

# BHMT Wage Replacement Program Q & A for Managers

*You can help your BHMT-eligible staff develop their careers via the Wage Replacement Program. This FAQ is designed to explain the Wage Replacement Program, how you as a manager can decide about the participation of team members, and how you can support your employees within this program.*

## **Q. What is the Wage Replacement Program?**

- A.** The Wage Replacement Program allows an eligible employee with your approval to reduce his or her regular work schedule to participate in an accredited program. When an employee reduces his or her regular work schedule to participate in an accredited program, wage replacement can be used to replace some or all of their lost income (up to 16-hours per pay period in wages). This payment is paid outside of your department's budget through BHMT, so you will not be charged for your employee's time off work.

## **Q. Who can participate in Wage Replacement?**

- A.** To participate in wage replacement, employees must be benefited (full-or part-time and normally scheduled to work at least 20 hours per week), and have completed their probationary period. Per Diem employees are not eligible for wage replacement.

## **Q. Can Per Diem employees receive Wage Replacement?**

- A.** No. Employees must be classified as full- or part-time employees (normally scheduled to work at least 20 hours per week) who have completed their probationary period.

## **Q. Am I expected to release my employees to attend class and/or study?**

- A.** Although, we encourage you to make every effort to release employees to participate in the Wage Replacement Program when possible, you, ultimately, have the final say. If you are unable to release an employee because of operational demands, you should contact your local HR consultant and local labor partner to explore alternate options.

## **Q. Why is the Wage Replacement Program important?**

- A.** The goal of the Wage Replacement Program is to provide employees with class and/or study time to assist them in attaining their educational and career goals as well as to assist KP in increasing the skill and education levels of the workforce. The Wage Replacement Program is strongly supported by KP leadership and is aligned with the mission of KP's Regional LMP Workforce Planning and Development Program to ensure that KP's workforce is educated, highly skilled, and highly trained.

## **Q. How many hours are awarded by the Wage Replacement Program?**

- A.** Wage Replacement replaces up to 16-hours per pay period for employees to use to attend school and/or study.

## **Q. Do employees have to use all 16-hours each pay period?**

- A.** No. Employees may use up to 16-hours per pay period, but they may use less. Your employees should coordinate any release time with you in advance.

## **Q. What happens if I can't afford to give my employees 16 hours off?**

- A.** Ultimately, you know whether school schedules can be accommodated for your employees. You can determine how many hours employees can take off. If you are unable to release an employee because of operational demands, contact your local HR consultant and labor partner to find an alternate plan for your employee.

## **Q. How does BHMT determine an employee's work schedule?**

- A.** BHMT uses the Regularly Scheduled Hours amount as indicated in HRconnect to determine the hours employees must reduce their hours from. This amount is communicated to BHMT each week through the KP Eligibility file. Managers view this number as "Working Hours" in HRconnect.

## **Q. How do I know my employee has been approved for the Wage Replacement Program?**

- A.** Employees are required to have your approval before they are eligible to participate in the program. You will receive an email at the time your employee applies to the program to confirm that you have approved their participation, but your approval is the first step in the entire BHMT approval process. Your employees are also required to submit an application and provide supporting documentation through MyBHMT. Once their application has been approved, you will be copied on the BHMT Wage Replacement Program approval email. Only after receipt of the BHMT approval email is your employee able to reduce their work schedule and begin receiving wage replacement payments. Any wage replacement time taken before BHMT Wage Replacement Program approval will not be paid by BHMT. Once your employee is a participant in wage replacement, you will be able to monitor utilization via your Manager Portal.

## **Q. How can employees check on the status of their Wage Replacement Program application?**

- A.** Employees can check on the status of their application by logging into their MyBHMT account and locating their Wage Replacement Program application.

## **Q. How do I document my employee's regularly scheduled hours for the Wage Replacement Program?**

- A.** You will need to log into the Manager Portal to verify regular scheduled hours as indicated in HRConnect, or to attest to the actual number of working hours if they are different. This will need to be re-verified every 6 months.

## **Q. Will I, as a manager, be responsible for ensuring the employee's attendance in their academic program?**

- A.** No, but you may be asked to verify the actual hours an employee has reduced from their regular schedule so BHMT can calculate their wage replacement payment.

**Q. Will I be required to request Proof of Completion from the employee participating in Wage Replacement?**

**A.** No. Tracking or verification of an employee's participation in his/her program is not your responsibility.

**Q. How long does the Wage Replacement Program last?**

**A.** Eligible participants have a lifetime maximum of 1900 hours to use toward their Wage Replacement. There is a maximum allocation of hours for certificates as well as for each degree level. Refer to [bhmt.org/wage-replacement](http://bhmt.org/wage-replacement) for additional information. The length of time it will take for employees to use that amount is based on the program they are in and how many hours per week they are using the program. There is no timeframe for the usage of the program; they can continue using it until they have used the full amount. **PLEASE NOTE:** Upon completion of their program, if hours remain, they may reapply with your consent.

**Q. Do participating employees need to work with HR to adjust their status, benefits, vacation, etc. as a result of their reduced work schedule?**

**A.** Yes. When using wage replacement time, please encourage your employees to confirm with their regional HR Representative that they will remain fully benefited and their participation in the Wage Replacement Program will not negatively affect their status or result in loss of benefits.

**Q. How do employees apply for Wage Replacement?**

**A.** To apply, they must first have your approval, then meet with a BHMT Career Development Coach and Academic Success Coach. They then complete their Wage Replacement Application on MyBHMT and upload their program acceptance document and class schedule.

**Q. How long does the application review process take?**

**A.** Once your employee has completed their application and uploaded their documents, it takes 4-6 weeks to be reviewed by BHMT. BHMT will notify you and your employee by email whether they have been approved or denied.

**Q. How can employees check their hours balance and see the history of their wage replacement payments?**

**A.** Employees may check their hours available and see the history of their wage replacement payments by logging into their MyBHMT account.

**Q. Are my employees guaranteed the full 1900 hours?**

**A.** Yes, as long as employees are in a qualifying academic program, attending school, and reducing their KP work schedule. They may not continue receiving wage replacement payments if they:

- Change schools or programs
- Do not reduce their KP work schedule
- Fail to complete the six-month renewal process
- Go on a leave of absence
- Do not have the minimum KP paid hours
- No longer have your support to participate

- Transfer from a BHMT-eligible union position to a non-represented position
- Are in a non-qualifying BHMT position
- No longer work for Kaiser Permanente
- Do not show continued significant progress in their academic program
- Fail to meet other requirements determined by BHMT and regional coordinators

**Q. Do the Wage Replacement hours have to be on the same day or at the same time as the class?**

**A.** No, but this is a wage replacement program, the hours must replace hours that employees were previously scheduled to work.

**Q. If they reduce their KP work schedule, can they pick up extra hours or shifts?**

**A.** No. The Wage Replacement Program is intended to provide time off so they can attend class and/or study without losing income. It is not intended to provide additional or supplemental income.

**Q. What if they run out of Wage Replacement funds before their academic program is over?**

**A.** No more than the lifetime maximum of 1900 hours total or the allocated maximum hours per program will be awarded even if they aren't finished with their academic program. That's why it is important for you and your employee to determine how to budget available hours.

**Q. How are Wage Replacement Program hours allotted?**

**A.** BHMT has allocated a maximum number of hours per degree that your employees can use. Employees may participate in multiple degrees of the same type as long as hours remain.

| [ Degree/Certification | = | Max Wage Rep. Hours ] |
|------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Certification = 960    |   | AA/AS = 640           |
| BA/BS = 1280           |   | RN-BSN = 480          |
| MA/MS = 640            |   | DOCTORAL - 960        |

**Q. Why do the maximum Wage Replacement hours available total more than 1900 hours?**

**A.** BHMT allocated ample hours per degree type to accommodate employees who may elect to pursue multiple degrees/certificates of the same level over the span of their career. Our goal is to ensure that the Wage Replacement Program is available to each of our beneficiaries that need to access it. Therefore, employees may not exceed the allotted hours per degree type or 1,900 total lifetime maximum wage replacement hours even if they haven't finished with their educational program. It is very important for employees to determine the best utilization of their wage replacement hours so hours are available when they really need them. Your assistance with your employee's work schedule, and planning assistance provided by their Academic Success Coach can help your employee best utilize their benefit during their entire educational journey.

**For questions about wage replacement payments, eligibility or BHMT policy please contact: [BHMT@kp.org](mailto:BHMT@kp.org).**