



## **CCSM Issues Development Subcommittee Final Board Approved 10/16/2025**

### **A Need for Greater Employment Service Coordination Issue Statement**

#### **The Issue:**

With upcoming changes in the federal work requirements, peers will need additional support(s) and guidance with returning to work or expanding work hours. Currently, there are state organizations and community partner organizations working on employment services simultaneously. These various programs operating separately create barriers to access for peers in need of services.

#### **Recommendations:**

- **Community Work Incentive Coordinators (CWICs)**
  - Currently there are 6 CWICs available statewide, which will not meet the increased need we anticipate for successful transition to employment.
- **Collaboration among various employment services organizations**
  - Historically, OBH convened regularly scheduled meetings with mental health employment stakeholders. These meetings were an effective tool in discussing emerging issues that impacted employment for our peers. We encourage DHHS/OBH to reinstate these meetings to organize entities to work together effectively.
- **Employment Advocacy**
  - We recommend an increase in funding to staff more Employment Advocates at



Disability Rights Maine. DRM's vocational advocates—funded through the Client Assistance Program—are uniquely positioned as independent, rights-based navigators. Vocational rehabilitation services are often difficult to navigate, and Employment Advocates can assist peers in their journey to finding employment.

- **Education/training for providers**

- Recognizing the high amount of turnover in the behavioral health provider community, it would be important for them to receive education and training regarding employment services across the state. This could occur through various pathways such as increased formal training, standing item on staff meeting agendas, and online training to create a service culture that includes career aptitude.

- **Outreach Campaign**

- Acknowledging the significant changes that will impact a large amount of the peer community, we recommend disseminating information about upcoming changes well in advance of their implementation. This will allow people to plan accordingly before changes take effect.

- **DHHS and General Assistance**

- Considering these work requirement changes, there will likely be an increase in General Assistance utilization. It will be imperative that DHHS and General



Assistance programs collaborate in advance of this new initiative so both sides are synchronized in service requirements.

### **Expected Outcomes:**

If the above recommendations within the system are implemented, peers will experience more employment opportunities, more education about employment resources, and feel more confident about entering the workforce.

**To submit feedback, ideas, or a personal story relating to this issue statement, please send it to the CCSM office either by mail at:**

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### **References:**

[https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/sites/maine.gov.dhhs/files/inline-files/DHHS%20Impact%20Summary\\_Medicaid-SNAP-Marketplace\\_May2025.pdf](https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/sites/maine.gov.dhhs/files/inline-files/DHHS%20Impact%20Summary_Medicaid-SNAP-Marketplace_May2025.pdf)

<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/blog/federal-budget-reconciliation-law-now-effect-impacts-mainecare-snap-covermegov-2025-07-11>

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/1/text> (Section 71119)

<https://www.maine.gov/rehab/cap.shtml>

<https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/26/title26ch41.pdf>