



**Mailing Address:**  
1 Baldwin Street  
Drawer 33  
Montpelier, Vermont 05633-5701

Tel.: (802) 828-2295  
Fax: (802) 828-2483

**STATE OF VERMONT**  
**JOINT FISCAL COMMITTEE**  
1 Baldwin Street  
Montpelier, Vermont 05633-5701

## MEMORANDUM

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**To:** James Reardon, Commissioner of Finance & Management

**From:** Rebecca Buck, Staff Associate *RB*

**Date:** January 11, 2007

**Subject:** Status of Requests

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No Joint Fiscal Committee member has requested that the following items be held for review:

**JFO #2280** – \$175,289 grant from the Social Security Administration to the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. This work incentives planning and assistance grant will be used to continue development and promote employment for recipients of Social Security Disability Income and Supplemental Security Income.

*[JFO received 12/12/06]*

**JFO #2281** – \$100,000 grant from the American Legacy Foundation to the Department of Health. This grant will be used to support a program targeting smoking cessation and prevention services to young adults who are not enrolled in formal education.

*[JFO received 12/12/06]*

**JFO #2282** – \$344,256 grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration to the Department of Health. These grant funds will be used to expand the state's oral health workforce through the recruitment of dental students, encouragement in oral health careers among state high school and college students, and by studying the feasibility of expanding Vermont's dental education capacity.

*[JFO received 12/12/06]*

In accordance with 32 V.S.A. §5, the requisite 30 days having elapsed since these items were submitted to the Joint Fiscal Committee, the Governor's approval may now be considered final. We ask that you inform the Secretary of Administration and your staff of these actions.

cc: Linda Morse  
Cynthia LaWare  
Patrick Flood  
Sharon Moffatt

**From:** "Jim Giffin" <Jim.Giffin@dail.state.vt.us>  
**To:** "Michael Obuchowski" <obie@leg.state.vt.us>  
**Date:** 12/20/2006 3:18 PM  
**Subject:** RE: Questions Regarding JFO #2280, SSA Grant to DAIL

**CC:** "Maria Belliveau" <MBELLIVEAU@leg.state.vt.us>, "Rebecca Buck" <RBUCK@le...  
Dear Representative Obuchowski

You are correct in that I did not clearly answer your question.

DVR will primarily use the WIPA grant to cover existing state employee salaries, fringe and travel costs. These staff that provide benefit and vocational counseling services are distributed in six VR regions covering the entire state.

Jim Giffin  
Financial Services Director  
Department of Disabilities, Aging, & Independent Living  
802-241-2410  
fax 802-241-1363.

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Michael Obuchowski [mailto:obie@leg.state.vt.us]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 20, 2006 9:08 AM  
**To:** Jim Giffin  
**Cc:** Maria Belliveau; Rebecca Buck; Steve Klein  
**Subject:** RE: Questions Regarding JFO #2280, SSA Grant to DAIL

Thank you for all the information, however you do not answer my question about geographic distribution of the services funded by JFO #2280. Thank you.

>>> "Jim Giffin" <Jim.Giffin@dail.state.vt.us> 12/19/2006 4:25 AM >>>  
Dear Representative Obuchowski

The beneficiaries of the grant remain the same regardless of the geographic distribution. The grant will cover a portion of salaries, fringe, and travel costs of Vocational Rehabilitation benefit counselors statewide.

The "WIPA" Grant you are currently reviewing is part of a larger plan to sustain VR benefit counselor's that the Division has developed over the past eight years. I am working on an AA1 to submit to Administration on a new federal grant, SSA youth transition, the Division has just received. I hope the attached description helps clarify the Department's plan to sustain the broad benefit counseling program while managing several grants that allow services to slightly different groups.

I have attached files that format correctly and text below in case you have difficulty opening the word files.

Please let me know if you have other questions.

Jim Giffin  
Financial Services Director  
Department of Disabilities, Aging, & Independent Living 802-241-2410 fax  
802-241-1363.

The attached grants sustain a broad Benefit and Vocational Counseling Program serving younger persons and adults with disabilities in the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation that has operated for the past eight years.

The attached grid attempts to explain the four different funding source VR has used since 1999 and the current plans to sustain this initiative.

The SSDI pilot was originally approved by JFC in 1999 and then extended by a Contract with SSA (JFO 2210 through 3/30/07- eight positions). This contract currently serves 600 disabled adults. VR has submitted a two year extension request and expect to have contract funding through 3/30/09. Only adults who receive Social Security Disability benefits may receive services under this contract.

The RSA youth benefits grant was approved in December 2001 JFC # 2033 with seven positions. This grant provides services to 300 youth per year. VR may serve any youth who receives a public benefit with these funds. This grant will end in September of 2007 and the VR plans to use the new SSA Youth transition grant to cover the staff and provide continued services to youth. The new SSA Youth Transition grant will serve 300 youth a year when fully operational. The new Youth Transition grant will only serve youth who receive Supplemental Security Income benefits. As a result about 30% of the youth served under the RSA grant will not be eligible for services under the new grant.

The recently submitted for approval, JFC #2280, SSA Work Incentive Planning and Assistance Grant covers services to adults and youth. VR will use this small grant to cover staff working in the above projects particularly with the time lag between acceptance of the new grant and the ending of the SSA Youth Transition grant. This grant will serve 100 adults and youth per year This grant can serve youth and adults who receive either SSI or SSDI benefits.

The department also had a grant from DET to provide enhanced transition services for youth in four school districts, JFO # 2139 2/20/04. That grant will end September 2007. This grant serves 75 youth with disabilities a year. Youth served have either an IEP or a 594 plan. This grant provided started four projects in local school districts. Three of the school districts have found the projects helpful and plan to sustain them at the end of the grant.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation will use a combination of the WIPA Grant and the new SSA Youth Transition grant to generally sustain the broad youth and adult benefit counseling services, available statewide, developed over the past eight years. DVR plans to cover the seven positions created 2001 (JFC 2033) and the two positions created in 2004 (JFC 2139) through SFY07 and SFY08 with these funds.

#### Funding for DVR Benefits Counseling

The following is a summary of the current funding picture for the DVR benefits counseling program. The attached table provides you with all the current and prospective funding for the DVR benefits counseling program. I have also included a best case, medium case and worst case scenarios regarding are funding prospects for 2007 and 2008.

Source of Federal Funds Funding Prospect for Continuation	Annual Amount and Term of
SSDI Benefit Offset Pilot Contract ends March 2007	\$550,000 per year SSA has informally shared their intention to continue the pilot beyond March 2007. No formal commitment has been made.
RSA Youth Benefits Counseling Grant formally ends September 2006. Approximately \$320,000 of carry over will be available till September 2007	\$550,000 per year. Grant No prospect of extension
SSA Youth Transition Demonstration Start Date Spring 2007 End Date Spring 2012	Up to \$700,000 per year SSA has selected Vermont as a pilot site and will provide \$250,000 for calendar year 2007. If successful SSA will increase funding to \$700,000 to 2012
SSA Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Start Date September 2006 End Date August 2009	\$75,000 per year Vermont has been approved for a three year funding to 2009.

#### Funding Scenarios

The following assumptions assume that we maintain the current capacity of the benefits counseling project benefits counselors and lead benefits counselors statewide. The total cost to maintain this capacity is about \$900,000.

: SSA decides to continue the SSDI 1 for 2 for the next two to four years. DVR will request at minimum \$625,000 per year.

\* SSA decides to continue to fund the Youth Transition Demonstration in Vermont after 2007. DVR will use approximately \$200,000 of the total grant to support the benefits counseling component.

\* SSA funds Vermont's Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Application, which totals \$75,000.

Total federal funds: \$900,000

-----Original Message-----

From: Maria Belliveau [mailto:mbelliveau@leg.state.vt.us]

Sent: Monday, December 18, 2006 2:06 PM

To: Jim Giffin

Cc: Michael Obuchowski; Rebecca Buck; Steve Klein

Subject: Questions Regarding JFO #2280, SSA Grant to DAIL

I received some questions from Rep. Obuchowski regarding JFO #2280, the \$175,289 grant from the Social Security Administration to the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to continue the development and promotion of employment for recipients of Social Security Disability Income and Supplemental Security Income. Specifically, Rep. Obuchowski would like to know who the beneficiaries of the grant will be if they will be distributed equally on a geographical basis throughout the state.

Please answer directly to Rep. Obuchowski and copy me, Rebecca Buck and Steve Klein. Thanks for your help and I hope that you have a happy holiday season!

**From:** Maria Belliveau  
**To:** Jim Giffin  
**Date:** 12/18/2006 2:05 PM  
**Subject:** Questions Regarding JFO #2280, SSA Grant to DAIL

**CC:** Michael Obuchowski; Rebecca Buck; Steve Klein

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**From:** "Jim Giffin" <Jim.Giffin@dail.state.vt.us>  
**To:** "Michael Obuchowski" <OBIE@leg.state.vt.us>  
**Date:** 12/19/2006 7:28 AM  
**Subject:** RE: Questions Regarding JFO #2280, SSA Grant to DAIL  
**Attachments:** Funding for DVR Benefits Counseling for Jim Dec 2006 - 2.doc; youth grant explanation.doc

**CC:** "Rebecca Buck" <RBUCK@leg.state.vt.us>, "Steve Klein" <SKLEIN@leg.state....  
Dear Representative Obuchowski

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be available till September 2007      No prospect of extension  
SSA Youth Transition Demonstration      Up to \$700,000 per year  
Start Date Spring 2007  
End Date Spring 2012      SSA has selected Vermont as a pilot site and  
will provide \$250,000 for calendar year 2007. If successful SSA will  
increase funding to \$700,000 to 2012  
SSA Work Incentives Planning and Assistance      \$75,000 per year  
Start Date September 2006  
End Date August 2009      Vermont has been approved for a three year  
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\*      SSA decides to continue to fund the Youth Transition Demonstration in Vermont after 2007. DVR will use approximately \$200,000 of the total grant to support the benefits counseling component.

\*      SSA funds Vermont's Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Application, which totals \$75,000.

Total federal funds: \$900,000

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**STATE OF VERMONT**  
**JOINT FISCAL COMMITTEE**  
1 Baldwin Street  
Montpelier, Vermont 05633-5701

## MEMORANDUM

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**To:** Joint Fiscal Committee Members

**From:** Rebecca Buck, Staff Associate *RB*

**Date:** December 14, 2006

**Subject:** Grant Requests

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Enclosed please find three (3) requests which the Joint Fiscal Office recently received from the Administration:

**JFO #2280** – \$175,289 grant from the Social Security Administration to the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. This work incentives planning and assistance grant will be used to continue development and promote employment for recipients of Social Security Disability Income and Supplemental Security Income.

*[JFO received 12/12/06]*

**JFO #2281** – \$100,000 grant from the American Legacy Foundation to the Department of Health. This grant will be used to support a program targeting smoking cessation and prevention services to young adults who are not enrolled in formal education.

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*[JFO received 12/12/06]*

The Joint Fiscal Office has reviewed these submissions and determined that all appropriate forms bearing the necessary approvals are in order.

In accordance with the procedures for processing such requests, we ask you to review the enclosed and notify the Joint Fiscal Office (Maria Belliveau at 802/828-5971; [mbelliveau@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:mbelliveau@leg.state.vt.us) or Stephen Klein at 802/828-5769; [sklein@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:sklein@leg.state.vt.us)) if you would like any item(s) held for Legislative review (I will be out of the office December 15 through January 1). Unless we hear from you to the contrary by December 28 we will assume that you agree to consider as final the Governor's acceptance of these requests.

cc: James Reardon, Commissioner  
Linda Morse, Administrative Assistant  
Cynthia LaWare, Secretary  
Patrick Flood, Commissioner  
Susan Moffatt, Commissioner

STATE OF VERMONT  
GRANT ACCEPTANCE FORM

JFO #  
2280

DATE: November 17, 2006

DEPARTMENT: AHS / Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living

GRANT/DONATION (brief description and purpose): To support and continue to expand the state's vocational rehabilitation services for Social Security Disability Income and Supplemental Security Income recipients. This includes continuing development of employment opportunities for this population.

GRANTOR/DONOR: Social Security Administration

GRANT PERIOD: 9/30/06 – 9/29/09

AMOUNT/VALUE: \$175,289

POSITIONS REQUESTED (LIMITED SERVICE): None – the grant provides partial support to existing staff.

ANY ON-GOING, LONG-TERM COSTS TO THE STATE: No additional costs.

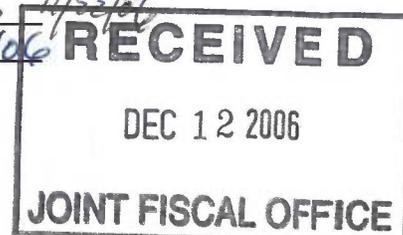
COMMENTS: The grant was approved 9/29/06 with the understanding that an amendment would be made prior to the final award of federal funds. The amendment was submitted and approved. Approval of receipt of the award is now required.

DEPT. FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT:  
SECRETARY OF ADMINISTRATION:  
SENT TO JOINT FISCAL OFFICE:

(INITIAL) SMY 11/20/06

(INITIAL) MDS 11/22/06

(DATE) 12/7/06



STATE OF VERMONT  
 REQUEST FOR GRANT ACCEPTANCE  
 (USE ADDITIONAL SHEETS AS NEEDED)

1. Agency: Agency of Human Services
2. Department: Department of Disabilities Aging and Independent Living
3. Program: Vocational Rehabilitation
4. Legal Title of Grant: Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Grant
5. Federal Catalog No.: 96.008
6. Grantor and Office Address: Social Security Administration; 6401 Security Blvd.  
 Baltimore, MD 21235
7. Grant Period: From: 09/30/06 To: 9/29/09

8. Purpose of Grant: (attach additional sheets if needed)  
 Promote the employment of persons with disabilities who receive SSA and/or SSI.

9. Impact on Existing Programs if Grant is not Accepted:  
 VR will continue to work towards these goals without the availability of some additional funds to support the goals.  
 VR plans to use these funds to cover some of the declining revenue from a SSA Contract due to expire 3/30/07

10. Budget Information:	(1ST State FY) FY 2007	(2nd State FY) FY 2008	(3rd State FY) FY 2009
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>			
Personal Services	\$ 30,649	\$ 61,298	\$ 61,298
Operating Expenses	\$ 7,214	\$ 9,619	\$ 9,619
Grants	\$ -		
In Kind		\$ -	\$ -
Indirect	\$ 896	\$ 1,792	\$ 1,792
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 38,759</b>	<b>\$ 72,709</b>	<b>\$ 72,709</b>
<b>REVENUES:</b>			
State Funds:	\$974	\$1,717	\$1,717
Cash (using existing staff and grants)			
In-Kind			\$ -
Federal Funds:	\$36,889	\$69,200	\$69,200
(Direct Costs)			
(Statewide Indirect)			
(Department Indirect)	\$ 896	\$1,792	\$1,792
Other Funds:			
(Source)			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$38,759</b>	<b>\$72,709</b>	<b>\$72,709</b>

Grant will be allocated to these  
 appropriation expenditure accounts:

Appropriation No.	Amounts
<b>3460010000</b>	

Over

RECD NOV 16 2006





State of Vermont

AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
103 South Main Street  
Waterbury, Vermont 05671-0204

Telephone: (802) 241-2220  
Fax: (802) 241-2979

**TO: Steve Gold, Deputy Secretary, Agency of Human Services**

**FROM: Sarah Clark, AHS Central Fiscal Office** *sc*

**DATE: November 9, 2006**

**RE: DDAIL - Grant Approval – Work Incentives Planning**

Attached is a grant acceptance form from DDAIL from the Social Security Administration for work incentives planning and assistance. The grant will be used to promote the employment of persons with disabilities who receive SSA and/or SSI. The grant begins upon approval and will continue through FY 2009. The state match requirement will be met through existing staff and grants and will not require an additional outlay of state dollars. In addition, there will be no longer-term funding concerns as the grant will cover work currently being done by Vocational Rehabilitation within DDAIL.

I recommend that AHS forward this grant along to the Secretary of Administration, the Governor and the Joint Fiscal Committee for approval.

Approved: *Steve Gold, Acting Sec. AHS*  
*11/13/06*

RECD NOV 16 2006

**SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION**

**NOTICE OF COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT AWARD**

Under authority of

(Legislations) Sec. 1110 Social Security Act as amended  
(Regulations)

This grant is subject to the terms and conditions incorporated either directly or by reference in:

- a. Grant Program Legislation cited above.
- b. Grant Program regulations cited above.
- c. Special Terms and Conditions, if any noted below.
- d. SSA Project Grants Policy Handbook in effect as of beginning date of grant budget period.
- e. 20 CFR Part 435 and Part 437.

<b>1. DOCUMENT NO.</b> 04014W50091	<b>CFDA NO.</b> 96.008
<b>2. GRANT NO.</b> 14-W-50091-1-01	<b>3. AMEND. NO.</b> 1
<b>4. BUDGET PERIOD</b> From: 09/30/06 Through: 05/31/07	
<b>5. TOTAL PROJECT PERIOD</b> From: 09/30/06 Through: 09/29/09	
<b>6. TYPE OF GRANT</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> NEW	<input type="checkbox"/> COMPETING EXTENSION
<input type="checkbox"/> CONTINUATION	<input type="checkbox"/> SUPPLEMENT
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REVISION FOR ( i ) See Reverse for Explanation	

**7. PROJECT/PROGRAM TITLE**  
Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Project

**8. GRANTEE ORGANIZATION**  
Vermont Agency of Human Services  
103 South Main Street  
Weeks Building 1A  
Waterbury, Vermont 05671-2303

**9. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR OR PROGRAM DIRECTOR**  
Mr. James Smith

**11. REQUIRED GRANTEE PARTICIPATION**  
Minimum Five (5) percent of Total Project Costs

**12. CONGR. DISTRICT** 1      **13. COUNTY** Washington

**10. APPROVED BUDGET**

GRANT FUNDS ONLY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
PERSONNEL .....	\$ 33,060
FRINGE BENEFITS .....	\$ 11,571
TRAVEL .....	\$ 3,377
EQUIPMENT .....	\$ -
SUPPLIES .....	\$ 200
CONTRACTUAL .....	\$ <i>1012</i> - 16,667
OTHER .....	\$ -

**14. AWARD COMPUTATION**

A. TOTAL APPROVED BUDGET	\$	76,218
B. LESS <u>Cost-Sharing</u>	\$	3,509
C. LESS UNOBLIGATED BALANCE FROM PRIOR BUDGET PERIOD(s)	\$	-
D. TOTAL AMOUNT AWARDED THIS BUDGET PERIOD	\$	72,709

**15. AMOUNT AWARDED-THIS ACTION** \$ -

**16. TOTAL FEDERAL FUNDS AWARDED TO DATE FOR PROJECT PERIOD** \$ 72,709

**17. SUPPORT RECOMMENDED FOR THE REMAINDER OF PROJECT PERIOD**

Yr	PERIOD	TOTAL DIRECT COST	
2	6/01/2007-3/31/2008	\$ 83,333	Continued funding subject to provisions of Chapter II Funding Procedures, SSA Grants Policy Handbook.
3	4/01/2008-1/31/2009	\$ 83,333	
4	2/01/2009-9/29/2009	\$ 66,667	

<b>DIRECT COSTS.....</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>64,875</b>
<b>INDIRECT COSTS.....</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,792 *</b>
Calculated at		
\$ - <---base		
Supplemental Funds	\$ <i>TRANS</i> -	6,042
<b>TOTAL APPROVED BUDGET</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>72,709</b>

**18. REMARKS (SPECIAL TERMS & CONDITIONS ATTACHED)**  YES  NO  
Award amended to: (1) reflect the approved budget as indicated in Block Number 10; and (2) rescind the restriction and release funds in the amount of \$72,709. These funds may now be expended.

\* Reimbursement of indirect costs is subject to the provisions of Chapter V - Indirect Costs, SSA Grants Policy Handbook.

**19. PAYMENTS UNDER THIS AWARD WILL BE MADE AS EXPLAINED ON REVERSE SIDE**

**20. INQUIRIES REGARDING ADMINISTRATION OF THIS GRANT SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:**

Ms. Jen DeBoy Stammer (410) 965-8658  
(SSA PROJECT OFFICER)

OR Ms. Mary L. Biddle (410) 965-9503  
(SSA GRANTS MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST)

<b>21. FY CAN</b> 400K530	<b>22. CRS/EIN</b> 03-6000264
<b>23. OBJECT CLASS</b> 4115	<b>24. SSA LIST NO.</b> 9-3-06

**25. SIGNATURE AND TITLE - SSA OFFICIAL**

*Mary L Biddle*      DATE 10/16/06  
GRANTS MANAGEMENT OFFICER

## EXPLANATIONS

### Item 6. Purpose of Revision:

- (a) To apply actual unobligated balance from prior budget period and decrease Amount Awarded.
- (b) To apply actual unobligated balance from prior budget period and increase Amount Awarded.
- (c) To apply actual unobligated balance from prior budget period and decrease Total Approved Budget.
- (d) To apply actual unobligated balance from prior budget period and increase Total Approved Budget.
- (e) To approve requested change in Principal Investigator or Program Director.
- (f) To approve requested change in date of Budget Period and/or Project Period.
- (g) To approve requested rebudgeting within Total Approved Budget.
- (h) To change Grantee Participation.
- (l) Other (see remarks).

### Item 19. Payment Clause

Inquiries regarding payments should be directed to:

Division of Central Accounting & Reporting  
Social Security Administration  
PO BOX 47  
Baltimore, Maryland 21235  
Telephone No. (410) 965-0021

**For your information, the SSA Inspector General maintains a toll free telephone number: (800) 269-0271, for receiving information concerning fraud, waste or abuse under grants and cooperative agreements. Such reports are kept confidential, and callers may decline to give their names if they choose to remain anonymous. You may also send a FAX to: (410) 597-0118.**

**Jim Giffin**

---

**From:** Patrick Flood  
**Sent:** Monday, October 16, 2006 10:42 AM  
**To:** Diane Dalmasse; Jim Giffin  
**Subject:** FW: 14-W-50091-1-01 (VT) Vermont Agency of Human Services - Award Notice - Amendment 1  
**Attachments:** 14-W-50091-1-01-Award-Notice-Amendment#1.pdf

---

**From:** Biddle, Mary [mailto:Mary.Biddle@ssa.gov]  
**Sent:** Monday, October 16, 2006 9:18 AM  
**To:** Patrick Flood  
**Cc:** James Smith; Deboy, Jenny ; Jones, Barbara ; Dobrow, Donald  
**Subject:** 14-W-50091-1-01 (VT) Vermont Agency of Human Services - Award Notice - Amendment 1

Reference Award Number 14-W-50091-1-01

Mr. Patrick Flood, Commissioner  
Vermont Agency of Human Services  
103 South Main Street  
Weeks Building 1A  
Waterbury, Vermont 05671-2303

Dear Mr. Flood:

I am pleased to inform you that the revised budget submitted by your organization on September 26, 2006 (including revisions dated October 5, 2006), in support of the project entitled "Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Project" has been approved. Therefore, the funding restriction is hereby lifted and the Total Approved Budget is now available for expenditure. Please update your financial records accordingly.

All other terms and conditions set forth in your award dated September 30, 2006, are still in effect.

If you need additional information or have any questions concerning the business management aspects of this award, please contact me at telephone (410) 965-9503. Any written communication should be mailed to: Social Security Administration, Office of Acquisition and Grants, Grants Management Team, 7111 Security Boulevard, 1st Floor - Rear Entrance, Baltimore, Maryland 21244.

Please reference the award number cited at the beginning of this letter in all future communications.

Sincerely,

Mary L. Biddle  
Grants Management Officer

10/16/2006



## EXPLANATIONS

### Item 6. Purpose of Revision:

- (a) To apply actual unobligated balance from prior budget period and decrease Amount Awarded.
- (b) To apply actual unobligated balance from prior budget period and increase Amount Awarded.
- (c) To apply actual unobligated balance from prior budget period and decrease Total Approved Budget.
- (d) To apply actual unobligated balance from prior budget period and increase Total Approved Budget.
- (e) To approve requested change in Principal Investigator or Program Director.
- (f) To approve requested change in date of Budget Period and/or Project Period.
- (g) To approve requested rebudgeting within Total Approved Budget.
- (h) To change Grantee Participation.
- (i) Other (see remarks).

### Item 19. Payment Clause

Inquiries regarding payments should be directed to:

Division of Central Accounting & Reporting  
Social Security Administration  
PO BOX 47  
Baltimore, Maryland 21235  
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Carma

- places

→ meetings - Walton

→ Funeral homes

**Jim Giffin**

---

**From:** James Smith  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 03, 2006 1:40 PM  
**To:** Jim Giffin  
**Cc:** Susan Seymour; Diane Dalmasse  
**Subject:** FW: 14-W-50091-1-01 (VT) Vermont Agency of Human Services - Award Notice  
**Attachments:** 14-W-50091-4-01-Award Notice.pdf.pdf; FSR.xls

Hi Jim,

Attached is the grant award notification for the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance project from SSA. The activities are very consistent with the work that was done under the SSA State Partnership, and the SSDI 1 for 2 project. We will not be hiring new staff for this project and the work performed is benefits counseling. So I think there is a case to be made that review by the Joint Fiscal Committee may be unnecessary.

What do you think?

James

---

**From:** Biddle, Mary [mailto:Mary.Biddle@ssa.gov]  
**Sent:** Saturday, September 30, 2006 3:49 PM  
**To:** Patrick Flood  
**Cc:** James Smith; Deboy, Jenny ; Jones, Barbara ; Dobrow, Donald  
**Subject:** 14-W-50091-1-01 (VT) Vermont Agency of Human Services - Award Notice

Reference Award Number 14-W-50091-1-01

Mr. Patrick Flood, Commissioner  
Vermont Agency of Human Services  
103 South Main Street  
Weeks Building 1A  
Waterbury, Vermont 05671-2303

Dear Mr. Flood:

I am pleased to inform you that the application submitted by your organization in support of the project entitled "Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Project" has been approved in the amount of \$72,709 for the period September 30, 2006 through May 31, 2007. The approved budget of \$72,709 exists as restricted funds, unavailable for obligation and expenditure until a revised budget is approved in writing by SSA. The approved budget also includes \$6,042 in supplemental funds for start up costs associated with the new Work Incentives Seminars. A Notice of Cooperative Agreement Award is enclosed which reflects the amount and approved period of support. Please note that, for purposes of this award, use of the term "grant" in this and all other documents relating to this award is intended to mean "cooperative agreement."

All employees working on federally funded WIPA projects must undergo a Suitability Determination

10/4/2006

security clearance. The process includes background checks and fingerprinting for all staff assigned to this project. SSA will mail a complete Security Clearance package with detailed instructions by October 15, 2006.

Continued funding of this project for the 10-month period beginning June 1, 2007, is contingent upon satisfactory progress in achieving the objectives of the project, the availability of fiscal year funds, and the continued relevance of the project activity to the Social Security Administration (SSA). In order that we may give consideration to the continued funding of this activity beyond the initial 8-month budget period, it is necessary that an application for continuation support be submitted. We will provide the appropriate forms and notify you when the application is due at a later date.

Also, please be aware that grantee organizations that expend \$500,000 or more in Federal funds in a year are subject to the audit requirements contained in OMB Circular A-133 (a copy of this document is available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a133/a133.html>).

The awarding of this grant is subject to the following terms and conditions:

- Serve the following counties--- State of Vermont.
- Send all Community Work Incentives Coordinators (CWICs) (who have not previously completed the BPAO initial training class) to the official SSA sponsored initial training and all CWICS to refresher training as needed.
- Ensure that CWICs employed under the WIPA Program meet and maintain the standards of competency developed by SSA. All CWICS must meet specific SSA-defined criteria and pass an SSA-approved examination to continue to provide services to SSA's beneficiaries with disabilities. SSA will establish a Nationwide CWIC Registry for trained and qualified CWICs.
- Provide training and technical assistance to CWICS about applicable State and local programs and the effect that these programs have on other programs' eligibility and benefits.
- Provide direct work incentives planning and assistance services to SSDI and SSI beneficiaries with disabilities to assist them in their employment efforts. (This does not include representing beneficiaries in overpayments and appeals.)
- Conduct outreach efforts in collaboration with SSA's Program Manager for Recruitment and Outreach (PMRO) contractor to beneficiaries with disabilities (and their families) who are potentially eligible to participate in Federal or State work incentives programs.
- Collect and report beneficiary information (to include the Social Security Number), required by SSA for evaluation and statistical purposes only.

Quarterly progress reports and semi-annual accounting of grant funds are required for this project. The grantee is responsible for the timely submission of these reports as follows:

Financial Status Reports (Standard Form 269A)

A Standard Form 269A is to be submitted to the Grants Management Office by January 31, 2007, covering the period September 30, 2006 through December 31, 2006. For your convenience, you may fax the interim Financial Status Report to fax number 410-966-9310. For the final Financial Status Report, please mail an original Standard Form 269A covering the full budget period to the Grants Management Office (address below) by August 31, 2007. A copy of the Standard Form-269A is

attached.

#### Progress Reports

A report covering the period September 30, 2006 through December 31, 2006, is due by January 31, 2007. The report covering the period January 01, 2007 through May 31, 2007, is due by June 30, 2006. For your convenience, you may email the reports to mary.biddle@ssa.gov.

The Social Security Independence and Program Improvements Act of 1994, Public Law No. 103-296, enacted August 15, 1994, established SSA as an independent establishment in the Executive Branch, effective March 31, 1995. On May 27, 2003, SSA published grants regulations 20 CFR Parts 435, 437 and 438 pursuant to section 106(b) of Public Law No. 103-296.

In the event of a dispute over a matter related to a grant, SSA will issue a final decision. There is no right of administrative appeal of a final decision adverse to the grant recipient.

This award is subject to the provisions of SSA regulation, 20 CFR Part 437, "Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments."

We recommend that you contact SSA's Grants Management Office prior to a "significant rebudgeting" (in excess of \$5,000) or "significant cumulative rebudgeting" of awarded grant funds, since it could possibly affect the scope or objectives of the grant. At that time, the Grants Management Office can forward a Rebudgeting Guide to assist with your rebudgeting request.

#### RIGHTS IN DATA

##### 1. Definitions

a. "Data," as used herein, means recorded information regardless of form or the media on which it may be recorded. The term includes computer software and information of a scientific or technical nature. The term does not include information incidental to grant administration such as financial, administrative, cost or pricing or management information and does not include personal identifying information unless informed consent to release such information has been obtained.

b. "Computer Software," as used herein, means computer programs, computer data bases, and documentation thereof.

c. "Federal Government Purposes," as used herein, does not include the right to use, or authorize others to use data first produced in the performance of this award for commercial purposes. (Commercial purposes being the reproduction of the data, on any medium, that is offered for sale, or the use of the data to produce or to manufacture a product for sale.)

##### 2. Rights in Data

a. "Rights in the Recipient of this Award." Except as otherwise provided in the terms and conditions of this award, the recipient shall have the right to and may permit others to copyright, publish, disclose, disseminate and use, in whole or in part, any data first produced in the performance of work under this award.

b. "Rights in the Federal Government." Except as otherwise provided in the terms and

conditions of this award, the Federal Government, and others acting for it or on its behalf shall have the right, and are hereby granted a royalty-free, non-exclusive, irrevocable license throughout the world, to use, reproduce, prepare derivative works, perform publicly, display publicly and distribute to the public, any data, including data copyrighted pursuant to paragraph 2.a. above, first produced in the performance of work under this award for Federal Government purposes.

### 3. Access to Data

The recipient of this grant award shall deliver to the Federal Government, as and when requested, a copy of the data to which it has rights thereto under the provisions of paragraph 2.b. above. Such data shall be provided at a cost not-to-exceed the cost of actual reproduction and transmittal.

### 4. Applicability to Third-Party Transactions

The recipient of this award shall incorporate the above provisions in all third-party transactions involving the development of data under this award.

## ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS

1. PURCHASE OF AMERICAN-MADE EQUIPMENT AND PRODUCTS--It is the sense of the Congress that, to the greatest extent practicable, all equipment and products purchased with Federal funds made available in this award should be American-made.

2. When issuing statements, press releases, requests for proposals, bid solicitations, and other documents describing projects or programs funded in whole or in part with Federal money, all grantees receiving Federal funds, including but not limited to State and local governments and recipients of Federal research grants, shall clearly state (1) the percentage of the total costs of the program or project which will be financed with federal money, (2) the dollar amount of Federal funds for the project or program, and (3) the percentage and dollar amount of the total costs of the project or program that will be financed by nongovernmental sources.

The grantee shall also incorporate the above provisions in all subgrants and contracts under this award.

Immediately upon receipt of this award notice, please contact the

Division of Central Accounting and Reporting  
Social Security Administration  
P.O. Box 47  
Baltimore, Maryland 21235  
Telephone No. (410) 965-0021.

The Division of Central Accounting and Reporting will work with you to set up payment arrangements.

Ms. Jen DeBoy Stammer has been designated to serve as the Federal Project Officer for this project. If you have any questions regarding the programmatic aspects of this award, please contact her. Ms. DeBoy Stammer's address is: Social Security Administration, Office of Employment Support

Programs, Room 107, Altmeyer Building, 6401 Security Boulevard, Baltimore, Maryland 21235, telephone (410) 965-8658.

If you need additional information or have any questions concerning the business management aspects of this award, please contact me at telephone (410) 965-9503. Any written communication should be mailed to: Social Security Administration, Office of Acquisition and Grants, Grants Management Team, 7111 Security Boulevard, 1st Floor - Rear Entrance, Baltimore, Maryland 21244.

Please reference the award number cited at the beginning of this letter in all future communications.

Sincerely,

Mary L. Biddle  
Grants Management Officer

<<14-W-50091-4-01-Award Notice.pdf.pdf>> <<FSR.xls>>

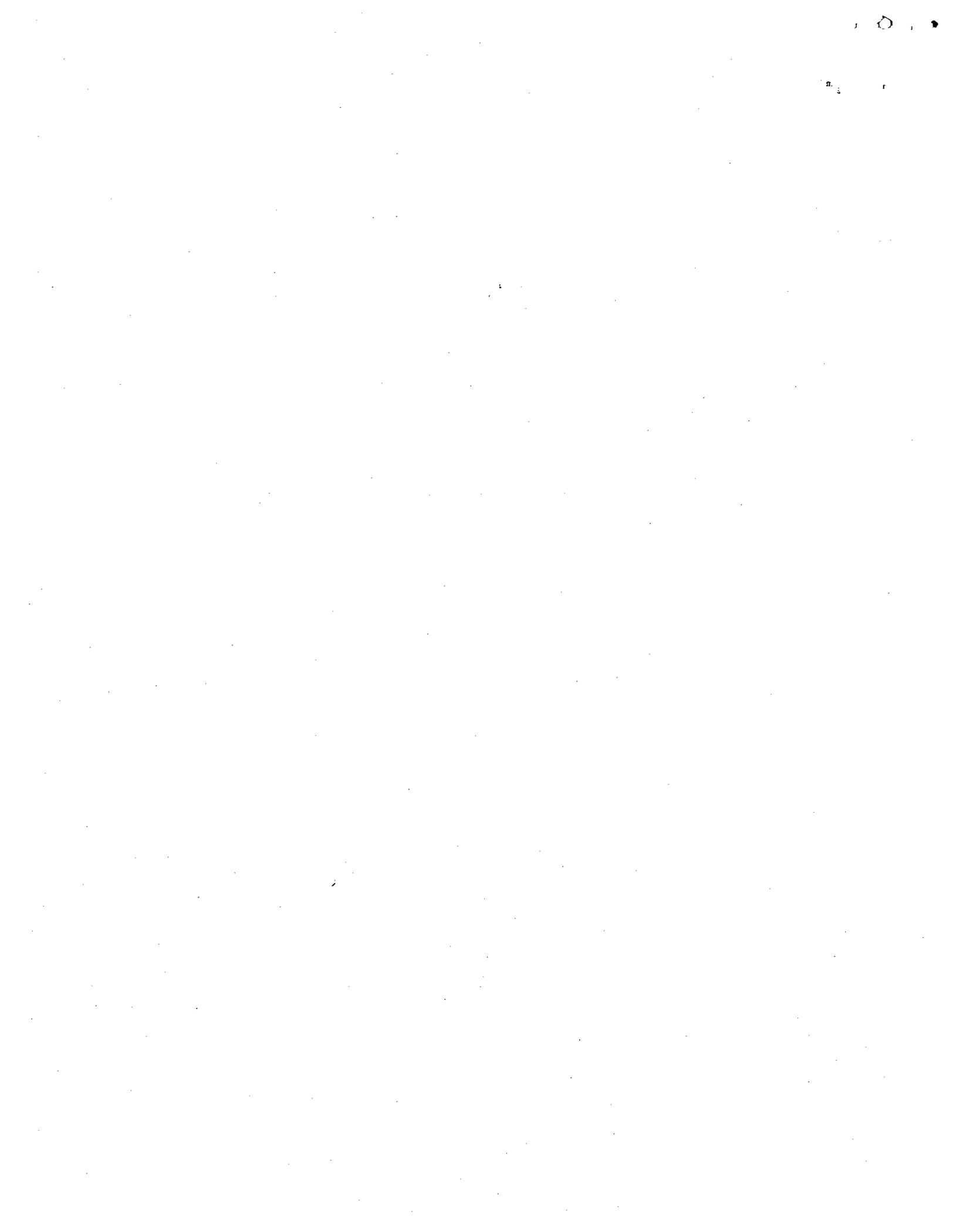
Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation  
Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Project

submitted by

**James Smith, MA**  
Director, Vermont Work Incentives Initiative  
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

in response to  
**SSA-OESP-06-1**

June 29, 2006



# Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Project

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# Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Project

## **Project Summary**

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The Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is the state's largest provider of benefits counseling services to SSDI and SSI beneficiaries, and is a leading Employment Network for the Ticket to Work program in Vermont. Vermont DVR proposes to implement the WIPA project as part of the Vermont Work Incentives Initiative (VWII). Vermont's VWII project has developed a national reputation for its work in the field of benefits counseling and promoting employment and economic self-sufficiency for people with disabilities. The VWII project is currently implementing three major federal projects, including the SSDI Benefit Offset Pilot.

The WIPA project will be implemented within the statewide VWII benefits counseling team of eleven benefits counselors and two lead benefits counselors. WIPA funds will partially support two benefits counselors/CWICs in the Burlington and Rutland areas of the state. However, because the WIPA funded staff will be part of a statewide team, the project will have an impact in all twelve human service districts in the state.

Vermont DVR and the VWII project already have established relationships with the major disability employment service providers in the state, including the Department of Labor, the community mental health system, the developmental service system and the high schools. The DVR benefits counselors are highly regarded by these providers for their expertise and quality services. The WIPA project will build on these existing relationships to ensure beneficiaries who are working or planning to work have access to benefits counseling.

Vermont DVR will also build on these established relationships with disability providers to assist the PMRO outreach to current and potential Employment Networks. DVR will help facilitate the planned WISE meetings and make available state space and resources to ensure their success. DVR has considerable experience with the Ticket program and has functioned in a lead role as a successful Employment Network and can use that experience to encourage new Employment Networks to participate. DVR believes the proposed new Ticket regulations due to be published this fall will greatly increase the participation of new Employment Networks in the program.

DVR is submitting this proposal in partnership with the Vermont Center for Independent Living (VCIL). DVR and VCIL strongly believe beneficiaries should have a choice of providers for WIPA services. Also by combining efforts DVR and VCIL believe WIPA will have the maximum impact in Vermont. Therefore DVR and VCIL are submitting separate but mutually supporting proposals.

# Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Project

## **Introduction and Overview**

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### **Overview of Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)**

The Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) provides employment services for people with disabilities statewide. In 2005 the agency provided services to 8,544 people of whom about 2,500 receive SSI or SSDI benefits. This represents about 10% of the beneficiaries of working age in the state. DVR has twelve district offices and is accessible in all areas of the state.

DVR employment services include but are not limited to:

- Job development and job placement services.
- Vocational training and education.
- Vocational counseling and guidance.
- Equipment and vehicle modifications or purchases.
- Supported employment services (generally in partnership with state developmental disability and mental health providers).
- Assistance accessing Workforce Investment Act (WIA) services through the state One Stop Centers.

Vermont DVR has also invested considerable resources and effort into serving SSDI and SSI beneficiaries. To further these efforts, DVR developed a special project within the agency in the late 1990s to focus exclusively on this population—the Vermont Work Incentives Initiative. DVR plans to implement the WIPA project as part of the Vermont Work Incentives Initiative.

### **Background on DVR Vermont Work Incentives Initiative (VWII)**

Vermont has developed a national reputation for its efforts to promote the employment of people with disabilities who receive Social Security Administration (SSA) Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). Few states have been as successful as Vermont in implementing state/federal partnership projects for these populations. The state work team responsible for most of these efforts is the Vermont Work Incentives Initiative (VWII).

Vermont DVR established the VWII project as Vermont's response to a 1997 report commissioned by the Vermont State Legislature on why so many people with disabilities in the state were unemployed or underemployed. The report identified a number of specific barriers to employment for people who receive federal and state cash and healthcare benefits.<sup>1</sup> These included: (a) fear of loss of healthcare coverage; (b) lack of understanding of the work incentive provisions within many benefits programs; (c) real and perceived work disincentives built into benefits programs; and (d) lack of coordination between federal and state programs. VWII was established in 1998 to address these issues at both a systems and programmatic level.

VWII is a special project within DVR. Since the establishment of VWII in 1998, the project has had considerable success with a variety of state and state/federal work incentive efforts. These include the following:

---

<sup>1</sup> The Barriers to Employment Faced by Persons with Disabilities: Problems and Solutions. 1997 Report to Vermont General Assembly on Work Disincentives

- Vermont DVR staff and VCIL worked with Senator James Jeffords' office with early drafts of the Ticket to Work, Work Incentives Improvement Act (TWWIA).
- From 1998 to 2004, Vermont DVR was a SSA State Partnership Initiative (SPI) Project. The primary intervention was to establish a comprehensive statewide benefits counseling program for SSI and SSDI beneficiaries. Between 1999 and 2003 the project enrolled over 1,200 participants and the evaluation produced the first empirical research supporting benefits counseling as an effective employment service.<sup>2 3</sup>
- In 2000, Vermont was one of the first states in the nation to establish a Medicaid Buy-In program designed specifically as a work incentive. DVR and VCIL staff led this effort and assisted the state Medicaid agency with the program design.
- In 2000, the Vermont DVR was awarded the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant through the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS). These funds have been used in part to create the DVR Planning and Evaluation Unit (PEU) and support benefits counseling services.
- From 2001 to 2003, the Vermont DVR in partnership with SSA implemented a SSI Waiver option to test alternative work rules for the SSI program. The project enrolled 399 individuals in the Waiver over two years.
- From 2001 to 2006, Vermont DVR was awarded funding from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to establish a statewide benefits counseling program for youth in transition from high school to adult life. To date the youth benefits counseling project has enrolled over 700 beneficiaries.
- In 2005, Vermont DVR was selected by SSA to implement one of only four state-level SSDI Benefit Offset Pilots. The project uses DVR benefits counselors to outreach, enroll and support SSDI beneficiaries in the Benefit Offset Pilot. To date the project has enrolled 351 SSDI beneficiaries in the pilot study.

Further information on the Vermont Work Incentives Initiative can be found on the project website at [www.vwii.org](http://www.vwii.org).

The VWII project has built considerable state level infrastructure and expertise related to SSI and SSDI and employment. Since 1999, DVR has provided benefits counseling services to over 4,000 individuals in the state. In particular the project has an excellent evaluation team and an established and well-qualified team of benefits counselors. The project has an evaluation infrastructure in place for the benefits counseling program that includes an automated online database and access to multiple state administrative databases. The VWII project intends utilize these resources and expertise to effectively implement the WIPA.

### **Rationale for DVR Application for WIPA Funds**

Though DVR has been providing benefits counseling since 1999, the agency has never been a Benefits Planning Assistance and Outreach (BPA&O now WIPA) provider. DVR decided not to

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<sup>2</sup> The Impact of Specialized Benefits Counseling Services on Social Security Administration Disability Beneficiaries in Vermont (2004) Tremblay, T. Smith, J. Xie, H and Drake, R. Journal of Rehabilitation Vol 70, No 2, 5-11

<sup>3</sup> Effect of Benefits Counseling Services on Employment Outcomes for People with Psychiatric Disabilities: (2006) Tremblay, T. Smith, J. Xie, H and Drake, R. Vol 57 No. 6

compete for the original BPA&O solicitation because the agency felt it was important that a peer advocacy organization such as the Vermont Center for Independent Living (VCIL) provide an alternative choice for consumers. Both DVR and VCIL recognized that it was important for beneficiaries to have a choice where they received their services. Therefore, when the original BPA&O projects were bid, DVR decided not to compete for the funds.

Since then, VCIL and DVR have worked collaboratively to provide benefits counseling statewide. To make the best use of the resources available, VCIL and DVR Work Incentive Initiative have sponsored joint staff meetings, trainings and conferences. DVR provided funding to VCIL from the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant to support their benefits counseling program and a range of other peer-directed activities. VCIL has referred beneficiaries to the SSDI Benefit Offset Pilot operated by DVR and to other DVR services.

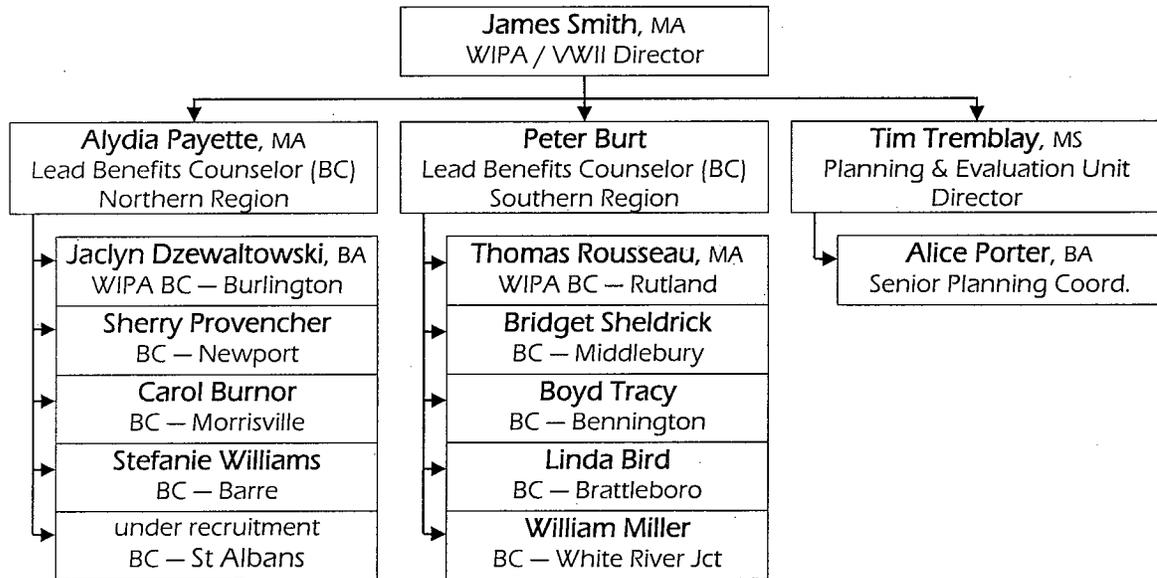
In 2006, with the increase of the base WIPA grant from \$50,000 per year to \$100,000, VCIL and DVR decided to submit mutually supporting applications for the funds. The intention is to build on our ongoing collaborative relationship and make the best use of the available resources. DVR developed this proposal in partnership with VCIL. DVR is requesting \$25,000 in WIPA funds and VCIL is requesting \$75,000 in WIPA funds. Both DVR and VCIL believe it is critically important that beneficiaries have a choice of WIPA provider in Vermont. Also, by combining efforts DVR and VCIL believe they can maximize the impact of the project across systems and across the state. The joint plan for services is outlined in the VCIL letter of support for this application (see attached letter). DVR has made the same commitment in a letter of support for the VCIL application. DVR's particular interest in applying to be a WIPA project is two-fold:

- A. To become connected to the national and regional SSA benefits counseling training, technical assistance and informational network: Because DVR was never a BPA&O project, the DVR benefits counseling team has not had access to the training and technical assistance available through the BPA&O project. In addition, Vermont DVR has not been involved in regional BPA&O forums or national discussions on the future of benefits counseling. As a significant provider of benefits counseling services in Vermont, DVR believes it is important the DVR Work Incentives Initiative become linked into the national network. We also believe it is important that DVR benefits counselors have access to the training and technical assistance available through the WIPA program.
- B. To help maintain accessibility to benefits counseling services in all twelve human service districts in the state: DVR has built up a statewide infrastructure of benefits counseling services with a combination of federal and state resources. As a result DVR has been able to support eleven benefits counselors and two lead benefits counselors covering all twelve human service districts in the state. However, in September 2006 a major source of grant funds from the Rehabilitation Services Administration will end. This will significantly reduce the funds available to support the DVR benefits counseling program. DVR hopes to use WIPA funds to in part maintain this capacity. WIPA funds will partially fund two benefits counselors located in Burlington and Rutland Vermont. *Without WIPA funding the state may have to reduce capacity and reduce access to benefits counseling in one or more regions of the state.*

## Service Plan

### Project Design and Scope

As noted, DVR has built a substantial benefits counseling infrastructure with both federal grant funds and state resources, and has made considerable progress in establishing a highly respected service with proven success in helping individuals increase their self-sufficiency (see Appendix 1). The current DVR benefits counseling team structure is as follows (for a map reflecting this structure and other employment resources, see Appendix 2):



### Service Structure and Goals

DVR proposes that the Burlington and Rutland staff will be the CWICs under the WIPA project. Rutland and Burlington are the most populous cities in the state and therefore the natural location for these positions. WIPA funding will support approximately 34% of a full time position across both locations (17% of an FTE per site). Currently, the full time DVR benefits counselors maintain an active caseload of 200 beneficiaries each. Therefore, DVR proposes to serve 70 beneficiaries per year under the WIPA program.

Region	Total Served Year One	Total Served Year Two	Total Served Year Three
Burlington	35	35	35
Rutland	35	35	35
Totals	70	70	70

WIPA participants will receive the full range of benefits counseling services, including:

- a thorough analysis of all current benefits and service supports;
- a review of options for employment, use of work incentives, and potential impacts on all benefits and supports;
- a consumer-directed plan of action for employment and utilization of work incentives and long-term supports;
- referral to additional resources such as VR, ENs, One-Stop Centers, community supports and advocacy resources as necessary;

- ongoing follow-up to monitor progress, identify new issues or opportunities, and help consumers manage benefits;
- advocacy on behalf of the client with other agencies as necessary.

### Staff Experience

The DVR benefits counselors are all employees of Vermont State Government. They are located in DVR district offices and serve all twelve Human Service Districts in the state. Most have ongoing regular arrangements to counsel clients at outstationed sites, particularly community mental health agencies, and all are available for home visits and site visits as needed. All operate under the supervision of a regional lead benefits counselor. The benefits counselors are fully trained and expert in the full range of state and federal benefits programs and available work incentives including but not limited to:

- Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI): Trial Work Period, Extended Period of Eligibility, extended Medicare coverage and the SSDI \$1 for \$2 Benefit Offset Pilot.<sup>4</sup>
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI): The Earned and Unearned Income Exclusions, the SSI Benefit Offset and 1619 A and B Medicaid.
- Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE) and Subsidies.
- The SSI Student Earned Income Exclusion.<sup>5</sup>
- Plans to Achieve Self Support (PASS)
- Blind Work Incentives
- Vermont Health Care Programs: Medicaid, Medicaid for Working People with Disabilities,<sup>6</sup> and the Vermont Health Access Program (VHAP).
- Housing Programs: The Mandatory Earned Income Deduction (MEID) and the Bridges to Self Sufficiency Individual Development Accounts
- TANF benefits and State General Assistance

All counselors are also seasoned case managers, with extensive experience working with people with disabilities throughout the age and disability spectrum. Most have worked in human services in the same community for several years, and have built strong collaborative relationships with local services providers as a result. Since they are so closely networked with each other, VR, the SSA AWIC and claims representatives, Disability Program Navigators, and the public and private human services providers in their community, they have an extensive support network for helping individuals find jobs, connect to ENs, and seek other supports to help them gain and maintain employment. They are familiar with advocacy resources and often refer clients to Legal Aid and the protection & advocacy provider. Benefits counselors are also available to consult with employers on health coverage questions for beneficiaries.

The WIPA counselors can capitalize on the many resources developed by VWII benefits counselors over the past seven years, including templates for written benefits analyses, user-friendly tracking tools and calendars for consumers to use for managing work and benefits, fact sheets on a

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<sup>4</sup> As noted Vermont DVR is under contract with SSA to implement the SSDI Benefit Offset Pilot. DVR will ensure that WIPA participants will be able to access this pilot if they are eligible.

<sup>5</sup> Vermont is currently being considered as a Youth Transition Demonstration (YTD) site. If selected the WIPA funded CWICs will be involved in recruiting youth for this demonstration and the SSI Waiver options available under the YTD.

<sup>6</sup> The Vermont Medicaid Buy In program

variety of topics, and case management reports that promote regular ongoing follow-up with consumers. Benefits counseling cases generally do not close except in the event a consumer dies, moves out of state, or withdraws consent to be served by the project, so consumers have an open line to reconnect with a benefits counselor at any time. Consumers with whom we have lost contact or who drop-out of services are flagged, rather than closed, so that we can investigate and try to reconnect with them.

### **Outreach & Services to Target Populations**

The VWII project has an existing program of outreach and public education that includes outreach brochures, consumer education materials (see Appendix 3), a website, and ongoing contact between local benefits counselors and schools, employers, community organizations, and service providers. This general outreach and associated products will provide an in-kind contribution to the WIPA project, so that no more than 10% of the WIPA budget needs to be devoted to outreach. The WIPA project will capitalize on VWII's and DVR's existing connections to service providers and advocacy groups throughout Vermont to develop a specific outreach strategy to the following hard-to-reach populations within 60 days of award:

#### **Ethnic minority and non-English speaking populations.**

Vermont does not have an ethnically diverse population. Nearly 97% of the population is white. The greatest concentration of non-English-speaking and ethnic minority populations is in Burlington, which is a prime reason for its selection as a WIPA site. Vermont has been a designated Refugee Resettlement location since the 1980s. Successive waves of refugee populations have included the Vietnamese and Cambodians in the 1990s, Bosnians, Afghans, and Armenians in the mid-1990s, and refugees from the Congo, Sudan, Somalia, and Burundi since 2000. Moreover, Vermont dairy farms concentrated in the fertile Champlain Valley surrounding Burlington are increasingly relying on Hispanic immigrant labor. Burlington and regions north of Burlington also have the largest concentrations of African-American, Asian, and Native-American residents.

The WIPA benefits counselor in Burlington has already developed referral relationships with agencies primarily serving these populations: the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program, the Sara Holbrook Community Center, Chittenden Valley Office of Economic Opportunity, Vermont Refugee Micro-Enterprise Program, and Howard Center for Human Services. She has also gained valuable experience through her client caseload of the particular demands of working with non-English-speaking and non-citizen populations, and the resources available to help with translation, cultural differences, and immigration issues.

#### **Individuals who are deaf or hearing impaired.**

It is important to note the specific challenges people who are deaf face when dealing with benefits issues. DVR has four Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf (RCD), who are all fluent in American Sign Language and deeply knowledgeable about deaf culture and the deaf community. The RCD staff are well connected with the DVR benefits counselors. The RCDs help the benefits counselors overcome the major communication barriers that can undermine service delivery. DVR also routinely pays for deaf interpreter services when needed. The WIPA CWICs will continue to coordinate with the RCDs to reach this population.

**Youth in transition from school to work.**

DVR has multiple programs in place to reach youth in transition. DVR has 11 specialty transition counselors serving a youth-only caseload spanning the ages of 14 to 27. Regardless of disability type or needs, DVR (with a few exceptions) is involved in most transition plans for youth with disabilities. DVR has also offered benefits counseling targeted to youth since 2002, gaining valuable experience with the outreach, counseling and follow-along challenges in working with youth. VWII's counselors work closely with DVR transition counselors and all the high schools in their districts, with the result that benefits counseling has been incorporated into the IEP and transition planning process. In addition, DVR is a funding source for almost all of the youth and adult community-based services, such as developmental service providers, mental health programs, and the JOBS programs for high-risk youth with emotional behavioral disturbance. As a result DVR has ongoing and active involvement with these community-based providers. All of these connections will provide a natural referral source for the WIPA project to reach youth. VWII has also applied to become an SSA Youth Transition Demonstration site which, if funded, would also offer an outreach avenue for the WIPA project.

**Resources and Management****Key Personnel**

As noted DVR and the DVR VWII program has a wealth of experience around benefits, work incentives, the Ticket to Work program and research and evaluation. The following are key staff who will be involved in the WIPA project.

**Director, Vermont Work Incentives Initiative (James Smith)**

Mr. Smith has been director of the VWII since 2000. Between 2000 and 2005 he oversaw Vermont's Social Security Administration (SSA) State Partnership Initiative (SPI) project. This project supported statewide benefits counseling services to adults served through the VR and community mental health systems. As part of the SPI project Mr. Smith oversaw the implementation of a SSI Waiver option that eventually enrolled 399 participants. Mr. Smith also oversees a Rehabilitation Services Administration Systems Change project that provides benefits counseling for youth in transition ages 16 to 27. This project works with all sixty high school supervisory unions in the state and to date has enrolled 710 youth. In addition Mr. Smith currently oversees the Vermont SSDI Benefit Offset Pilot a project designed to inform the National Demonstration. This is a very important and technically very complex random assignment study. To date the Vermont SSDI Benefit Offset Pilot has enrolled 355 beneficiaries. Also between June 2003 and April 2004 Mr. Smith served on the Adequacy of Incentives Advisory Group for the SSA Ticket to Work program. Prior to his involvement in Social Security and work incentives issues, Mr. Smith worked for fourteen years in the supported employment arena in Vermont and New York City with community rehabilitation providers and the state vocational rehabilitation agency.

**Lead Benefits Counselor North (Alydia Payette)**

Ms. Payette is the supervisor of five Benefits Counselors covering the northern part of the state. She is responsible for the day-to-day supervision and support of staff providing benefits counseling to people with disabilities who are returning to work. Ms. Payette has a BS in Human Services and Counseling from Lyndon State College and a MS in Community Counseling Psychology with a concentration in Criminal Justice from Springfield College. Ms. Payette was a

benefits counselor for the SSA SPI project from 1999 to 2004. In 2004 she was promoted to lead benefits counselor. Prior to this Ms Payette worked for seven years at the Division of Economic Services (formerly Dept. of Social Welfare) as an Eligibility Specialist for all state healthcare and welfare programs. She has extensive background in both state and federal benefits programs. With Mr. Burt she developed the policy and procedures for the Vermont SSDI Benefit Offset Pilot.

**Lead Benefits Counselor South (Peter Burt)**

Mr. Burt is the VWII Lead Benefits Counselor for the southern part of the state. He supervises the six Benefits Counselors that cover that region. He is responsible for the day-to-day supervision and support of staff providing benefits counseling to people with disabilities who are returning to work. Mr. Burt has over 26 years experience in the human services field, including 15 years as a District Manager for the Vermont Division of Economic Services (Vermont's public welfare and Medicaid agency) in the Rutland, Vermont office. Mr. Burt has extensive experience with state and federal benefits. He has been called on to testify to the Vermont Legislature regarding proposed changes to the State Medicaid for Working Disabled program and is a recognized expert in benefits issues statewide. In 2005 Mr. Burt also served on the Disability Research Institute, SSDI Gradual Reduction Think Tank held in Washington DC.

**Benefits Counselor/CWIC Burlington (Jaclyn Dzewaltowski)**

Ms. Dzewaltowski has been a benefits counselor for DVR for three years. Prior to working for DVR she was an Eligibility Specialist and a Case Manager for the State Division of Economic Services (Vermont's public welfare and Medicaid agency) for four years. She has extensive expertise in Medicaid and other state healthcare programs. Prior to working for state government she had a background in public special education. She has a Bachelors degree in Education from the University of Vermont.

**Benefits Counselor/CWIC Rutland (Thomas Rousseau)**

Mr. Rousseau has been a DVR benefits counselor since 1999. Prior to becoming a benefits counselor Mr. Rousseau was a vocational rehabilitation counselor and a senior vocational rehabilitation counselor in the Rutland district office. Mr. Rousseau currently is a vocational consultant to the Rutland Regional Medical Center Rehabilitation Team and is a past president of the Vermont Rehabilitation Association. He has a bachelors degree in sociology and a masters degree in special education from the University of Vermont.

**Director, DVR Planning and Evaluation Unit (Tim Tremblay)**

Mr. Tremblay has overseen the DVR Planning and Evaluation Unit since 2004, supervising all core members of the staff and managing all reporting requirements, budget and contract monitoring, and all research and program evaluation activities. Prior to assuming this position, Mr. Tremblay was responsible for design and management of project databases, collection and processing of local, state, and federal administrative data, and research design and analysis. Mr. Tremblay is a primary author of two recently published journal articles featuring research done under the auspices of the VWII and MIG projects. His initial career preparation focused on the design and use of standardized psychological assessment instruments, and quantitative program evaluation in educational and mental health settings.

**Senior Planning Coordinator (Alice Porter)**

Ms. Porter has primary responsibility for building and maintaining management information systems and analytical databases that support benefits counseling and other special DVR projects,

including WIPA. She also assists with statistical analysis and implementation of evaluations under the direction of Mr. Tremblay. As the former Education Director of a statewide nonprofit providing benefits counseling for children with special needs, Ms. Porter also has considerable experience in desktop publishing, outreach planning, training production, and web design. Her combination of technical expertise with more than a decade's experience working with public benefits programs, health and disability policy, and the benefits counseling model equips her particularly well to support to the WIPA project in both its service and outreach dimensions.

### **Hiring of Persons with Disabilities**

Neither of the benefits counselors/CWIC staff to be funded under this project has a disclosed disability. However, at least one member of the benefits counseling team has a disclosed disability and was a former SSDI beneficiary and a former consumer of vocational rehabilitation services. Furthermore, DVR has a strong record of hiring people with disabilities into a variety of positions. DVR estimates that at least 15% of the agency staff has a disclosed disability including a number of former beneficiaries. This includes one regional manager, a senior vocational rehabilitation counselor and multiple general vocational rehabilitation counselors. If either of the positions funded under this project become vacant DVR will aggressively recruit people with disabilities and current or former beneficiaries for the position.

### **Facilities**

Counselors are located in DVR district offices, all of which are accessible to persons with disabilities. The Burlington and Rutland offices are very close to public transportation hubs. To ensure accessibility of services, counselors frequently outstation sites at community mental health and other agencies, attend school IEP meetings, and make home visits.

### **Quality Assurance**

#### **Staff Training Strategies**

As required by SSA, Vermont DVR will send the two staff identified as the WIPA CWICs to an SSA-approved initial four-day training within three months of award. They will also work closely with the SSA or its designated training and technical assistance staff to maintain their knowledge and skills, and provide evaluation feedback to SSA or its designee on training activities and needs. This training and technical assistance will provide an excellent grounding for the CWICs and provide useful material for the whole team.

In addition, the WIPA CWICs will benefit from DVR's longstanding commitment to ensuring the ongoing training and supervision that are critical to the effectiveness of these positions.

For the last seven years DVR has worked very closely with the State Area Work Incentives Coordinator (AWIC) Jim Pontbriand and other local SSA staff, to ensure all the benefits counselors are fully trained around SSI and SSDI benefits and work incentives. Jim Pontbriand has attended the VWII project staff meetings on a quarterly basis. On request he has also provided specific trainings for the VWII benefits counseling staff on a range of topics from PASS to deeming. We anticipate he will continue to provide this level of coordination and technical support for the WIPA project.

In addition DVR has coordinated closely with the State Medicaid Agency (The Office of Vermont Health Access, OVHA) to ensure the benefits counselors are fully trained around Vermont's public healthcare programs (see letter of support). DVR also routinely invites staff from

the State Housing Authority and the State Division of Economic Services (Social Welfare) agency to provide training and technical assistance to staff. Specific trainings have included an overview of TANF, Food Stamps, Medicaid and the Vermont Health Access.

Finally, the benefits counseling team includes considerable experience from across the service systems—including former senior VR counselors and staff from social welfare, mental health, developmental services, and SSA. The program has two full time lead benefits counselors, Peter Burt and Alydia Payette, who are both veterans of the State Division of Economic Services and have extensive experience (see key staff section) in public benefits and counseling and case management skills. To facilitate team learning and sharing of expertise, the lead benefits counselors hold peer case review meetings every two months. This allows the benefits counselors to share and discuss challenging cases with each other and identify training needs. The VWII project also has an email alias that allows staff to ask the whole team questions or clarify policy. This type of group learning has proven very effective.

### **Case Management and Monitoring Procedures**

All VWII benefits counselors have extensive experience in case management and monitoring client progress. Providing follow-along services to clients was a requirement of both the SPI and RSA youth benefits counseling grants, and is a critical component of the SSDI Benefit Offset Pilot. A standard protocol is for VWII counselors to contact clients at least once a month during the active phases of benefits analysis and planning, then quarterly thereafter to check in on employment and benefits status and need for further counseling services.

VWII's project structure also promotes quality assurance. DVR's two lead benefits counselors provide the day to day supervision of the benefits counseling staff and will provide the same role for the WIPA CWIC staff. This includes routine review of cases and case files. The lead benefits counselors also periodically sit in on benefits counseling meetings to assess the quality of services provided. In addition, benefits counselors can rely on a strong infrastructure of VWII administrative and technical support staff to help them monitor caseloads and deadlines, identify missing documentation or data errors, and develop new case management reports and tools as needs are identified. Regular biweekly meetings of the project director, lead benefits counselors, administrative and technical staff frequently focus on quality assurance and case management issues identified by field staff. Discussions in this group often lead to new case handling procedures, training development, database reports for case management purposes, and outreach initiatives.

Project management staff have experience working with SSA under a cooperative agreement arrangement, and are well-prepared to comply with all reporting and pre-approval requirements. Staff will also benefit from a long history of cooperation with SSA. The Benefit Offset Pilot in particular has required intensive collaboration with SSA's Baltimore office and Vermont field offices to determine ongoing management and QA processes.

### **Management Information Systems**

Case monitoring and follow-along by both counselors and supervisors is significantly aided by the VWII project's comprehensive online case management system. This database has evolved over several years to meet the data collection and case management needs of myriad VWII projects in one integrated MIS. In its current form, the database collects nearly all the elements identified for WIPA data collection (see Appendix 4) in a SQL Server database. Counselors can record extensive case notes, set reminders, and track multiple jobs, BPQY records, work incentives utilization,

monthly earnings and self-employment hours, and contact information for the client, payee, and professionals involved in assisting a client. In addition, several case management reports and tools are available for counselors and supervisors to monitor cases and compliance with the data reporting requirements, highlight consumers needing follow-up, and identify data errors or gaps. Outreach tracking has also recently been integrated into the database to monitor response to outreach mailings.

The database was constructed by staff of DVR's Planning and Evaluation Unit (PEU), created and funded through the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant. As an in-house product, it can easily be adapted to incorporate additional data elements and outreach activity tracking as part of the WIPA project. Moreover, the PEU has had experience packaging or inputting data into national database collection programs through the SPI and other grants and anticipates no problems meeting the 60-day deadline to ensure compatibility of our MIS with SSA's data collection protocols. The PEU would agree to collect and transmit SSNs to SSA for WIPA participants. Counselors routinely collect client SSNs and verify them against Vermont's social welfare agency database. The project uses SSNs for linking to administrative databases for evaluation purposes, and has also frequently produced finder files with SSN and other identifiers at the request of SSA and CMS and their contractors.

The PEU is also responsible for DVR's program evaluation and has extensive resources and expertise to put towards outcomes tracking for the WIPA program. The PEU has archived DVR RSA-911 services data, benefits participation data from Vermont's department of social welfare, and quarterly earnings data from the Unemployment Insurance database for benefits counseling participants and DVR consumers as far back as 1997. These data were the basis for outcomes evaluation studies reported in peer-reviewed journals and at national conferences. The same resources can be used to track and monitor WIPA cases at both the individual level for case management purposes, and at the aggregate level for program evaluation (see Appendix 5).

Confidentiality is maintained through having all project data stored only on servers within the state's private network, not on local laptop harddrives, and accessible only through secure logins and secure connections. Paper client files are kept in locked cabinets.

### **Grievance Procedures**

Any beneficiary receiving WIPA services through Vermont DVR would be entitled to utilize the DVR grievance process. Under the Rehabilitation Act, the Rehabilitation Services Administration funds the Client Assistance Program (CAP) specifically to assist clients of DVR with disputes with the agency. CAP is administratively separate from DVR and is housed in the office of Vermont Legal Aid, Inc. CAP assists DVR consumers understand their rights under the DVR program. CAP can assist a consumer resolve a disagreement with DVR or if necessary assist the consumer appeal any decisions made by DVR.

If the DVR consumer is not able to resolve an issue, there are four levels of appeal options. These are as follows:

- A. Mediation: The process of having a neutral third party help the two parties in the dispute reach a mutually acceptable solution.
- B. Administrative Review: An informal review conducted by a DVR manager.
- C. Fair Hearing: A formal review conducted by the Agency of Human Services, Human Services Board.
- D. Civil Action: A civil court action filed by the consumer.

The DVR consumer is not required to go through any of the levels prior to requesting a Fair Hearing or filing a civil action. The full DVR grievance procedures can be found on the Vermont DVR website at [www.VocRehabVermont.org](http://www.VocRehabVermont.org) under Policy Manual, Part 1, Chapter 105, Appeals Process. CAP produces a quarterly report on grievances filed and disposition, which is provided to DVR and the State Rehabilitation Council, and can be forwarded to SSA quarterly as evidence of compliance.

<b>Summary of Resources and Plan for Ongoing Training of Staff and Quality Assurance</b>		
<b>Training Providers and Persons responsible for QA</b>	<b>Content Area and Purpose</b>	<b>Training and QA Activities and Timing and Frequency</b>
WIPA-funded CWICS to attend SSA sponsored four day training	SSI and SSDI programs and Work Incentive Provisions	Within three months of project start date
SSA-supported technical assistance	SSI and SSDI programs and Work Incentive Provisions	DVR will request onsite visit within three month of project start date and quarterly visits thereafter.
AWIC support to the project	SSI and SSDI programs and Work Incentive Provisions	AWIC will attend project staff meetings on a quarterly basis. Will also provide periodic trainings in specific content areas as needed.
Office of Vermont Health Access	Vermont Public Health Programs including Medicaid, Medicaid for Working People with Disabilities and the Vermont Health Access Program.	Ongoing and frequent consultation and technical assistance. Periodic trainings for the benefits counselors in specific content areas.
State Division of Economic Services	State assistance programs including Food Stamps, TANF, Fuel Assistance and General Assistance	Ongoing and frequent consultation and technical assistance. Periodic trainings for the benefits counselors in specific content areas.
State Housing Authority	State housing programs including Section 8 and the Mandatory Earned Income Deduction	Ongoing and frequent consultation and technical assistance. Periodic trainings for the benefits counselors in specific content areas.
Lead Benefits Counselors	To assure the DVR benefits counselors are providing accurate and timely information in all the content areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Periodic case reviews</li> <li>• Direct observation of benefits counseling sessions</li> <li>• Review of the VWII online database</li> </ul>
Case review meetings	To review all the content areas involved in a particular case	North and South benefits counseling teams hold case review meetings every two months
Use of E Mail VWII alias	To ask the benefits counseling team a specific question or share new information or policy findings	As needed
VWII Technical Staff	Review MIS data, tools, and reports to ensure data and service quality issues are identified and addressed, and counselors are using MIS to maximum effect.	Ongoing, and at least quarterly

## **Collaboration**

### **Partnerships with DOL and Employment Service Providers in Vermont**

Access to beneficiaries is a critical challenge for WIPA projects. If a WIPA project is not well connected with local disability and employment providers, it is unlikely to get timely or appropriate referrals. DVR has very well established collaborative partnerships with all the major disability providers in the state. These include:

#### **The Vermont Department of Labor (DOL) One Stop Centers**

DVR and DOL have an ongoing partnership at both the state and local levels (see attached letter of support). In seven of the twelve districts the DOL and DVR offices are co-located within the same buildings. It is not unusual for a DVR or DOL staff person to walk a beneficiary across the hall or across the street to assist them access services from the other agency. It is very common for DVR and DOL to work together to serve mutual consumers and share the costs of services. DOL has in place eight Disability Navigators who provide a strong link between DVR and DOL. In Vermont, the DOL Navigators provide beneficiaries general information on SSA work incentives and refer to the DVR or VCIL benefits counseling programs if the person needs more assistance. To date this arrangement has been effective. DVR and DOL also routinely co-sponsor trainings and workshops around disability and employment issues. The DVR WIPA project will build on this continuing partnership.

#### **The Vermont Community Mental Health System**

In Vermont ten non-profit community based agencies provide a full range of residential, case management and employment services for people with severe mental illness. These agencies also provide children's mental health services and outpatient mental health services. DVR provides grant funding to each of the agencies for supported employment services. Since 1999 the DVR benefits counselors have worked closely with the community mental health agencies to outreach consumers. A high proportion (90% plus) of the consumers served through the supported employment programs are also SSI or SSDI beneficiaries. The DVR benefits counselors are outposted to the mental health centers at least one day per week to facilitate access to services. These services are highly valued by consumers and service providers alike (see attached letter of support from the Vermont Council for Developmental and Mental Health Services). The effectiveness of these services was illustrated in a recent research paper published in the Journal Psychiatric Services in June 2006 (see footnote 3). This research indicated that beneficiaries with psychiatric disabilities, who received benefits counseling through DVR earned on average \$1,256 per year more than the comparison group members. The DVR WIPA project will build on this ongoing partnership to ensure individuals with psychiatric disabilities will continue to have access to benefits counseling services.

#### **The Developmental Services System**

In Vermont fourteen non-profit community based agencies provide a full range of residential, day services, case management and supported employment services. Almost all the 3,500 people served by these programs receive SSI and SSDI benefits. DVR has a long history of partnership with the developmental service system. DVR provides grant funding to each of the fourteen agencies to fund supported employment. As with the community mental health system the DVR benefits counselors have worked closely with the programs to outreach beneficiaries served. The DVR benefits counselors partner closely with the supported employment programs to engage

beneficiaries who are working or planning to go to work. The DVR benefits counselors are the recognized expert resource by the developmental service staff (see attached letter of support from the Vermont Council for Developmental and Mental Health Services). The DVR WIPA project will build on this ongoing partnership to ensure people with developmental disabilities have access to these services.

#### **The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation**

As noted the DVR program in Vermont serves approximately 2,500 beneficiaries at any given time. Because the DVR benefits counselors are located within the DVR offices referral is easy and routine. In Vermont DVR vocational rehabilitation counselors highly value benefits counseling services. It is routine for the DVR benefits counseling to be included as a formal component of a persons Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). DVR conducted a research study under the SSA State Partnership Initiative on the effectiveness of benefits counseling as an employment intervention for beneficiaries served through vocational rehabilitation. The study showed that SSA beneficiaries who received VR services and benefits counseling are more likely to work and earn more money, than SSA beneficiaries who receive VR services and no benefits counseling.<sup>7</sup> The WIPA CWICs will continue this close working relationship with the DVR program.

#### **Vermont Division of the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI)**

DBVI is the sister agency to DVR providing rehabilitation services for people who are blind or visually impaired. DVR and DBVI are divisions of the same state agency, the Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living. Four DBVI counselors are co-located with DVR serving all twelve human service districts. The DVR benefits counselors routinely work with the DBVI counselors and provide services to DBVI consumers. DVR will continue this close collaboration under the WIPA project.

#### **Department of Education and local school districts**

As noted, DVR received funding from the Rehabilitation Services Administration to provide benefits counseling services for youth in transition. Between 2002 and 2006 the project has served and enrolled over 700 youth. As a result DVR has established strong links with most of the high schools in the state (see attached letter of support from the Vermont Department of Education). The project is scheduled to end in September 2006 with some ramp down activities into 2007. While it is not certain that DVR will be able to maintain this level of effort on an ongoing basis, it is expected that the WIPA funds and the CWICs will help retain some of this capacity.<sup>8</sup> Regardless, DVR is expanding vocational rehabilitation services to youth in transition. DVR currently has twelve full time equivalent Transition Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors serving a youth only caseload. The Transition VR counselors are closely linked to the schools and routinely sit in on IEP and transition planning meetings. The Transition VR counselors provide the link between the schools and the DVR benefits counselors making referrals when benefits and

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<sup>7</sup> The Impact of Specialized Benefits Counseling Services on Social Security Administration Disability Beneficiaries in Vermont (2004) Tremblay, T. Smith, J. Xie, H and Drake, R. Journal of Rehabilitation Vol 70, No 2, 5-11.

<sup>8</sup> DVR is currently looking at state and federal level funding options to maintain these services beyond 2007.

work incentive issues arise. The WIPA CWICs will be closely linked to the Transition VR counselors to facilitate youth access to services.

### **Advocacy and Consumer Organizations**

DVR is submitting this application in partnership with VCIL, the State Independent Living Center. As noted in other sections of this proposal DVR and VCIL have a strong ongoing partnership and often serve mutual customers (see letter of support). DVR is also extensively networked with many of the other advocacy groups in the state. The DVR benefits counseling has been invited to present at the annual conference of the Vermont Chapter of the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (2005), the Vermont Chapter of the Association for Persons in Supported Employment (2005 and 2006) and the Vermont Parent Information Center (2005 and 2006). The DVR benefits counseling team is also well linked with other consumer groups including Vermont Psychiatric Survivors and Green Mountain Self Advocates (see letters of Support). The WIPA CWICs will continue to build on these ongoing relationships.

### **Plan to Work in Collaboration with the Ticket to Work Program Manager for Recruitment and Outreach (PMRO)**

Vermont DVR has considerable expertise around the Ticket to Work Program. DVR has been a very active Employment Network and currently has over 2,000 Tickets assigned. DVR understands the administrative details of the program and this year has received \$100,759 in Ticket Outcome payments. In addition, James Smith, the WWII project director, served on the SSA Adequacy of Incentives Advisory Group that helped develop some of the elements of the new Ticket to Work regulations scheduled to be published in the fall of 2006.

DVR strongly believes that the proposed regulations will dramatically increase the participation of new Employment Networks in the Ticket to Work Program. Currently, there is only one other Vermont based organization registered as an Employment Network. DVR believes many of the traditional disability employment providers in Vermont such as the community mental health and developmental service providers will reconsider their participation in the Ticket program, when the new regulations are published. Furthermore, DVR believes non-traditional providers such as employers and consumer run organizations may also consider becoming Employment Networks. The new regulations may offer a tremendous opportunity for SSA to expand the universe of Employment Networks and increase beneficiary participation in the Ticket Program.

DVR is uniquely positioned to help the PMRO recruit Employment Networks and engage beneficiaries in the Ticket program. DVR understands the Ticket program and has the local networks to help promote it. Furthermore DVR has credibility with local agencies around the Ticket program and work incentives.

To assist the PRMO DVR will:

- Make available state buildings or identify other free space for the Work Incentive Seminars (WISE). Assist the PRMO with the planning, logistics and registration for the WISE meetings.
- Provide to the PRMO a list of local public and private provider agencies for each regional WISE meeting. Encourage local providers to attend and sign up as Employment Networks.
- Help link Employment Networks with Ticket holders.
- Assist the PRMO with outreach to beneficiaries to encourage attendance at the WISE meetings.

- Ensure DVR benefits counselors attend each WISE meeting to be available for one on one consultation with beneficiaries. It will be particularly important to have the local disability providers encourage beneficiary attendance. DVR has the local relationship with most providers and can make this happen.
- Provide marketing materials including information on the State Medicaid for Working Disabled program and make available the “Making the Most of Your Abilities” work incentives hand book (electronic copy can be found on our website at [www.vwii.org](http://www.vwii.org)).
- If requested, conduct presentations on the Ticket to Work program and other SSA work incentives.

### Procedures for Resolving Potential Conflicts of Interest

DVR is the state public vocational rehabilitation program and an employment network. Therefore, there is the potential for a conflict of interest in DVR being both the WIPA provider and an Employment Network. The potential conflict of interest arises in two areas:

[1] *The agency may not properly inform the beneficiary regarding the impact of work on his/her federal benefits in order to maximize Ticket payments.*

DVR addresses this issue specifically in the DVR Policy and Procedure Manual directing VR counselors that “It is important to note that the Ticket Program and the payment mechanisms built into the program should not influence the rehabilitation counseling process”.<sup>9</sup> In addition the DVR counselor is instructed to “encourage the customer to consult with a benefits counselor regarding the potential impact of the employment plan on his/her benefits and healthcare coverage”.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the Ticket to Work information printed on the DVR Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) includes information on how to contact a benefits counselor “For information about how working will affect your benefits”. The DVR benefits counselors are managed under a separate structure within the DVR program to help assure their advisement is independent. Furthermore, DVR has always supported and continues to support the VCIL benefits counseling program as an independent option for beneficiaries. This is part of the reason DVR and VCIL are submitting separate but mutually supporting applications for WIPA funding.

[2] *An agency may not properly inform beneficiaries that they can choose to assign their Ticket to any available Employment Network in order to maximize the organization’s assignments.*

DVR also addresses this issue in the DVR Policy and Procedure Manual. The VR counselor is required to review the Ticket to Work information on the back of the customer copy of the IPE (see Appendix 6). This includes the statement “I can put my Ticket in inactive status or assign it to a different employment network by contacting Maximus, the Program Manager, toll free at 1-866-968-7842 (1-866-833-2967 TTY)”.

To date the issue has been somewhat hypothetical because there is only one other local Employment Network operating in Vermont and that agency has only accepted a handful of Ticket assignments for people with psychiatric disabilities only. However, DVR believes with the new proposed Ticket regulations will both reduce the potential conflict between VR agencies and Employment Networks and expand the potential pool of private Employment Networks. In particular the proposed provision that allows DVR to use cost reimbursement and an Employment Network to bill for milestone outcomes will promote creative new partnership arrangements.

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<sup>9</sup> Vermont DVR Policy and Procedure Manual. Section 107, Page 2.

<sup>10</sup> Vermont DVR Policy and Procedure Manual. Section 107, Page 3.

Also DVR recognizes that if it becomes a WIPA provider it will have specific responsibility to help the PMRO recruit new Employment Networks. As a WIPA provider DVR will also be responsible for helping Employment Networks connect with Ticket holders. Therefore if DVR becomes a WIPA provider, the agency will:

- Maintain and update a list of all operating Employment Networks in each of the twelve DVR District Offices in the State, and provide that information to Ticket holders.
- The WIPA CWICs and all VWII benefits counselors when providing benefits counseling and outreach, will provide beneficiaries with information on all available Employment Networks in the state.

## Appendix 1 — Benefits Counseling Fact Sheet



**Benefits Counseling**  
 promoting independence  
 and self-sufficiency for  
 Vermonters with disabilities

Benefits counseling provides targeted assistance on public benefits issues for people who want to work towards self-sufficiency. It is of proven value in helping people with disabilities gain employment and reduce dependency on public benefits.

Benefits counseling also has great potential to contribute to the success of AHS reorganization. In fact, benefits counseling is an established statewide service that exemplifies the core themes of the reorganization, with its emphasis on consumer direction, service coordination, community-based decisionmaking, flexible solutions, and crisis prevention.

With AHS support, benefits counseling can remain a vital service for AHS and its customers.

### What does Benefits Counseling do for AHS Consumers?

**Provides a "one stop" source for benefits issues** that solves complex problems across federal and state agencies. The problems consumers bring to BCs are never confined to a silo—counselors can't afford to be either.

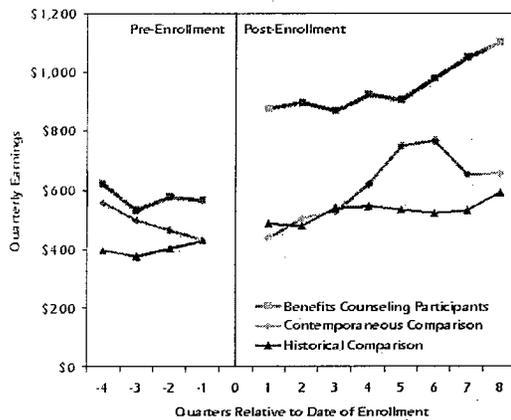
**Reduces Fear** that prevents people from going to work and getting a better life. Consumers (and many of their service providers) aren't aware of all the work incentive opportunities we now have. It takes time and concentrated work by counselors to get past the old truth that work means lost benefits.

**Prevents Crisis** that results when a change in situation (a new job, a raise) causes an unexpected loss of healthcare or cash benefits. The interaction between multiple benefits systems is very complicated. It takes an expert to plan for and manage change so that crisis is averted.

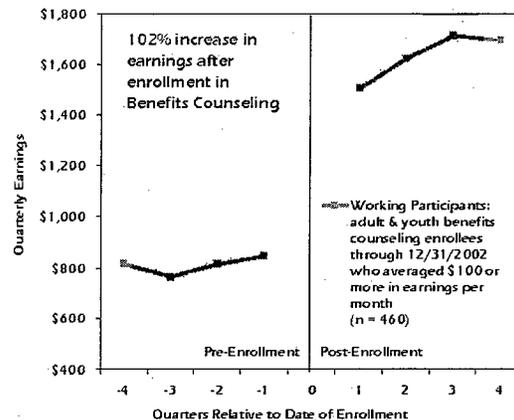
**Improves employment outcomes** and economic circumstances of some of the AHS system's most vulnerable consumers.

**Benefits Counselors help consumers navigate our complex public benefits system. BCs work with—**

- Social Security
- Medicaid
- Medicare
- State healthcare programs
- Food Stamps
- TANF
- Fuel assistance
- Housing subsidies
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Special Education
- Veterans benefits
- and more...



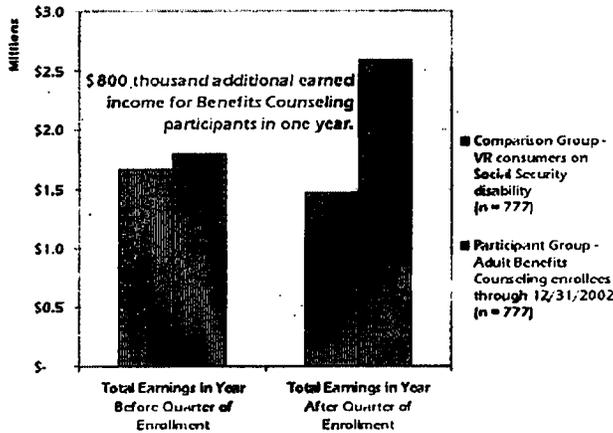
**Figure 1.** Average earnings go up for benefits counseling clients, even when those who didn't go back to work are included in the average (\$0 earners). The VocRehab clients in the comparison groups are also on SSA disability. They also sought VR's help to go to work, but—without benefits counseling—the benefits issues remained a barrier.



**Figure 2.** When \$0 earners are excluded, the substantial improvement in earnings for benefits counseling clients is even more evident. On average, those who chose to work doubled their earnings after enrolling in benefits counseling. For people used to living on so little, this is a big change.

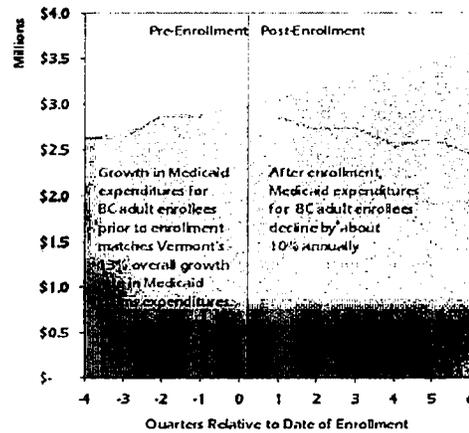
**What does Benefits Counseling do for AHS and the State of Vermont?**

An expanded workforce and growing economy are two important benefits for our state. In the year following benefits counseling enrollment, participants brought in \$800,000 in additional earnings and raised their employment rate from 35% to 50%.



Satisfied consumers and smoother AHS operations as both consumers and AHS staff finally have a reliable resource for answering complex federal/state benefits questions. Benefits counseling customers give the service a 98% positive rating. AHS staff and other agency staff and advocates are also strongly supportive of the service. It lets them do their jobs, without having to tackle the morass of public benefits regulations.

Decreased Medicaid and state health care costs as employment increases well-being, reduces health care utilization, shifts costs to private insurance, and moves people off the Medicaid rolls. Benefits counseling participants had a 10% decline in claims expenditures after enrolling in benefits counseling services.



**How can we preserve and expand this important investment in self-sufficiency?**

Despite being a relatively new service, benefits counseling has proven its merit. It has a well-established network of 12 counselors, 2 lead counselors, and a director serving 500 adults and 200 youth in transition per year. With grant funds ending in 2005 and 2007, benefits counseling's future is uncertain, but promising.

Make it an integral part of AHS reorganization by incorporating benefits counselors into the Community Navigation Teams and ensuring that their expertise is readily available to Field Service Directors.

Explore alternative funding sources to continue our investment in building the state's workforce and reducing dependence on public benefits and services. It costs about \$1,060 to serve a benefits counseling client each year—a cost outweighed by the clear economic benefit of increased earnings and reduced benefits costs.

Extend the service to TANF recipients who share many of the same fears and barriers to employment as people with disabilities. DCF Economic Services staff has expressed interest in using the model for their consumers.

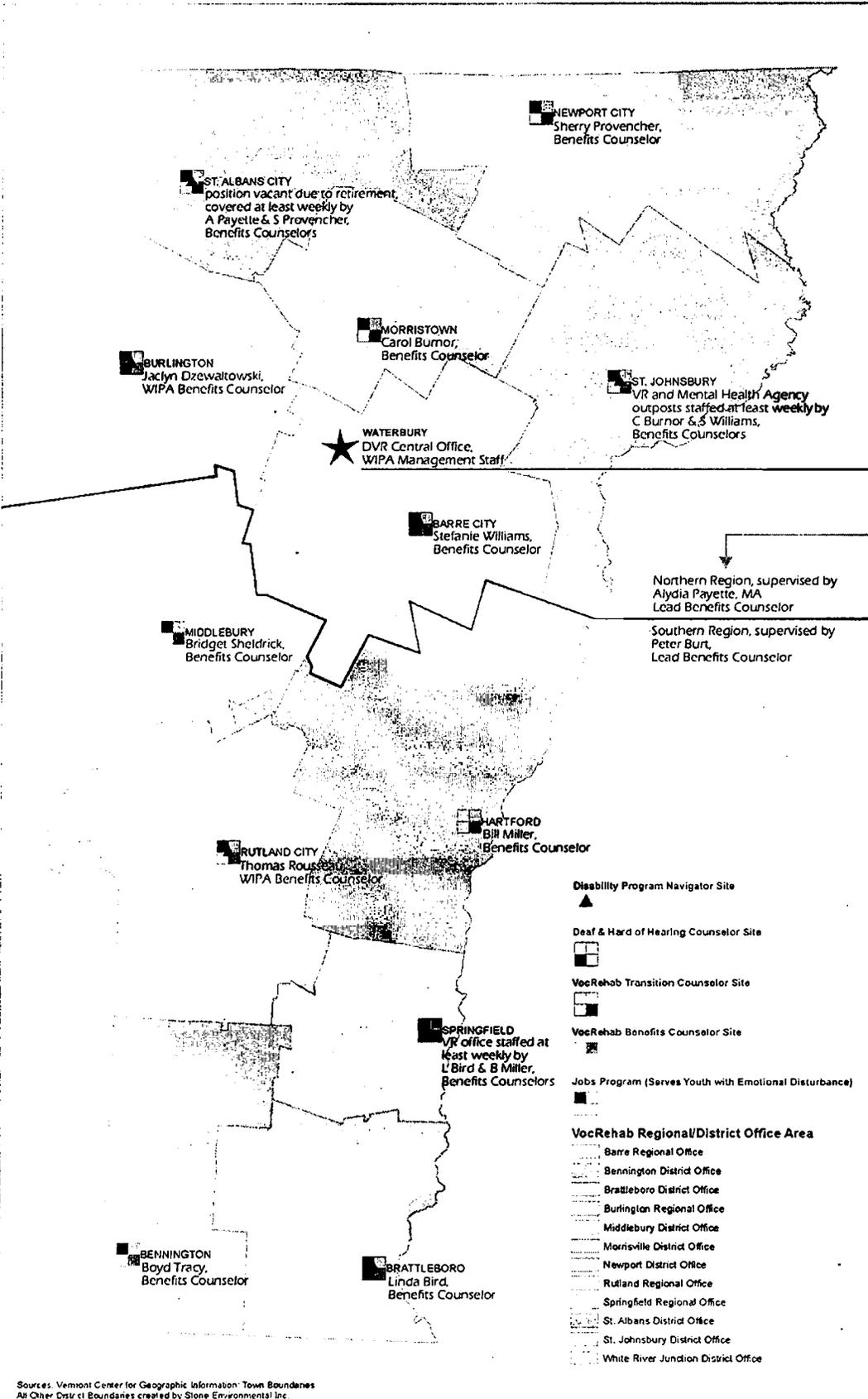
Estimated cost to support benefits counseling for 500 adults per year	
State General Fund & other sources	\$480,000
Medicaid Infrastructure Grant Funds	\$50,000
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>\$530,000</b>
Cost per Consumer	\$1,060

BC enrollees on average earned \$1,400 more and used \$400 less in Medicaid in the year after enrolling

- Measurable outcomes expected from BC services
- 45% higher average annual earnings
  - 10% decrease in Medicaid expenditures
  - 5% increase in employer-based health coverage

For more info, contact — Diane Dalmasse or James Smith, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, 1-800-361-1239

Appendix 2 — Vermont Services System Map



Sources: Vermont Center for Geographic Information Town Boundaries  
All Other District Boundaries created by Stone Environmental Inc.

**Appendix 3 — Making the Most of Your Abilities**

VocRehab *Vermont*  
**Making the most  
of *YOUR* abilities**  
Programs that help Vermonters go to work



VWII staff produced this plain-language guide to federal and state work incentive programs and Vermont employment supports, with a glossary of terms and resource directory to introduce Vermonters with disabilities to the opportunities and resources they can use to go to work. It is available online at [www.vwii.org](http://www.vwii.org)

**Table of Contents**

- I. Introducing . . . Your Tools for Success
- II. When You Make a Living, You Make a Better Life
- III. Social Security: Your Financial Safety Net
- IV. Healthcare Benefits: We've Got You Covered!
- V. She's Got a Ticket to Work!
- VI. Get the Help You Need to Succeed
- VII. Make it Happen!
- VIII. Resource Guide

**Appendix 4 — VWII MIS System Screenshots**

The VWII benefits counseling case management database tracks **1** client identifiers, including SSN and birth date, **2** referral source, **3** multiple addresses associated with one client, **4** extensive case notes, **5** case management information (including consents, counselor assignment, case status), **6** information on SSA benefits status, trial work period usage, and work incentives usage from the BPQY and other SSA communications, **7** multiple jobs, **8** profile information at intake and at unlimited multiple points thereafter, and **9** monthly earnings information as part of the SSDI Benefit Offset Pilot.

**Vermont Work Incentives Initiative - [VWII Client Record]**

Enter Change View Reports Tools

Client: **Test Client** **4** **1637** **5** Log Out

Client: **Test Client** **1**  
 SSN: 999-99-9999 **6** DOB: 5/25/1957  
 FC: Sherry Provencier  
 Gender: Adult **2** **10/14/2002**  
 Status: Active  
 Ref by: **Jody Casey**  
 Agency: **VR**  
 Ref type: **VR / DBVI**  
 VR Dist: **Newport**

3/3/2005 Add New BPQY [LR BPQY]

**Cash Benefits**  
 Type of Benefit: Worker Disabled Indiv. **6**  
 Current Status: Current Pay Terminated  
 Enrollment date: Feb-1998  
 Payment Amt: \$893.10  
 Other Paid On: No  
 Total Family Amt: \$893.10  
 Overpaid Balance: \$0.00  
 Amt Withheld: \$0.00

**Disability**  
 Onset Date: Aug-1997  
 Sickness End: No  
 Disability: 2950  
 First CDR: Jul-1999  
 CDR Code: Q+

**Medicare**  
 Medicare A Since: Feb-2000  
 Medicare B Since: Feb-2000  
 Decided Part B

**Representative**  
 Payee: No  
 Authorized Rep: No

**SSDI Work**  
 Trial Work Month: May-1998 Sep-1999 4  
 Cession Month:

TWP Months				Work Incentive Usage			
Month	Countable	Used	Verbed	Type	Started	Ended	Amt./Mo Description
Aug-1999	\$346.75	1	<input type="checkbox"/>				
May-1999	\$504.89	1	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Aug-1999	\$1,011.05		<input type="checkbox"/>				

Contact List: Test Client **3**  
 Ref: participant  
 Street: 20 Main St  
 City: Anywhere VT 05050  
 Phone: 802-999-2222  
 Fax: TTY  
 Email:  
 Contact Instruct:

Record: 14

**Edit Job Record**

Client: **Test Client**

Employer: **Sherwin Williams** **7**  
 City: **Montpelier** State: **VT** Zip: **05602**

Job Started: 1/21/2006 Hourly Wage: \$12.54 Job Type: Competitive  
 Sall There: 4/25/2006 Avg hrs / wk: 40 PT / FT: FT 30+ hrs/wk  
 Job ended: Monthly Gross: \$2,157 Ins Offered: Yes

Notes: Overtime rate of pay: 18.87  
 Works 44 hours per week (4 are overtime) 2,157 \* 301 = 2458 per month

Delete Save Cancel

**Personnel Employment**

Test Client    SSN: 999-99-9999    DOB: 5/25/1957    Program: Adult    Benefit Date: 7/27/2005    **8**

**Demographics and Family Situation**

Sex: Male  
 Ethnicity: White  
 Marital Status: Married / Civil Union  
 Living Situation: With spouse / partner  
 Children at home: Under 18: 2  
 18+:  
 Highest Education: Bachelor's degree

**Employment / School Activities**

Student Status:  
 Enrolled in:  HS  VoTech  College  
 Currently Working: Yes  
 Avg Hours/Week: 20

Enter Job Data  
 Enter WIP Data  
 Enter Work Incentive Usage

**Public Benefits Utilization**

Medicare: Yes  
 Medicaid or WMAP, etc: No  
 Working People w/ Disab  
 HCBS Waiver  
 Medicare Buy-in (OMB/SMB)  
 Private ins thru employer: No  
 Other private insurance: Yes  
 Housing Assistance: No  
 Food Stamps: No  
 General Assistance: No  
 Fuel Assistance: No  
 TANF / Reech-Up: No  
 WIC: No  
 Child Care Subsidy: No  
 Veteran's Benefits: No  
 Private Disability / Pension: No  
 Workers Compensation: No  
 Unemployment Comp: No  
 Other Benefits: Yes  
 (Describe) Private disability coverage

**Current System/Programs**

Voc Rehab / DBU: Yes  
 Developmental Services: No  
 Children's Mental Health: No  
 Outpatient Mental Health: No  
 CRT Program: No  
 DET / One-Stop Center: No  
 School Special Education: No  
 Economic Services (PATH):  
 Child Welfare (SRG): No  
 Corrections: No

**Social Security Disability Status**

SSDI Beneficiary: Yes  
 SSDI Type: Worker  
 On SSDI For: 1 year or longer  
 SSI Recipient:  
 On SSI For:  
 Receives Blind SGA

Save Cancel

**MonthRptEntry : Form**

Client: Test Client    **9**

Month	Gross Earnings	RWES Subsidy	Disposable Earnings	WIP Pct Evidence	Verified Self-Emp by SSA	Hours	Monthly SGA	Over 12 Months	Over 12 Months SGA	Over 12 Months Type
05/2005	\$2,000	\$0	\$2,000	Paystubs	<input type="checkbox"/>		1	\$1,410	\$1,170	TW/Pused
06/2005	\$923	\$0	\$923	Paystubs	<input type="checkbox"/>		2	\$332.7	\$93	TW/Pused
07/2005	\$675	\$0	\$675	Paystubs	<input type="checkbox"/>		3	\$65	\$0	TW/Pused
08/2005	\$243	\$0	\$243	Paystubs	<input type="checkbox"/>			\$0	\$0	
09/2005	\$1,643	\$0	\$1,643	Paystubs	<input type="checkbox"/>		4	\$1,053	\$813	TW/Pused
10/2005	\$1,133	\$0	\$1,133	Paystubs	<input type="checkbox"/>		5	\$543	\$303	TW/Pused
11/2005	\$1,619	\$0	\$1,619	Paystubs	<input type="checkbox"/>		6	\$1,029	\$789	TW/Pused
12/2005	\$1,795	\$0	\$1,795	Paystubs	<input type="checkbox"/>		7	\$1,205	\$965	TW/Pused
01/2006	\$1,133	\$0	\$1,133	None	<input type="checkbox"/>		8	\$513	\$273	TW/Pused
02/2006	\$1,133	\$0	\$1,133	None	<input type="checkbox"/>		9	\$513	\$273	TW/Pused
				None	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					

## **Appendix 5 — Planning and Evaluation Unit Data Resources**

In addition to the comprehensive benefits counseling database described in Appendix 3, the PEU has data sharing agreements in place with several state agencies and has well-established routines for requesting and archiving data (in many cases going as far back as 1997) from these agencies on VR project participants. This existing structure can easily be adjusted to incorporate data collection for WIPA participants. The PEU's administrative datasets include:

### **The RSA 911 Database**

This is the primary service and outcome database for the DVR program. This database includes data on disability, employment goals, services provided, cost, and time in the system. This database could be used to track employment services used by WIPA participants. In addition, the RSA 911 database includes some outcome data on employment status at case closure, job type, earnings, and employer benefits, which may provide the evaluation with some additional qualitative information on employment outcomes such as job type and associated employee benefits.

### **The State Unemployment Insurance (UI) Database**

The PEU has direct access to UI data reported to the Vermont Department of Labor. These data are reported from employers to the state agency for most types of employment in the state. The UI database archives data for three years prior. This will allow the PEU to collect valid employment data for WIPA participants for at least three years prior to enrollment in the YTD. Because the UI system is mandated to collect data on all earnings directly from employers it is a highly reliable source of employment data. The UI database does have some limitations. It does not count self-employment, some types of non-profit employment or out-of-state employment.

### **The State Department for Children and Families (DCF) ACCESS database**

The ACCESS database includes all the state's social welfare and healthcare programs (TANF, Medicaid, Food Stamps, etc.). The PEU will use this database to track eligibility for state healthcare and cash assistance programs. It will also be a useful source of information for screening eligibility of WIPA applicants who must have SSI or SSDI benefits to qualify for services, and will be an important tool for the benefits counselors for ongoing benefits management.

### **Electronic Data Systems (EDS) Medicaid Claims database**

The PEU also has access to the Medicaid eligibility and claims data warehouse maintained by EDS, the state's Medicaid claims administrator. In addition to allowing analysis of health care eligibility and utilization patterns for both WIPA participants, the EDS warehouse also provides some information on third party health care coverage.

### **State Department of Corrections Database:**

Unfortunately, youth in the transition age range experience a high degree of involvement with corrections. According to a recent evaluation by the Vermont Department of Mental Health, about one third of males receiving special education services are incarcerated at least once, within three years of exiting high school. The PEU can will use this database to track rates of incarceration and days incarcerated for the full VR youth population, including WIPA participants. This will allow a secondary analysis to determine if the benefits counseling intervention had any significant impact on rates of incarceration for youth.

## Appendix 6 — Ticket to Work EN Statement from Vermont DVR IPE Form

**Ticket to Work Information for SSI and SSDI Beneficiaries:**

*I agree and acknowledge that by signing this IPE, my "Ticket" will be assigned to Voc Rehab if my "Ticket" is available for assignment on the date I sign the IPE.*

*I understand that:*

- ❖ I can put my Ticket in inactive status or assign it to a different employment network by contacting Maximus, the Program Manager, toll-free at 1-866-968-7842 (1-866-833-2967 TTY).*
- ❖ As long as I continue to work with my VR counselor and make progress on my IPE, SSA will not do any Continuing Disability Reviews (CDR) on my case once my Ticket is in use.*
- ❖ In order for VR to get paid for services provided to me, they will track my SSI/SSDI payments and my earnings. To do this, VR shares information with the Department of Prevention, Assistance, Transition and Health Access (PATH), the Department of Employment and Training, Maximus, and Social Security. This information may include SSI and SSDI cash benefits data, my work and vocational plan information, and records of my employment and earnings.*

For more information about the Ticket to Work Program, call Maximus at 1-866-968-7842 or the Voc Rehab Ticket Administrator at 1-800-361-1239 or talk to your VR Counselor.

For information about how working will affect your benefits, call 1-800-361-1239 for the name of a benefits counselor near you.

## **Letters of Support**

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**Vermont Center for Independent Living**

**Vermont Department of Labor (DOL) One Stop Centers**

**Office of Vermont Health Access**

**Vermont Council on Developmental and Mental Health Services**

**Vermont Department of Education**

**Vermont Psychiatric Survivors**

**Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)  
Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Project (WIPA)  
SSA OESP -06-1  
September 29, 2006**

Addendum to Proposal Submitted June 25, 2006

**Rational for Modification of Proposal**

Vermont DVR originally submitted a proposal for WIPA funds as a collaborative project with the Vermont Center for Independent Living (VCIL). Both DVR and VCIL misunderstood that the minimum award available was for \$100,000. Therefore DVR and VCIL submitted mutually supportive proposals for \$25,000 and \$75,000 respectively. Our agencies did not understand that SSA could only make a single award for \$100,000.

SSA has informed DVR that only a single award for \$100,000 would be made. Therefore, DVR is modifying the original proposal submitted June 29, 2006 to reflect an award of \$100,000. DVR and VCIL still intend to work collaboratively to ensure the maximum access to WIPA funded services statewide. *DVR will provide all the services and activities outlined in the original proposal.* The primary changes in the proposal reflect the larger amount of WIPA funds available to DVR

**Project Staffing**

DVR will expand the number of benefits counseling staff/CWICs providing WIPA services from two to four. DVR intends to add the following DVR/Vermont Work Incentives Initiative staff to the WIPA project in addition to the two staff identified in the original proposal.

*Linda Bird, Benefits Counselor/CWIC Brattleboro:* Ms. Bird has been a benefits counselor for DVR since 1999. Prior to 1999 she was a vocational rehabilitation counselor and senior vocational rehabilitation counselor for the Brattleboro district. She is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor and has a Masters degree in counseling.

*Meg Lister, Benefits Counselor/CWIC St Albans:* Ms. Lister is a new benefits counselor to the DVR team. Prior to coming to DVR she was the coordinator of a supported employment program for adults with psychiatric disabilities for North Western Community Services in St. Albans. She has a Bachelors degree in child development.

In addition DVR will designate Peter Burt the Southern Lead Benefits Counselor as the Project Coordinator for the WIPA project. He will work with Alydia Payette the Northern Lead Benefits Counselor to provide supervision to the four WIPA CWIC staff. He will also be the primary day to day contact with SSA regarding the WIPA project. He will report to James Smith who will continue to have overall responsibility for the WIPA project.

Summary of Staffing

<b>Staff</b>	<b>Percent of Full Time to WIPA Project</b>
Peter Burt, Lead Benefits Counselor and WIPA Project Coordinator	20%
Jackie Dzewaltowski, Benefits Counselor/CWIC Burlington Vermont	20%
Tom Rousseau, Benefits Counselor/CWIC Rutland	20%
Linda Bird, Benefits Counselor/CWIC Brattleboro	20%
Meg Lister, Benefits Counselor/CWIC St Albans	20%

All the above positions are full time benefits counselors. The non-WIPA portion of their time is funded through other state and federal sources, though all there responsibilities are as benefits counselors.

**Sub-Contract to VCIL**

DVR and VCIL are strongly committed to providing choices for beneficiaries. DVR and VCIL recognize that some beneficiaries may prefer to receive WIPA services through a peer or consumer run organization. Other beneficiaries may prefer to receive WIPA services through the state vocational rehabilitation program.

In order to ensure beneficiaries have a choice DVR will subcontract \$25,000 of the WIPA funds to VCIL. These funds will partially support three VCIL Benefits to Work Specialists as follows:

<b>Staff</b>	<b>Percent of Time to WIPA Project</b>
Gail Halverson, Benefits to Work Manager Burlington	27%
Helen Johnke, Benefits to Work Specialist Montpelier	27%
Tracy Dorman, Benefits to Work Specialist Bennington (PT 18 hours per week)	30%

*The combination of DVR and VCIL CWICs will allow for statewide coverage of WIPA services.*

Background of VCIL Project Staff

Gail Halverson, our SSA Benefits to Work Manager, provides technical support and oversight of our two Benefits to Work Specialists, Helen Johnke and Tracy Dorman. These three staff manage our toll free Benefits to Work help line and coordinate and carryout most of the outreach and training activities for this project with assistance from other VCIL staff. Our Benefits to Work staff also participate in regular technical assistance phone conferencing meetings with Cornell staff, and participate in meetings with Vermont Protection and Advocacy, VR Benefits Counselors, and other Vermont Works partners. They are presenters and co-facilitators of the Choice Advantage workshops and other group sessions and workshop series that we offer. Both

our Youth Leadership and Choice Advantage activities now include a strong work-incentives component. Together, Gail Halverson Tracy Doorman and Helen Johnke bring a broad range of skills and experience to our work. They include employment law training, HUD Fair Housing training, presentation and facilitation skills, peer counseling experience, personal and professional experience with work incentives.

Patricia Dowers, VCIL's Program Director provides general oversight and supervision of our Benefits to Work Specialists and of our collaborative activities with VR projects, with regional Workforce Investment Boards, and with the Department of Employment and Training Program's local service navigators. In addition to supervising our Benefits, Planning, Assistance and Outreach staff, Patricia also supervises VCIL's information and referral, peer advocate counseling, Deaf Independence, youth leadership, and personal assistance service activities and oversees the day to day operations of these programs. This has helped us to integrate our work incentive activities and services into the work plans of many more staff than the program pays for.

VCIL's Executive Director Deborah Lisi-Baker has participated in national forums and advisory boards on work incentives and health reform; including a recent task force, *Making Medicaid work for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, sponsored by the National Academy on State Health Policy, and national work incentive policy summits hosted by George Washington University. Ms Lisi-Baker helped the University of Vermont and the Association for Cerebral Palsy implement a successful youth and transition programs for youth and young adults with disabilities; and assisted in the development of Vermont's successful Governor's Youth Leadership Forum, which VCIL manages. She has co-authored the state's *Guide to Services for Seniors and Adults with Disabilities* and several curricula and workbooks on life planning and disability; including *Taking Charge: Tools and Tips from the Self-Help & Psychiatric Survivor Movement in Vermont* (VT Protection and Advocacy, Inc.); *Enabling Futures Curriculum*, (UVM); *Choice Advantage Curriculum*, (Division of Vocational Rehabilitation). She is the editor of the statewide paper, *The Independent*, a Vermont publication for individuals with disabilities and seniors which VCIL produces and distributes in partnership with numerous disability and senior organizations, including DVR and Vermont Protection and Advocacy.

**Vermont Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) Application  
The Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)**

**PART II**

**[5] Budget Justification**

**Staffing**

The WIPA program will be implemented within the DVR VWII project. The VWII project consists of multiple state and federal work incentive projects. All VWII staff are limited service employees of the Vermont DVR and receive full state benefit packages. Staff salaries are determined by the state government pay grade for the position and length of service. In some cases staff at a lower pay grade may have a higher salary than staff at a higher pay grade because of length of service.

VWII staff will positive report time spent on the WIPA to ensure only project activities are charged to the project. The actual staff assigned to the project, their salaries, and proportion of time assigned to the project for eight months, are laid out in the following table:

<b>Staff Person and Title</b>	<b>Salary</b>	<b>Time Assigned to WIPA Project</b>	<b>Eight Month Cost to WIPA Project</b>
Peter Burt, Lead Benefits Counselor	\$59,753	20%	\$7,767
Tom Rousseau, Benefits Counselor/CWIC Rutland	\$53,768	20%	\$7,169
Jaclyn Dzewaltowski, Benefits Counselor/CWIC Burlington	\$45,178	20%	\$6,024
Linda Bird, Benefits Counselor/CWIC Brattleboro	\$53,768	20%	\$7,169
Meg Lister, Benefits Counselor/CWIC	\$35,485	20%	\$4,731
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$33,060</b>

**Fringe Benefits**

As noted, all staff are employees of the State of Vermont and receive the state government benefits package. The individual fringe rates for staff depend on both the number of dependents and the healthcare options selected. Ranges vary by individual and range from a low of 19% to a high of almost 50%. For the WIPA project staff the overall fringe rate equals 35% of their total salaries.

A complete description of the State of Vermont employee salaries and benefits can be found at <http://www.vermontpersonnel.org/employee/benefits.cfm>.

Total Fringe Costs: \$11,571

### **Out of State Travel**

As required in the WIPA application, the Vermont project has set aside funds for the CWICs to complete the four day SSA sponsored training for all staff. DVR estimates the cost of sending the two CWIC staff will break down as follows:

Five nights lodging at \$150 per night for two staff: \$1,500

State of Vermont per diem allowance for food is \$32 per day for two people for five days: \$320

Mileage to a New England regional location at 44.5 cents per mile for 499 miles: \$222

### **In State Travel**

Local mileage for the CWIC staff in the Burlington and Rutland areas. 3000 miles at 44.5 cents per mile: \$1,335

Total Travel Costs: \$3,377

### **Supplies**

The VWII project has existing brochures and outreach materials regarding benefits counseling services. These will be modified at little or no cost to reflect the new WIPA status. However, there will be a significant need to develop outreach and informational materials regarding the new Ticket to Work regulations. The VWII project will develop these materials in house in consultation with SSA. We anticipate printing and duplication costs will total \$200.

Total Supplies \$200

### **Contractual**

As noted in the original proposal and the addendum, the Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Vermont Center for Independent Living (VCIL) agreed that it is important for beneficiaries to have a choice of CWIC providers. Therefore, DVR will subcontract a portion (25%) of WIPA funds to VCIL to provide CWIC services. The following is the budget for the VCIL sub-contract.

Staff Person and Title	Salary	Time Assigned to WIPA Project	Eight Month Cost to WIPA Project
Gail Halverson, Benefits to Work Manager	\$28,710 Full Time	27%	\$5168
Helen Johnke, Benefits to Work Specialist	\$24,330 Full Time	27%	\$4,379
Tracy Dorman, Benefits to Work Specialist	\$9,460 Part Time	30%	\$1,892
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$11,439</b>

The fringe rate for VCIL staff is 35%. Total fringe for staff assigned to this project will equal \$4,004.

Instate travel: The VCIL staff will be required to travel in state to meet with beneficiaries, and attend trainings and staff meeting. Travel is estimate to total 2750 miles at 44.5 cents per mile equals a total of \$1,224.

Total VCIL Sub-Contract Costs: \$16,667

**Total Funds for Direct Costs Requested \$64,875**

**Indirect Costs**

The State of Vermont has a federally approved cost allocation plan for all state agencies. The cost allocation plan requires that all of the regional and central supporting costs be shared among funded projects. These funds support the location of project staff in the DVR central offices and in the twelve regional and district offices. This includes rent, utilities, supervision, clerical support, and other administrative overhead. It also includes the costs of the DVR management staff that oversee the program.

The State indirect costs vary from year to year based on the actual operating costs of the agency. Based on similar sized projects administered by DVR in 2006 we estimate the total indirect rate for the WIPA project will be 16% or \$10,380.

DVR requests \$1,792 in indirect costs to partially offset these costs.

**Total Funds for Indirect Costs Requested: \$1,792**

**Total WIPA Funds Requested: \$66,667**



**Required Non-Federal Match**

As noted the estimated indirect costs for the WIPA project are much greater than the funds requested. DVR will apply \$3,334 of the indirect costs towards the required non-federal match for the WIPA project.

**Non Federal Match \$3,334**

