



Consumer Council System of Maine
A Voice for Consumers of Mental Health Services

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CCSM Issues Development Committee Concept Draft 1/12/2022

What are CWICs and why they are so important for Maine's Mental Health Community

Currently in Maine the amazing team of benefit counselors consist of only 6 employees to cover the needs of the entire State of Maine. We want to increase these positions so that we can support those individuals that want to return to work and who face real or perceived barriers to employment.

Background on This Program:

Work Incentives are special rules that apply when a Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI, DWB, CDB) beneficiary or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipient returns to work. There are many different types of work incentives that may protect your eligibility for benefits including MaineCare or Medicare, and that may make you eligible for funding to advance your career. The rules are different depending on whether you receive SSI or Social Security for disability. If you receive both benefits, both sets of rules apply.

Benefits Counseling Services has Community Work Incentives Coordinators (CWICs) that help Maine people understand how working affects their Social Security disability and other public benefits. This service is provided at no cost to Maine residents 14 or older who receive Social Security disability benefits, are considering or currently working, and have questions about how working impacts benefits. This service is made possible through funding from the Maine Department of Labor's Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, and the Social Security Administration.

<https://www.mainehealth.org/Maine-Medical-Center/Community/Vocational-Services/Benefits-Counseling>

We would like to hear from you:

To submit feedback, ideas or a personal story relating to this issue statement, please send to the CCSM either by mail at: 219 Capitol St. Suite 7 Augusta, ME 04330 or email at vmccarty@maineccsm.org

DEADLINE TO RESPOND: February 14, 2022

Thank you.