Work Incentives Information Network (WIIN) Application

About New York Makes Work Pay

New York Makes Work Pay is a statewide initiative intended to dramatically improve the rate of employment among people with disabilities. It is funded by the Center for Medicaid Services for calendar years 2009 and 2010. The initiative’s nine goals target sustainable, comprehensive policy and practice solutions to address the state’s estimated 70% unemployment rate among working-age people with disabilities. It will positively impact individuals, employers, service providers, communities, funders and policy-makers by building skills, awareness, partnerships and resources to achieve improved and lasting workforce participation and self-sufficiency outcomes.

One of the primary objectives of the initiative is to increase the availability of benefits and work incentives planning and assistance services through development of a statewide Work Incentives Information Network. This initiative will...

- Develop a minimum of 100 new credentialed benefits and work incentives practitioners a year providing the comprehensive array of services and supports for wage based and self-employment;
- Equip a cadre of 500 existing employment supports and rehabilitation practitioners each year throughout NYS to be able to provide short-term assistance and information and referral to credentialed practitioners;
- Provide education and awareness to the public, including people with disabilities and their families regarding disability programs and available work incentives;
- Build on existing work incentives planning sponsored by the Social Security Administration;
- Align benefits and work incentives planning and assistance services across systems;
- Develop a minimum set of standards and competencies for quality assurance;
- Support asset development and accumulation for people with disabilities; and,
- Promote linking beneficiaries of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) to other critical employment supports to make work pay.

New York Makes Work Pay is a Comprehensive Employment System Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (#1QA-CMS030318) from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to the Office of Mental Health on behalf of New York State. It is a joint effort of the Burton Blatt Institute at Syracuse University and the Employment and Disability Institute at Cornell University with the collaborative support of the Employment Committee of the New York State Most Integrated Setting Coordinating Council to develop pathways and remove obstacles to employment for New Yorkers with disabilities.

Partnering Organizations
New York State Office of Mental Health
Burton Blatt Institute
Employment and Disability Institute

Contact Us
Employment and Disability Institute
201 Dolgen Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853
Voice: 607.255.7727
TTY: 607.255.2891
Web: www.NYMakesWorkPay.org
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Introducing the New York State Work Incentives Information Network (WIIN)

The Work Incentives Information Network (WIIN) is an approach to structuring the array of benefits and work incentives planning and assistance services that exist and are available throughout New York State. This tiering of expertise and skill accomplishes three primary purposes: 1) Assists practitioners in understanding the scope of services and supports they provide to New Yorkers with disabilities and where they plug into the hierarchy of services; 2) Catalogues those services to provide a comprehensive directory for consumers of where services can be obtained; and, 3) Ensures that practitioners at each level are provided with access to ongoing technical assistance and training customized to meet their needs.

This level of service delivery is provided by credentialed benefits and work incentives practitioners who have completed a rigorous, nationally-recognized course of study inclusive of a minimum of 20 hours of practicum experience with an examination of proficiency/competency (including SSA-sponsored WIPA program personnel). Practitioners at this level provide the comprehensive array of benefits and work incentives services and job support to beneficiaries making choices about work aligned with financial literacy and asset accumulation. Typically they spend more than 35% of their effort delivering these services.

Practitioners at this level provide information and referral as well short-term, basic work incentives planning to beneficiaries considering wage based or self-employment. Information concerning work incentives, impact of earnings on benefits, financial literacy and asset accumulation and advocacy and support with various state/federal agencies may be provided. Practitioners will have completed a minimum of two days of training on disability benefits and work incentives, use ongoing toll-free technical support to assist them in delivering short term services and update their skills through annual refresher training. Typically they will spend approximately 16-35% of their time delivering these services.

Level III practitioners provide general information and referral on work incentives issues as part of their job (typically less than 15% of their time). They are encouraged to attend distance learning events on work incentive issues, financial literacy and asset accumulation and become acquainted with new information important to return to work efforts—like the Medicaid Buy-In, Plan for Achieving Self-Support and other incentives. Practitioners will assist beneficiaries in navigating return to work and make active referrals to Level I and II practitioners when that level of support is needed.
The following training and technical assistance services and supports are available statewide through the New York Makes Work Pay Initiative.

**Certificate Program in Benefits and Work incentives Planning and Assistance**

The core competency-based certificate program requires participation in a five-day on-site training event plus successful completion of a rigorous field assignment/evaluation. The program is targeted for Level I practitioners with time dedicated to comprehensive service delivery. The MIG will be developing 100 new practitioners at this level each year. Past BPA&O and current WIPA personnel are grandfathered in based on past credentialing.

**Work Incentive Information Network Seminars**

Work Incentive Information Network Seminars will allow Level II practitioners to become fully acquainted with the Social Security Administration’s disability programs and the related work incentives. These two day sessions will be offered regionally throughout NYS and provide a comprehensive introduction and review of all components needed to fulfill WIIN obligations.

**Supplemental Distance Learning Training**

Throughout the year, supplemental distance learning events will be offered to all WIIN practitioners, allowing practitioners to remain current and become acquainted with new and various topics important to a return to work effort from the comfort of their office or home. The Medicaid Buy-In for Working People with Disabilities and PASS are examples of topics to be offered.

**Toll-Free Technical Assistance Hotline: 1-888-224-3272**

A toll free technical assistance line is currently available to all WIIN practitioners who may have questions when working with beneficiaries who are interested in work. Technical assistance personnel will be available at all times during the work week.

**Organizational Development Support and Online Organizational Assessment**

Organizations providing the comprehensive array of benefits and work incentives planning and assistance services and supports will have access to an online organizational assessment tool to assess the quality and fidelity of services and supports offered—leading to development of a strategic work plan to enhance services.

**WIIN Expectations, Eligibility, Policy & Procedures**

As described above, practitioners at each level of the network have specific continuing education requirements to maintain their skills and expertise. These training programs are offered at no charge. Individuals interested in joining the WIIN must complete the required application (see next section). In addition, Level I and II registrants must provide a letter of commitment from your organization as specified. Individuals selected for participation will be based on meeting the specific criteria detailed in the application. The application process will ensure statewide coverage as well as cross-systems availability.
Work Incentives Information Network Application

Individuals desiring to participate as a member of the WIIN must complete the following application. Existing BPA&O and WIPA personnel with current credential will be grandfathered in and not required to re-take the certificate program. However, they must still complete the application requirements to be registered officially as a WIIN member and provide verification of past certification. An informational webinar, explaining the WIIN can be obtained by emailing Katie Steigerwalt at kms342@cornell.edu.

Name: ______________________________________________  Title: ______________________________________________

Organization: ___________________________________________________________________________________

Address: _______________________________________________________________________________________

Phone: ____________________  Fax: ____________________  Email: __________________________________

☐ Check here if you are a partner in a Literacy Zone

1. Please check which level you are applying for:
   ___ Level One / Credentialed Work Incentive Practitioner (36-100% FTE)
   ___ Level Two / Short-Term Work Incentive Practitioner (16-35% FTE)
   ___ Level Three / General Information and Referral Practitioner (< 15%)

2. What type of service delivery system do you predominantly work in (check all that apply):
   ___ Workforce Development / DOL  ___ VESID / CBVH
   ___ Alcoholism/Substance Abuse Services  ___ Mental Health Services
   ___ Veterans Services  ___ Social Services / Dept of Health
   ___ Mental Retardation / Developmental Disabilities
   ___ Literacy Zone
   ___ Other (Please indicate): _________________________________

3. What percentage of your job will you spend providing benefits and work incentives planning and assistance services?
   ___ < 15%  ___ 16-24%  ___ 25-35%  ___ 36-50%  ___ 51-75%  ___ 76-100%

4. What disability population do you work predominantly with? (check all that apply)
   ___ Mental Health  ___ Alcoholism and Substance Abuse
   ___ Cognitive and Intellectual  ___ Blind
   ___ Deaf / Hard of Hearing  ___ Physical Impairments
   ___ Multiple / Co-occurring  ___ Neurologic
   ___ Other: (Please indicate) _________________________________

5. How many individuals with disabilities per year do you anticipate providing benefits and work incentives planning services and supports to? Base your response on how you identified yourself and level of service you will provide in question one.
   ___ < 24  ___ 25 – 50  ___ 51 – 75  ___ 76 – 100  ___ 101-150  ___ > 150

6. Please select the levels and types of work incentive planning and assistance services and support you plan on providing to your customer base.
   ___ Peer support  ___ Information and referral
   ___ Short-term problem solving  ___ Return to work/self-employment services
____ Benefits and work incentives analysis and planning
____ Long-term benefits and work incentives assistance and support
____ Financial literacy and asset accumulation
____ Other: ___________________________________

7. For Level I and II participants, are you willing to complete a 10-15 item survey quarterly to assist us in understanding the impact you have had as a member of the WIIN? The survey will require you to track the number of constituents you have served, level of service provided, disability type, age, employment outcome, and other demographic variables. Members of the WIIN will be provided a database to track required information.
   ____ Yes  ____ No

A final requirement for application is a letter of commitment from your organization/agency (or you as an independent agent) for participation in the WIIN. At a minimum the letter should include the following:
• Name of person practitioner applying and level of membership.
• Willingness to commit the resources (e.g. time, staff development, equipment, office space, etc) needed for the practitioner to provide services and supports as specified by their “level” of interest. This should include the approximate percentage of time the individual will dedicate to this effort.
• Willingness to participate in the quarterly surveying process. (Level I & II only)

To match the commitment of individual organizations and practitioners applying for membership in the WIIN, the New York Makes Work Pay Initiative will provide access to ongoing training, technical assistance and toll-free support as long as members meet the obligation of their commitment. Members not meeting performance criteria, ethical standards and code of conduct, or not fulfilling their agreed upon commitments will be removed from the WIIN.

For more information, please contact:
  Ray Cebula, Director of Training and Technical Assistance
  Employment and Disability Institute
  ILR School, Cornell University, Dolgen Hall
  Ithaca, New York 14853-3901
  617.312.3261 (voice)
  rac79@cornell.edu (e-mail)

Applications can be mailed, faxed or emailed. Please forward your completed application and letter of commitment to:
  Katie Steigerwalt, Project Assistant
  Employment and Disability Institute
  ILR School, Cornell University, Dolgen Hall
  Ithaca, New York 14853-3901
  607.255.3921 (voice)
  607.255.2763 (fax)
  kms342@cornell.edu (e-mail)

Applications for participating in 2010 programming will be received until classes are full. Please indicate on the following page, which program you wish to attend if accepted.
Indicate which program you wish to attend when accepted into the WIIN Network.

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<tr>
<th>Level I Programming</th>
<th>Level II Programming</th>
<th>Level III Programming</th>
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<tr>
<td>July 19-23, 2010</td>
<td></td>
<td>MBI Webinar Series: (2nd Tuesday each Month)</td>
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<td>Buffalo, NY</td>
<td>May 5-6, 2010</td>
<td>MBI Course 1.1: April 13, 2010: 10AM-11:30AM ET Overview of the Medicaid Buy-In for Working People with Disabilities (MBI-WPD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 4-8, 2010</td>
<td>June 8-9, 2010</td>
<td>MBI Course 1.2: May 11, 2010: 10AM-11:30AM ET Why Medicaid Is Important and Why the MBI-WPD Is Important</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ithaca, NY</td>
<td>June 28-29, 2010</td>
<td>MBI Course 1.3: June 8, 2010: 10AM-11:30AM ET The Ins and Outs of the Medically Needy Program and Its Relation to the MBI-WPD Program</td>
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<td>September 23-24, 2010</td>
<td>MBI Course 1.4: July 13, 2010: 10AM-11:30AM ET 1619b: The Best Kept Secret</td>
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<td>October 12-13, 2010</td>
<td>MBI Course 1.5: August 10, 2010 10AM-11:30AM ET The Plan For Achieving Self Support (PASS) and Medicaid</td>
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<td>MBI Course 1.6: Sept. 14, 2010 10AM-11:30AM ET The Medicaid Buy-in Application Process</td>
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<td>PASS Webinar Series: (3rd Monday each Month)</td>
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<td>PASS Course 1.1: April 19, 2010 10AM-11:30AM ET Overview of the Plan for Achieving Self Support</td>
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<td>PASS Course 1.2: May 17, 2010 10AM-11:30AM ET How the PASS Works</td>
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<td>PASS Course 1.3: June 21, 2010 10AM-11:30AM ET Candidates for a PASS and How to Exclude and Use Income and Resources</td>
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<td>PASS Course 1.4: July 19, 2010 10AM-11:30AM ET The Criteria for PASS Approval</td>
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<td>PASS Course 1.5: Aug. 16, 2010 10AM-11:30AM ET So My PASS Has Been Approved, Now What</td>
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<td>PASS Course 1.6: Sept. 20, 2010 10AM-11:30AM ET How Will the PASS Affect Other Benefits &amp; How Will Work Affect the PASS</td>
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Once selected for participation in the WIIN, members will be provided an internet link to register for coursework related to their level and/or interest.
Contact Information
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