What are Benefits?

Benefits are government-funded programs provided to people based on characteristics such as disability or financial need. Examples of benefits include:

- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)
- Local/Public assistance benefits e.g. Energy Assistance, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Aid to Needy Disabled (AND), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP/food stamps)
- Housing assistance
- Health insurance (e.g. Medicaid/Medicare)
- Other assistance

What is Benefits Counseling?

Benefits counseling is a service that helps individuals with disabilities and their families understand how employment and other life decisions will impact their benefits.

Benefits counseling provides a clear, personalized plan to educate individuals with disabilities and their families that, in general, you will not immediately lose your cash benefits and health insurance if you work.

Benefits counseling addresses the fears and concerns many individuals and their families have about a reduction in benefits if they start work.

Benefits counseling helps each individual understand:

- What benefits the individual receives and why
- Work incentives available when they go to work
- How earned income impacts cash benefits, public assistance, and health insurance
- Reporting requirements for each benefit and public assistance program
- How to save money and build assets for self-sufficiency (e.g. Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) accounts)

When to Seek a Qualified Benefit Counselor’s Assistance:

- Prior to seeking employment/education
- While conducting a job search
- When working with a Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Counselor
- Upon obtaining employment
- Currently working and if changes occur while working
- Transition-age students and youth (ages 14-24)

ANY TIME employment is part of the conversation!

For the most updated version of this guide, please visit www.employmentfirstcolorado.org/benefits-counseling/
Qualified Resources for Benefits Counseling:

**Ability Connection Colorado (ACCO)**

**Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Program for Colorado (WIPA)**

**Credential:** Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) **Community Work Incentive Coordinator** (CWIC)

**Individuals Served/Criteria for Service:**

- MUST BE a Social Security Administration (SSA) disability beneficiary (SSI/SSDI) age 14-64
- **Priority assigned to individuals served:**
  - Employed, self-employed
  - Individuals preparing to achieve a work goal
  - Transition age students (ages 14-24)

**Service/Product Provided (Individualized and Based on Above Priorities):**

- Services available statewide
- Triage by phone (based on priorities listed above)
- General phone consultation
- Benefit Summary and Analysis (BS&A)
- Long term supports as needed
- Information gathering meeting
- Verification of all benefits
- Assistance to individuals with more complicated benefit scenarios (e.g. multiple benefits such as SSI, SSDI, housing, Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP/food stamps)
- Wage reporting instruction

**Cost:** No charge or Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (Must be eligible DVR client)

**General Inquiries and Ticket To Work Helpline:**

- **Western Slope**
  - David Nelson, CWIC
  - 970-256-2457
  - dnelson@abilityconnectioncolorado.org

- **Southeastern/South Central Region**
  - Julie Taylor, CWIC
  - 719-597-0068 office / 719-250-0686 cell
  - jtaylor@abilityconnectioncolorado.org

- **Denver Metro / Northeast Region**
  - Lisa Linder, CWIC
  - 303-934-0970
  - llinder@abilityconnectionscolorado.org

- **Denver Metro/Northeast Region**
  - Harold Lasso, CWIC
  - 855-228-5393 (toll free)
  - Bi-lingual, Spanish translation available
  - hlasso@abilityconnectioncolorado.org

For the most updated version of this guide, please visit [www.employmentfirstcolorado.org/benefits-counseling/](http://www.employmentfirstcolorado.org/benefits-counseling/)

Last Revision: 09/30/21
Qualified Resources for Benefits Counseling Continued:

**Community Partner Work Incentive Counselor (CPWIC) Service Providers and Credentialed Work Incentives Practitioner (WIP) Service Providers**

Community Partner Work Incentive Counselors (CPWIC) - Virginia Commonwealth University

Credentialed Work Incentive Practitioners (WIP) – Cornell University

**Individuals Served/Criteria for Service** - Varies with each vendor, but generally:
- Ages 14-65 – no priority levels assigned
- Beneficiaries of local public assistance only (do not have to be receiving SSI/SSDI)
- Individuals who are not yet working but are considering returning to work
- Social Security Administration (SSA) disability beneficiaries (SSI/SSDI) ages 14-64

**Service/Product Provided** - Varies with each vendor, but generally:
- Information gathering meeting with beneficiary, family, and/or employment team
- Verification of all benefits (housing, SSI/SSDI, local benefits)
- Benefits Summary and Analysis (BS&A)
- Work Incentive Plan with timeline and action steps
- Assistance to individuals with more complicated benefit scenarios (multiple benefits such as SSI, SSDI, housing, Medicaid, TANF, food stamps, etc.)
- Ongoing relationship with beneficiary established with individualized approach
- Long term supports
- Wage reporting instructions

**Sources for Payment:**
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (Must be eligible); third parties (e.g. Employers); self-pay

**Community Partner Work Incentive Counselors and Work Incentives Practitioners Available:**

- A Circle Works
- Arapahoe/Douglas Works! Workforce Center
- Bayaud Enterprises
- Broomfield Workforce Center
- Center for People with Disabilities (CPWD)
- Center for Independence
- Connections for Independent Living
- Center Toward Self Reliance
- Easterseals Colorado
- Integrated Supports Colorado, Inc.
- JMD Group Holdings
- Parker Personal Care Homes
- Pikes Peak Workforce Center
- Southwest Center for Independence
- The Independence Center
- Training Employment Services, Inc.

For the most updated version of this guide, please visit [www.employmentfirstcolorado.org/benefits-counseling/](http://www.employmentfirstcolorado.org/benefits-counseling/)

Last Revision: 09/30/21
Community Partner Work Incentive Counselor (CPWIC) and Credentialed Work Incentive Practitioner (WIP) Service Providers (continued)

Despite areas of coverage listed, many providers currently offering statewide virtual services.

A Circle Works

NW Colorado / Western Slope
Tom Scilacci, WIP
970-846-5725
acircleworks@gmail.com

Arapahoe/Douglas Works! Workforce Center

Arapahoe / Douglas Counties / Denver Metro Virtual
Matt Kilian, WIP
303-636-1261
mkilian@arapahoegov.com

(Services available through Ticket to Work only)

Bayaud Enterprises

Denver Metro Region / Statewide Virtual / Teleconference
MariSol Little, CPWIC
303-830-6885 ext. 207
Marisol.little@bayaudenterprises.org

Jessmine Anderson, CPWIC
303-830-6885 ext. 210
Jessmine.anderson@bayaudenterprises.org

Broomfield Workforce Center

City and County of Broomfield
Rebecca Champion, WIP
303-464-5822
rchampion@broomfield.org

(Services available through Ticket to Work and Workforce Center Services only)

Center for People with Disabilities (CPWD)

North Denver Metro / Boulder County / Fort Collins Region / Statewide Video / Teleconference
American Sign Language (non-certified) available

Jan Dabroski, CPWIC
Main Email: benefits@cpwd.org
Main Phone: 303-790-1390
Video: 720-459-5341
Community Partner Work Incentive Counselor (CPWIC) and Credentialed Work Incentive Practitioner (WIP) Service Providers (continued)

Despite areas of coverage listed, many providers currently offering statewide virtual services.

Center for Independence

Grand Junction / Western Slope
Tracy Morton, CPWIC
970-241-0315 ext. 14
tmorton@cfgj.org

Easterseals Colorado

Denver Metro / Statewide Video / Teleconference
Pablo Sandoval, CPWIC
720-749-8399
1-510-338-9438 video
psandoval@eastersealscolorado.org

HighPointe Services

Centennial / Fort Collins / Statewide Video / Teleconference
Luke Bainer, CPWIC
720-295-4304 Phone
luke@highpointecenters.org

Integrating Supports Colorado, Inc.

In Person and Statewide Virtual / Video / Teleconference
Shantelle Rockman, CPWIC
Norman Karp, CPWIC
719-313-0626
719-313-0626 ext. 2 office
518-354-0198 cell
srockman@integratingsupports.com
nkarp@integratingsupports.com

JMD Group Holdings

Denver Metro Region / Statewide Virtual / Teleconference
American Sign Language available
Jonathan M. Davis, CPWIC
202-601-9091 (V/Videophone)
davis@jmdavisgroup.com
Community Partner Work Incentive Counselor (CPWIC) and Credentialed Work Incentive Practitioner (WIP) Service Providers (continued)

Despite areas of coverage listed, many providers currently offering statewide virtual services.

My Advanced Benefits

Statewide Virtual / Teleconference
American Sign Language (non-certified) available
Janelle Barto, CPWIC
Main Phone: 303-578-8423  Video Relay: 928-683-5511
https://myadvancedbenefits.org/contact.html  janelle@myadvancedbenefits.org

Parker Personal Care Homes

Denver Metro / Boulder / Longmont / Statewide Video / Teleconference
Heather McCalla, CPWIC
720-965-4446 Cell Phone  303-424-6078 ext. 123 office
hmccalla@parkerpch.com

Pikes Peak Workforce Center

El Paso / Teller / Statewide Virtual / Teleconference
Julie Palacios, WIP, CPWIC  (Services available through Workforce Center Services only)
719-338-5509
juliepalacios@elpaso co.com

Southwest Center for Independence

Archuleta / Dolores / La Plata / Montezuma / San Juan Counties / Statewide Virtual
Dan Rieber, CPWIC
970-903-1832
dan@swilc.org

The Independence Center

El Paso / Park / Teller / Lincoln / Cheyenne / Kit Carson Counties
Suzi Arnold, CPWIC
719-471-8181
sarnold@theindependencecenter.org

Training Employment Solutions, Inc.

Denver Metro / Boulder / Longmont / Statewide Video / Teleconference
Steve Allen, WIP  Joseph Wilson, WIP
720-757-8685  720-751-8093
steven.allen@trainingemploymentsolutions.com  joseph.wilson@trainingemploymentsolutions.com

For the most updated version of this guide, please visit www.employmentfirstcolorado.org/benefits-counseling/
For More Information on Accessing Benefits Counseling Services in Colorado:

Melanie Honsbruch, CPWIC
Benefits Counseling Curriculum Developer and Trainer
Colorado Office of Employment First
303-929-2129
Melanie.honsbruch@state.co.us

Meghan Greene
Competitive Integrated Employment Unit Manager
Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Meghan.greene@state.co.us

Colorado Association of People Supporting Employment First (CO APSE)
General Email Inquiries: coloradoapse@gmail.com

For the most updated version of this guide, please visit www.employmentfirstcolorado.org/benefits-counseling/