



**COALITION FOR BARRIER FREE LIVING (CBFL)/
HOUSTON CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING (HCIL)
JOB ANNOUNCEMENT**

Houston Center for Independent Living, Inc. (HCIL), is seeking to fill Community Work Incentives Coordinator positions (CWIC) to be part of the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) project team. The CWIC will provide benefits counseling and support to individuals receiving disability benefits from the Social Security Administration (SSA) who want to work.

About HCIL

HCIL promotes the full inclusion, equal opportunity, and participation of persons with disabilities in every aspect of community life. We believe that people with disabilities have the right to make choices affecting their lives, the right to take risks, the right to fail and the right to succeed.

About the WIPA Project

The WIPA project is funded by SSA for five (5) years to provide no cost supports and services to beneficiaries who want to work, so they can make informed decisions about working, and have a successful transition to the workforce. HCIL's WIPA program serves the eleven (11) Gulf Coast counties of Texas. For fifteen years, HCIL has provided direct service to beneficiaries of SSI and SSDI seeking to increase their financial independence and stability through employment.

WIPA projects help beneficiaries take advantage of SSA work incentives, which may delay or reduce the effect of work on monetary benefits and health insurance. Additionally, WIPA projects act as repositories for information about resources that may help beneficiaries succeed as they work towards employment goals.

Position Summary

Through HCIL's Gulf Coast Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) Project, eighty-five percent (85%) of a CWIC's time will be spent in providing direct and intensive benefits counseling and assistance to Social Security disability beneficiaries (receiving SSI and/or Title II benefits) over the age of 14 but who have not yet reached full retirement age, who are either already working or are actively seeking work. Fifteen percent (15%) of a CWIC's time will be to provide outreach to beneficiaries, employment related organizations, disability service providers, educational entities providing services to youth with disabilities and transition specialists, and others who would benefit from information about Social Security Work Incentives and the Ticket to Work Program.

Essential Position Tasks

Deliver direct and intensive services customized to meet the specific needs of beneficiaries working or on the verge of working. In most situations, services will be provided remotely by phone, email or through other technology (e.g., teleconference, Skype, etc). Only in exceptional cases will the CWIC meet face-to-face with the beneficiary.

- Through the application of work incentives, demonstrate to beneficiaries that employment and public benefits are not mutually exclusive, and that use of these work incentives can lead to greater self-sufficiency.

- Participate in on-going training, and consistently use the array of available technical support resources (online resources, WIPA Project networking options, SSA, WIPA National Training and Data Center and supplemental trainings, or other local or state resources).
- Through research, practice and experience, become highly knowledgeable of Federal, State and local benefits and programs in order to convey the information to beneficiaries.
- Using SSA software, develop customized, written Benefits Summary and Analyses and Work Incentive Plans for beneficiaries (and others, as directed by beneficiary, on the employment support team) explaining SSA work incentives and other public benefits as appropriate.
- Refer beneficiaries, as appropriate, to employment support agencies e.g., State VR, Employment Networks, WorkForce Centers, etc.
- Provide on-going, long-term follow-up to beneficiaries requiring supports in their journey to or advancement in, employment.
- Perform outreach and referral duties that include but are not limited to: using quality marketing material in making presentations about the WIPA project and the Social Security work incentives to audiences of consumers (e.g., transition-age youth, veterans with disabilities, and underserved minority populations) generic and specialized providers, family members, educators, etc.
- Participate in HCIL's Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) project team meetings to monitor project quality assurance and productivity.
- Maintain effective and regular communication regarding HCIL WIPA project with partner organizations, i.e., WorkSource Centers, local SSA offices, school districts, asset building community partners (AFI grantees, State IDAs (Individual Development Account), financial literacy programs and other service agencies.
- As required by executive director and/or funding source, prepare progress reports, project correspondence, consumer files, public service announcements and newsletter articles as requested.
- Gather data on other resources in the community while performing outreach. Provide new information to HCIL for inclusion in its Information and Referral system.
- Understand and subscribe to the independent living philosophy of consumer-controlled and consumer-directed services for people with disabilities working in concert with independent living staff members in order to ensure successful outcomes for SSI/Title II beneficiaries who desire to return to work or are already employed.
- Flexibility to work evenings and weekends, as requested, to accommodate beneficiaries with non-traditional schedules.
- Perform other work-related duties and tasks as required.

Skills and Qualifications

- Complete intensive training authorized by SSA with required level of passing for all certification requirements. Once certified, complete 18 Continuing Certification Credit (CCC) hours annually thereafter.
- Strong math skills with an emphasis on problem solving.
- Deductive abilities with analytical thinking and creative problem solving skills.
- Strong interviewing skills; understanding of "customer service" principles and methods.
- Ability to interpret Federal laws, regulations and administrative code regarding public benefits.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills (including use of alternative formats).
- Knowledge of disability and medical terminology; and awareness of political, cultural and social issues pertaining to people with disabilities.
- Strong computer skills, e.g., MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, data entry, email and use of the Internet to research, print and distribute information.
- Ability to consult diverse resources.
- Counseling and evaluation skills: adult-to-adult and peer-to-peer.

- Ability to become proficient in:
 1. SSI and SSDI programs – benefits, eligibility, how to use, structure, field offices, various positions within those offices and the “big picture” of the system.
 2. All public benefits programs (including federal, state and local programs and services).
 3. Translating technical knowledge into training for lay people.
 4. Accessing information in a variety of ways and excellent interpersonal skills.
 5. Ethical standards and how they apply to benefits work (particularly in conflict of interest and confidentiality concerns.)
- Punctual with good attendance.

Education and Training Required

1. Bachelor’s degree in social services, rehabilitation counseling, liberal arts or related fields; comparable work experience may be substituted for the bachelor’s degree.
2. Certificate or continuing education in counseling, inter-personal skills, benefits planning and assistance, public presentations, writing for marketing purposes, etc. through college or university courses or private sector work is desired.
3. Certifications or continuing education in social service system, benefits systems, disability programs, medical model services, etc. is highly desirable. Proven personal knowledge may be substituted for certifications or continuing education credits.

Suitability Determination as Required by SSA

CWICS must receive a favorable Suitability Determination at a level five (5) from Social Security and must have a copy of the notification letter on file at the CBFL/HCIL Corporate office. All CWICS will be required to submit necessary information on and documentation using the latest SSA required Suitability database. If there are any SSA exceptions to this guideline, CBFL/HCIL administration will notify CWIC staff.

Close: Until qualified applicant hired.

Salary: \$2,916 - \$3,333 per month, plus benefits.

Application Procedure: Email resume and cover letter to humanresources@cbfl.cc

Or fax to **713.974.6927**

Or mail to:

Personnel/CWIC Search
 Houston Center for Independent Living
 6201 Bonhomme Road, Suite 150-S
 Houston, Texas 77036