

Disability Program "Navigator" Initiative

Department of Labor
and
Social Security Administration



FACT SHEET
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The Department of Labor (DOL) and the Social Security Administration (SSA) have jointly established a new position, the Disability Program Navigator, within DOL's One-Stop Career Centers.

The Disability Program Navigator helps people with disabilities "navigate" through the enormous challenges of seeking work. Complex rules surrounding entitlement programs, along with fear of losing cash assistance and health benefits, can often discourage people with disabilities from working. DOL and SSA have established the Disability Program Navigator (DPN) initiative to better inform beneficiaries and other people with disabilities about the work support programs now available at DOL-funded One-Stop Career Centers. These Centers provide information, training and other employment-related services at a single customer-friendly location. This Initiative is developing new/ongoing partnerships to achieve seamless, comprehensive, and integrated access to services, creating systemic change, and expanding the workforce development system's capacity to serve customers with disabilities and employers. DOL's Employment and Training Administration and SSA's Office of Program Development and Research signed an Interagency Agreement in September 2002 to jointly fund, implement, pilot, and evaluate the Navigator initiative.

Overview

- Approximately 120 Navigator positions were established in PY 2003. Currently there are 227 Navigators in 214 One-stops funded under this initiative. This Initiative will soon be expanded to an additional 16 states and Tribal entities.
- DOL, with input from SSA, has entered into cooperative agreements with the state level workforce system in 17 states where SSA is implementing employment support initiatives: Arizona, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, Vermont, and Wisconsin.
- DOL and SSA are training the Navigators on SSA employment support programs, One-Stop partner funded programs, and other programs that impact successful employment.
- DOL and SSA are working together to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the Navigator pilot.
- Disability Program Navigators are hired and employed by the state or local workforce system.

The DPN Position

The Navigators:

- Guide One-Stop staff in helping people with disabilities access and navigate the complex provisions of various programs that impact their ability to gain/retain employment.
- Develop linkages and collaborate on an ongoing basis with employers to facilitate job placements for persons with disabilities.
- Develop partnerships to achieve integrated services, systemic change, and expand the capacity to serve customers with disabilities.
- Facilitate the transition of in- or out-of-school youth with disabilities to obtain employment and economic self-sufficiency.
- Conduct outreach to agencies/organizations that serve people with disabilities.
- Serve as resources on SSA's: work incentives and employment support programs and the provision of services through Benefits Planning, Assistance and Outreach organizations (BPAOs); Protection and Advocacy systems (P&As); and employment-related demonstration projects.
- Serve as resources on the Federal, State, local and private programs that impact the ability of persons with disabilities to enter and remain in the workforce.

For additional information contact: The Division of Disability Workforce Programs, DOL, (202) 693-3844; <http://www.doleta.gov/disbaility/>