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WCD Today

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WCD Today

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Department of Consumer
and Business Services





Matt West

As we begin 2026, I want to take a moment to reflect on the progress we made in 2025 and share a few important updates for the year ahead.

Last year was a busy one for the Workers' Compensation Division (WCD). We made significant strides in our [modernization efforts](#), implemented legislative changes, and began preparing for a major relocation. These changes reflect our ongoing commitment to improving the way we serve Oregonians and support the workers' compensation system.

One of the most meaningful developments in 2025 was the rollout of our new mission statement and strategic plan. These updates are more than just words on paper – they represent a renewed focus on transparency, service, and innovation. Our teams have been working hard to align our day-to-day work with these guiding principles, and we're already seeing the benefits.

Another major change on the horizon is our upcoming move. The Workers' Compensation

Administrator's notebook:

A new year brings new changes

By Matt West, WCD administrator.

Division – and DCBS as a whole – will be temporarily relocating to the Department of Revenue building just across the street from our current home in the Labor and Industries (L&I) Building in Salem. This move is necessary because the L&I Building is scheduled for a seismic retrofit. We are still waiting for an exact move date, but we know it will be in 2026 and anticipate staying there for about three years before we return to the L&I Building.

We understand the temporary address change will affect notices and information sent to workers and employers. Our team is working to ensure that the transition is as smooth as possible for staff, Oregon workers, and businesses. We will continue to provide updates as the move approaches, and we appreciate your patience and flexibility during this time.

Another change that is important to mention is Operations Section Manager Shawn Haywood's retirement at the beginning of 2026. Shawn was a key member of the WCD leadership team throughout his 4 1/2 years at the division. He played an important role in helping me transition into the WCD administrator role when he stepped in as

acting deputy administrator. We thank Shawn for his many contributions and wish him all the best in his well-earned retirement. His influence will continue to shape our work. He will be missed.

Barb Belcher will fill in as acting Operations Section Manager. Barb has been an integral part of the WCD leadership team for 12 years, managing the Audit and Employer Compliance units. In 2025, she also served as acting Performance Section Manager for five months, demonstrating her versatility and commitment to WCD. I'm excited for what this means for the Operations Section and for WCD as a whole. Barb is an exceptional leader who will further strengthen our senior leadership team.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the continued efforts of the Management-Labor Advisory Committee (MLAC) and its subcommittees. MLAC has been hard at work reviewing key issues and providing thoughtful recommendations that help shape the future of Oregon's workers' compensation system. Its members' collaboration and dedication are essential to the success of our work.

As always, thank you for your continued partnership. We look forward to another productive year. ■



Shining a light on the Records Center team

By George Arias-Montero,
communications
coordinator.

Behind every great team, there is a group of people working behind the scenes to keep everything running smoothly.

For the Workers' Compensation Division (WCD), that group is its Records Center team. Tucked away in the basement of the Labor and Industries (L&I) Building in Salem, this small but mighty team keeps WCD's records accurate, organized, and accessible.

The team's responsibilities include:

- General insurer files inventory
- Digitizing microfilm files into electronic records
- Processing requests for claim records
- Maintaining and archiving paper claim files

The team consists of Records Center Team Leader Charles Hajduk, Records Management Specialist Kye Monismith, and Records Clerk Tatyana Rizzo.



George Arias-Montero

Charles Hajduk



As team leader, Charles oversees daily workflow, supports team operations, and ensures compliance with retention and processing standards. He has been part of WCD for 22 years, having started his career with the division in central reception. Over the years, he has taken on rotations with the division's Appellate Review and Communications units, and even rotations with other state agencies, but he has always found his way back to WCD's file room.

Charles' day to day responsibilities include answering phone calls from insurers, law firms, and injured workers, as well as producing reconsideration copies upon request. He also helps with the daily operations of the file room. Right now, much of that work involves file cleanup and general office preparation for WCD's upcoming temporary move to the Department of Revenue building while the L&I Building is retrofitted.

What Charles enjoys most about his job is being able to help injured workers. Knowing that his work supports people during a difficult time is what makes the role meaningful to him.

Outside of work, Charles enjoys golfing – though not as often as he'd like – spending time with his family, and visiting the Oregon Coast.

Kye Monismith



As records management specialist, Kye focuses on records accuracy, scanning, and digital transition efforts. He has been with WCD for seven years and previously worked for the Department of Corrections. He holds a bachelor's degree in business management.

Kye's primary responsibilities include converting old microfilm reels into PDFs using Adobe software so they can be accessed electronically through the NetCenter database. He also manages the purging of files based on retention schedules and is concentrating on this work as the division prepares for its move to the Revenue building. His inventory work includes managing more than 100 file types.

Kye finds meaning in helping people return to the workforce, even if his role is behind the scenes. He enjoys working in a team environment where everyone shares common goals. Outside of work, his interests include golf, reading, movies, music,

Modernization update

By **Heather Williamson**, *Modernization Program manager*.



Heather Williamson

2025 was an important year for the Modernization Program and the Workers' Compensation Information System (WCIS) project. As we shared in our [July 2025 issue](#), the division

received its Stage Gate 2 endorsement from Enterprise Information Services (EIS) in May 2025.

In November, we released our request for proposal (RFP) to evaluate potential vendors to deliver the WCIS technology solution. This milestone required extensive coordination, feedback, and approval from internal and external partners. Interested vendors had until Jan. 16, 2026, to submit proposals. An evaluation committee will now begin a detailed review process. Under the current schedule, selection of the WCIS solution vendor is planned for the second quarter of 2026.

Contract negotiations can take time once a vendor is selected. During this period, the Modernization team will begin the "discovery" phase with the vendor. This phase includes sharing WCIS project documentation and other key information to help the vendor understand WCD's work. It also includes reviewing future-state models and requirements – what we need the technology to do to support the division's work. This early discovery effort helps ensure a smooth transition into solution design and implementation planning.

During this time, we will also begin preparing for testing, training, and support for staff members and external stakeholders. We are targeting early 2028 for completion of the WCIS technology implementation.

We encourage you to sign up for our GovDelivery email updates and to regularly check the [Modernization Program webpage](#) for the latest information. ■

traveling, and spending time with family and friends.

Tatyana Rizzo

Tatyana supports the team as the records clerk. She helps process morning and afternoon mail, assists with purging files, answers incoming phone calls, and fills in wherever needed to support claims operations. Her flexibility and willingness to jump in make her an essential part of the team. Outside of work, Tatyana enjoys cooking and spending time with loved ones.

Why their work matters

The Records Center plays a critical role in ensuring compliance with state and federal requirements, maintaining efficient workflows, and reducing risk through accurate recordkeeping. Their work supports every part of the claims process and directly contributes to WCD's mission of serving Oregon's injured workers with accuracy, timeliness, and care.

Looking ahead

As WCD continues its modernization efforts, the Records Center team is preparing for expanded digitization, improved electronic access, and the upcoming move to the Revenue building. Their work today lays the foundation for a more efficient and streamlined future.

WCD staff members are encouraged to reach out to the team whenever they need help with records or file related questions. ■



Preferred Worker Program success story: Salathiel Reyes-Franco



Oscar Garcia Lopez

By Oscar Garcia Lopez, worksite modification consultant, and George Arias-Montero, communications coordinator.

On Nov. 22, 2020, Salathiel Reyes-Franco's life changed in an instant when he suffered a serious shoulder injury while at work. He was working as a delivery and van driver for a company subcontracted by Amazon when a heavy box he was carrying slipped from his hands. As he tried to catch it, he felt a sudden warm sensation in his shoulder, followed by sharp pain. That moment marked the beginning of a long and challenging journey.

Medical evaluations revealed the extent of his injuries: a left shoulder strain, a superior labrum anterior to posterior (SLAP) tear (a tear in the cartilage that is part of the shoulder joint), subacromial bursitis, and impingement syndrome. These conditions left him with permanent work restrictions – no lifting more than 20 pounds from floor to waist level or 10-pounds from waist to chest level, and no reaching or lifting above chest height. For

someone whose livelihood depended on physical labor, these restrictions were life-altering.

Salathiel spent nearly 11 months recovering before being declared medically stationary in October 2025. At that time, his employer was unable to offer transitional work that met his restrictions. The uncertainty was stressful. He worried about returning to work, supporting his family, and managing debts. The stress was so severe that he underwent a psychiatric evaluation.

Finding hope through the Preferred Worker Program

Salathiel's turning point came when Vocational Counselor Stan Potocki introduced him to Oregon's [Preferred Worker Program](#) (PWP). Through this program, Salathiel received vocational training focused on office and computer skills – training funded by Cimarron Insurance Co. through North American Risk Services. This new skill set opened doors to opportunities beyond physically demanding jobs.

PWP also provided essential benefits to support his transition, including clothing, transportation assistance, and even an eye exam and glasses. These resources helped Salathiel prepare for a new chapter in his career.

A fresh start

Today, Salathiel works as a community engagement coordinator for LatinoBuilt.org, a role he has held for more than a year and eight

months. His new employer embraced PWP and utilized benefits such as premium exemption, wage subsidy, and worksite modifications. These modifications included a computer, arm monitors, a sit-stand desk, an ergonomic office chair, a landline headset, and Bluetooth headphones – tools that make his work environment comfortable and accessible.

Impact and success

For Salathiel, PWP was more than just financial assistance – it restored his confidence and gave him the ability to rejoin the workforce despite permanent restrictions. Salathiel is a big fan of his new office setup, which was provided by PWP.



The program also benefited his employer, which avoided the cost of creating a new office space and received financial support through wage subsidies. This partnership demonstrates how PWP not only empowers injured workers but also helps businesses thrive by hiring skilled, motivated employees.

Salathiel's story is a testament to resilience and the power of support systems. Thanks to PWP, he turned a moment of crisis into an opportunity for growth and stability. ■

Meet new ECU manager: Cory Van Houten



The Workers' Compensation Division (WCD) is pleased to share that Cory Van Houten has been selected as its new manager of the Employer Compliance Unit in the division's Performance Section.

He stepped into the role after completing a six month rotation as the manager, which began in May 2025.

Cory brings extensive experience to this position. Before his rotation, he served as the Resource and Technology Services Unit manager since 2007. In that role, he helped streamline processes and supported technology improvements that strengthened division operations. His leadership during the rotation highlighted his ability to support staff, guide complex work, and uphold the division's commitment to high quality service.

Please join us in congratulating Cory on his new role. His experience, leadership, and dedication will continue to support WCD and its mission of serving Oregon's workers. ■

Join us for the 2026 Workers' Compensation Educational Conference

By Chris Sutter, acting conference and training coordinator.



We're excited to welcome you to the 2026 Workers' Compensation Educational Conference.

This year's conference will be entirely held in person May 7-8 at the Holiday Inn Portland – I-5 South in Wilsonville.

This two-day event brings together professionals from across Oregon's workers' compensation community, including claims examiners, union representatives, safety committee members, human resources managers, attorneys, medical providers, employers, and more. Whether you are new to the field or a seasoned expert, the conference offers valuable opportunities to learn, connect, and stay current on key issues and best practices.

Early bird registration is available until April 1. Register by then to receive the discounted rate of \$350. After April 1, the registration fee will increase to \$425.

This year's agenda includes a mix of returning favorites and new sessions designed to address emerging trends and challenges in the industry – 28 sessions in total. Topics include:

- Workers' Compensation 101 – This two-part class will explain the basics of Oregon's workers' compensation system. You'll learn what happens to a claim from the time it's filed through acceptance and beyond.
- Workers' Compensation Board updates – This class gives a quick and informative review of the most important workers' compensation case decisions. Stay up to date on the most recent debated topics.
- How an OSHA consultation can reduce claims – This class will explain what Oregon OSHA does and how its safety and health officers inspect workplaces. After learning about enforcement, you'll discover Oregon OSHA's free, confidential consultation services. These services help employers improve workplace safety without penalties or fines and are available to any Oregon employer who wants to create a safer work environment.
- The perspective of the injured worker – This popular class from our 2024 conference is back. In this interactive session, you'll hear about the challenges workers face during their claims journey, learn from statements provided by workers, and gain a clearer understanding of their rights and responsibilities. Gain this perspective firsthand from attorneys and the ombuds for Oregon workers.

We're also pleased to welcome a diverse group of presenters, including industry experts, division

staff members, and professionals from across the United States. Here are a few of the featured speakers:

- Aaron Fellman is a WCD policy analyst specializing in coverage, employer compliance, and assessment issues. Aaron began working for the division in 2018 after seven years with the Workers' Compensation Insurance Rating Bureau of California. Aaron has a master's degree in public administration from San Francisco State University.
- Todd Johnson is the senior state relations executive with the National Council on Compensation Insurance (NCCI). He is responsible for NCCI's regulatory and legislative affairs, including rate filings, legislative impact analyses, and residual market issues. He supports the Pacific Northwest states of Montana, Idaho, Utah, Alaska, Washington, Wyoming, and Oregon. Todd received his bachelor's degree in law, criminology, and deviant behavior from the University of Minnesota.
- Robert Arias earned his doctorate in clinical psychology from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He completed a specialized neuropsychology fellowship at West Virginia University and has been practicing clinical psychology/neuropsychology in Lincoln, Nebraska, since 2000. He provides psychological and neuropsychological evaluations for clients at any age, as well

as individual medical examinations/forensic evaluations. Robert has been the neuropsychologist with the Bryan Hospital's Level 1 trauma team and inpatient rehabilitation unit for more than 20 years.

In addition to the educational sessions, the conference will include networking opportunities, exhibitor booths, and a chance to connect with subject matter experts. Make connections, meet industry experts, and see the latest in services, equipment, and materials from exhibitors – all in one location.

Check out the full conference [agenda](#) on our website.

Registration is open for attendees, exhibitors, and sponsors.

Register today at <https://workcompevent.com/oregon/oregon-workers-compensation-conference/>.

If you haven't already joined our mailing list or if you have questions about the conference, contact Chris Sutter at Chris.P.Sutter@dcbs.oregon.gov or by phone at 971-286-0162.

We look forward to seeing you in May. ■

