

**85.70 Additional payment for attendance — rehabilitation and training — new career vocational training and education program.**

1. An employee who has sustained an injury resulting in permanent partial or permanent total disability, for which compensation is payable under [this chapter](#) other than an injury to the shoulder compensable pursuant to [section 85.34, subsection 2](#), paragraph “n”, and who cannot return to gainful employment because of such disability, shall upon application to and approval by the workers’ compensation commissioner be entitled to a one hundred dollar weekly payment from the employer in addition to any other benefit payments, during each full week in which the employee is actively participating in a vocational rehabilitation program recognized by the vocational rehabilitation services division of the department of workforce development. The workers’ compensation commissioner’s approval of such application for payment may be given only after a careful evaluation of available facts, and after consultation with the employer or the employer’s representative. Judicial review of the decision of the workers’ compensation commissioner may be obtained in accordance with the terms of the Iowa administrative procedure Act, [chapter 17A](#), and in [section 10A.322](#). Such additional benefit payment shall be paid for a period not to exceed thirteen consecutive weeks except that the workers’ compensation commissioner may extend the period of payment not to exceed an additional thirteen weeks if the circumstances indicate that a continuation of training will in fact accomplish rehabilitation.

2. a. An employee who has sustained an injury to the shoulder resulting in permanent partial disability for which compensation is payable under [section 85.34, subsection 2](#), paragraph “n”, and who cannot return to gainful employment because of such disability, shall be evaluated by the department of workforce development regarding career opportunities in specific fields aligning with postsecondary career and technical education programs that provide instruction in the areas of agriculture, family and consumer sciences, health occupations, business, industrial technology, and marketing, that allow for accommodation of the employee’s disability and to determine if the employee would benefit from participation in the new career vocational training and education program offered through an area community college, that will allow the employee to return to the workforce.

b. Upon completion of the evaluation and a determination by the department that the employee is a candidate for the new career vocational training and education program, the employee shall be referred by the department to the community college that is in the closest proximity to the employee’s residence, or upon agreement of the department and the employee, to the community college that offers a vocational training and education program that best meets the employee’s needs, for enrollment in the new career vocational training and education program at the community college for the purpose of providing the employee with occupational training that will result in, at a minimum, the awarding of an associate degree or completion of a certificate program and will enable the employee to return to the workforce. If an employee does not enroll in the new career vocational training and education program at the community college to which the employee has been referred by the department within six months after the referral, the employee is no longer eligible to participate in the program.

c. The employee shall be entitled to financial support from the employer or the employer’s insurer for participation in the new career vocational training and education program in a total amount not to exceed fifteen thousand dollars to be used for the payment of tuition and fees and the purchase of required supplies. The community college in which an employee is enrolled pursuant to the program shall bill the employer or the employer’s insurer for the employee’s tuition and fees each semester, or the equivalent, that the employee is enrolled in the program. The employer or the employer’s insurer shall also pay for the purchase of supplies required by the employee to participate in the program, upon receipt of documentation from the employee detailing the cost of the supplies and the necessity for purchasing the supplies. Such documentation may include written course requirements or other documentation from the community college or the course instructor regarding the necessity for the purchase of certain supplies.

d. The employer or the employer’s insurer may request a periodic status report

each semester from the community college documenting the employee's attendance and participation in and completion of the career vocational training and education program. If an employee does not meet the attendance requirements of the community college at which the employee is enrolled or does not maintain a passing grade in each course in which the employee is enrolled each semester, or the equivalent, the employee's eligibility for continued participation in the program is terminated.

e. The community college shall also provide the employer or the employer's insurer with documentation detailing that the receipt of funds by the community college pursuant to [this subsection](#) is for the payment of tuition and fees and the purchase of required supplies.

f. Beginning on or before December 1, 2018, the department of workforce development, in cooperation with the department of education, the workers' compensation division of the department of inspections, appeals, and licensing, the insurance division of the department of insurance and financial services, and all community colleges that are participating in the new career vocational training and education program, shall prepare an annual report for submission to the general assembly that provides information about the status of the program including but not limited to the utilization of and participants in the program, program completion rates, employment rates after completion of the program and the types of employment obtained by the program participants, and the effects of the program on workers' compensation premium rates.

[C71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §85.70]

[96 Acts, ch 1127, §1; 98 Acts, ch 1061, §11; 2003 Acts, ch 44, §114; 2004 Acts, 1st Ex, ch 1001, §13, 18; 2017 Acts, ch 23, §18; 2018 Acts, ch 1041, §32; 2023 Acts, ch 19, §1751, 2237, 2716](#)