



Vocational Improvement Project

January 2008

Vocational Rehabilitation Implementation Update

L&I successfully implemented the vocational rehabilitation legislation effective January 1, 2008. The changes were passed as Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5920, requested by the Governor.

Some highlights of the efforts of the past several months, culminating in the January 1 changes:

- Changes to L&I's mainframe database were completed. These changes involved the creation of new or changes to more than 100 computer system programs.
- Changes to the medical bill payment system were implemented.
- New letters to workers, vocational providers, and employers were programmed into L&I's claims management correspondence system and changes to the document imaging system were done.
- New documents and brochures providing injured workers with their rights and responsibilities at various phases of vocational services were developed and printed. These have been distributed to those who are currently working with private vocational counselors to develop training plans.
- Several hundred L&I claim managers and vocational specialists received training on the changes provided in the legislation and in the new computer system applications.
- The Vocational Improvement Project (VIP) website was completed and can be found at <http://www.LNI.wa.gov/ClaimsIns/Providers/Vocational/ImproveVoc/VrcTools>.
- Initial rules have been filed, and public hearings scheduled.

What's next?

- E-transactions will be created for vocational counselors in L&I's on-line Claim and Account Center.
- New information will become available on-line, such as the amount of option 2 funds available to a worker who has made this selection.
- Additional rules and policies will be stakeholdered covering issues such as:
 - Elements for on-the-job training
 - Additional details for option 2 selection and processes for accessing funds
 - Requirements for training plan modifications
 - Criteria for department-approved institutions and programs
- Public hearings on the proposed rules will be held on January 22 and 24, 2008.
- Locations of WorkSource sites where L&I vocational specialists will provide services to injured workers will be identified, with the first two sites on board July 1, 2008.
- The registry of state fund and self-insured workers who have received training or selected option 2 will be created.
- Measurements of the outcomes and impact of the changes will be monitored. L&I will work closely with the contracted researcher, the University of Washington, concerning measurements.

Need more information?

Please call Vickie Kennedy, Special Assistant to the Director, at (360) 902-4997, or Micki Petty, Vocational Improvement Project Manager, at (360) 902-5779. You can also e-mail questions to VocRehabProgram@LNI.wa.gov.