

5-18-18

To: Employment First stakeholders

From: Acacia McGuire Anderson, Statewide Employment First Coordinator

Re: [Employment First](#): Benefits Counseling in the Waiver

(Please forward to your local partners & stakeholders)

[Like Us](#) on Facebook!

Employment First and the [Work Incentives Network](#) (WIN) have been working together for several years to increase the availability of benefits counseling services to Oregonians with disabilities, especially those who are at the very beginning of their employment path.

Employment First is requesting that benefits planning services be included in the Home and Community Based Services waiver as part of Employment Path services that will hopefully take effect July 1, 2018.

WIN is offering to train 10-15 people to become certified benefits planners who will then be able to provide benefits planning through Employment Path Community services (contingent on benefits planning being approved in the waiver). Hopefully, this training will become an annual, if not bi-annual, event in the future.

The initial week-long training is in-person, classroom-style, and will be July 23-27 at the DHS Training Facility, 126 E. Lincoln St., Woodburn. Additional study and training will take place over the next month with Provisional Certification and the ability to begin providing services scheduled for Aug. 30, 2018.

The training offered by WIN is free, but agencies will be responsible for their own travel costs. This is an intensive training because benefits counseling is a complicated service that impacts a person's finances and must be administered with great care. If providers are not able to attend the WIN training, Oregon also recognizes the benefits counseling certifications offered by [Virginia Commonwealth University](#) and [Cornell University](#).

Please join us for a conference call on **Friday, June 8 from 1-2 p.m.** to discuss the details of this opportunity and answer any questions that you might have. The phone number is: 877-411-9748; Access Code: 5268628.

The call will give background information on benefits counseling, Medicaid billing, time commitment, and what is expected of providers who sign up.

~ Acacia