



Additional Opportunity for Certification Program for Cornell University's Work Incentives Practitioner Credential

ODP Announcement 22-078

AUDIENCE:

Providers or prospective providers of Benefits Counseling funded through the Consolidated, Community Living, and Person/Family Directed Support (P/FDS) Waivers or base funding.

PURPOSE:

To announce a second opportunity for providers to have staff person(s) participate in a virtual certification program with the goal of receiving a Work Incentives Practitioner credential.

DISCUSSION:

Pennsylvania is an Employment First state where competitive integrated employment is the *first consideration* and *preferred outcome* for people with disabilities. The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) believes that all people with an intellectual disability or autism must be encouraged and supported to pursue their goals for an *Everyday Life*, which may include working in competitive integrated employment.

Benefits Counseling services can be an integral part of the development of employment goals for individuals with disabilities and their families. People who depend on continued access to medical care and long term supports and services often fear that earning too much income will result in losing eligibility for publicly funded benefits and services. ODP is committed to supporting individuals to access comprehensive Benefits

Counseling services that provide information on the full array of work incentives available to individuals as they gain and maintain employment.

The Work Incentives Practitioner credential is accepted by ODP to provide the Benefits Counseling service funded by the Consolidated, Community Living, or P/FDS Waivers and base funding. To build capacity to provide Benefits Counseling, ODP has contracted with Cornell University to deliver the Work Incentives Practitioner certification program to Pennsylvania providers. In March 2022, ODP announced that it would cover the cost of the certification program and credential for 25 people. **ODP is pleased to announce that it will cover the cost of the certification program and credential for an additional 25 people (up to two staff persons per provider).** Providers will be selected using a competitive application process.

THE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM AND CREDENTIAL

The Work Incentives Practitioner certification program will be held virtually. This intensive certification program requires participation in the following:

- Five full-day sessions held once a week over a period of five consecutive weeks;
- Coursework between sessions;
- A 1½ hour review session;
- An online examination; and
- The completion of a case study that will be reviewed by Cornell University.

Successful completion of all steps above will result in a Work Incentives Practitioner credential.

The Work Incentives Practitioner credential is issued for a five-year period during which 60 hours of continuing education units (CEUs) must be completed.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The certification program will be limited to 25 persons. Providers may choose up to two staff persons for which they are applying. ODP expects that persons selected for this opportunity are committed to attending, actively participating, and completing all required parts of the program.

Providers that previously applied for the certification program and were not selected must resubmit an application if they wish to be considered for this opportunity.

Providers that were selected and have staff persons that are actively completing the certification program may apply to send different staff persons for this additional opportunity. When reviewing applications, ODP will consider whether a provider has a staff person(s) who is already participating in the certification program.

To be eligible, providers must already be enrolled with ODP to provide one of the following:

- Supported Employment,
- Advanced Supported Employment,
- Benefits Counseling,
- Small Group Employment, or
- prevocational services in Community Participation Support.

Please complete an application (attached to this announcement). This application will help us to get to know your organization and to measure your interest and commitment in having a staff person(s) receive the Work Incentives Practitioner credential.

Applications must be submitted by email to Laura Cipriani at lcipriani@pa.gov no later than **Friday, July 22, 2022**.

ODP will notify each provider no later than Friday, August 5, 2022, whether they have been selected. Notifications will be sent via email to the email address by which the application was submitted.

DATES

Virtual Class Sessions (all times are 8:00am to 4:30pm):

- ☞ Friday, September 16, 2022
- ☞ Friday, September 23, 2022
- ☞ Friday, September 30, 2022
- ☞ Friday, October 7, 2022
- ☞ Friday, October 14, 2022

Virtual Review Session:

Friday, October 21, 2022; 1:00pm-2:30pm

Online Examination:

24-hour access beginning October 31, 2022 through November 4, 2022

Case Study Period:

Begins November 14, 2022 and runs for 30 days. Exercises can be submitted at any time during the 30-day period. It is expected that the case study will take between 10-15 hours to complete.

If you have any questions, please contact Gary Smith at smiga@pa.gov.

ATTACHMENT

- Work Incentive Practitioner Certification Program Application