

Broadening Provider Qualifications for the Benefits Counseling Service

ODP Announcement 20-012

AUDIENCE:

Individuals and families, Administrative Entities, Providers in the Consolidated, Community Living, and Person/Family Directed Support (P/FDS) waivers, Supports Coordination Organizations and all other interested parties.

PURPOSE:

To disseminate information regarding the Office of Developmental Programs' (ODP) change to the minimum qualification requirements to provide Benefits Counseling in the Consolidated, Community Living, and P/FDS waivers.

DISCUSSION:

Benefits Counseling services are an important part of career planning for individuals with disabilities and their families. 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.

In order to build provider capacity statewide, ODP is broadening the provider qualifications of the Benefits Counseling service. As of the date of this communication, ODP will accept the **Work Incentive Practitioner** credential for staff (direct, contracted, or in a consulting capacity) who will work directly with the participant to provide Benefits Counseling. The Work Incentive Practitioner credential is obtained by completing the Cornell University Work incentives Planning & Utilization for Benefit Practitioners Online Certificate course and satisfying requirements to maintain the credential (sixty hours of continuing education units for training approved by Cornell University within 5 years of obtaining the full credential).

To be determined qualified to render the Benefits Counseling service in accordance with this guidance, providers must submit documentation of each staff person's current Work Incentive Practitioner credentials to their Administrative Entities.

Information about the credentialing course can be found here:

<https://ytionline.org/webinarseries/1>

The acceptance of the Work Incentives Practitioner credentials through Cornell University is in addition to the qualifications described in Appendix C of the currently approved waivers. **ODP will continue to accept the Community Work Incentive Coordinator (CWIC) Certification offered through Virginia Commonwealth University.** Changes to the Provider Qualifications section in the Consolidated, Community Living, and P/FDS waivers will be made during the next amendment.

For questions, please email ra-odpproviderqualif@pa.gov