

PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYMENT FAQ

1. Can I negotiate a better wage than what is posted?

The short answer is no. The wage is negotiated and listed in each CBA. Public Sector doesn't look at the posted wage as the floor. It is the wage. That doesn't mean there aren't premiums for things like shift differential, leads, forepersons, assistants or standby/on-call. Premiums just aren't high on Public Sector's payout.

2. What about my hall pension?

Public Sector has their own pension called Public Employee's Retirement System (PERS). Your PERS contribution cannot be transferred to the IBEW pensions instead. You must have five years contributing to PERS to be vested in the program. There is also a six-month waiting period before your pension starts building. This is because most public employers (not all, some are longer) have a six-month probationary period so it's more like 5.5 years before you are vested in PERS.

3. Is there medical?

Each public employer has their own health plan and does not utilize IBEW L48's health plan. Some employers allow for an opt out if you can prove you have coverage elsewhere, but you must have coverage in another plan. For example: A significant other works for a company that has better/cheaper coverage. If you are enrolled on their plan as a dependent, you may be able to opt out of coverage by the public sector employer. It's important to review all options and what each employer allows or doesn't. The Public Sector also does not contribute to the Harrison Pre-fund plan so reach out to Benesys if you have questions.

4. What about my Hall Flex Plan?

Well, your best move is to reach out to Member Services (503-256-4848) if you are moving to a Public Sector job and ask what you should do. There are timelines and issues that may arise if you don't do this, and no one wants you to lose monies in the Flex Accounts.

5. What about holidays?

Public Sector generally follows the Federal Holidays off and they are paid. Generally: New Year's, Martin Luther King Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, 4th of July (Independence Day), Labor Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day. There may be additional days if declared by the Federal or State government.

6. What is vacation like?

Public Sector employers have varied paid vacation packages. In general, they start with two weeks. Some employers also offer additional paid benefits like personal leave time. If you are interested in knowing more, it would be best to read the contract.

7. I can take unpaid time off, though?

This is a rare occurrence for Public Sector. There are exceptions, however, it is generally frowned upon.

8. I journeyed out within the last five years. Am I good to apply for Public Sector positions?

The quick answer is no. If you have journeyed out within the last five years, you have a training center contract you signed with an obligation to work in construction after you completed your training. It's not worth the risk having to pay back your training because you didn't meet your contractual obligation. Please reach out to the Training Center for further information.