

June 21, 2019

To: Employment First stakeholders

From: Acacia McGuire Anderson, Statewide Employment First Coordinator

Re: Employment First: Benefits Counseling Training Announced

(Please forward to your local partners & stakeholders)

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The [Work Incentives Network](#) (WIN) is again offering to train up to 16 people to become certified benefits planners who will then be able to provide benefits planning as an Employment Path Community service. This is the second year that WIN has offered this training to developmental disability service providers.

The initial week-long training is in-person, classroom-style, and will be Sept. 30-Oct. 4, 2019 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 Nov. 18, 2019.

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 **Wednesday, July 10 from 2 to 3 p.m.** to discuss the details of this opportunity. The Skype meeting details are: [Join Skype Meeting](#) or join by phone: 503-934-1400; 67524566#

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

Registration for the training will open in July. Email win.refer@dhsola.state.or.us to be notified when registration opens.

Benefits counseling is in the Home and Community Based Services waiver as part of Employment Path Community services. There are two levels of ODDS-authorized benefits counseling. Level One can be authorized up to three hours. It is basic information and referral. Level Two can be authorized up to 12 hours and

results in a benefits counseling report. This is typically for someone who just started working and has hours and wages and needs information on how their benefits may be impacted.

More information about benefits counseling, including a worker guide, a flow chart, and the approved list of current benefits counselors, is available on the Employment First I/DD policy page:

<https://www.oregon.gov/DHS/EMPLOYMENT/EMPLOYMENT-FIRST/Pages/policy.aspx>

~ Acacia