Social services: Supporting injured workers and their families

NEW YORK STATE | Workers' Compensation Board

When a worker becomes injured as the result of a work-related accident or occupational illness, it can be overwhelming for them and their family. Besides facing the pain and difficulty of the disability itself, the effects can be financially and mentally devastating. We can help!

The NYS Workers' Compensation Board (Board) has licensed master social workers (LMSWs) available in all district offices to provide free, confidential assistance to injured workers. Our LMSWs can help with the workers' compensation claims process and with financial and emotional barriers that may delay a return to work.

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

- Advocate for injured workers with health care providers, insurers, mortgage companies, landlords, utility companies, and creditors.
- Make referrals to emergency shelters, food pantries, nutrition/heating benefits, nursing/assisted living facilities, drug/alcohol programs, and other resources.
- Offer short-term counseling and connections to community/mental health agencies.
- Assist with workers' compensation claims by finding health care providers and contacting insurers about treatment and benefits.
- Help access Social Security, Medicare, and other benefits.
- Distribute correspondence related to claims, benefits, and services.
- Assess and evaluate strengths and abilities, and partner with the Board's vocational rehabilitation counselors to assist injured workers with a successful return to work.

Things to know if you have a work-related injury or illness:

Medical care for your work-related injury is a lifetime benefit.
Work with your health care provider to get clearance to work.
Communicate your medical restrictions to your employer for duty options within your limitations.
If you are disabled, you may request a reasonable accommodation from your employer so you can get back to work.
If you return to work at lower pay due to your work-related injury, you may receive benefits to make up the difference.
Employers are not required to hold your job. Stay in contact with your employer about your job status.
If you are able to work but cannot return to your job, you may be required to search for work within your restrictions.
You may be entitled to unpaid leave through the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).
Discrimination is always prohibited!

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For more information, visit **wcb.ny.gov/socialservices**, email **SocialWorkers@wcb.ny.gov**, or contact the Board at **(212) 866-2425** and ask for "social work assistance." Free language assistance services are available. Please have your name, telephone number, WCB case number, and a description of the problem ready when you reach out. All social services are free, confidential, and available to all injured workers.

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.