

STATE OF WISCONSIN



Department of Workforce Development

Vocational Rehabilitation

CHELSEA NEWBY
Dispute Resolution Specialist

Initial Screening by WCD

- Automatically screen claims with greater than 13 weeks of Temporary Total Disability (TTD) paid
- Voluntary employment status questionnaire is sent out to determine potential need for vocational rehabilitation (voc rehab)
 - Has end of healing (EOH) been reached?
 - Is there a wage loss?
 - Are there permanent restrictions or permanent disability?



Initial Screening by WCD

- Refer injured workers who potentially qualify for vocational rehabilitation to Department of Workforce Development's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)



Voc Rehab Steps

For Worker's Compensation Claims



Permanent work restrictions signed by doctor are provided to the employer, who responds within 60 days

If suitable employment within restrictions and paying at least 90% of average weekly wage (AWW) is not available, claimant and voc counselor develop the retraining plan

Worker's Comp insurance adjuster reviews retraining plan

Benefits paid consistent with accepted plan



DVR vs Private Vocational Counselors

- All new clients found eligible for DVR services since December 2025 have been placed on a wait list
- When DVR cannot provide services, the injured worker may consider selecting a private vocational counselor from our [list of certified providers](#)



DVR vs Private Vocational Counselors

- 2026 maximum private vocational counselor fee is \$2,183.00
- Injured workers living outside of Wisconsin can choose to work with either a private vocational counselor or their state's equivalent of DVR



Benefits of Retraining for WC Claims

- Tuition, school fees, books
 - Laptop or other equipment required for program may be covered if determined necessary by IPE
- DVR requires participants in retraining to apply for federal student aid (FAFSA)
 - Grants reduce cost of tuition paid by insurance carrier
 - Scholarships are awarded to injured worker



Benefits of Retraining for WC Claims

- Mileage reimbursement and meals are paid at state employee rate:
 - Travel for school \$0.51 per mile
 - Breakfast: \$10
 - Lunch: \$12
 - Dinner: \$23

- [PocketTravelGuide.pdf](#)



<https://dpm.wi.gov/Documents/BCER/Compensation/PocketTravelGuide.pdf?v1>



Benefits of Retraining for WC Claims

- Maintenance = TTD rate
 - Not to exceed 80 weeks, unless WCD determines that additional school is necessary to replace AWW
 - Permanent Partial Disability (PPD) continues to accrue during breaks from school
- Case law: *Massachusetts Bonding Insurance Co. v. Industrial Commission*. 275 Wis. 505 (1957)



Additional Info

- Injured worker can work up to 24 hours per week while participating in retraining without reducing the maintenance benefit.
- Employee can still be eligible for voc rehab benefit, even if declared Permanent Total Disability (PTD).



Questions?

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<https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/wc/voc-rehab/vr-guide.htm>

