

Seattle will pay \$11.5 million to settle 'permatemp' case

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The city of Seattle has agreed to pay \$11.5 million to settle claims that it improperly denied benefits to about 2,000 workers it classified as "temporary" between 1996 and 2005.

The city also said that from now on it will limit temporary assignments to less than one year, unless the position involves less than half-time employment.

Four "permatemp" city workers brought the class-action lawsuit in 2002. Two had worked full time for city-owned golf courses for four years without being granted the benefits of regular city workers. One worked at Seattle Public Utilities and the other as a job counselor.

King County Superior Court Judge Douglas McBroom gave preliminary approval to the settlement Monday. He is scheduled to hold a hearing on final approval in March.

The case was the second brought against the city alleging abuse of temporary workers. In 1989, the city agreed to pay \$5 million to settle claims it had improperly denied benefits.

After the current case was filed, the city created more than 220 new regular positions to accomplish work previously performed by temps.

The Mayor's Office said it was not immediately clear if the settlement would be covered by insurance.

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