



LIFE. YOUR WAY.
Department on
Disability Services

DC's Benefits Planning System Training Resources-Update

*Supported by the National Expansion of
Employment Opportunities Network (NEON)*

Tiered Benefits Planning System- NEON 2025



NEON 2025 Objective

- Developed Tiered Benefits Planning System
 - Benefits Ambassadors
 - Examples: DSPs, Intake Workers, Service Coordinators, etc.
 - Benefits Navigators
 - Examples: Employment Specialists, VR Counselors, Employment Coordinators, etc.
 - Benefits Planners
 - Certified Benefits Planners



Benefits Ambassadors

Training and Tools

- Recorded Training
 - *How to Know Enough about Disability Benefits from Social Security to NOT be Dangerous*
- *Tools:*
 - *SSDI and SSI Summaries*
 - *SSDI and SSI Comparison Chart*

Website Link: [Benefits Ambassador Resource Page | dds](#)

Benefits Navigator

Training and Tools

- *Recorded Trainings*
 - *You Can Get Public Benefits, Go to Work and Live to Tell About It-SSI*
 - *You Can Get Public Benefits, Go to Work and Live to Tell About It-SSDI*
- *Tools*
 - *SSDI and SSI Summary*
 - *SSDI and SSI Comparison*
 - *SSI Calculation Sheet*
 - *Bottom Line Comparison*

Website Link: [Benefits Navigator Resource and Training | dds](#)

Benefits Planner

Training and Tools

- *Recorded Trainings*
 - *Why on Earth Should I Work My Way Off SSDI?*
 - *Medicaid*
 - *Estimating Taxes*
 - *HUD Rental Assistance*
- *Tools*
 - *Comparison Tools*
 - *Calculators*
 - *Key Summaries*

Website Link: [Benefits Planner Resource and Training | dds](#)

Website Demo

- Share 3 pages
- [Benefits Ambassador Resource Page | dds](#)
- [Benefits Navigator Resource and Training | dds](#)
- [Benefits Planner Resource and Training | dds](#)
- Share PDF Resource Page

What is Benefits Counseling

- A Benefits Counselor gives you information to help you make informed choices about work and earnings.
- A Benefits Counselor will show you how different amounts of earnings will affect your benefits and can help you use work incentives to be sure you get ahead financially when you work.
- The information you need depends on the benefits you receive, past work you have done and current work you're doing, and your use of work incentives in the past.

Data Highlights: Participant Motivations

Which topics/areas related to work and benefits do the people you support struggle with the most?

- Impact on SSI Benefits
- Impact on SSDI Benefits
- Impact on Medicaid
- Family Concerns
- Correctly Reporting Wages

Medicaid Session

Top Reason for Attending:

- Learning about Latest Medicaid Updates
- Understanding Medicaid Eligibility to Help Myself or My Family

Data Highlights: Participation and Learning

Participation

- 379 Participants in Live Trainings (overall)
- 12 Government Agencies
- 69 DDS Staff
- 69 Service Provider Organizations
- 7 Advocacy Organizations
- Others

Feedback

- 77% of respondents plan to refer people for Benefits Counseling
- 79% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they felt more comfortable answering questions about benefits and work after the training.

How to Get Free Benefits Counseling:

- Contact the Ticket to Work Helpline at 1-866-968-7842 (if you receive Social Security Disability or SSI, are 14 – 65 years old, and are working or trying to work)
- If you have a case open with the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), ask your RSA counselor to arrange benefits counseling for you.

Building on What We Have Learned

Individual and Family Training

- Family Sessions on SSI and SSDI
- Individual Session

Expanding the State Specific Trainings

- Medicaid (updated for 2026)
- Veteran's Benefits
- Worker's Compensation
- SNAP
- TANF

Building on What We Have Learned

Considering Increased Use of Ticket to Work Program and Long-term Employment Supports

- Ticket to Work
 - Worker
 - Providers
 - Vocational Rehab
- Long-term Supports
 - Including Benefits Counseling

Assessing and Updating DC's Tiered Benefits Planning System

Building the Next Phase of DC's Benefits Planning System



01

Community Outreach

Expand outreach to individuals, families, schools, providers, employers, and referral partners to raise awareness of employment and benefits planning.



02

Agency Coordination

Strengthen collaboration across DDS, including DDA and RSA, for seamless, person-centered services and consistent messaging.



03

Earlier Engagement

Refine the RSA intake process so benefits planning begins early in the vocational rehabilitation journey.



04

Customer Education

Offer SSI and SSDI Benefits Overview sessions after the RSA application to support informed decision making.



05

Individualized Benefits Counseling

Provide one-on-one Work Incentives Benefits Counseling tailored to each individual's benefits, goals, and finances.



06

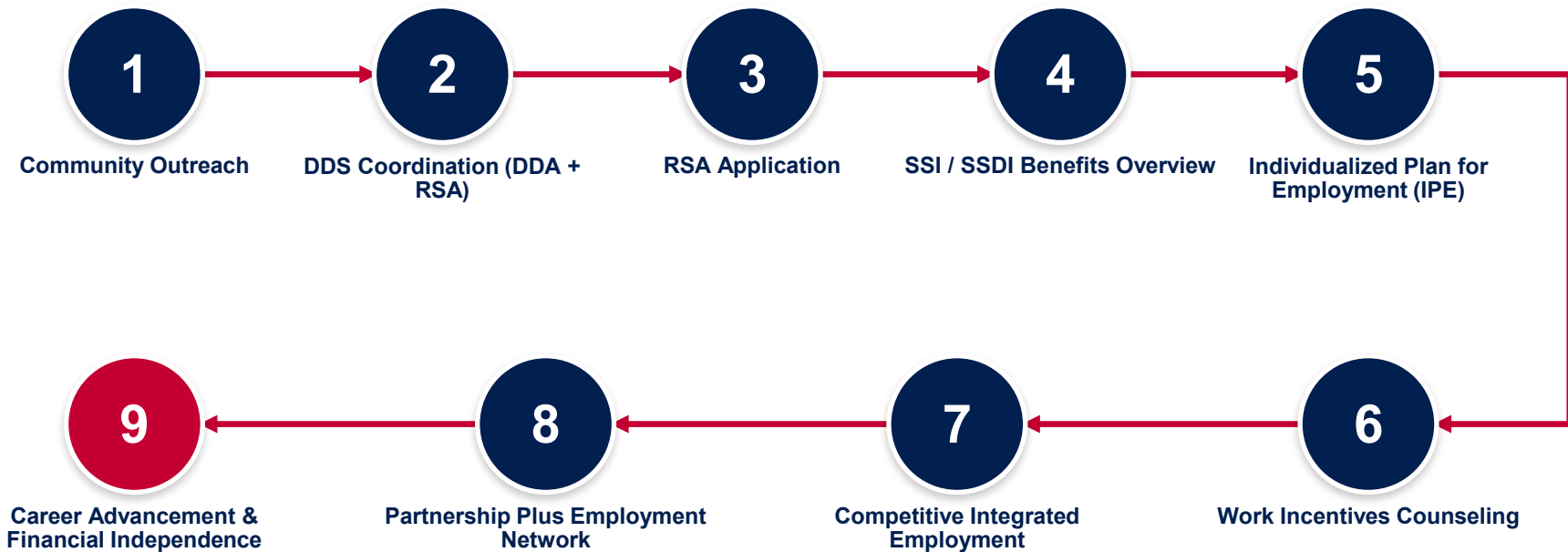
Long-Term Employment Success

Establish Partnership Plus agreements with Employment Networks for follow-along, Ticket to Work, and retention.

VISION

A coordinated DDS Benefits Planning Continuum that connects outreach, education, employment services, and long-term supports, so every individual can confidently pursue competitive integrated employment and financial independence.

DDS Benefits Planning Continuum



GUIDING PRINCIPLES



**Early
engagement**



**Coordinated
DDS supports**



**Benefits-
informed
decisions**



**Long-term
employment
success**

Individual First: A Continuum of Long-Term Employment Success



OUTCOMES



Competitive integrated employment



Employment retention



Career advancement



Increased earnings



Financial independence



Ticket to Work participation



Strong DDS partnerships

The right support, at the right time, from community outreach through long-term career success.



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Questions?

