

NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

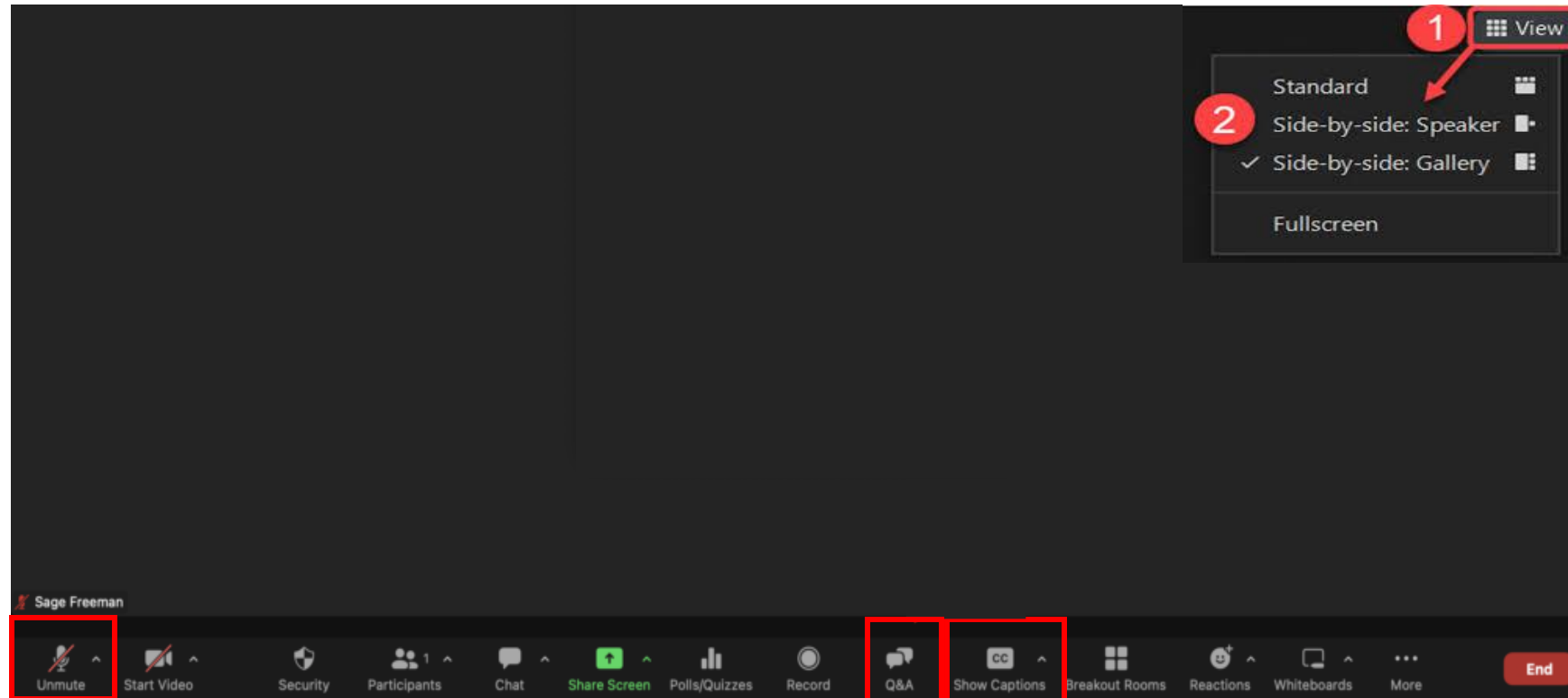
Inclusion Works Lunch & Learn Series

Empowering Employment for Individuals with I/DD Through Benefits Counseling - Part 1

November 20, 2024



Housekeeping



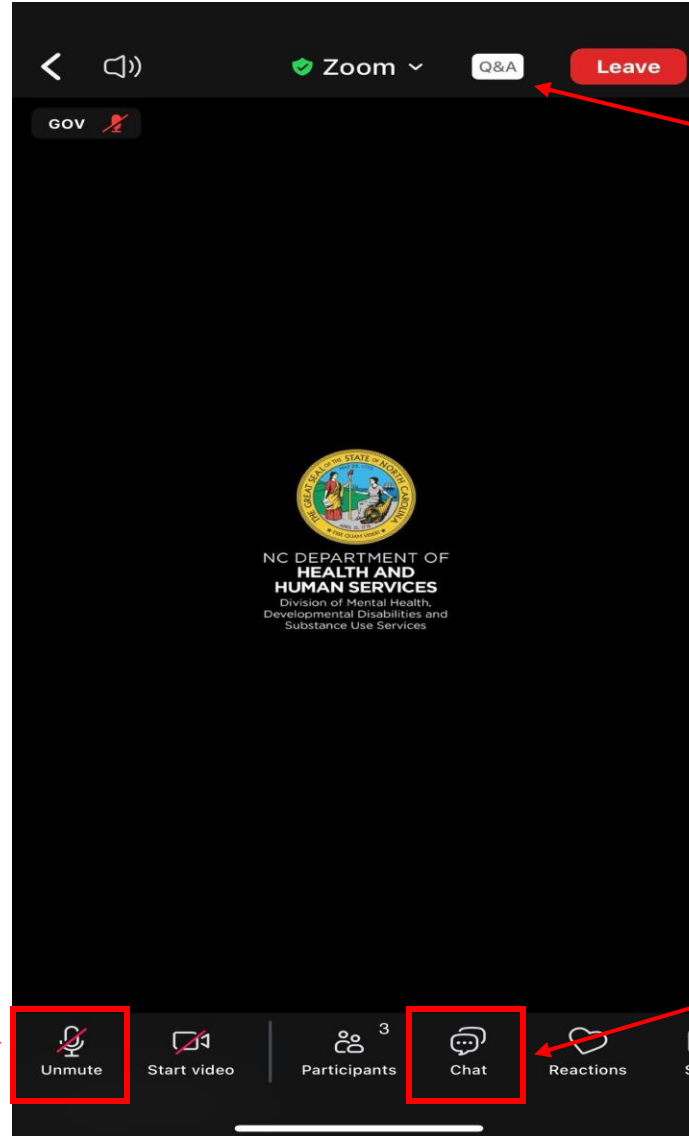
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Housekeeping – Mobile Attendees



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Agenda

1. Introduction
2. Understanding Competitive Integrated Employment
3. Common Misconceptions about Employment and Benefits
4. Benefits Counseling
5. Questions



Introductions



Tina Barrett, MA, LPA, HSP-PA
I/DD Team Lead – I/DD, TBI, & Olmstead
DMHDDSUS



Pablo Puente, CWIC, PMP, MBA
Director, Special Project
Employment Source

With Special Guest:

Kena Farrington, Community Work Incentives Coordinator (CWIC), *Employment Source*

Overview

The Inclusion Works Program is hosting **2 Lunch & Learn Webinars** to provide a deep-dive on Benefits Counseling and Work Incentives.

1st Session – November 20th (Today)

Understanding Benefits and Employment

- Relationship between employment and benefits for individuals with I/DD
- Overview of Benefits Counseling
- Q&A with Benefits Counselor

2nd Session – December 4th

Navigating Benefits and Employment: Real World Experiences

- Benefit Programs Eligibility and Info:
 - Medicaid, SSI/SSDI, WIC/SNAP
 - Ticket to Work Incentives
- Strategies to maintain benefits while working
- Individual testimonies/ Q&A

The presentation slides and video recording links will be uploaded to the Inclusion Works website following the webinars

Understanding Competitive Integrated Employment

What is CIE and who does it include?

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) defines **Competitive Integrated Employment** as individuals with I/DD who perform work on a full-time or part-time basis and are:

- 1 Compensated at or above minimum wage
- 2 Paid comparable wages to employees without disabilities performing similar duties and with similar training and experience
- 3 Receiving the same level of benefits provided to employees without disabilities in similar positions
- 4 At a location where employees with disabilities interact with individuals without disabilities
- 5 Presented opportunities for advancement similar to other employees without disabilities in similar positions



Benefits of Competitive Integrated Employment

Everyone has a right to work if they want to. For those who choose to work in the community, there are several benefits. On average, individuals who work in CIE jobs:

Earn More Money

Individuals in CIE earn more than their peers in non-integrated settings. CIE jobs pay at least minimum wage and provide individuals with additional income to spend for themselves

Build more relationships

CIE allows individuals to build relationships and friendships with peers who are not staff or family. Better social relationships contribute to a sense of belonging and purpose.



Show increased skills

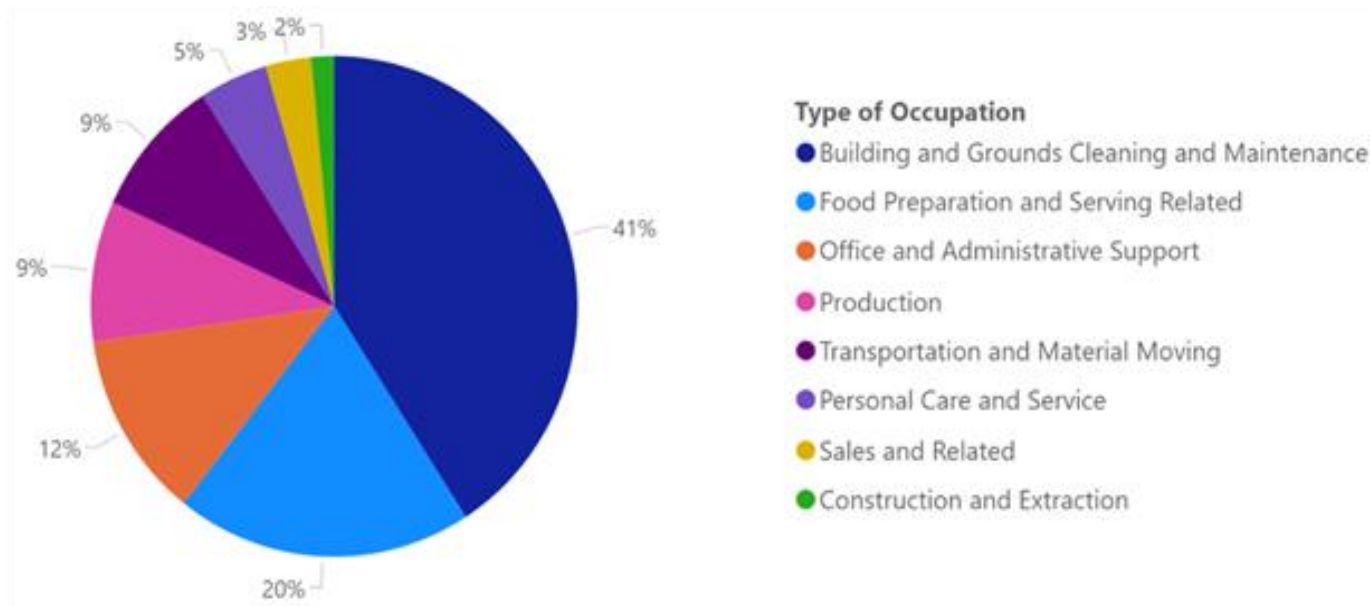
Engagement in CIE is linked to improved confidence, focus, personal independence, and developing skills in self-determination and self-advocacy.

Integrate in the community

Individuals in CIE have more community integration and inclusion. Their overall quality of life is enhanced due to access to broader social and economic opportunities.

Many North Carolina employers have benefited from CIE talent

Type of Occupation for CIE Individuals in Reporting Tool and EIPD Records



Source: CIE Reporting Tool LME/MCO Responses Matched to DVRS Records

Places of CIE Employment



Employment and Independence for People with Disabilities (EIPD) and Supported Employment services can support individuals with I/DD find a CIE job if that is their choice

1

EIPD Services (Vocational Rehabilitation)

EIPD Services should be an individual's **first point of contact** before pursuing the supported employment services.

EIPD services help **individuals with a disability** develop a **customized path to employment** that includes:

- Career counseling
- Education and training
- Job placement assistance
- Medical treatments
- Assistive technology

For **eligibility requirements**, individuals can contact their local EIPD office for a referral.

2

Supported Employment Services

Supported Employment Services help individuals with I/DD **live and work independently** in the community

There are multiple options available, depending on eligibility:

Service Name	Eligibility
Medicaid-funded SE (1915(i) SE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medicaid recipients who complete 1915(i) assessment
State-funded SE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Non-Medicaid recipients with I/DD diagnosis, SNAP/SIS/TBI/VR assessment, and at least 1 functional impairment
Innovations Waiver SE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medicaid recipients and Innovations Waiver beneficiaries

3

Accessing Employment Services

To learn more about how to apply for these services, please reach out to the following:

- [Your local EIPD office](#)
- [Your Tailored Care Manager](#) (for eligible Medicaid beneficiaries) OR
- [Your regional Tailored Plan](#)

If you're unsure in which service option is right for you, check out the [Paths to CIE Guide](#) on the Inclusion Works website.

This interactive tool shows the steps to finding a job in CIE and explains the support options available

Common Misconceptions about Employment Benefits

Common Misconceptions about Employment and Benefits

MISCONCEPTION # 1

“If I go to work, I will lose all my benefits”

Common Misconceptions about Employment and Benefits

MISCONCEPTION # 2

“If I lose my benefits, I will not get them back”

Common Misconceptions about Employment and Benefits

MISCONCEPTION # 3

“I went to the Social Security office, and a representative told me...”

Common Misconceptions about Employment and Benefits

MISCONCEPTION # 4

“A friend told me since I am receiving SSI, I have 9 months to work without affecting my benefits”

Common Misconceptions about Employment and Benefits

MISCONCEPTION # 5

“Once I start working, Social Security/ DSS/ other agencies will know that I am working since I am getting a paystub”

Overview of Benefits Counseling Services

Overview of Benefits Counseling Services

- ▶ **What are Benefits Counseling services ?**
- ▶ **How can Benefits Counseling services help me?**
- ▶ **When is the best time to request assistance from a Benefits Counselor?**
- ▶ **Who provides Benefits Counseling services in NC?**
- ▶ **How can I access Benefits Counseling services?**

Overview of Benefits Counseling Services

▶ What are Benefits Counseling services ?

Benefits counseling services are individualized and personalized meetings with a certified benefits counselor to discuss how employment activities can impact your benefits situation

Overview of Benefits Counseling Services

► How can Benefits Counseling services help me?

Benefits Counselors can discuss the following:

- Your personal employment/benefits situation
- Information about benefits programs (SSI, SSDI, Medicaid, Medicare, Food Stamps, and more)
- Details about how your employment activities can affect your benefits
- Strategies to reach your employment goals
- Employment/benefits resources available in the community
- Benefits issues
- Work Incentives available
- Ask any other benefits/employment-related questions

Overview of Benefits Counseling Services

▶ **When is the best time to request assistance from a Benefits Counselor?**

- While making informed choices about employment
- When ready to start a CIE job (Completed job exploration and preparation stages)
- While receiving at least one public benefit
- If you are already working and receiving benefits
- Worried about losing your benefits due to working activities
- When experiencing benefits issues

Overview of Benefits Counseling Services

▶ Who provides Benefits Counseling services in NC?

Benefits counseling services are provided by **certified professionals** who are familiar with common public benefits programs such as SSI, SSDI, Medicaid, Medicare, SNAP, and many more.

They can also explain complex information about how your benefits can be impacted by your employment activities in very simple words

They can also help you develop a strategy and find resources in the community to reach your personal goals

Overview of Benefits Counseling Services

▶ How can I access benefits counseling services?

Benefits Counseling Program	Target Audience	How to access services
Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA)	Social Securities beneficiaries	Call directly the program serving your county
EIPD/VR Fee-for-Service program	EIPD/VR consumers	Discuss with your EIPD counselor
Benefits Counseling under Innovations Waiver (new)	Tailored plan participants	Contact your LME/MCO
Private counseling programs	Various	Contact program for details
Other counseling programs (pilot programs)	See eligibility	Contact program for details

Q&A with Benefits Counselor

Reminder: Join Lunch & Learn in two weeks, 12/4, for additional information on Benefits Counseling

Register for [Lunch and Learns](#)



2nd Session – December 4th

Navigating Benefits and Employment: Real World Experiences

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Directions:

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