

Prevailing Wage Basics

For Seattle Office of Housing Funded Projects

Did you know?

As a construction worker on any residential construction project funded by the Seattle Office of Housing, you are entitled to the Washington State prevailing wage, as a minimum, for the kind of work you do.

What is prevailing wage?

Prevailing wage is the hourly wage paid to the majority of construction workers in the largest city in each county in Washington State, as determined for each trade by the Department of Labor & Industries (L&I).

The General Contractor must display a list of these wages at the jobsite. Look up the wage for your trade first in the Residential section (all trades starting with "Residential"). If your trade is not there, find it among the commercial wages. You can also look up wages on L&I's website:

www.lni.wa.gov/TradesLicensing/PrevWage/WageRates/LookUp/default.asp

Wage rates are updated twice a year. Check with your superintendent for the correct list of wages for this project, or contact the Office of Housing.

Does prevailing wage include benefits?

Yes. Prevailing wage can be a combination of hourly (base) wage and fringe benefits. If your employer does not provide benefits, or if your benefits haven't started yet because you are a new employee, your base wage alone must be at least the prevailing wage. Eligible fringe benefits include health insurance, retirement, and vacation pay. Deductions for income tax or union dues are not fringe benefits.

Do apprentices get prevailing wages?

Yes. There is a separate list of prevailing wages for registered apprentices. If you are a registered apprentice, your wage will depend on your experience. Go to www.lni.wa.gov/TradesLicensing/PrevWage/WageRates/LookUp/default.asp and click on "Apprentice wages" to find the apprentice wage for your trade.

If you are not registered with the State, or you are registered as a "trainee" but not an apprentice, you are entitled to be paid journey level wages.

Am I entitled to overtime pay?

Yes. You are entitled to overtime pay when you work more than 8 hours in a day or more than 40 hours in a week. If you sign a 4/10 Agreement with your employer, you can work up to 10 hours per day without overtime pay.

Overtime pay is usually 1.5 times your regular hourly wage. Sometimes, it may be double your regular wage, or you may be entitled to a special wage on Saturdays and Sundays, depending on your trade. Find the overtime requirements for your trade using the "Overtime Code" on the wage schedule and the Benefit Code Key. Download the Benefit Code Key from L&I's website at

www.lni.wa.gov/TradesLicensing/PrevWage/WageRates/Printable/ByTrade/default.asp

Make sure you download the Benefit Code Key with the same effective date as the list of prevailing wages for this project. Check with your superintendent for the correct date, or contact the Office of Housing.

Why must I sign in?

There is a requirement that you sign in everyday at the jobsite on all Office of Housing projects. The Office of Housing looks at sign in sheets and payrolls to make sure you get paid for every day you work. The Office of Housing will investigate possible underpayments and make sure you get paid the correct amount.