

Self Determination Conference Employment Toolbox

Benefits Counseling

What is benefits counseling?

Benefits Counseling, sometimes called Work Incentives Benefits Counseling, is a service for people who get Social Security Disability Benefits (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Benefits (SSI). A Benefits Counselor teaches people about their benefits and how they can make money at a job and keep the benefits that are most important. Every person with a disability should have Work Incentives Benefits Counseling as part of their employment plan.

Why is Benefits Counseling Important?

It is important for you to know what benefits you get and how to manage them when you are working. There are special rules that help people maximize the amount of money they can make every month. These special rules are called Work Incentives. Work Incentives are very good programs for you to take advantage of but the government makes them complex. Benefits counselors can help you understand and use these special programs.

How is Work Incentives Benefits Counseling Funded?

Work Incentives Benefits counseling is funded through DVR (the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Family Care and IRIS, or the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Program.

How do I find a Benefits Specialist?

There are three ways you might be able to connect to a Benefits Specialist:

- 1) Ask your DVR counselor to put Benefits Counseling on your Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) with DVR
- 2) Ask your IRIS Consultant or Family Care Case Manager to connect you to a Work Incentives Benefits Specialist
- 3) Call the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Program at 1-877-826-1752 (toll-free)

Benefits Counseling Worksheet Activity:

My job earnings goals are:

The questions and concerns I have about earning money and my benefits are:

Who I can ask to connect me to benefits counseling:

My next step is: