

Community Work Incentives Coordinator (CWIC) Responsibilities and Competencies

NOTE: The following information has been taken directly from Cooperative Agreements for Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Projects; Program Announcement No.SSA-OESP-06-1 which was published in the Federal Register Vol. 71, No. 94, Tuesday, May 16, 2006.

1. CWIC Responsibilities

The WIPA cooperative agreement awardees shall select individuals who will act as Community Work Incentives Coordinators (CWICs). The CWICs will provide work incentives planning and assistance directly to beneficiaries with disabilities to assist them in their employment efforts. CWICs will also conduct outreach efforts in collaboration with SSA's Program Manager for Recruitment and Outreach (PMRO) contractor to beneficiaries with disabilities (and their families) who are potentially eligible to participate in Federal or State work incentives programs.

As part of work incentives planning and assistance, CWICs will also screen and refer beneficiaries with disabilities to the appropriate Employment Networks (ENs) based on the beneficiary's expressed needs and types of impairments. CWICs are also required to work in cooperation with SSA's Area Work Incentives Coordinators (AWICs), Federal, State, local and private agencies and other nonprofit organizations that serve beneficiaries with disabilities seeking employment.

CWICs will also provide general information on the adequacy of health benefits coverage that may be offered by an employer of a beneficiary with a disability; the extent to which other health benefits coverage may be available to that beneficiary in coordination with Medicare and/or Medicaid; and the availability of protection and advocacy services for beneficiaries with disabilities and how to access such services.

2. Competencies and Credentialing

Applicants must ensure that CWICs have the skills required to competently provide work incentives planning and assistance services that assist beneficiaries in their employment efforts. WIPA awardees will be required to provide documentation to SSA that CWIC personnel meet the requirements below. SSA will use this documentation to credential CWIC personnel before they may begin providing beneficiary services.

SSA prefers that CWICs have attained a bachelor's degree in a relevant field, or possess relevant experience. CWICs may possess a combination of education and experience if the experience provides the knowledge, skills and abilities required to successfully perform the duties of the position as shown below. Former beneficiaries may substitute up to two years of full-time work for the education requirement if they can demonstrate that they used SSA work incentives to successfully gain employment.

All CWICs must demonstrate successful completion of required SSA sponsored work incentives training or shall complete said training within 3 months of hire.

CWICs should bring the following knowledge, skills, and abilities to the position:

- Basic math skills with an emphasis on problem solving;
- Deductive ability with analytical thinking and creative problem solving skills;
- Demonstrate competent interviewing and partnering skills;
- Demonstrated computer proficiency;
- Demonstrated ability at linking individual's with disabilities with employment opportunities;
- Ability to interpret Federal, State, and local laws, regulations, and administrative code about public benefits;
- Communication skills (written and verbal);
- Knowledge of terminology used to describe certain disabilities and awareness of cultural and political issues pertaining to various populations and to various disabilities; and
- Basic computer skills.

CWICs are required to be proficient in the following knowledge, skills, and abilities:

- Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) disability programs;
- Knowledge of SSA and other Federal, State and local work incentives programs;
- Knowledge of all public benefits programs, basic operations and interrelationships among the programs, specifically in terms of their impact upon employment;
- Translating technical information for lay individuals;
- Accessing information in a variety of ways (including the ability to be able to recognize when additional information is needed);
- How to access specific Employment Network (EN) information;
- Interpersonal skills (e.g., recognize and help people manage anger and conflict, enjoy working with individuals);
- Counseling and evaluation-related skills (ability to listen, evaluate alternatives, advise on potential course of action);
- Knowledge of SSA field office structure and how to work with various SSA work incentives specialists e.g., Area Work Incentives Coordinators (AWICs), Plan to Achieve Self Support (PASS) Specialists, Work Incentives Liaisons (WILs); and
- Knowledge of ethics (e.g., confidentiality, conflict of interest);
- Ability to manage beneficiary case files and information electronically.

The applicant must clearly explain how it will ensure all individuals hired as CWICs will possess or acquire the relevant knowledge, skills and abilities. SSA may contract with separate entities to provide technical assistance and training to awardees on an ongoing basis about SSA's programs and work incentives, Medicare and Medicaid, and other Federal work incentives programs.