

Supporting Apprentices Through Hardship Assistance



Types of Assistance

- **Apprentice Request**
 - Event(s) that caused the hardship
 - Other resources sought
- **Eligible Expenses**
 - Rent or mortgage
 - Utilities
 - Car repair
 - Medical not covered by insurance
- **Individual Limits**
 - \$4K for personal (half allocated early)
 - None for state emergency
 - \$6K for wraparound



Types of Events

- **Personal Events**
 - Fire
 - Theft
 - Acute Illness
 - Divorce
 - Domestic violence
 - Death of a spouse, child, or parent
 - Breakdown of primary vehicle
- **State Emergencies**
 - Pool of \$25K
 - Declared by Governor
 - Examples include COVID, wildfires, and homelessness



Other Support and LCSA

- **Targeted Wraparound Supports**
 - Pool of \$40K for apprentice parents receiving child care subsidies
 - Pool of \$40K for registered operating engineer apprentices
- **Labor's Community Service Agency**
 - Safety net for apprentices and families
 - Provides support as subcontractor to Akana

Joint Apprenticeship & Training Committees (JATCs) currently utilizing hardship assistance	# receiving hardship assistance	# of active apprentices	% receiving hardship assistance
OREGON & SW-WA CEMENT MASONS JATC	4	46	8.7%
OR SW-WA IUOE LOCAL #701 & AGC JATC	10	116	8.6%
PACIFIC NW IRONWORKER & EMPLOYER JATC	17	220	7.7%
OREGON LABORERS JATC	13	170	7.6%
PACIFIC NW CARPENTERS JATC	43	967	4.4%
OREGON & SW WASHINGTON PAINTERS JATC	2	61	3.3%
NECA-IBEW ELECTRICAL JATC	21	886	2.4%
TOTAL	110	2,466	4.5%

Portland State report indicates investment in support services is an effective tool to increase retention of apprentices

By Katy Swordfisk, Nov. 19, 2024 – Portland State University

"A surprising finding was the fragile nature of many apprentices' financial situations," said Lindsey Wilkinson, associate professor of Sociology. "Although the construction trades overall offer good paying jobs and benefits, apprentices who are early in their careers have not yet had time to build financial reserves."

Overall, they found that apprentices who received hardship funds were 5% more likely to complete than those who did not receive hardship funds.

"These findings suggest that providing services such as hardship funds can be a useful tool in helping to retain workers," Professor Maura Kelly added.

Source: Portland State University News



The most common primary hardship was an illness or injury affecting either the apprentice or family members.

Other contributing factors, listed from most to least common, included

- Vehicle accident or breakdown
- Homelessness and/or eviction
- Separation, divorce, or domestic violence
- Death in the family
- Stolen or damaged tools

Destabilizing events were often accompanied by financial stress due to missed hours at work.

Women were more likely than men to request hardship funds related to separation, divorce, and/or domestic violence.

Source: 2024 Evaluation of Oregon's Highway Construction Workforce Development Program Supportive Services, Dr. Lindsey Wilkinson and Dr. Maura Kelly, Portland State University, October 2024. See 2024 Evaluation Report at www.maura-kelly.com

Oregon Statute (ORS 184.866), enacted in 2009, directs ODOT to fund workforce development for highway and bridge construction

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) have formed a unique partnership with Labor's Community Services Agency (LCSA), which provides a vital safety net for workers and their families, including housing aid, utility assistance, workforce development, and emergency relief. LCSA has supported the ODOT-BOLI Supportive Services Program with hardship assistance since 2016.

LCSA became a nonprofit community program of the United Way of the Columbia-Willamette in July 1974, bringing to Portland a national partnership between the AFL-CIO and United Way that has been improving the lives of working-class communities since 1946.

Source: <https://lcsanorthwest.org/>



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ODOT-BOLI APPRENTICESHIP EMERGENCY HARDSHIP REFERRAL PROGRAM

Targeted Trades: Carpenters, Cement Masons, Ironworkers, Laborers, Operating Engineers, Electricians & Painters.

The apprentice hardship assistance program is run by Labor's Community Service Agency in partnership with Akana and funded through BOLI-ODOT. The program manager is Penny Painter of Akana. We operate on a referral basis working with apprentice coordinators to foster a relationship between the apprentice and their apprenticeship program. That way the apprentice feels that they can rely on coordinators to help them be successful and ultimately become a journey person.

We have following qualifying criteria in order to provide assistance:

1. Apprentice is in one of the targeted trades (see above)
2. Experienced one of the following hardships: Natural disaster; fire; theft (with police report); major medical issues; divorce; domestic violence; death of a spouse, child, or parent; breakdown of primary vehicle (does not include breakdowns preventable through regular maintenance).

We provide assistance towards: rent, mortgage, and move-in assistance; car repair assistance; utility assistance; medical expenses not covered by insurance (in very specific circumstances); tools.

We only pay vendors directly and never provide direct cash assistance to apprentices. All payments are made out to Landlords, Mortgage providers, Mechanics, etc. So that we can ensure funds are being applied directly to the hardship. For documentation, we ask for a 4-sentence statement from the apprentice, and we ask for a copy of their Lease, mortgage statement, repair estimate, etc. We can provide up to \$2,000 for apprentices in the first half of their apprenticeship, and up to \$4,000 if they are in the second half of their apprenticeship. The \$4,000 limit is reduced by the amount of assistance they received in the first half of their apprenticeship.

In 2024, we received 104 referrals for this program, and we were able to provide assistance to 60 apprentices. Of the 44 who were not served, 5 had already received hardship funds, 12 never responded to our outreach (we make 2 attempts to reach them both over the phone and email), 16 did not meet the program criteria, 10 never sent in the required documentation, and 1 declined assistance.

To those who do not qualify or already received assistance, we try to provide other resources so they can still get the help they need. The ultimate goal is to retain these apprentices so they finish their apprenticeship and get into the workforce.



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