



2026 WORKERS' COMPENSATION CONFERENCE

COMMEMORATING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF 9/11

OCTOBER 16 — ALBANY, NY



Workers'
Compensation
Board



Workers'
Compensation
Board

SUPPORT SERVICES FOR INJURED WORKERS



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JANET DRAINNA, LANGUAGE ACCESS COORDINATOR



AGENDA

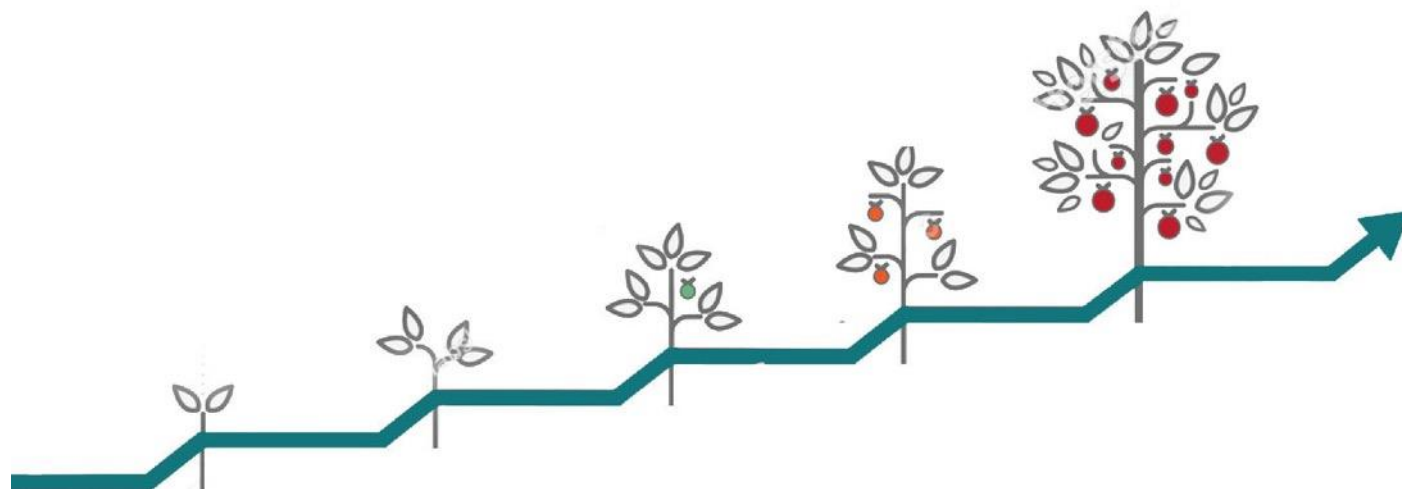
1 Social Services Support

2 Vocational Rehabilitation

3 Return-to-Work Support

4 Labor Market Attachment

5 Language Access Support





INTEGRATED SERVICES FOR INJURED WORKERS

Support Services (also known as Integrated Services) for injured workers

- A workplace injury can be life altering and challenging for those injured on the job.
- The Workers' Compensation Board (Board) offers health support services and employment resources designed to help injured workers overcome medical limitations.
- Licensed master social workers (LMSWs) and vocational rehabilitation counselors (VRCs) work individually and as partners to aid injured workers by identifying appropriate services and reducing barriers.
- Language access services provide interpretation and translations.



Social Services



Licensed Master Social Workers (LMSWs) and Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSWs)

When a worker is injured, ill, or disabled as the result of a work-related injury or occupational illness, the impact can be devastating. The Board offers assistance by highly skilled professionals. Board social workers are:



- Available in all district offices
- Required to possess a Master of Social Work degree
- Licensed to practice in New York State
- Trained to provide free and confidential mental health and social services



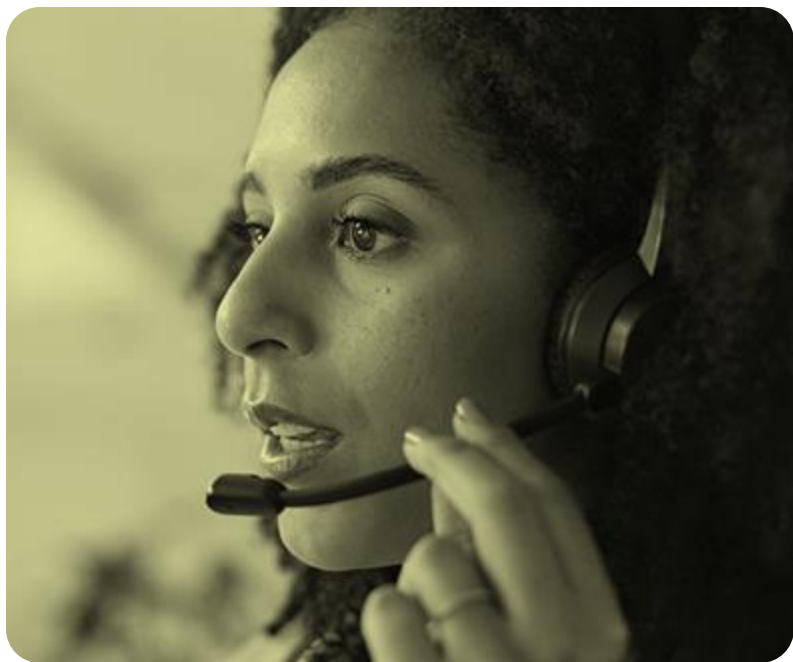
Social Workers

- Offer short-term counseling to aid emotional and mental wellbeing.
- Respond to concerns or questions regarding the claims process.
- Assist with Medicare, Social Security, and NYS Disability.
- Provide advocacy support by reaching out to creditors, landlords, carriers, etc.
- Connect injured workers with services such as:
 - Department of Social Services (DSS)
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
 - Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)
 - shelters
 - food pantries
 - and more!



SOCIAL SERVICES: 2025 RESPONSE

In 2025, Board Social Workers responded to **12,413** injured workers and resolved inquiries, involving:



- Increased demand for mental health support and short-term counseling
- High levels of financial hardship
- A growing need to partner with vocational rehabilitation counselors to support return-to-work efforts



SUPPORTING CLAIMANTS IN CRISIS

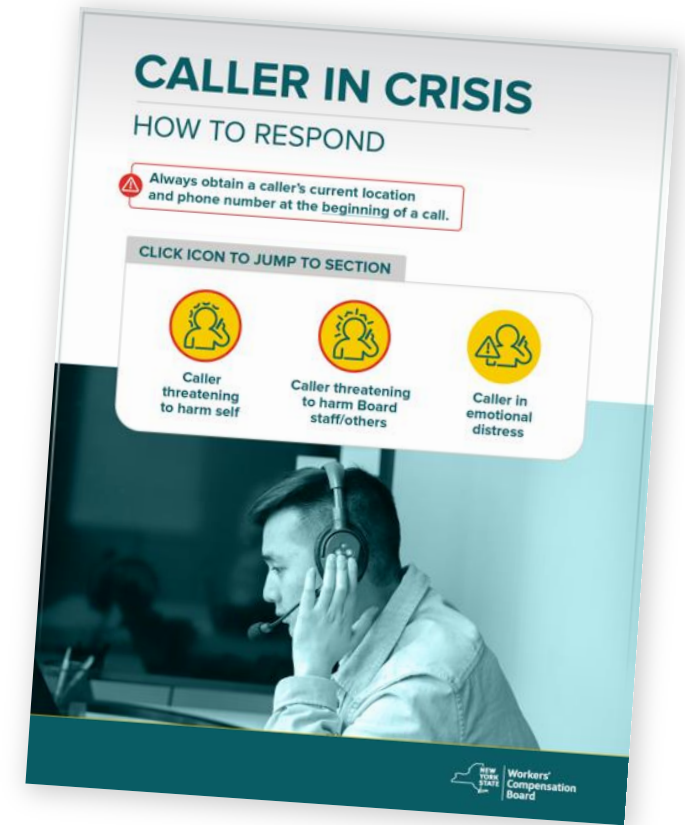


- Acknowledging claimants in distress
- RED PHONE alerts
- Crisis support

The Social Services unit created a new **Caller in Crisis** resource for all Board staff with step-by-step procedures for:

- Callers threatening to harm themselves or others
- Callers in emotional distress

This resource enables quicker action in a crisis and better communication between Board units.



SCENARIO: REACHING OUT



- Cori was referred to the Board's Social Services unit by her legal representative. She reached out to us expressing despair:

“(I’ve) Lost it with scary thoughts and am in the lowest point of my life.”

- Due to Cori's work injury, she is experiencing financial hardship while awaiting a determination in her claim.

SCENARIO: RESPONSE

- The social worker assessed Cori and created a safety plan.
- Cori was provided with information on how to complete and submit a ***Claimant's Record of Medical and Travel Expenses and Request for Reimbursement (Form C-257)***.
- Cori was referred to DSS for financial resources.





SCENARIO: REFLECTION

Cori was more prepared for her hearing.

Cori was able to properly document medical and travel expenses to request reimbursement.

The judge was able to focus on the findings of the case.



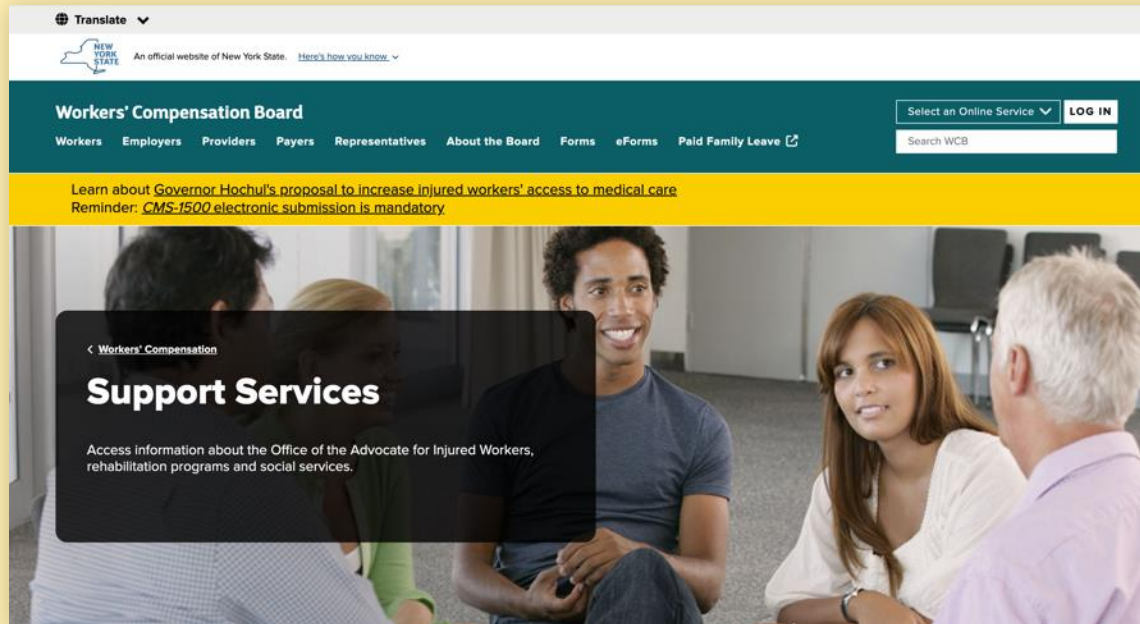
SOCIAL SERVICES: **TESTIMONIAL**

**“I JUST WANT TO THANK YOU,
YOUR INTERVENTION
MOST LIKELY SAVED MY LIFE”**

— Jeffrey



SOCIAL SERVICES: RESOURCES



- wcb.ny.gov/socialservices
- Email: SocialWorkers@wcb.ny.gov
- Call: (212) 866-2425





Vocational Rehabilitation





Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRCs)

- The Board's VRCs, located in district offices and customer service centers, provide free assistance to all injured workers, including those with physical and mental impairments.
- VRCs are master-level counselors with degrees in Rehabilitation Counseling.
- VRCs hold the national credential of Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC).



VOC REHAB: **VRCs** (cont'd)

- Vocational support is offered to injured workers
 - to ensure they get the help they need to become more independent and return to work.
- Those with medical restrictions may require alternate or light duties at work as they continue to recover from their injury.
- In 2025, the VRC unit assisted **8,393** injured workers as they returned to the workforce and resolved **10,482** inquiries.



VOC REHAB: **VRCs (cont'd)**

Services provided by VRCs include:



**Vocational
Rehabilitation
Services**



**Counseling for
Labor Market
Attachment**



**Return-to-Work
Support**



VRC services provided for injured workers:

- Educate stakeholders regarding work restrictions, light duty, and modified work that support safe recovery efforts.
- Help injured workers search and apply for jobs.
- Coordinate referrals to vocational support services such as vocational rehabilitation through NYS Education Department's Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR) and NYS Department of Labor (DOL) One-stop Career Centers.
- Assist with resume development and mock interview preparation.
- Provide guidance regarding labor market attachment, reasonable accommodations, workforce development, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).



VOC REHAB: SERVICES (cont'd)

- The VRC unit connects injured workers to training and employment opportunities by working closely with other agencies and partners such as:
 - ACCES-VR
 - NYS Department of Labor Career Centers
 - SUNY/CUNY Reconnect (tuition-free associate degree program for adults)
 - NYS Department of Civil Service / 55-a Program
 - New York Systems Change and Inclusive Opportunities Network (NY SCION)
 - NYS Office of the Aging
 - Public Library Systems
 - Non-profit organizations
 - GoodTemps (a staffing agency)
 - Per Scholas (tuition-free technology training, professional development)



RETURN TO WORK

Vocational Rehabilitation

RETURN TO WORK (RTW): GETTING BACK

Get better — and get back



- A quick and safe return to a healthy lifestyle helps one get better.
- Research shows the longer employees are out, the less likely they are to come back to work.
 - In fact, just **50%** of injured employees will return to work after a six-month absence, and only **1%** after a two-year absence.



RTW: PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

The Board's return-to-work (RTW) resources help support injured workers and employers with programs and initiatives that:

- Help an employee continue working while recovering from a work-related illness or injury.
- Provide “reduced earnings” benefits to those who return to work at a lower pay rate because their disability prevents them from working at pre-injury level.



FACT: Medical care for a work injury or illness is a lifetime benefit, even after returning to work (unless there is a legal settlement that says otherwise).

RTW: PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES (cont'd)

- Improve communication and clarify the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in helping the injured worker come back to, and stay at, work.
- Enable all employees, including those who are not ill or injured, to understand and access a process for resolving difficulties at your work site, including during the period when an injured worker is transitioning back to work.
- Promote fair and consistent policies once an accident has occurred.



SCENARIO: DIFFERENT CAREER

- John has a disability from his work-related injury and wants to return to work in a different career field.
- John has not engaged in job searches in a long time.



SCENARIO: RESPONSE

- John was referred to the vocational rehabilitation unit to assess his career goals.



- The VRC helped John apply for services via ACCES-VR.
- John was provided with guidance to help him explore career paths.

A screenshot of the New York State Education Department website. The top navigation bar is orange and contains links for NYSED.GOV, Board of Regents, News, Index A-Z, Search ACCES, Translate, Contact Us, NYSED Employment, and Business Portal. Below this is a white banner with the NYS ED .gov logo and the text "New York State EDUCATION DEPARTMENT" and "ADULT CAREER & CONTINUING ED SERVICES". To the right of the banner are social media icons for Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and TikTok. Below the banner is a blue navigation bar with links for ACCES, ACCES-VR (selected), Adult Education, Career Schools, High School Equivalency, and Contact Us. The main content area has an orange background with a pattern of faint icons. It features the heading "ACCES- VR (Vocational Rehabilitation)" and the text "Assisting Individuals with disabilities to achieve and maintain employment and to support independent living." To the right of this text is a circular inset image showing a woman in a black blazer shaking hands with a man in a suit at a desk with a laptop.

SCENARIO: REFLECTION

- John was able to obtain services via ACCES-VR and was recommended for a training program.
- The VRC helped John establish a career plan which helped John look forward to the future.
- John will receive support to find a job upon completing the training program.





VOC REHAB: **TESTIMONIAL**

“Ms. Galimore, you work miracles! You are the best. I never had anyone that believed in me, and that made me lose faith in myself. I feel good for the first time in a long time. Thank you.”

— Eric



Labor Market Attachment

Vocational Rehabilitation

LABOR MARKET ATTACHMENT (LMA)

■ Why is labor market attachment important?

- To continue to receive ongoing lost-wage benefits, a temporarily partially disabled worker might be obligated to demonstrate "labor market attachment." Medical restrictions, while limiting, do not automatically exclude an injured worker from seeking employment.

■ What are the requirements for a partially disabled worker?

- Injured workers must only look for work within their work restrictions.
- Reasonable efforts to obtain gainful employment must be documented in a timely, diligent, and persistent manner.





What documentary evidence can be submitted to demonstrate LMA?

- Active participation in a job-retraining program
- Contacting and actively participating with DOL's One-stop Career Centers for job searching, follow up meetings, seminars, orientation, and/or job counseling
- Participating in full-time higher education or training
- Actively working with a VRC at ACCES-VR
- Conducting an independent job search





LMA: FORM

Documenting labor market attachment

- Document everything with the:
 - ***Claimant's Record of Job Search Efforts/Contacts (Form C-258)***
 - ***Claimant's Record of Independent Job Search Efforts (Form C-258.1)***
 - Other supporting documents
- Forms can be found at **wcb.ny.gov/forms**



Participation in vocational services may support LMA but does not replace an active job search

NEW YORK STATE **Workers' Compensation Board** **Claimant's Record of Job Search Efforts/Contacts**

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____ MI: _____ WCB Case #: _____

For the Period: _____ to: _____

Use this form to show your efforts to attach to the labor market. Information regarding labor market attachment can be found on the Board's website at www.wcb.ny.gov/labor-market-attachment. Detailed instructions are on page two of this form.

You can demonstrate attachment in one or more ways:

1. active participation in a job-location service such as One-Stop Career Centers, Workforce One, etc.;
2. an independent job search;
3. active participation in vocational rehabilitation through ACCES-VR, another Board approved rehabilitation program, or a job re-training program.
4. attendance in an accredited educational institution full-time to pursue employment.

Check the box or boxes below to demonstrate your attachment to the labor market and provide all required information.

Note: Benefits may be suspended if the Board issues a decision finding that your job search efforts were not sufficient.

This document will be considered evidence by the NYS Workers' Compensation Board, therefore you should consult with an attorney or licensed representative before completing this form and before submitting it to the Board.

☐ **1. Participating in NYS Department of Labor's re-employment services such as One-Stop Career Centers, Workforce One, etc.:**

Name of Program or Service: _____ Location: _____

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): _____ Activity/Result: _____

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): _____ Activity/Result: _____

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): _____ Activity/Result: _____

Attach supporting documentation. If necessary, attach separate sheet listing additional dates and activity/result.

☐ **2. Independent Job Search.** If you conducted an independent job search complete Form C-258.1 to record your job search efforts. Be sure to complete all fields in order to show that your job search is timely, diligent and persistent. If you are only submitting a record of an independent job search, you may use Form C-258.1 without also filling out Form C-258.

☐ **3. Participating in Adult Career and Continuing Education (ACCES-VR) or other rehabilitation or job-retraining programs including SUNY Educational Opportunity Centers (EOC):**

Dates(s) of Contact (mm/dd/yy): _____

Name of Career Center or Program: _____

Mailing Address: _____ Line 2: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Name of Person Contacted: _____ Daytime Phone #: _____

Result: _____

Attach supporting documentation.

☐ **4. Attending an accredited educational institution or licensing program to pursue employment within my work restrictions:**

Dates(s) of Enrollment (mm/dd/yy): _____ Estimated Graduation Date (mm/dd/yy): _____

Name of Educational Institution: _____

Mailing Address: _____ Line 2: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Attach proof of enrollment.

C-258 (5-19) www.wcb.ny.gov



VOC REHAB: **TESTIMONIAL**

“...thank you for truly listening to me and making me feel heard. That meant a lot to me. I left our conversation feeling supported and encouraged...”

**— From Injured worker to Board VRC,
Felicia Hang-Chou**



RTW: RESOURCES



Vocational rehabilitation: Helping workers get back to work

NEW YORK STATE **Workers' Compensation Board**

The NYS Workers' Compensation Board (Board) has vocational rehabilitation counselors (VRCs) who provide free assistance to injured workers with physical disabilities. Our counselors help these injured workers get the help they need to become more independent and return to work.

While the majority of injured workers fully heal and return to their same job once cleared by their health care provider, some may have medical restrictions or other situations that affect their return to work. They may require alternate or light duties at work as they continue to heal or to accommodate new medical restrictions. Some injured workers need training and assistance to find a different job altogether. We can help!

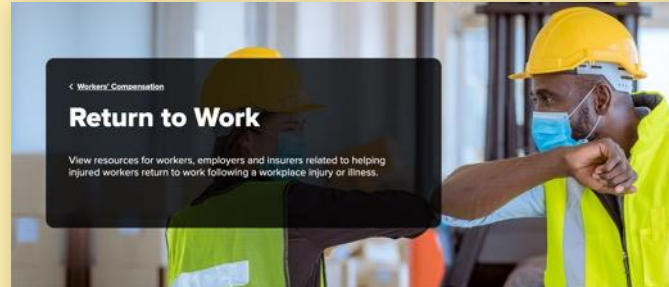
The Board's team of highly qualified and skilled VRCs:

- Help search and apply for jobs.
- Coordinate job/vocational training.
- Offer referrals to other vocational support services.
- Provide general assistance to return to work or stay at work.
- Provide guidance regarding labor market attachment and reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Serve as a resource regarding disability, employment, and workforce development.
- Partner with the Board's licensed master social workers to address any mental health issues that may affect an injured worker's successful return to work.

For more information, visit wcb.ny.gov/vocrehab, email VocRehab@wcb.ny.gov, or contact the Board at (212) 866-2425 and ask for "vocational rehabilitation assistance."

CRISIS SUPPORT: Are you in crisis, experiencing emotional distress, or worried about someone you know? Call or text 988 or chat at 988lifeline.org. These resources are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

WCB.NY.GOV



Return to Work

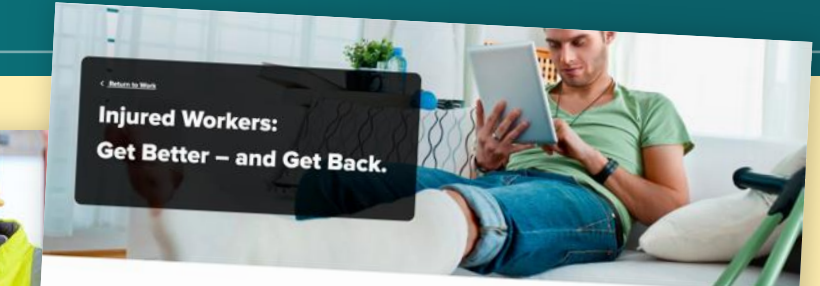
View resources for workers, employers and insurers related to helping injured workers return to work following a workplace injury or illness.

No one wants a work-related injury or illness to keep an employee out of the workforce forever. While treating the injury or illness is focusing on an employee's return to work is also important. And the sooner, the better – research shows the longer employees are out they are to come back to work. In fact, just 50% of injured employees will return to work after a six-month absence, and only 1% after

I AM AN



Injured Worker Employer or Business Owner Insurance Carrier



Injured Workers: Get Better – and Get Back.

Sections

- Overview
- Your return-to-work team
- Important return-to-work guidance
- COVID-19
- Labor market attachment
- Board vocational services
- Board social services
- Advocate for injured workers
- Other career resources
- Unemployment insurance
- Return-to-work: key terms
- Frequently asked questions
- Forms

Overview

When you are dealing with a work-related injury or illness, healing is your most important job – but it's also good to begin thinking about and planning for your return to work. Many people who receive workers' compensation benefits do return to work, for lots of good reasons.

- A quick return to an active lifestyle may help you get better faster.
- Returning to work can benefit your overall and long-term compensation, as you won't miss out on raises, promotions and seniority status.

Not every injured worker's return-to-work path is the same.

Most injured workers fully heal and return to their same job.

The overwhelming majority of injured workers fully heal from their work-related injury or illness and return to their same job, as soon as their medical provider has cleared them to do so.

↓

If this sounds like your situation, your return-to-work process is very straightforward. Simply:

- notify your employer's workers' compensation insurer when your medical provider says you are cleared to return to your job, and
- coordinate your return date and other details with your employer.

Some may have medical restrictions or other situations that affect their return to work.

Some injured workers may not be able to return to their exact same job. They may require alternate or light duties at work as they continue to heal or to accommodate new medical restrictions. Some injured workers need training and assistance to find a different job altogether.

↓

If your return-to-work situation is a bit more complex like the examples above, there are many resources to help you. Please read on for important information and guidance to assist you as you heal and work toward getting back to work.

wcb.ny.gov/vocrehab
wcb.ny.gov/returntowork
wcb.ny.gov/labor-market-attachment
Email: VocRehab@wcb.ny.gov
Call: (212) 866-2425



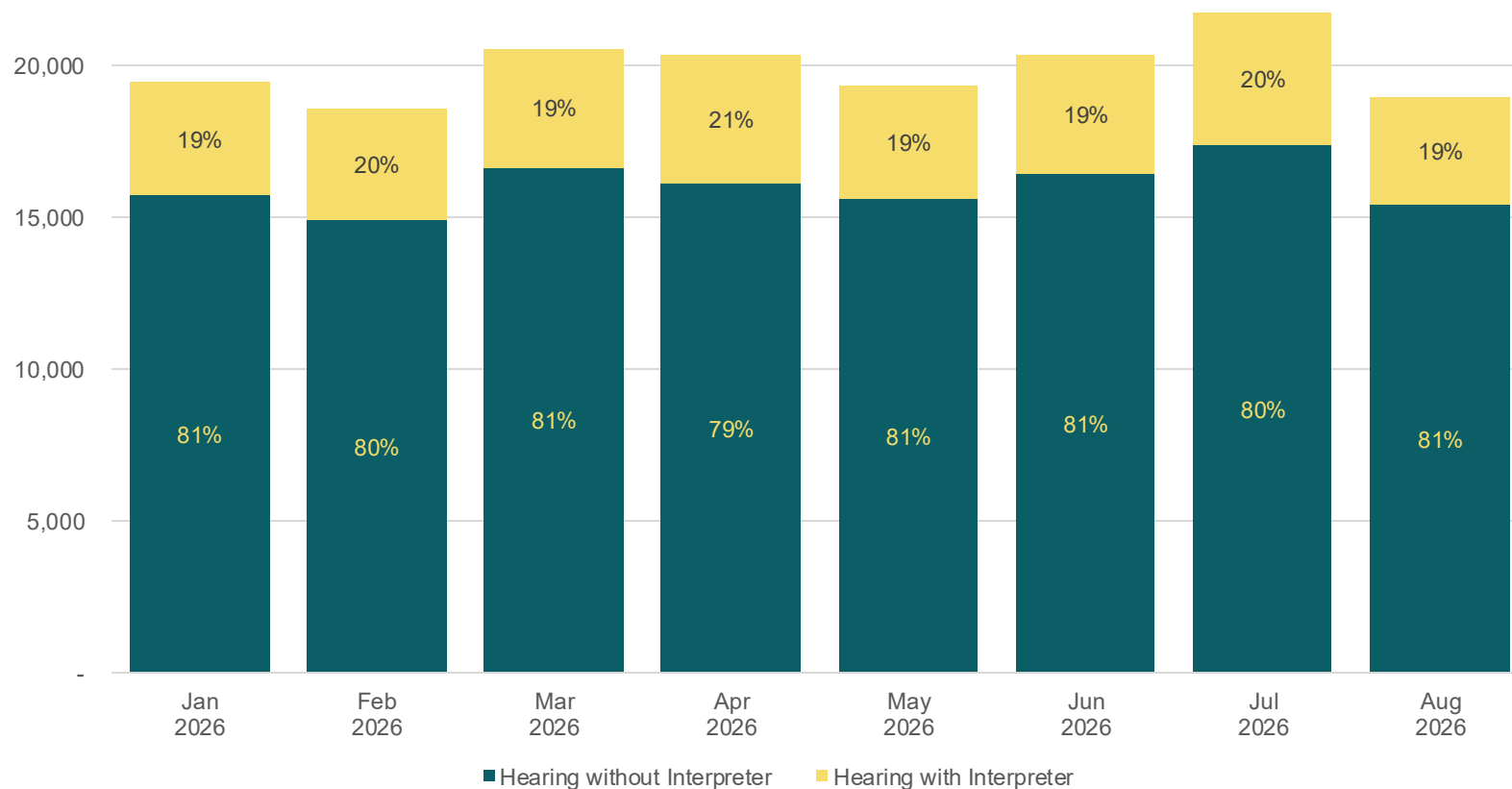
Language Access (LA)





A STRONG NEED FOR LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE

Hearings held **with** and without an interpreter





A STRONG NEED (cont'd)

Number of hearings with an interpreter in the past six months

Month	# of Hearings w/ interpreter
Mar 2026	3,934
Apr 2026	4,275
May 2026	3,761
Jun 2026	3,897
Jul 2026	4,388
Aug 2026	3,567
Monthly Average	3,970



A STRONG NEED (cont'd)

Number of written translations requested in the past six months

Month	# of Written Translations
Mar 2026	241
Apr 2026	240
May 2026	243
Jun 2026	230
Jul 2026	236
Aug 2026	240
Monthly average	238
Total	1,430

WHY PROVIDE LANGUAGE ACCESS SERVICES?

- To ensure all New Yorkers can understand and exercise their rights and access the benefits they need
- It's the law!
 - Executive State agencies providing direct public services must:
 - offer interpretation services in languages requested by limited-English proficient individuals **and**
 - provide important forms and documents in at least the top 12 most commonly spoken languages in NYS, in addition to English
 - (NYS Executive Law Section 202-A)



HOW DO WE SUPPORT LANGUAGE ACCESS NEEDS?

Provide access to interpretation and translation for individuals who are hearing impaired or with Limited English Proficiency status

- The Board engages multiple expert service contractors for:
 - Over-the-phone, video remote, or in-person interpretation
 - Written translation
 - American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation
 - Closed captioning
 - Subtitles



LANGUAGE ACCESS OFFERED UPFRONT!

- Injured workers can request translation service on the *Employee Claim (Form C-3)*.

NEW YORK
STATE OF OPPORTUNITY.

Workers' Compensation Board

Employee Claim
State of New York - Workers' Compensation Board

Fill out this form to apply for workers' compensation benefits because of a work injury or work-related illness. Type or print neatly. This form may also be filled out on-line at www.wcb.ny.gov.

WCB Case Number (if you know it): _____

A. YOUR INFORMATION (Employee)

1. Name: _____
First MI Last

2. Date of Birth: ____/____/____

3. Mailing address: _____
Number and Street/PO Box/Apartment No. City State Zip Code

4. Social Security Number: _____

5. Phone Number: (____) _____

6. Gender: ☐ M ☐ F ☐ X

7. Will you need a translator if you have to attend a Board hearing? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, for what language? _____

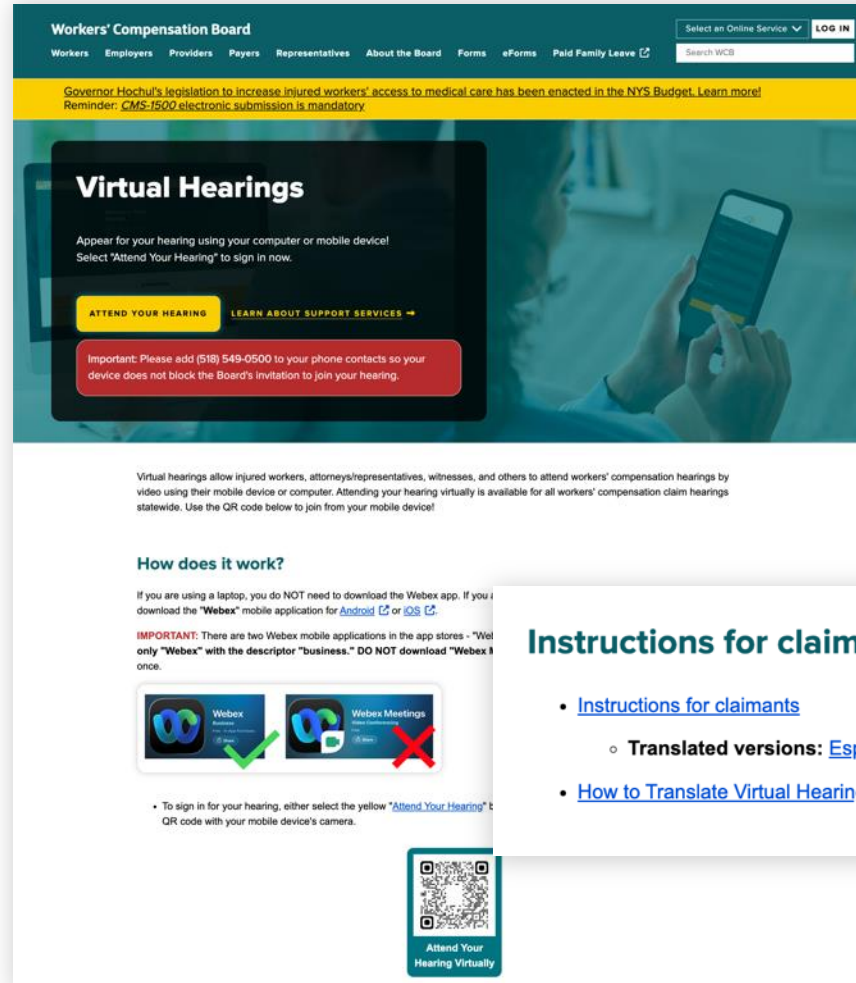
B. YOUR EMPLOYER(S)

- *Form C-3* is also translated into 12 languages and readily available for download on the Board's website.

Translated forms: [Español](#) | [Русский](#) | [Polski](#) | [中文](#) | [Italiano](#) | [Kreyòl ayisyen](#) | [한국어](#) | [বাঙালি](#) | [יידיש](#) | [عربي](#) | [Français](#) | [اردو](#)

EXAMPLES OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED

■ Interpreters attend virtual hearings to coordinate communication between claimants, employers, adjudicators, and other parties of interest.



■ Instructions for attending a virtual hearing are offered in 12 languages, and can be translated in additional languages upon request.

Instructions for claimants

- [Instructions for claimants](#)
 - **Translated versions:** [Español](#) | [Русский](#) | [Polski](#) | [中文](#) | [Italiano](#) | [Kreyòl ayisyen](#) | [한국어](#) | [বাংলা](#) | [עברית](#) | [Français](#) | [اردو](#)
- [How to Translate Virtual Hearings Web Pages](#)



EXAMPLES OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED (cont'd)

- Translated webpages on the Board's website, wcb.ny.gov
- Vital documents and forms are translated in the 12 most commonly spoken languages in New York, and can be translated in all other languages upon request
- Translate exhibits important to case history:
 - Text or app messages
 - Handwritten notes
 - Emails





LANGUAGE ACCESS: **TESTIMONIAL**

“Thank you very much for all of your assistance. I have been corresponding quite a bit with you lately and I want you to know that I truly appreciate all that you do for our clients.”

— Loredana

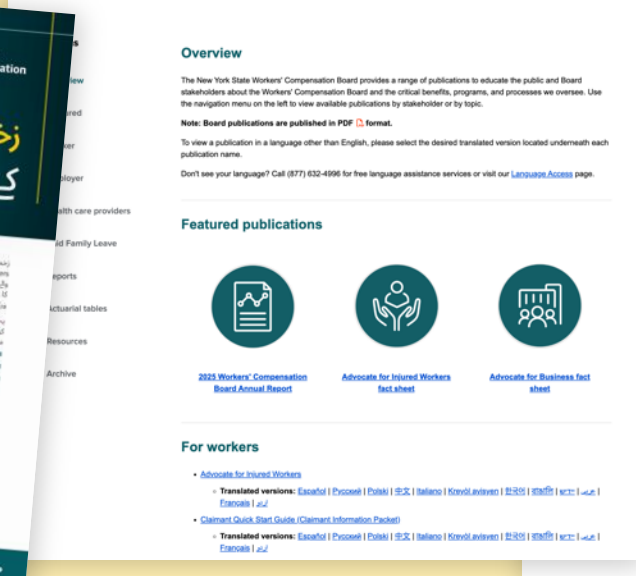


OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

- Conduct education and outreach to promote usage of the preferred language designation on ***Form C-3***
- Continue providing resources on our website to raise public awareness about LA services available
- Push toward claimants attending hearings virtually for better service
- Continue to leverage data and analysis to improve processes
- Pursue live captioning options



- ## Publications



Sections

- [Overview](#)
- [English](#)
- [Español \(Spanish\)](#)
- [Русский \(Russian\)](#)
- [Polski \(Polish\)](#)
- [中文 \(Simplified Chinese\)](#)
- [Italiano \(Italian\)](#)
- [Koryŏl myŏlyeon \(Korean Cursive\)](#)
- [한국어 \(Korean\)](#)
- [ᨆᩣ᩠ᨾᩮᩥᩬ᩵ᨦᩈᩬᩁ \(Burmese\)](#)
- [יידיש \(Yiddish\)](#)
- [عربي \(Arabic\)](#)

Overview

The New York State Workers' Compensation Board strives to provide a welcoming and inclusive experience to all whom we serve. One of the ways we do this is by providing language assistance services to ensure that all New Yorkers can get critical information in their preferred language.

Language Assistance Services

- Please call us at (877) 632-4996 for free language assistance services.
- Ліценсія на (877) 632-4996 ci надають допомогу gratis en su idioma.
- Услуга мовного забезпечення надається безкоштовно українською, російською, польською, німецькою та англійською мовами: (877) 632-4996
- Pod numerem telefonu (877) 632-4996 otrzymasz Pomocę bezpłatną pomocy językowej.
- 讓我們打電話，電話：(877) 632-4996。要求免費語言協助服務。
- Chiamare il (877) 632-4996 per assistenza linguistica gratuita.
- Tempel roue nou nan (877) 632-4996 pou jwenn sèvis ed gratis nan lang.
- 전화 (877) 632-4996 로 무료 언어 지원 서비스를 이용하실 수 있습니다.
- uşqet us fongxuej uen xetsej efisej ne wexne neta wen (877) 632-4996 (eta xani).
- ទំព័រជូនសេវាឥតគិតថ្លៃ (877) 632-4996 សម្រាប់អ្នកដែលមានបញ្ហាភាសា។
- تېلىپون قىلىڭ ۋە ئەگەر ئۇچۇر سۆزلەشكەن بولسا، ئەمەس ئۇچۇر (877) 632-4996 ئارقىلىق ئېلىنىدۇ.
- Veuillez nous appeler au (877) 632-4996 pour obtenir les services gratuits d'assistance linguistique.
- يېزىلغان ۋە ئاڭلانغان خاتىرىلەر ئارقىلىق بىزنىڭ خىزمەتكارلىرىمىز بىزنىڭ ئۆزىمىزگە مەنسۇب ھالدا ئۆزىمىزگە ياردەم بېرىشىمىزغا ياردەم بېرىدۇ.

English

New York State's language access policy requires State agencies that provide direct public services to offer

CONTACT US

WEBSITE: wcb.ny.gov/supportservices

EMAIL: VocRehab@wcb.ny.gov

SocialWorkers@wcb.ny.gov

LanguageAccessCoordinator@wcb.ny.gov

PHONE: 212-866-2425



988 LIFELINE

**Are you in crisis, experiencing
emotional distress, or worried
about someone you know?**

**Call or text 988 or chat at
988lifeline.org**

24 hours a day, 7 days a week



FOLLOW THE BOARD

 [@NYSWorkersComp](https://twitter.com/NYSWorkersComp)

 [@NYSWCB](https://www.facebook.com/NYSWCB)

 [@NYSWorkersCompBoard](https://www.instagram.com/NYSWorkersCompBoard)

 [youtube.com/@nyswcb](https://www.youtube.com/@nyswcb)

 [linkedin.com/company/nyswcb](https://www.linkedin.com/company/nyswcb)

 wcb.ny.gov (“Get WCB Notifications”)



THANK YOU

