



# Back to Work Oregon

The following information is presented by the Oregon Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development to describe the Back to Work Oregon program and its impact on Oregonians.

## A Success Story

The *Back to Work Oregon* program was one of Governor Kitzhaber's first five job creation strategies, launched in 2011, to get the Oregon economy back on track. The program was resourced with a \$3.28 million investment from the Oregon Legislature, matched by Oregon's Local Workforce Investment Boards, and supported by Oregon Employment Department staff. *Back to Work Oregon* placed 1,325 Oregonians into long term jobs.

Given the goal of 1,325 placements, a year and a half into the two year program, *Back to Work Oregon* is exceeding the original goal with almost 1,400 unemployed Oregonians placed into permanent jobs, 931 earning a National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC).

"I must have filled out over 200 applications. I didn't get one phone call in return. Now I'm in a job with an opportunity for advancement, and it feels good to be able to pay my bills and take care of my family again."

Shawn Welch, Program participant  
Service Technician  
Home Comfort Hearth & Patio  
Medford OR

## Value-Added Training

*Back to Work Oregon* addresses both the needs of business for skilled workers and the needs of Oregonians to have job-specific, certified, transportable skills.

The program consists of two components:

- **On-the-Job Training (OJT)** which is a "hire-first" program that reimburses a company for the cost of training a new employee. A rigorous training plan is put in place by the company which leads to employee retention in the job. The employee becomes a taxpayer by drawing a paycheck during training and beyond.
- **Oregon's National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC)** which demonstrates that an individual has the foundational workplace skills necessary to succeed in the training plan and on the job, and provides the individual with a national portable credential for future career growth.

"The National Career Readiness Certificate helps validate critical foundation skills. It fits right into our model and overall training strategy."

Jon Ostling, Employer  
Training Manager  
Cascade Steel Rolling Mills  
McMinnville OR

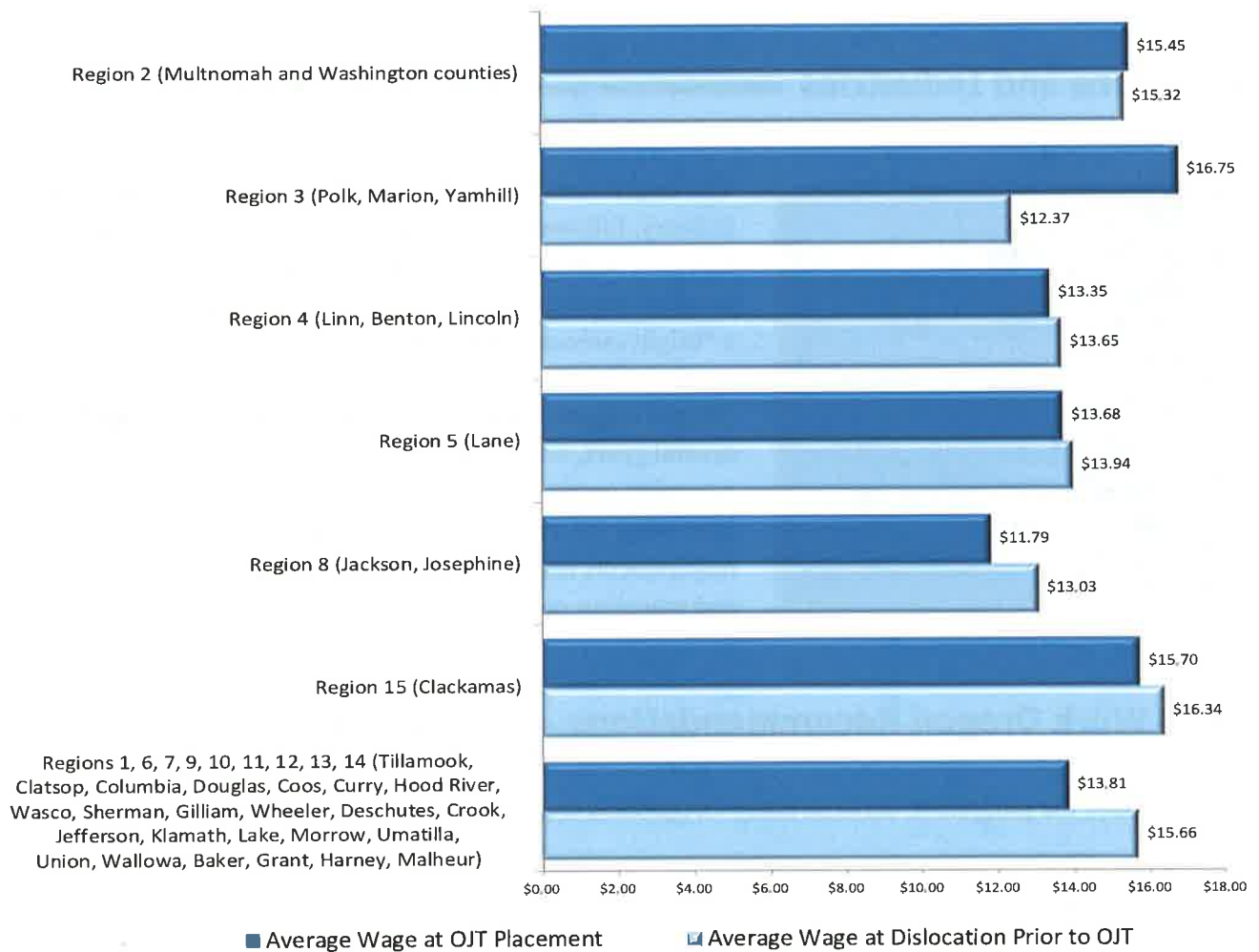
The Oregon Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development (CCWD) oversees and manages the program from the state level and Oregon's seven Local Workforce Investment Boards operate the program locally in collaboration with the Oregon Employment Department through WorkSource Oregon.

## Trainee Wages

When dislocated workers enter new jobs, they typically have to start over and as a result, start at a lower wage. For example, the average Dislocated Worker Wage Replacement rate from July 2010 through June 2011 was 80 percent, according to the Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development. In contrast, *Back to Work Oregon* participants were able to start new jobs at 97 percent of their previous earnings. **Two of the seven workforce areas increased the average wage of trainees.** Those in rural areas of the state were able to replace almost 90 percent of their previous earnings despite the much more significant impact of the recession in these communities.

**Back to Work Oregon participants were able, on average, to start new jobs at 97% of their previous earnings.**

**Average Wage at OJT Placement**  
**Total Statewide: \$14.36**



Source: Local Workforce Investment Areas

As a strategy to meet the ongoing business demand for skilled employees, *Back to Work Oregon* has strengthened working relationships between businesses and WorkSource Oregon resulting in increased prosperity for workers, businesses and the public.