Ohio BWC Reimburses Employers for Operating Drug-Free

(August 2020 [updated September 2021]) Recognizing that a best-practice drug-free workplace is the best way to prevent and respond to substance use in the workplace and support individuals in recovery, the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) has $15 million to help employers hire, manage and retain employees in recovery.

Through the Substance Use Recovery and Workplace Safety Program (SURWSP), eligible employers will be reimbursed for qualifying expenses related to implementing, operating and maintaining a drug-free workplace program:

- development and legal review of drug-free workplace policies and procedures
- annual policy review
- employee and supervisor training (up to 72 hours each per year), e.g., company-specific training, training of trainers, webinars, OnDemand 24/7
- drug testing of prospective and current employees (provided the employer has a second-chance policy as part of their drug-free workplace program)

All participating employers will also have access to Better You, Better Ohio, which provides health and wellness resources to employees – a service usually only available to businesses in high-risk industries with 150 or fewer employees.

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Ohio employers who are covered by the state's workers' compensation fund, in good standing with the BWC and current on their premium payments can complete a simple, online form to enroll in the program.

Once enrolled, all employers need to do to be reimbursed for expenses is to submit a form for qualifying expenses. Employers can even submit forms to get money for expenses dating back to July 1, 2019, regardless of whether they were enrolled in the program at the time of purchase or not. The reimbursement form and proof of payment will be submitted to and processed by the local Alcohol Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Boards or the Bureau of Workers' Compensation (depending on the county), typically within 30 days, on a first come, first-serve basis.

The SURWSP is funded with money Governor Mike DeWine budgeted for the Bureau to lessen the impact of substance use disorder on Ohio's workforce, help Ohio's employers keep employees in recovery at work, assist employers in hiring and managing employees in recovery, and promote a safe and healthy workforce. It also complements the Bureau's Drug-Free Safety Program (DFSP), as the majority of expenses incurred through the DFSP are eligible for reimbursement through the SURWSP.

Visit the BWC's website to learn more about this program and to enroll.

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