11	Unsure. Likely, the nature of the workforce, fewer "family wage" jobs, more transient workforce.	6/3/2019 5:02 PM
12	fewer eligible because of rise in minimum wage	6/3/2019 4:56 PM
13	Primary cause is the fact that the insurer is entitled to pick the evaluator. If workers or their attorneys had veto authority the findings of eligibility would go up. But then workers compensation always has the fox guarding the hen house.	5/21/2019 12:24 PM
14	No. The reports I see seem very appropriate.	5/21/2019 10:19 AM

Workers Compensation Vocational Issues Survey

15	Minimum wage increase and AP attributing PPD/WD to preexisting or unrelated conditions. And, workers negotiating a regular release to keep their jobs.	5/21/2019 9:02 AM
16	Minimum wages have gone up. The 80% threshold is too low. Not enough eligibility evaluations are being done.	5/20/2019 1:54 PM
17	Seems more about found eligible.	4/25/2019 2:52 PM
18	Low wage earning and the minimum wage catching up to their earnings.	4/25/2019 12:09 PM
19	It seems to me that they are shrinking. I assume the cause is the minimum wage law.	4/24/2019 2:59 PM
20	If I make a worker eligible for services, 99% of the time it is for ATP services. Workers are settling their claims before we ever get to ATP. The other problem is when workers learn about the limitations in time and funds, they loose hope that training is actually going to make a difference.	4/23/2019 12:13 PM
21	Fewer are being found eligible. Too strict of guidelines to overcome and become eligible.	4/23/2019 11:54 AM
22	AWW at injury is so low in so many cases.	4/23/2019 10:47 AM
23	I think less people are found eligible because of their prior income, which isn't necessarily a good representation of what would be a suitable wage	4/23/2019 8:14 AM
24	There are very few worker's who are eligible due to the reasons cited in #6.	4/22/2019 7:34 PM
25	See answer to number 6.	4/22/2019 7:02 PM
26	too many workers CDA prior to an eligibility evaluation	4/22/2019 5:50 PM
27	Higher minimum wages, especially in the metro areas.	4/22/2019 5:23 PM
28	80% threshold of their wage; not the other employer benefits (healthcare, retirement programs, etc).	4/22/2019 5:00 PM

Q8 What are the most prevalent comments/feedback from workers who have participated in vocational assistance services, eligibility evaluations, and /or ATP training?

Answered: 35 Skipped: 38

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	For several years half of the eligible workers settled and half went through training, because they needed to get back to work as close as possible to their former income. It was a win-win for everybody, and mandated under the rules.	6/24/2019 2:15 PM
2	A significant number of workers have commented that their attorneys have informed them vocational assistance does not work and that "nobody returns to work after a training plan." Based on information from the workers, I feel that they are not given an accurate view of what vocational services benefits are, and are entering into CDA agreements uninformed.	6/20/2019 10:20 AM
3	They feel like each step in the process is not adequately explained.	6/19/2019 12:07 PM
4	Those who have received services from a vocational counselor who is not just doing the bidding of the insurer are pleased with the outcome. I find some voc counselors send warning letters in order to get someone off their caseload or do insurers' bidding and are not really there to benefit the worker. This makes me quite upset.	6/19/2019 12:01 PM
5	Most workers complain about the lengthy and convoluted claims process. They often become bitter and angry because they need specific treatments that are delayed time and time again, sometimes resulting in worsening of the condition. Worker's are beside themselves when an insurer will pay me or my staff to facilitate various optional services, but won't pay to have their medical issues addressed despite the recommendation of medical professionals.	6/19/2019 11:33 AM
6	These individuals predominately no NOTHING about Workers' Compensation. They tend to be individuals with little education and almost no knowledge of the world they live in. They simply have no clue to what's going on and what's available to them via vocational services. Sadly, some PRO's understand that doing less with your client helps the insurers win more CDA's and they are getting the most referrals. It's a tough system to be in for any injured worker.	6/19/2019 10:05 AM
7	Highly, highly favorable. I'm blessed to run into clients who were retrained and stay in new career for 20 years plus.	6/19/2019 8:58 AM
8	The exams can be intrusive Long time between eligibility and stat of program, without funds to sustain them	6/19/2019 8:50 AM
9	I could never have found my way without your help. I never knew these options were available. This has been really informative and I now understand what my options are.	6/19/2019 7:21 AM
10	Workers who see training as an opportunity to benefit themselves are 100% successful!!!! the worker that sees vocational services as just another thing the insurer will pay for, the entitlement mentality should just settle this client is not successful usually having help to guide me through the process and help me realize I can return to work has helped me to save my family, get me back on my feet, return me to a sense of self, wholeness and recovery. insurers grind client down by not paying for what is needed or not reimbursing in timely fashion, not getting services approved, denying conditions and treating every client like a fraud. By the time a client is determined eligible they know a fight is on their hands, many client give in and take the cda claimant attorneys are leaving clients stranded when they don't settle	6/18/2019 11:28 PM
11	The workers that go through training plan are usually extremely appreciative of the opportunity and take it seriously. The job placement phase is not adequate given that the average person who does not have permanent restrictions takes 6 months to suitable employment	6/18/2019 7:52 PM
12	ATP rules are too strict. The options for training are too limited and the wages resulting from training are not worth the amount of training required.	6/18/2019 7:50 PM
13	Generally positive, with some frustration about the constricted period for ATP's.	6/4/2019 11:12 AM

Workers Compensation Vocational Issues Survey

14	They feel like they are being set up for failure with some vocational providers. The end game for some providers is to get the carrier off the hook by riding the injured worker so hard they quit or mess up.	6/4/2019 9:40 AM
15	Most clients who are eligible and participate are very pleased with the outcomes. I encourage my clients to participate if they are eligible and need help with RTW.	6/3/2019 5:02 PM
16	That vocational providers want to force them into programs they have experience with rather than something they will actually enjoy doing. Second most common is that the program was actually not sufficient to obtain employment.	5/21/2019 12:24 PM
17	I have had many injured workers report that they benefited from the services but not all. A lot, if not most, depends on the motivation of the worker.	5/21/2019 10:19 AM
18	Some ATP not offering jobs at the end of training. Gap between med stat and start of training. Trouble getting reimbursement.	5/21/2019 9:02 AM
19	Vocational rehabilitation works! The WCD statistics bear this out.	5/20/2019 1:54 PM
20	Most is positive. There are always a few outliers.	5/9/2019 2:04 PM
21	That the training timeframes are not long enough to provide them the training they need to compete with other potential employees.	4/25/2019 12:09 PM
22	Most folks are glad they went through the ATP. Some, however regret not settling the case. Most injured workers appreciate the discussions after being found eligible and before the plan actually starts, because then they understand their options and the decision to settle, or not, is an informed one.	4/24/2019 2:59 PM
23	When I have a worker who actually completes a program and returns to work, they are very appreciative of the help and it has been a positive experience.	4/23/2019 12:13 PM
24	The ones that completed it are so happy	4/23/2019 11:54 AM
25	They were very grateful for the opportunity to regain a life worth living. They embraced the opportunity.	4/23/2019 10:47 AM
26	My clients are always shocked by how little can be done to return them to work anywhere near their way to the time of injury	4/23/2019 9:35 AM
27	poor planning, difficulty obtaining reimbursements/benefits	4/23/2019 8:14 AM
28	The few workers I see complete a program still end up trying to apply for jobs outside of the training program goals or beyond their work restrictions.	4/23/2019 7:33 AM
29	In my experience, workers who complete ATP training are very happy to have a career and be able to earn a suitable wage.	4/22/2019 7:34 PM
30	Those who have received real assistance generally have a positive experience. The more sophisticated injured workers resent the intrusion and would rather do a CDA and do their own retraining.	4/22/2019 7:02 PM
31	workers who complete an ATP recoup much more of their aww than workers who don't	4/22/2019 5:50 PM
32	Many complain about how they and/or their employer contribute to the work cmp system and then are hassled every step of the way in their claim. Many complain that insurer's will pay a PRO like me to screw around in Optional Services, and at the same time deny recommended procedures/treatments.	4/22/2019 5:23 PM
33	Many worker's state that they feel capable of doing more than what their physical restrictions list. They are not permitted to sign an ATP that is outside of their doctor's recommended physical restrictions and therefore they cannot train for the career they prefer, so they choose to settle instead. The rules for ATP's are very strict. The career options for ATP's within such a limited time frame are pretty meager.	4/22/2019 5:21 PM
34	they get shoe-horned into a program without the voc counselor truly considering their interests, or past relevant work.	4/22/2019 5:00 PM
35	A worker who goes through the process is really benefitted. It is rare I see a worker who is not. Getting to voc benefits has too many hurdles in the claim processing before you even get there.	4/22/2019 4:49 PM

Q9 What percentage of workers use optional services? What are your thoughts on the usefulness of optional services?

Answered: 36 Skipped: 37

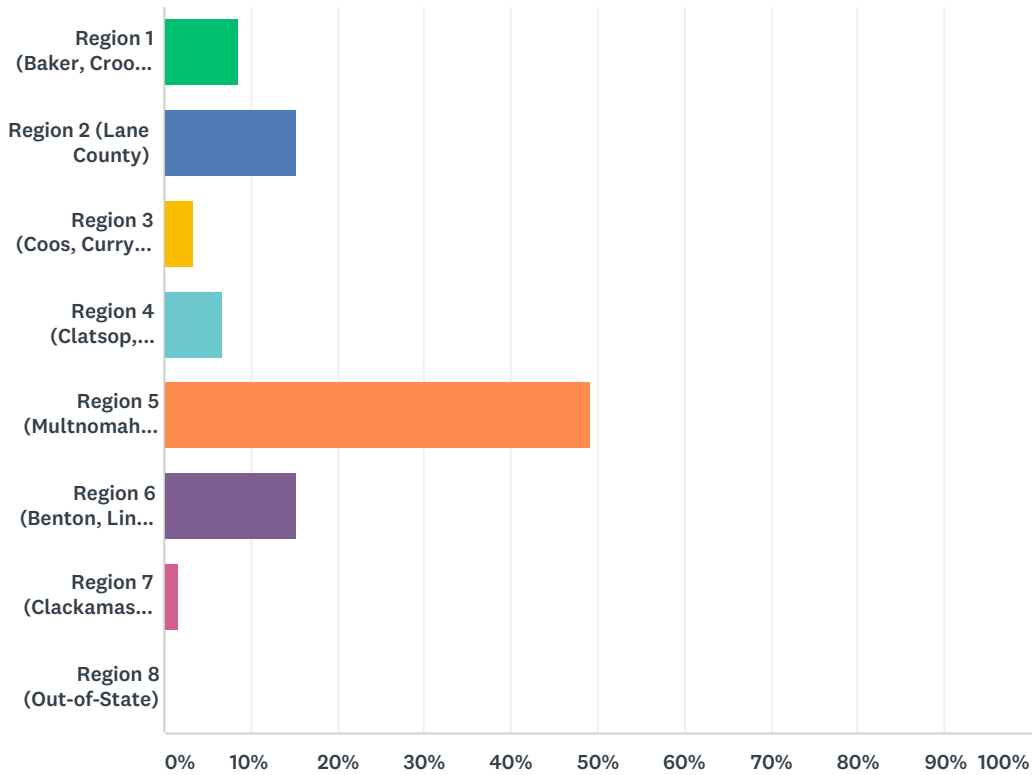
#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	I only see optional services when a worker who is obviously not going back to his regular work is referred to learn English, computer skills, or a GED. From a voc provider's point of view, this is ideal if the worker is referred early, because we don't use their training time up on this type of preparation and can do longer academic and on-the-job (experience program).	6/24/2019 2:15 PM
2	Per my experience, about 90% of workers use optional services. I believe that optional services are very useful in that the worker can use their recovery time to their benefit. While they may not be released for work activities, they can be working on basic skills upgrading, GED acquisition, computer skills, etc. In the event that they are later found eligible, effective use of optional services can reduce training time, or enhance the viability of effective training within the time limits/funding available.	6/20/2019 10:20 AM
3	I have had very few optional services and I think optional services is very useful to help the worker begin thinking positively about their future.	6/19/2019 12:07 PM
4	I haven't had such referrals in awhile and am not up to date about these services.	6/19/2019 12:01 PM
5	60 to 70% use the services, and I can see a lot of benefit to those who actually take full advantage of them.	6/19/2019 11:33 AM
6	When I receive an "OS" referral I know that worker was a higher wage earner. This seems to be the most common way for the insurers (the few insurers that actually do the work) to get a head start on a perspective vocational services claim. In the past decade I may have had only a hand full of clients not accept "OS".	6/19/2019 10:05 AM
7	Optional services are good. For a motivated worker with a significant injury, much can be accomplished rather than the worker not having any skills upgrading opportunities say for a couple of years.	6/19/2019 8:58 AM
8	I always encourage claimants to use these. They are very helpful, especially for those without computer skills or who need to work on English language skills. I think they are great and more insurers should use them.	6/19/2019 8:50 AM
9	Rarely does a worker turn down Optional Services. It is a chance to get some skills that they can use with the employer-at-injury, a new employer or to get them ready to participate in training. SAIF is the only insurer that consistently refers for Optional Services.	6/19/2019 7:21 AM
10	1 percent Its not the worker that has a choice, the insurer needs to agree to pay for it. I have mentioned in previous answers optional services can save claim costs by focusing on rtw activities pre MMI. Voc exploration, GED or other education skill building activities, OJT participation, vocational testing, resume development classes, typing classes, tons and tons of stuff clients can be doing pre mmi but the insurers don't send these client out for services. they wait till MMI to do anything	6/18/2019 11:28 PM
11	I rarely see optional services being used	6/18/2019 7:52 PM
12	75%	6/18/2019 7:50 PM
13	90% of my clients use the optional services they are offered.	6/5/2019 11:51 AM
14	Unsure.	6/4/2019 11:12 AM
15	very few	6/4/2019 9:40 AM
16	I see it mostly as a way to reduce insurers costs, saif primarily. Often used to teach ESL.	6/3/2019 5:02 PM
17	Very few . Optional services are used by insurers to head off a PTD claim. It would be better to increase the amount of services available eg 48 months of training if needed, rather than leave it to the insurer.	6/3/2019 4:56 PM

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18	Only my severely injured workers are given optional services. Most often to attempt to put them in a position where vocational assistance with time loss can be denied.	5/21/2019 12:24 PM
19	Not sure what you mean by optional services.	5/21/2019 10:19 AM
20	Unknown percentage. Not enough information.	5/21/2019 9:02 AM
21	No idea on percentages. These services are definitely useful.	5/20/2019 1:54 PM
22	Uncertain, but optional services are a good stopgap or compromise that assists the worker and that the employer is more often than not in favor of, over a complete program.	5/9/2019 2:04 PM
23	Not very useful.	4/25/2019 2:52 PM
24	Most workers use optional services if offered. I think the services are marginal, but recommend using them. Don't look a gift horse in the mouth.	4/24/2019 2:59 PM
25	The only carrier who endorses Optional Services is SAIF. This is a very useful service. Workers can develop computer skills, enough so they don't flounder in their first computer class in training. I have had people get their GED's which allowed us to provide more formal training. I have had workers with serious injury facing a long recovery complete degrees. One thing Optional services does is allow a worker to feel connected. They are often so isolated and the only people who are talking to them are their medical providers. I believe it helps move workers along.	4/23/2019 12:13 PM
26	Very few are offered optional services by the insurers.	4/23/2019 11:54 AM
27	Very small percentage in my experience use optional services because they are not offered. OS can be instrumental in getting an IW back to work in many cases if the insurer will fork up the money.	4/23/2019 10:47 AM
28	Very few, but somewhat more in the past 1-2 years.	4/23/2019 7:33 AM
29	Optional services to help a worker to prepare for a training plan by providing instruction on English, basic computer skills, upgrading in academic levels, is extremely beneficial. Otherwise a significant portion of their training time is spent on the aforementioned education.	4/22/2019 7:34 PM
30	Optional services? Clarify.	4/22/2019 7:02 PM
31	no sure , however early referral is beneficial to a workers outcome	4/22/2019 5:50 PM
32	85 to 90% of workers referred for OS participate to some degree, depending on the type of services being offered. I feel they can be useful if taken advantage of. Most participate at a minimal level though.	4/22/2019 5:23 PM
33	In my experience about 80% of my worker's offered optional services use them. I believe they are useful.	4/22/2019 5:21 PM
34	10%	4/22/2019 5:00 PM
35	Insurers only offer optional services if they are worried about PTD or trying to get GED before claim closure to lessen PPD award. Optional services can offer significant benefits	4/22/2019 4:59 PM
36	Optional services are only offered to reduce a worker's ppd benefit, and then to avoid voc because of the services provided. The rule should be that they can be given but not considered in determining ppd or voc eligibility. It is a catch-22 for workers.	4/22/2019 4:49 PM

Q10 In what region of Oregon (as defined by the OSB) do you work the most?

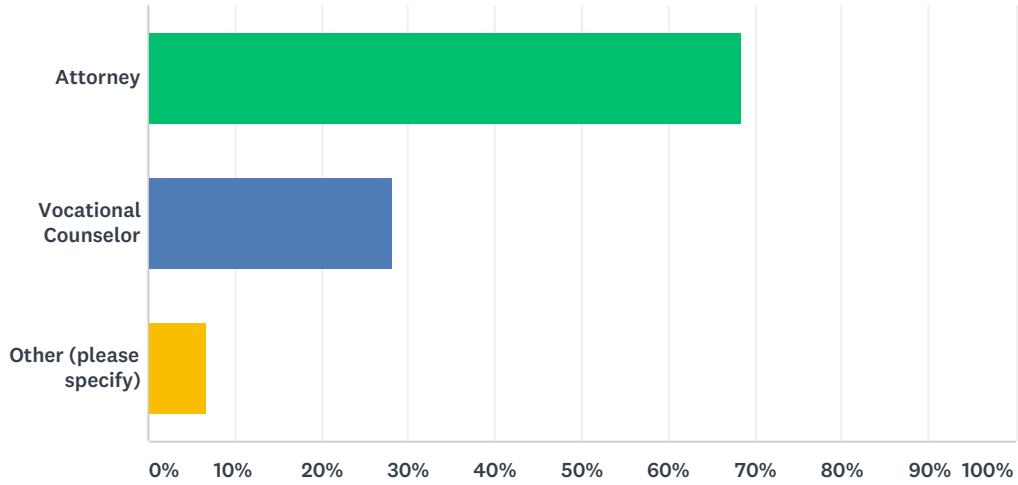
Answered: 59 Skipped: 14



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Region 1 (Baker, Crook, Deschutes, Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Hood River, Jefferson, Lake, Malheur, Morrow, Sherman, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Wasco and Wheeler Counties)	8.47%	5
Region 2 (Lane County)	15.25%	9
Region 3 (Coos, Curry, Douglas, Jackson, Josephine, and Klamath Counties)	3.39%	2
Region 4 (Clatsop, Columbia, Lincoln, Tillamook and Washington, and Yamhill Counties)	6.78%	4
Region 5 (Multnomah County)	49.15%	29
Region 6 (Benton, Linn, Marion, and Polk Counties)	15.25%	9
Region 7 (Clackamas County)	1.69%	1
Region 8 (Out-of-State)	0.00%	0
TOTAL		59

Q11 What is your role in your organization? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 60 Skipped: 13



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Attorney	68.33% 41
Vocational Counselor	28.33% 17
Other (please specify)	6.67% 4
Total Respondents: 60	

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Nurse case manager	6/19/2019 12:01 PM
2	Owner	6/19/2019 7:22 AM
3	Paralegal	6/4/2019 9:40 AM
4	ALJ	5/21/2019 8:52 AM