

July 2019

BWC eNews



Governor DeWine signs BWC budget



Budget supports workers in recovery, workplace safety

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine signed the biennial budget for the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) into law July 22, allowing the agency to expand a program that supports employers who hire workers struggling to overcome an addiction to opioids and other dangerous substances.

The agency's budget also provides \$40 million to improve workplace safety for employers across the state, including law enforcement, firefighters, schools and businesses.

Under the new budget, BWC's [Substance Use Recovery and Workplace Safety](#) will add nine counties to the three (Montgomery, Scioto and Ross) already participating in the program. The budget allocates \$15 million over the next two years to the program BWC launched last October. The expanded program will help employers hire, manage and retain workers in recovery.

"Having a job plays a major role in helping those in recovery stay on a healthy, productive path," said BWC Administrator/CEO Stephanie McCloud. "In turn, this program allows employers to bring these folks back into the workplace in a safe and supportive way."

McCloud noted the budget aligns with Governor DeWine's highest priorities and the goals of his [Recovery Ohio initiative](#).

The \$40 million allotment for workplace safety continues funding for several BWC grants, including the Ohio Law Enforcement Body Armor Program to help local law enforcement agencies purchase body armor. It also covers the agency's program that assists fire departments purchase equipment that reduces exposure to carcinogens and other toxins during and after a firefight. The funds also support BWC's School Safety and Security Grant Program. Click [here](#) for more on BWC's Safety Grant program.

Average private employer workers' comp rates drop 20 percent



A 20 percent reduction in the average premium rate BWC collects from private employers went into effect July 1, the agency's largest cut in nearly 60 years.

"We're pleased to continue the trend of falling rates with a reduction that will save Ohio private employers roughly \$244 million in fiscal year 2020," said BWC Administrator/CEO Stephanie McCloud.

McCloud said safer workplaces resulting in fewer and less costly workplace injury claims and continued lower inflation of medical costs are among the factors that make the reduction possible. Claims have fallen 18 percent since 2010 to 85,136 in 2018.

The cut follows a 12 percent reduction in July 2018 for private employers and a 12 percent rate reduction for public employers — counties, cities, schools and others — that went into effect Jan. 1. Overall, the average rate levels for the 242,000 Ohio employers in the BWC system are at their lowest in at least 40 years.

The 20 percent rate cut represents an average statewide change. The actual total premium paid by individual private employers depends on several factors, including the expected future claims costs in their industry, their company's recent claims history, participation in various BWC rebate programs as well as assessments collected to fund the operations of the system.

BWC board approves \$1.5 billion dividend for employers

Move continues trend of lowering workers' compensation costs



BWC's Board of Directors voted last month to approve a proposal from Ohio Governor Mike DeWine to send \$1.5 billion of the agency's revenues to Ohio employers.

BWC will begin sending checks to approximately 180,000 private and public employers in late September. It marks the fifth time since 2013 the agency has returned at least \$1 billion to employers following strong investment returns, falling injury claims and other operational efficiencies.

"I am pleased that BWC's Board of Directors agreed with our proposal to give this money to qualifying businesses, local governments, and school districts," said Governor DeWine. "Employers will be able to reinvest these funds in their operations and their employees, which will further strengthen Ohio's economy."

Employers are free to spend the funds as they wish, but BWC Administrator/CEO Stephanie McCloud urges businesses to invest in workplace safety.

"Investing in safety reduces the risks for costly workplace injuries," said Administrator McCloud. "It's good for the health and safety of employees, it's good for the company's bottom line and it's good for our economy."

In total, BWC has saved employers nearly \$10 billion in workers' comp costs through dividends, credits, rate reductions and greater efficiencies since 2011.



Help Ohio understand your workforce needs

InnovateOhio and the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation has launched a new survey tool for Ohio businesses to gather feedback ahead of the creation of the state's new In-Demand Jobs list.

Strong participation is crucial to our success — and Governor DeWine is counting on you to help!

The survey is open through September and can be found at indemand.ohio.gov.

Survey results inform the in-demand jobs list that will be published at the end of 2019, helping training providers, educators, and workforce professionals learn the future hiring needs of Ohio employers.

Start a no-cost wellness program for your employees



Smaller health care group practices, clinics, or nursing facilities: Your employees may be eligible for [Better You, Better Ohio!](#)[®] – our **FREE** health and wellness program for workers who work for smaller employers in high-risk industries, such as health care.

The program gives you the rare opportunity to start a wellness program for your employees with no cost and no paperwork hassles. You're eligible if you have 150 or fewer workers and do not have an established workplace wellness program.

We can even arrange an on-site biometric screening event for your workers. If you have questions about the program, email BWCBetterYouBetterOhio@bwc.state.oh.us.

BWC eBriefs

Save the Date: Fallen Worker Memorial



We invite you to attend a program honoring Ohio's fallen workers. Please join us for this tribute at 10 a.m., Thursday, Aug. 29, in the auditorium of the William Green Building at 30 W. Spring St. in downtown Columbus.

July 2019 Safety Update

The July 2019 Safety Update is now available! Click [here](#) to read about our Safety Innovation Awards, where you can win up to \$6,000 for a creative solution to reduce workplace injuries and illnesses. Also, read about our upcoming trenching safety webinar, NIOSH & OSHA news, an update on 3D printing safety and more.

McCloud interview on the radio and online

BWC Administrator/CEO Stephanie McCloud recently spoke with [@OhioFarmBureau](#) on their Town Hall Ohio podcast about workplace health and safety. If you missed it on the radio, listen to it online by clicking [here](#).



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