

GUIDE TO WORKING WITH OUT-OF-STATE AND OUT-OF-COUNTRY WORKERS

Review this guide for important considerations vocational rehabilitation counselors (VRCs) can use when assisting workers who reside or have relocated out of state or out of country (OOS/C). This guide provides useful tips and links to information that help mitigate challenges and reduce delays in providing services to workers outside of Washington State.

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How to Help a Worker Who Has Relocated Out of Washington

As soon as the VRC learns that a worker will be moving out of Washington State, but **within the U.S.**, the VRC should take the following actions to reduce delays, prevent confusion, and facilitate communication:

- Contact the claim manager (CM) as soon as possible to report that the worker is relocating. Discuss with the CM how to support the worker during relocation. This may include discussing challenges associated with relocating and finding medical providers.
- Assist the worker in notifying L&I, in writing, of their change of address using the [Change of Address Form](#) (F242-388-000). This can be expedited through the Claim and Account Center.
- Contact the vocational services specialist (VSS) to discuss moving the referral to the firm's OOS/C referral hub.
- Help the worker find a new provider in their state.
- Explain to new medical providers how to apply for a provider number through [ProviderOne](#), if they are not already a registered provider with L&I. If providers have issues with enrollment, they can send an email to ProviderSupport@LNI.WA.GOV
- Contact the applicable employer and assist with any return-to-work or light-duty job offers.

When a worker relocates from Washington to a **different country**, the VRC should proactively assist in managing the complexities associated with receiving time-loss payments, finding a medical provider, and maintaining regular communication:

- Contact the CM as soon as possible to report that the worker is relocating. Discuss with CM how to support the worker during relocation. This may include discussing challenges associated with relocating and finding medical providers.
- Identify how the VRC will communicate with the worker *before* they leave. For out-of-country workers, texting apps such as WhatsApp Messenger or email may allow for easier communication. You can download the app to your phone, tablet, or desktop.
- Assist the worker in notifying L&I, in writing, of their change of address using the [Change of Address Form](#) (F242-388-000). This can be expedited through the Claim and Account Center.
- Contact the VSS to discuss moving the referral to the firm's OOS/C referral hub.
- A worker may be eligible to receive a debit card to facilitate receipt of time-loss payments. The CM can advise on the ability for a worker to obtain a debit card in a particular country. If eligible, assist the worker in filling out the [Payment Method Authorization Form \(F120-211-000\) \(wa.gov\)](#) to set up a debit card. The form is available in 15 languages, including [Spanish](#). For other languages, use [the Forms & Publications Search \(wa.gov\)](#) and select from the list of languages.

- It may be possible for the worker to have time-loss payments sent to an alternate recipient in the U.S. Contact the CM to discuss.
- Contact the employer and assist with any return-to-work or light-duty job offers.

To assist out-of-country workers with coordination of medical treatment:

- Contact the CM to discuss the worker's current medical treatment plan *before* contacting an out-of-country medical provider. The CM may have already initiated the process to coordinate care with an out-of-country medical provider.
- In some cases, a worker may find an out-of-country medical provider that will need assistance obtaining an L&I provider number. Out-of-country medical providers are exempt from ProviderOne. To assist with obtaining a provider number, send an email to ForeignProviders@lni.wa.gov and include the medical provider's email address and phone number. For any other medical barriers or claim specific questions, contact the CM.
- Understand and set expectations with out-of-country workers and medical providers about the potential for delays in medical treatment, reimbursement, and payment for services rendered. Common delays are the result of:
 - Limited access to treatment within the workers' geographic location.
 - Obtaining treatment authorization.
 - Limited number of providers or specialty provided.
 - Misunderstanding billing and payment policies associated with [MARFS](#).

NOTE: Washington State WACs, RCWs, and payment policies apply for vocational services regardless of where the worker resides.

Limited English Proficiency Communication and Cultural Competency Resources for VRCs

The [Vocational Firm Provider Agreement](#) requires vocational providers to abide by all applicable federal and Washington State statutes, rules, and policies. These include, but are not limited to:

- [Title 51 RCW](#) (Industrial Insurance Act)
- [Title VI of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964](#)
 - Title VI prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in any program or activity that receives federal funds or other federal financial assistance. This includes discrimination based on limited English proficiency (LEP).
 - Recipients and sub-recipients of federal financial assistance are responsible for taking reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access by LEP persons to the recipients' and sub-recipients' programs or activities, including the use of an interpreter. Failure to do so constitutes illegal discrimination and is a violation of an individual's civil rights. Since L&I is the recipient of federal funding, vocational providers and others whom L&I pays are **sub-recipients** of federal funding and are required to provide language access services.
- [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#): Providers are required to ensure spoken and sign language access.

Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Service Standards

Vocational providers are required to ensure the provision of quality service that is respectful, equitable, and responsive to diverse cultural health beliefs, practices, preferred languages, and communication needs in accordance with the **National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS)** in Health and Health Care.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has outlined [15 action steps, or CLAS Standards](#), intended to advance health equity, improve quality, and help eliminate health care disparities.

CLAS Standards are about respect and responsiveness:

- Respect the whole individual; and
- Respond to the individual's health needs and preferences.

[The CLAS Standards website](#) features information, continuing education opportunities, resources, and more for health and health care professionals to learn about culturally and linguistically appropriate services. A few online courses and resources that vocational counselors may find most informative include:

- [Cultural Competency Deployment Refresher](#)

- [Improving Cultural Competency for Behavioral Health Professionals](#)
- [The How To Guide for Communication Styles](#)

Interpreter Services

The healthcare or vocational provider determines the need for interpreter services and makes all arrangements. When referring the worker to another provider, please notify the provider of the worker's interpreter needs. Interpreter services are a covered benefit for all injured workers who have an open and allowed claim, including self-insured and crime victims.

Tips:

- When using an interpreter, speak directly to the worker or provider.
- Speak in short sentences or ask concise questions. Pause for the interpreter to relay the information.
- Be aware of any potential silent pauses, as that could imply confusion or uncertainty and may need rephrasing.
- Avoid using jargon or acronyms.

L&I Interpreter Scheduling System for VRC's

L&I provides in-person, video, and telephonic interpretation for scheduled and on demand appointments with healthcare providers and vocation providers. As of June 17, 2024, providers must request interpretation services for **all** scheduled and unscheduled in-person and scheduled telephonic and video interpretation services through L&I's new vendor, SOS International LLC (SOSi).

There is no need for prior authorization on open and allowed claims and you may request interpreter services for state fund, self-insured, and crime victim claims.

In-person interpreting is most appropriate for complex, sensitive medical interpreting, such as:

- Sharing bad news.
- Worsening health conditions.
- Treating a head injury.
- Neuropsychological testing.
- Conscious sedation procedures.
- Hands-on teaching or demonstrations.

Note: L&I cannot reimburse interpreters who are family or friends of the worker, or for legal purposes, such as attorney appointments, legal conferences, depositions, or testimony at the Board of Industrial Insurance Appeals, or any court.

On-demand, over-the-phone interpretation

Healthcare or vocational providers may continue to use CTS Language Link for on-demand, over-the-phone interpreter services. Providers may also access these services as a backup when an in-person interpreter is not secured through **WordBridge**.

Benefits include:

- Real-time access to over 300 languages.
- No appointment needed.
- Quick access: In most cases, a telephonic interpreter can be on the phone within 30-60 seconds.

Translation Services for Healthcare providers

Healthcare providers both in and out of state, may request interpreter services by calling one of the phone numbers below. Please have the claim ID, the worker's name, the required language, and the employer or third-party administrator name available when calling. See [Interpreters Services \(wa.gov\)](https://www.wa.gov/Interpreters)

CTS Language Link

Medical Providers: 877-626-0678
VOC Counselors: 844-303-7212
Activity Coaches: 844-303-5430

Providers may also access telephonic interpretation services for international calls. Please have the worker on the line and then call CTS Language Link to connect with an interpreter as CTS Language Link Customer Service Representatives and interpreters are unable to perform international dial outs.

Note: Providers cannot use CTS Language Link for appointment reminders or rescheduling appointments with the worker.

Providers practicing outside of Washington State (out of state providers) treating Washington workers' compensation patients in the following zip codes must use Wordbridge to request an interpreter for scheduled, in person, spoken language appointments.

- Oregon zip codes starting with 970, 971, 972, and 978.
- Idaho zip codes starting with 835 and 838.

If you are an out of state provider outside of these zip codes:

- Request on demand telephonic interpretation via CTS Language Link
- Request scheduled telephonic and video interpretation via WordBridge through ZOOM
- Use individual out-of-state in-person interpreters with an L&I provider account number, present in the clinic

L&I out-of-state interpreters

Out-of-State Interpreter Name	Phone	Email	City/State
Rodrigo M Olguin	559-681-2630	Interpreter.olguin@gmail.com	Fresno, CA
Michael Soler	916-201-4794	Mikesol@comcast.net	Roseville, CA

For Sign Language Interpreters

- For sign language interpreters, use the [Sign Language Interpreter Lookup Tool](#)

Interpreter Rules and Policies

Only L&I-authorized interpreters can be paid by L&I for services provided to the worker ([RCW 39.26.300](#)). If an LEP worker chooses to use a friend or family member that is their choice. However, the family member will not be compensated for providing interpretation and L&I strongly discourages their use.

The only situation where a family member may be excluded from providing interpretation services is during an independent medical exam (IME). In this situation, the worker can only have one person present at the **physical examination**: ([WAC 296-23-362](#))

- The companion must be at least **18 years old** and unobtrusive during the examination.
- The companion **cannot** be the worker's legal representative, an employee of the legal representative, the attending provider, or an employee of the attending provider.
- For the **psychiatric examination**, no companions are allowed. If an interpreter is needed, L&I will schedule the interpreter.

Assisting Medical Providers with Interpretation Services

Vocational counselors may also need to help medical providers with access to interpretation services to communicate information to workers regarding medical treatment:

- Help the medical provider select the correct interpreter service based on the zip code of the medical provider.
- For sign language interpreters, use the [Sign Language Interpreter Lookup Tool](#).
- For telephonic interpretation services, use [CTS Language Link](#) (scroll to Option 3).
- To schedule in-person spoken language appointments, use [Interpreter Services](#).
- For additional tips on using the Interpreter Scheduling System, click on the following links:
 - [Tip Sheet for Interpreter Scheduling System, English](#)
 - [Tip Sheet for Interpreter Scheduling System, Spanish](#)
- To schedule video remote interpreting (VRI), use [CTS Language Link](#) (scroll to Option 4).
- For questions on how to setup VRI, contact ClientRelations@Language.Link

Resources for Helping Non-Medical Providers Obtain a

Provider Number and Bill for Services

Vocational Counselors can help new providers obtain an L&I provider number. To help new providers obtain an L&I provider number, vocational counselors should direct a provider to the [ProviderOne](#) website where they can start their application to obtain an L&I provider number. See the below resources for assistance.

All providers must have an active L&I provider number to be paid. Let the provider know that L&I functions like a third party biller and bills cannot be paid up front.

Note: Washington State WACs, RCWs, and payment policies apply for services regardless of where the worker resides.

VRCs can help schools if they:

- **Aren't sure if they already have an active L&I provider number?**
Go to [Vendor Services Lookup: Active Providers](#). In the "Service" dropdown, click on "Retraining Services" and filter by State, City and/or county. For out of country schools, select "All" under State.
- **Need an L&I provider number?** Go to [Become a Training Provider \(wa.gov\)](#) and use the step-by-step instructions in the [Enrollment Guide for Training Providers](#). This will direct them to [ProviderOne](#) website where the provider can start their application. For question about ProviderOne applications, email LNIPProviderOne@Lni.wa.gov.

For Out of Country training providers

- Go to [Become an Out of Country Provider](#)
- Email your application and questions to SchoolOversightProgram@lni.wa.gov.
- L&I will send you information about your new account if your school is approved

Note: For any other questions related to applications for Provider One, email LNIPProviderOne@Lni.wa.gov.

Resources for Helping Non-Medical Providers Bill L&I

Once a vendor becomes a provider, they may need assistance submitting bills for payment. Vocational counselors can prevent delays and denied bills by sharing the following information:

- There is no automatic payment. To be paid, the provider has to submit a bill to L&I.
- Remind the provider they have up to a year to bill from the date of service.
- Payments require pre-authorization. L&I will need adequate time to process the bill.
- Use [MARFS](#) to check that the procedure codes are correct

Verify the dates of service fall within the dates of the retraining plan.

- Confirm the request includes the correct EIN for the retraining site, the L&I provider number, and the worker's claim number.
- Share the referral ID number with the provider to complete the [Statement for Retraining and Job Modification Services Form](#) (F245-030-000).
- If using either the [Statement for Miscellaneous Services form](#) (F245-072-000) or the [Statement for Retraining and Job Modification Services form](#) (F245-030-000), please mail the form with attached bill to Department of Labor and Industries, P.O. Box 44269 Olympia, WA 98504-4269. (Do not fax the bill or form to the claim file.)
- Refer to the Claim and Account Center (*under claim payments > medical bills and payments*) to confirm payments are being processed by L&I. Share the status of the payment, as needed, with the provider.
- Refer to the Resources for Training Providers tip page on L&I's website for resources you can provide to the training school for billing assistance: [Resources for Training Providers \(wa.gov\)](#)

Note: Washington State WACs, RCWs, and payment policies apply for services regardless of where the worker resides.

L&I's School Oversight Program can help:

- Answer questions about the training provider application process.
- Confirm training provider or school status

Note: For any questions specific to retraining school vendors, email the School Oversight Program at SchoolOversightProgram@lni.wa.gov.

Tips to Motivate a Non-Medical Provider to Register with L&I

- Offer to help provide support with application and billing.
- Let the provider know that L&I will facilitate payment in a timely manner in accordance with the [Washington State fee schedule](#).

Note: To be paid, all providers must have an L&I provider number. Let the provider know L&I functions like a third party biller and bills cannot be paid up front. However, L&I will pay them for bills submitted through the proper process.

Medical Resources for Out-of-State and Out-of-Country Referrals

How to Look for Out-of-State or Out-of-Country Medical Providers

Workers may need assistance finding an authorized L&I medical provider when they reside or move outside of Washington State. The [Find a Doctor](#) directory lists providers who are able to treat workers and bill L&I for their services. However, listed providers are not required to accept any patient requesting services.

Note: If you are looking for a doctor outside of the U.S., try the [alternate list of out-of-country providers](#).

Helping *Out-of-State* Medical Providers Obtain a Provider Number

Out-of-state medical providers must have an active L&I provider number to be paid for their services. To obtain a provider number, medical providers must apply through the online portal. Please direct medical providers to [ProviderOne](#).

Vocational counselors can become familiar with the ProviderOne registration process by reviewing the [ProviderOne Guides and Resources](#). Contact the [L&I ProviderOne team](#) with questions.

Helping *Out-of-Country* Medical Providers Obtain a Provider Number

Out-of-country medical providers are exempt from using ProviderOne. Out-of-country medical provider applications are handled by specific staff who have been trained to match L&I requirements with other countries' legal requirements for doctors.

If you are working with a medical provider who is out of country and needs assistance in obtaining an L&I provider number, contact the Foreign Provider Liaison at ForeignProviders@lni.wa.gov and include the medical provider's email address and phone number.

Providing Important Medical Resources to Out-of-Country Medical Providers

Out-of-country claims can be complex and come with their own unique set of medical barriers. VRCs can assist out of country medical providers by understanding and sharing the guides below:

- Essential guides, available in English and Spanish:
 - English: [Guide for Out of Country Providers \(wa.gov\)](#) (F245-430-000)
 - Spanish: [Guía para proveedores fuera del país](#) (F245-430-999)

Out-of-State and Out-of-Country Care Coordination

Claim managers (CM) can consult with resources at L&I, such as an Occupational Nurse Consultant (ONC) and Nurse Case Manager (NCM), to address complex medical barriers on out-of-state and out-of-country claims. If you think an ONC or NCM would be appropriate or would like to discuss claim-specific medical barriers or issues, please contact the claim manager.

- **Occupational Nurse Consultants (ONCs)**

The ONCs are a valuable resource on a claim and can provide expert medical advice. ONCs can assist with onsite nurse case manager coordination of complex medical issues, help with quality of care issues/concerns, and are involved in the assignment and monitoring of NCMs.

- **Nurse Case Managers (NCMs)**

Claim Managers can use NCMs to coordinate care for Washington injured workers residing out of state or out of country. Criteria for assignment of an NCM needs to be flexible to allow for unique claim issues. An NCM can be assigned whenever an ONC and a CM agree that more intensive, on site, services are needed.

Examples of when it may be appropriate to staff with the CM for ONC support:

- Multiple diagnoses, related or unrelated, that are complicating recovery.
- Stalled recovery with no progress and no clear treatment plan.
- Proposed treatment that does not appear to be curative or rehabilitative.
- Coordination of specialty consultants and care.
- Coordination of return to work with attending physician, worker, and employer.
- Worker has moved out of state or region and needs assistance finding a new attending physician.

Job Offers Once a Worker has Relocated

In most circumstances an employer can still offer a worker temporary or permanent light duty work, even when they move outside of Washington. You can help employers to understand it is possible for a worker to return to work in a different capacity while still receiving medical benefits, even if they have relocated. Research shows the sooner a worker returns to work, the more likely they'll preserve future income and health.

Job offers can be for light-duty employment (while the worker is medically unstable), or permanent employment (after the worker reaches maximum medical improvement).

Returning to work as quickly as possible is a team effort between the vocational counselor, the worker, their attending provider and the employer. As a Vocational Counselor you can help provide assistance to facilitate a smooth return to work. Resources for barriers include the Claims Manager and the unit VSS.

Additional Considerations for Job Offers

- Additional time may be needed for a start date allowing for worker to start the job, contact the Claims Manager to staff reasonable start date questions
- If considering remote work, the employer may want to review the worker's resume or work history for skills and abilities

Transitional Work Resources:

- Ask L&I Article #Prod-2937 Transitional Return to Work

Helpful Temporary Job Offer Resources include:

- Policy 5.15 Adjudicating Transitional Job Offers and Eligibility for Time Loss Compensation and Loss of Earning Power Benefits
- Policy 6.50 Determining the Validity of a Job Offered by the Employer of Record
- [RCW 51.32.090](#)
- [RCW 51.32.095](#)

Helpful Permanent Job Offer Resources include

- Policy 6.50 Determining the Validity of a Job Offered by the Employer of Record
- Ask L&I: Article #Prod-2933 Permanent Job Offers
- Ask L&I: Task 5.18-A Adjudicating Eligibility Compensation Benefits-Valid Job Offers after the Worker is Found Eligible for Plan Development
- [RCW 51.32.090](#)
- [RCW 51.32.096](#)

H-2A Visa Considerations for Job Offers

The federal H-2A visa program allows temporary, nonimmigrant workers to enter the U.S. on a guest worker visa to perform agricultural labor on a seasonal basis. The workers travel from a home base in another state or country.

H-2A visa certifications are granted to employers where there's a demonstrated shortage of workers in the current job market and where it won't have an adverse effect on wages and working conditions of similarly employed U.S. workers.

As part of the agreement, employers must provide workers' compensation insurance, transportation, meals (or access to kitchen facilities), and housing.

Workers sign an H-2A contract before they're employed which describes:

- Jobs they can and can't do
- Base wages and any varied wages
- Work schedules
- Covered benefits, including housing and health care benefits
- Visa begin and end dates

Per an H-2A contract, only the employer of injury can offer an H-2A worker a job. The employer's job offer would need to be within the dates of the current H-2A visa, an extension of the current H-2A visa or include a new H-2A visa.

NOTE: You can contact the Employer of Injury to find out if your worker received an H-2A visa.

Helpful H-2A resources for VRC's to assist employers:

- [H-2A Temporary Agricultural Workers | USCIS](#)
- [H-2A Temporary Agricultural Program | U.S. Department of Labor \(dol.gov\)](#)
- [H-2A Visa Program For Temporary Workers | Farmers.gov](#)
- Ask L&I Article #Prod-2993: H-2A Foreign Guest Worker