



Minnesota
RETAIN

Retaining
Employment
and Talent After
Injury/Illness
Network

MN RETAIN EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT

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MN RETAIN Employer Toolkit

1. Introduction

1.1 Welcome to MN RETAIN

Welcome to the MN RETAIN Toolkit, your comprehensive resource designed to help you retain and support your workforce through injury or illness. MN RETAIN is a no-cost, federally funded program to help employers strengthen and retain their workforce.

1.2 About MN RETAIN

MN RETAIN (Retaining Employment and Talent after Injury/Illness Network) is a program aimed at providing early intervention strategies and on-the-job support to help employers manage employees returning from injury or illness. The goal is to minimize the cost of lost time and enhance workforce retention.

MN RETAIN is a collaborative program led by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), Department of Labor and Industry (DLI), Mayo Clinic, and Workforce Development Inc (WDI).

1.3 Goals and Benefits of the Toolkit

The MN RETAIN Toolkit is a **free, comprehensive online resource** designed to support employers in retaining their workforce and facilitating the return of employees who have been injured or are dealing with illness. Here's how the toolkit benefits your organization:

- **Support for Retaining Employees:** The toolkit provides valuable resources and strategies to help keep ill/injured employees at work and manage their needs effectively.
- **Facilitate Faster Return to Work:** It offers tools and guidance to expedite the return-to-work process for employees recovering from injuries or illnesses.
- **Access to MN RETAIN Services:** Utilize a range of services offered by MN RETAIN, tailored to support employers in managing and retaining their workforce.
- **State-Specific Resources:** Access detailed, state-specific resources that are essential for managing the needs of injured workers, including information related to worker's compensation and local regulations.

The toolkit aims to minimize the cost of lost time and expenses, improve workplace safety and ergonomics, and ensure a smooth transition for ill/injured employees returning to work.

1.4 How to Use This Toolkit

Navigate through the toolkit by following the sections outlined in the Table of Contents. Use the links and references provided to access detailed resources, forms, and contacts.

2. Resources and Services

2.1.1 Ergonomic Services

Ergonomics focuses on designing workspaces and tools that fit the user's needs, reducing the risk of injury, and improving comfort.

2.1.2 Free Ergonomic Assessments

MN RETAIN offers complimentary ergonomic assessments to help you optimize work environments for employees recovering from injury or illness. Our team will evaluate your current setup and provide recommendations tailored to individual needs.

2.1.3 Desk Setup Tips and Best Practices

- **Chair Height:** Adjust the chair so that feet are flat on the floor and knees are at a 90-degree angle.
- **Desk Position:** Position the desk and monitor to minimize strain. The monitor should be at eye level and about an arm's length away.
- **Keyboard and Mouse:** Keep the keyboard and mouse close to avoid overreaching. Your wrists should be straight while typing.

2.2 Workplace Accommodation or Restriction Recommendations

2.2.1 Guidelines for Workplace Modifications

Implement modifications to accommodate employees' physical needs:

- **Modified Duties:** Adjust job responsibilities to align with the employee's current capabilities.
- **Assistive Devices:** Provide recommendations for necessary equipment such as ergonomic chairs or specialized keyboards..
- **Flexible Hours:** Allow adjustments to work hours or provide additional breaks.

2.2.2 Examples of Accommodations

- **Reduced Physical Strain:** Use of sit-stand desks or ergonomic tools.
- **Modified Workstation Layout:** Reorganize workspaces to reduce repetitive movements.
- **Remote Work Options:** If feasible, allow remote work to reduce commuting strain.

2.3 Return-To-Work Case Manager (RTWCM)

Through MN RETAIN, a worker may be assigned a Return-to-Work Case Manager (RTWCM) who becomes a member of the workers' healthcare team. Case Manager will work with the worker and the employer and healthcare provider to:

- Help plan for quick return to work.
- Identify safe work tasks based on healthcare provider's recommendations.
- Update healthcare provider between appointments on return-to-work progress.
- Communicate with both worker, employer, and healthcare provider to make adjustments in return-to-work plan.
- They will coordinate care until the worker can safely return to work, obtain permanent work accommodations, or referred to workforce development services.
- Answer questions and assist the worker to stay at work or get back to work.

For more information, please contact us at:

Email: worker@mnretain.com

Telephone: 507-284-4537

2.4 Employer Reasonable Accommodation Fund (ERAF)

A new state program known as the Employer Reasonable Accommodation Fund or ERAF provides up to **\$30,000 per fiscal year** in reimbursements to eligible businesses to help them offset costs for expenses related to welcoming and supporting employees with disabilities.

The Department of Employment and Economic Development's (DEED) Employer Reasonable Accommodation Fund (ERAF) creates a central fund where small to mid-sized Minnesota employers can request reimbursement for expenses related to providing reasonable accommodations for job applicants and employees with disabilities. The ERAF's purpose is to encourage employment of people with disabilities by reducing any perceived or real financial barriers.

In addition to processing reimbursements, the ERAF Coordinator is available for technical assistance (TA) and consultation at no cost to employers. TA is available for the following activities:

- Understanding the Americans with Disabilities Act as it pertains to hiring and retaining individuals with disabilities and implementing reasonable accommodations.
- Consulting on how to locate, purchase, and implement reasonable accommodations that meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.
- Connecting employers to disability-related trainings and resources, including DEED-specific programs and initiatives; and
- Answering any questions about the ERAF.

ERAF is a two-year pilot program from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2025. This program is appropriated \$4,000,000.

For more information, please contact us at:

Email: Eraf.deed@state.mn.us

Telephone: 651-539-2390 or 1-833-391-8050

2.5 DEED's Workforce Strategy Consultants

2.5.1 Introduction to DEED's Consultants

The Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) offers Workforce Strategy Consultants to assist with workforce management strategies.

2.5.2 How to Collaborate with DEED's Consultants

- **Consultation:** Schedule a meeting with a consultant to discuss workforce strategies and retention plans.
- **Support:** Utilize their expertise to implement best practices and improve workforce stability.

2.6 Talent Development Program (TDP)

The Talent Development Program is designed to provide direct financial assistance to train current employees to avert a layoff and/or improve the economic competitiveness of local business.

The program provides reimbursement to eligible businesses for specific training costs accrued during training. The purpose is to improve the skills of businesses' workforce and to improve the company's business process and competitiveness.

Contact Us Today - Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services, Inc. (CMJTS)

<https://www.cmjts.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Talent-Development-Program-Business-Application-2025.pdf>

2.7 Becoming a MN RETAIN Employer Champion

2.7.1 Benefits of Becoming a MN RETAIN Employer Champion

Becoming a MN RETAIN Employer Champion demonstrates your commitment to supporting employees through injury or illness and can enhance your organization's reputation.

2.7.2 Steps to Become an Employer Champion

- **Commitment:** Pledge to implement best practices for employee support.
- **Recognition:** Receive recognition and resources from MN RETAIN for your commitment.

3. How to Get Started

3.1 Enrolling in MN RETAIN as a worker.

Please contact MN RETAIN at worker@mnretain.com.

3.2 Requesting Assistance and Support

- **Submit Requests:** Use the contact forms to request ergonomic assessments, case manager support, or accommodation funding.
- **Follow-Up:** Ensure to follow up with MN RETAIN representatives for ongoing support and assistance.

4. Contact Information

4.1 MN RETAIN Contact Details

- **Email:** info@mnretain.org
- **Mailing Address:** Great Northern Building 180 East Fifth Street St Paul MN 55101-1678

5. Additional Resources

5.1 Links to Related State and Federal Resources

- State Workers' Compensation Website

- Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)

5.2 Useful Forms and Templates

- **Ergonomic Assessment Request Form:** Download Form
- **Accommodation Request Form:** Download Form [Apply / Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development \(mn.gov\)](#)

5.3 FAQs

Find answers to common questions about MN RETAIN services and resources.
[Frequently Asked Questions - MN RETAIN](#)

6. Appendix

6.1 Glossary of Terms

1. Ergonomics

- The science of designing the workplace, keeping in mind the capabilities and limitations of the worker. It aims to optimize productivity by fitting jobs to people, reducing discomfort and risk of injury.

2. Posture

- The position in which someone holds their body while sitting, standing, or lying down. Proper posture is crucial in ergonomics to prevent strain and injuries.

3. Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI)

- A type of injury caused by repetitive motion or overuse of certain muscles, tendons, or nerves, often leading to pain or discomfort in the affected area.

4. Workstation Design

- The layout and arrangement of the equipment and furniture where a person performs their job. An ergonomic workstation is designed to minimize strain and enhance comfort.

5. Adjustable Furniture

- Office furniture such as chairs and desks that can be modified to suit individual needs, helping to maintain good posture and reduce physical strain.

6. Ergonomic Assessment

- A systematic evaluation of a workplace or workstation to identify potential ergonomic risks and suggest modifications to improve comfort and efficiency.

7. Reasonable Accommodation

- Modifications or adjustments to a job or work environment that enable an individual with a disability to perform essential job functions or enjoy equal employment opportunities.

8. Accessibility

- The design of products, devices, services, or environments for people with disabilities. It ensures that all individuals have the opportunity to participate fully and equally.

9. Job Restructuring

- The process of modifying job duties or the way a job is performed to accommodate an employee's disability, ensuring they can fulfill the essential functions of their role.

10. Assistive Technology

- Devices or software designed to help individuals with disabilities perform tasks more effectively, such as screen readers, ergonomic keyboards, or voice recognition systems.

11. Disability Management

- A proactive approach to helping employees with disabilities remain in or return to work. It includes accommodations, job modifications, and support systems.

12. Worker's Compensation

- A form of insurance providing wage replacement and medical benefits to employees who are injured or become ill due to their job. It typically covers medical expenses and a portion of lost wages.

13. Claim

- A formal request for payment of benefits under a worker's compensation policy, usually submitted by an employee who has sustained a work-related injury or illness.

14. Medical Benefits

- Coverage provided under worker's compensation insurance for medical expenses related to a work-related injury or illness, including treatments, medications, and therapy.

15. Temporary Disability

- A condition where an injured employee is unable to work for a short period due to a work-related injury or illness. Temporary disability benefits provide partial wage replacement during this period.

16. Permanent Disability

- A condition where an injured employee is unable to return to their previous job or any other gainful employment due to the severity of their injury or illness. Permanent disability benefits offer compensation for long-term or lifetime impact.

17. Return-to-Work Program

- A program designed to help injured employees return to work as soon as medically possible. It often includes modified duties or a gradual reintegration into the workplace.

18. Rehabilitation

- The process of restoring an injured employee's physical and functional abilities through medical and therapeutic treatments, aimed at helping them return to work.

6.2 References and Further Reading

List of resources for further information on ergonomics, workplace accommodations, and return-to-work strategies.

[About Ergonomics and Work-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders | Ergonomics and Musculoskeletal Disorders | CDC](#)

[Office of Disability Employment Policy \(ODEP\) Return to Work Toolkit for Employees and Employers](#)

[Workers' Compensation Insurance - Workers' Comp Quotes \(workerscompensationshop.com\)](http://workerscompensationshop.com)

[The Job Accommodation Network](#)

****Please Note** This form will be used online via the MN RETAIN website**

MN RETAIN ERGONOMIC ASSESSMENT REQUEST FORM

What is ergonomics:

The study of people's efficiency in their working environment.

In an office, ergonomics applies to

- Design and organization of jobs and task office workers perform.
- The layout of the office, including the floor plan and storage systems.
- Choice of office equipment such as keyboards, input devices and monitors.
- Set up of the office workstation such as the type of desk, chair, and accessories, how they are arranged.
- The office environment, including temperature, air quality and noise.

Name	Employee ID number
Address	Phone Number/Extension
	Department
Date	Supervisor
Requested by: <input type="checkbox"/> Employee <input type="checkbox"/> Occupational Health <input type="checkbox"/> Supervisor	
Building and room number	
Please describe your concerns	

