W-2 Case Management and the SSI/SSDI Process

Purpose:

The purpose of the course is to provide Case Managers and FEPs with information about the SSI/SSDI application process and strategies for appropriate case management for W-2 T participants involved in the SSI/SSDI process.

Objectives:

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Describe to W-2 participants what SSI and SSDI are
- Use assessment to determine whether or not a W-2 applicant or participant is appropriate for SSI and/or SSDI
- Assist the W-2 T participant with the SSI/SSDI application and/or appeals process
- Assign activities to support the W-2 T participant's SSI/SSDI application
- Access resources and collaborate with other service providers working with the participant to achieve his/her desired outcomes

---

Table of Contents

W-2 Contact Information

Questions regarding this training material should be directed via your local agency process to the Partner Training Team,
Email: PTTTrainingSupp@wisconsin.gov
A contact person is available to answer e-mailed questions related to this training material, assist you in completing any activity that you are having difficulty with, and/or provide explanation of anything else about this training material.

Questions regarding W-2 production cases and systems should be directed via your local agency process to the W-2 Help Desk at:
Email: DCFW2CARESHD@wisconsin.gov
Telephone: (608) 422-7900.
W-2 Policy questions should be directed to your Regional Office staff.

Introduction

Policy Reference: W-2 Manual 7.4.3

Through screening, formal assessment and consultation with other providers of disability-related services, the W-2 agency is responsible for identifying participants who have a reasonable chance of obtaining Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). When there is agreement between the participant and the agency that the participant is appropriate for SSI/SSDI advocacy, the agency is responsible for assisting with the SSI/SSDI application and appeals process to the extent needed by the participant. Participants determined appropriate for SSI/SSDI advocacy should be placed in W-2 T throughout the SSI/SSDI application process.

SSI/SSDI advocacy is an important service that you and your agency provide. In order to determine who should receive SSI/SSDI advocacy services, we first need to define SSI and SSDI.

What Is SSI?

SSI is a Federal income supplement program funded by general tax revenues of the U.S. Treasury (**not** Social Security taxes) authorized by Title XVI of the Social Security Act. The Social Security Administration (SSA) makes monthly payments to people who have low income, have few resources, and are:

- Age 65 or older;
- Blind; or
- Disabled (Social Security Administration, 2012).

The monthly SSI payment is the same nationwide. Currently, the payment is $740 per month. States may supplement that amount. In Wisconsin, the maximum state supplement amount is $83.78 per month for a single person. Benefits are paid on the first of each month. (Note: Maximum Federal benefit amounts usually increase in January of each year due to a cost of living adjustment. Wisconsin’s state supplement amounts have not increased in recent years.)

Wisconsin pays an additional amount to SSI-eligible parents for their children through Caretaker Supplement (CTS) benefits. CTS benefits pay an additional $250 per month for the first child, and $150 per month for each additional child.

SSI Non-Financial Requirements

SSI has non-financial eligibility requirements, including that the applicant:

- Be a resident of the United States
- Not be absent from the country for more than 30 consecutive days
- Be either a U.S. citizen or national, or in one of certain categories of eligible non-citizens
- Be age 65 or older, blind or disabled
- File an application
- Apply for any other cash benefits or payments for which s/he may be eligible (e.g., pensions, Social Security benefits, etc.)
- Give the Social Security Administration (SSA) permission to contact any financial institution and request any financial records that the institution may have about the individual

SSI Financial Requirements

To receive SSI, there are financial requirements that must be met. Income and resources are counted to determine whether or not someone qualifies for SSI. Income includes wages, Social Security benefits, and pensions. The current income threshold is $1,070 per month. As in W-2, certain forms of income are disregarded, such as FoodShare and energy assistance benefits. If an applicant is married, his/her spouse's income also will be counted. To see the complete list of counted and disregarded income, go to SSA's website at http://www.socialsecurity.gov/ssi/text-income-ussi.htm.

Resources include things an applicant owns, such as real estate, bank accounts, and stocks. The SSI resource limit is $2,000 for an individual and $3,000 for couples. Again, some resources are disregarded, such as the home an applicant lives in, vehicles, and burial plots. To see the complete list of counted and disregarded resources, go to SSA's website at http://www.socialsecurity.gov/ssi/text-resources-ussi.htm.

What Is SSDI?

SSDI is a benefit paid to people who cannot work because they have a medical condition that is expected to last at least one year or result in death. SSDI is funded by taxes withheld under the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) or the Self Employment Contributions Act (SECA). To be eligible for SSDI benefits, an individual must have worked in jobs that were covered by Social Security. Benefits are based on an individual's prior work history or a family member's prior work history. Under title XVI, an individual can receive SSDI as an adult over 18 years of age or as a child less than 18 years of age.

In general, to receive SSDI benefits, the applicant must meet two earnings tests:

1. A "recent work" test based on his/her age at the time s/he became disabled; and
2. A "duration of work" test to show that s/he worked long enough under Social Security.

SSDI Non-Financial Requirements

As with SSI, SSDI also has non-financial requirements. The applicant must:

- Be a resident of the United States
- Not be absent from the country for more than 30 consecutive days
- Be either a U.S. citizen or national, or in one of certain categories of eligible non-citizens
- File an application
- Be blind or disabled
- Be insured (meaning s/he has earned enough work credits)

SSDI does <u>not</u> have any financial requirements.

SSI vs. SSDI

SSI and SSDI have both similarities and differences, as illustrated in the chart below. This chart is taken from the Social Security Administration's Red Book. The Red Book is marketed as a guide to employment services for individuals receiving SSI or SSDI. It also offers general information on SSI and SSDI. This information can be found at http://www.socialsecurity.gov/redbook/.

	SSI	SSDI
Source of Payments	General tax revenues	Disability trust fund
Minimum Initial Qualification Requirements	Must meet SSA's disability criteria. Must have limited income and resources.	Must meet SSA's disability criteria. Must be "insured" due to contributions made to FICA/SECA based on personal earnings, or those of spouse or parents.
Health Insurance Coverage Provided	Medicaid. A jointly-funded, Federal-State health insurance program for persons with limited income and resources. It covers certain children, and some or all of the aged, blind, and disabled in a state who are eligible to receive federally-assisted income maintenance payments.	Medicare. Consists of hospital insurance (Part A), supplementary medical insurance (Part B), and Medicare Advantage (Part C). Voluntary prescription drug benefits (Part D) also are included.
How does SSA determine the monthly payment amount?	SSA starts with the Federal Benefit Rate of $740, subtracts countable income, and then adds the state supplement. Some income is disregarded.	SSA bases SSDI monthly payments on the worker's lifetime average earnings covered by Social Security. SSA may reduce the amount if the recipient receives Workers' Compensation benefits and/or public disability benefits, etc. Other income or resources do not affect the payment amount. Benefits also can be paid to dependents.
Is a State Supplemental Payment provided?	Yes, Wisconsin does provide a state supplemental payment with SSI.	There is no state supplemental payment with the SSDI program

Assessment

Assessment is a key element in the case management process for all W-2 applicants and participants. It is increasingly valuable when working with W-2 participants on the SSI/SSDI advocacy path. The assessment process starts with informal assessment, which allows the Case Manager to gather information about a participant and his/her family. This information can assist the Case Manager in determining:

- The participant's ability to become employed and remain employed,
- The appropriate placement of a participant,
- The existence of potential disabilities or other specific limitations through screening with a validated screening tool, and
- The need for a formal assessment of any disabilities or other employment barriers by a qualified agency or individual.

Informal Assessment

The informal assessment process is an ***ongoing*** process. Informal assessment information is obtained in many ways, including one-on-one conversations with the participant, personal observations, forms and worksheets; and observations from others, such as Job Developers, worksite supervisors and job center staff.

What type of information do you collect through informal assessment?

How does this information assist you in determining potential barriers?

How can this information lead you to make a referral for SSI/SSDI?

Topics covered during informal assessment can be critical for a participant on the SSI/SSDI advocacy path. They include:

- Concerns related to personal and family health, including mental health, and
- Other needs or barriers identified by the participant that may impede his/her ability to participate in W-2 activities or find and retain a job.

You can review the full Informal Assessment inventory list in W-2 Manual 5.2.2.

Formal Assessment

Participants on the SSI/SSDI advocacy path should be placed in a W-2 T placement, which requires that a formal assessment be scheduled and recorded in CARES within 30 days of placement. Formal assessment results can provide the Case Manager with valuable information, such as:

- The appropriate level of W-2 participation,
- The person's ability to engage in specific work and training activities, and
- The need for supportive services and/or accommodations.

Obtaining a Complete Assessment

There are multiple ways to gather formal assessment information. For a learning or cognitive disability, there is no specific form to send to the qualified professional assessor. As the FEP, you may need to create a document to send to the assessing agency specifying the information you are requesting. W-2 Manual 5.5.4 outlines information that should be gathered.

Mental health and AODA information can be gathered using the Mental Health Report Form (form 126). For other medical conditions, you can use the Medical Examination & Capacity Form (form 2012).

Remember to discuss, review, and sign the Formal Assessment Agreement (form 2565) with the participant before any formal assessment takes place.

Best Practices

Sometimes it can be difficult getting information back from a provider. Keep the following in mind:

- Gather information directly from the provider treating the participant.
- Contact that provider beforehand to explain the W-2 program and the purpose of the assessment.
- Follow up with the provider during and after the assessment process.

What best practices have you used in obtaining critical information from a provider?

Functional Assessment

A functional assessment can provide information on a participant's ability to complete daily tasks and basic work functions. One tool at your disposal to determine if a functional assessment would be beneficial is the Barrier Screening Tool (BST). The Functional Screen of the BST gathers information from the participant about his/her ability to function in a work setting, work training, and daily living activities. Depending on how the questions are answered, moving on to Screen 2 of the BST and a potential referral to a professional functional assessment can provide valuable information for a participant's SSI/SSDI application and his/her participation in the W-2 program.

Benefit Eligibility Screening Tool (BEST)

A helpful online assessment tool specific to SSI/SSDI is the Benefit Eligibility Screening Tool (BEST). BEST can be used to determine if an individual is eligible for any type of Social Security benefit, and takes as little as five to ten minutes to complete. This screening tool provides eligibility information based on the user's responses to its questions. Answers are not saved and are seen only by the individual using the tool. You can access BEST at http://www.benefits.gov/ssa.

BEST is not an application for benefits and:

- does not know, or ask for, an applicant's name or Social Security number,
- does not access personal Social Security records,
- will not give an estimate of benefit amounts.

SSI Assessment Process Tool

The SSI Assessment Process Tool is a form that can assist in identifying viable candidates for SSI. It will assist in identifying information to gather and organizing that information in a way that can help you as the FEP/Case Manager make correct decisions. A copy of this tool is included in the Appendix.

What tools, resources and information do you use to help you determine who may be appropriate for SSI/SSDI advocacy?

Remember…
The assessment information that has been gathered and evaluated can be used to determine if the participant would be a viable SSI/SSDI candidate. Equipped with assessment results, the Case Manager can develop an Employability Plan (EP) with the participant that is customized for that individual. In this instance, the **primary** goal of the EP is to set the participant on the path that will result in eligibility for SSI/SSDI benefits. The participant still will need to develop an employment goal for the EP, moving him/her on the path toward potential employment.

The SSI and SSDI Application Process

As a FEP or Case Manager providing SSI/SSDI advocacy services, you play an important role in the SSI/SSDI application process. What does the process look like? How can you assist the W-2 participant through this process?

Adult Disability Starter Kit

A good place to begin for either the SSI or the SSDI process is with the Adult Disability Starter Kit. The Adult Disability Starter Kit is an online tool available on the SSA website that allows individuals to start the application process for disability benefits. The link for the kit can be found at
http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disability/disability_starter_kits.htm.

The Adult Disability Starter Kit will help an individual get ready for a disability interview or online application by providing information about the specific documents and the information that will be requested from an applicant.

The documents can be printed or submitted online. Individuals can complete the forms at their own pace, stopping and restarting as needed. This process is secure and private.

Each kit contains:

- **A Fact Sheet** - *"What You Should Know Before You Apply for Social Security Disability Benefits."* This fact sheet answers questions most people ask about applying for disability benefits.

- **A Checklist** - *"Checklist - Adult Disability Interview."* This is checklist includes information and documents to have ready for the disability interview or when completing the online Disability Report.

- **A Worksheet** - *"Medical and Job Worksheet – Adult."* This worksheet can help individuals prepare for the disability interview. It lists questions that Social Security will ask and provides space to write down this information. Social Security will ask for this information during the disability interview.

Steps in Applying for Benefits

The processes for applying for SSI and SSDI are slightly different. Both processes can be started online, but for **SSI, the application must be completed in person.** Office locator tools are available via the SSA website at http://www.socialsecurity.gov/info/isba/otherways.htm.

For SSDI, the application can be completed in person *or* online, allowing the application process to be done completely via distance for those individuals who choose to do so. The SSA website points out many advantages to applying for benefits online:

- The participant can start his/her disability claim immediately. There is no need to wait for an appointment;
- S/he can apply from the convenience of his/her own home or on any computer; and
- S/he will avoid trips to the Social Security office, saving time and money.

The SSI Application Process

- Review the Adult Disability Benefits Checklist
- Complete the Adult Disability Report
- Call the local SSA office to set up an appointment
- Provide the necessary information
- File an application

Again, the application process for SSI cannot be completed online. It also is important to note that most of the forms used for the SSI application process are not meant to be self-completed. Claims Representatives will complete the necessary documents.

The SSDI Application Process

- Review the Adult Disability Benefits Checklist
- Complete the Disability Benefit Application
- Complete the Adult Disability Report
- Complete the Authorization to Disclose Information Form and mail or take it to the local Social Security office

The entire SSDI application process can be completed online. The online application and online Adult Disability Report can be started, stopped, and restarted at any time. As a Case Manager, you can assign the Adult Disability Report and online application as an Employability Plan activity, or, if providing advocacy services from your office, you can schedule the completion of these reports with the W-2 participant in your office over multiple sessions.

Key Points

- The ***Adult Disability Benefits Checklist*** may be helpful for participants to print as they gather the information needed for the SSI/SSDI application. A more detailed list of what information will be needed is in the next section of the Participant Guide.

- It is important to have all the information listed on the ***Adult Disability Benefits Checklist*** prior to completing the ***Adult Disability Report***. There are multiple sections in this report, and as with the application, a participant can start and stop the process at any time and resume at a later date.

- The online ***Disability Benefit Application*** (for SSDI) can be started, paused, and resumed at any time. The SSA estimates that it takes from 10 to 30 minutes to complete the application, depending on the number of questions an applicant needs to answer.

- As the FEP/Case Manager, you can provide advocacy services during the application process by assisting with gathering documents, completing online forms and reports, and contacting the SSA on behalf of the W-2 participant.

Information the Applicant Needs When Applying for SSI and SSDI Benefits

The SSA suggests that the participant has the following information at hand when completing the application. It will make the application process much easier.

Information about the Applicant

The SSA will require demographic information, such as the applicant's date and place of birth and Social Security number. The SSA also will require:

- Routing and account numbers for all banking accounts,
- The previous year's earnings and employer information,
- Previous employers' names and addresses,
- U.S. military service dates, and
- Specific information about current and former spouses.

Information about the Applicant's Medical Condition

The applicant will need information about medical evidence already in his/her possession. This type of information includes:

- Medical records
- Doctors' reports
- Recent test results

The applicant also will need to provide detailed information about his/her medical illnesses as well as injuries or conditions and his/her work history. The SSA also will need to know if the applicant has filed or intends to file for any other benefits, such as:

- Workers' Compensation,
- Black lung benefits, and/or
- Similar benefits.

Documents the Applicant Needs to Provide

The SSA may require other documents from the applicant in order to pay benefits. These may include:

- Original birth certificate or other proof of birth,
- Original citizenship or naturalization papers,
- Copy of U.S. military service paper(s), and/or
- Copy of IRS Form W-2 and/or the individual's self-employment tax return for the previous year.

Case Management in Practice

How can you help collect, organize and save this information for the participant?

The SSI/SSDI Determination Process

After the application is complete, the SSA will initiate the process of making a determination on the application. The SSA's first steps in this process are to determine if the applicant meets the basic requirements for disability benefits and to complete a review of the applicant's work history. If it is determined that these basic requirements have been met, the SSA will send the application to the state Disability Determination Services office. In the state of Wisconsin, this is the Disability Determination Bureau (DDB).

How the Decision Is Made

Five questions need to be answered in order for the SSA and the DDB to decide whether the applicant is disabled.

1. **Is the applicant working?** If the applicant is working and his/her earnings average more than $1070/month, the SSA generally will not consider him/her disabled. If the applicant is not working, or if his/her monthly earnings average $1070/month or less, the state agency then looks at his/her medical condition.

2. **Is the applicant's medical condition "severe"?** The medical condition must *significantly* limit the applicant's ability to complete basic work activities for at least one year. If that is the case, the DDB will move on to question 3.

3. **Is the applicant's medical condition on the "Listing of Impairments"?** If the applicant's medical condition is on the list, s/he is considered disabled by law. A listing of the impairments can be found at http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disability/professionals/bluebook/listing-impairments.htm. If his/her condition is not on the list, the DDB will look to see if the condition is as severe as a condition that is on the list.

4. **Can the applicant do the work s/he did before?** If the applicant cannot do the work s/he did before, DDB will move on to question 5. If the applicant can do the work s/he did before, s/he is not disabled.

5. **Can the applicant do any other type of work?** The DDB will take into account the applicant's medical condition, age, education, previous work experience, and other skills to see if another type of work is a possibility. If other work is a possibility, the applicant is not disabled. If there is no other type of work the applicant can do, s/he is considered disabled.

To Summarize

The chart below can be used to explain the DDB's determination process. If Step 1 and Step 2 are not met, an individual is determined to be not disabled. If the individual's medical condition is in, or equal to a condition in, the listing, s/he can be determined to be disabled at Step 3. If an individual can do past work as outlined in Step 4, s/he is determined to be not disabled. In Step 5, an individual can be determined to be not disabled or disabled, depending on his/her ability to perform other work.

1. Engaging in Substantial Gainful Activity	= Not Disabled
2. No serious medical condition	= Not Disabled
3. Medical condition meets/equals a listed impairment	= Disabled
4. Able to do past work	= Not Disabled
5. Able to do other work	= Not Disabled
Unable to do past work OR other work	= Disabled

W-2 Participation and the Case Management Process

The Case Manager has many roles to play throughout the SSI/SSDI advocacy case management process. One role may be SSI/SSDI Advocate and/or Authorized Representative. There may be situations where the Case Manager does not take on any additional role. Whether or not the Case Manager takes on an additional role, SSI/SSDI advocacy **must** happen. The Case Manager and W-2 agency **are responsible** for ensuring that it does.

Case Management Level of Involvement

Policy Reference: W-2 Manual 7.4.3.2

SSI/SSDI advocacy must be provided, either directly by the agency, through subcontract, or by referral to an SSI/SSDI advocate. An SSI/SSDI advocate provides specific services to facilitate the approval of a W-2 participant's application for SSI/SSDI or to appeal an adverse decision by the SSA. The roles and responsibilities of the advocate are the same whether a W-2 agency provides the advocacy through its own in-house staff or through an outside resource. A W-2 participant may receive SSI/SSDI advocacy services at any point in the SSI application process (initial application, reconsideration, or appeal).

In general, a qualified SSI/SSDI advocate must have the program background and knowledge necessary to assist W-2 participants in navigating the SSI/SSDI application process successfully. In particular, an SSI/SSDI advocate should have the following background and knowledge:

- Experience working in an SSI/SSDI advocacy role;
- General knowledge of W-2 policy and procedures;
- Knowledge of the SSI/SSDI application processes; and
- Legal or medical background or experience in the field of disabilities

Duties of Advocates

Policy Reference: W-2 Manual 7.4.3.3

There are many responsibilities associated with the SSI/SSDI advocate. The W-2 program expects that an advocate may assist the W-2 participant by providing the following services:

1. Review medical documentation;
2. Assist in supplying initial and subsequent documents, including non-medical documentation;
3. Coordinate with the Case Manager or an appropriate service provider to schedule additional evaluations that may support the disability claim;
4. Communicate information to and facilitate contacts among involved parties;
5. Attend meetings, hearings, and appointments with the participant as needed or requested;
6. Present the facts in a participant's case that favor a decision of disability;
7. Assure all pertinent documentation is available to the DDB;
8. Maintain regular contact throughout the process with SSA, DDB and the W-2 participant;
9. Assist the participant in complying with the SSI claim requirements;
10. Act as a liaison among SSA, DDB and medical professionals; and
11. Coordinate with the W-2 agency and the FEP to establish a referral process and an ongoing communication network, to include SSI-related activities on the Employability Plan and to provide supportive services such as transportation and childcare for SSI-related activities.

Collaboration

To achieve a successful outcome to the SSI/SSDI-focused participant's application for SSI/SSDI benefits, it is to everyone's benefit to collaborate.

With whom can you collaborate or partner to the advantage of the participant? Depending on your W-2 agency, the list could include:

This list is not all-inclusive, but it can give you an idea of the number of appointments the participant may need to keep and the range of partners s/he is working with outside of the W-2 agency. Collaboration can bring it all into focus during the SSI/SSDI advocacy process, and certain essential elements virtually ensure successful collaboration.

Case Management in Practice

Consider a W-2 T participant with an SSI/SSDI focus you are working with. Who, in addition to you, works with him/her?

What benefits do you and the participant receive by collaborating with these partners?

Give an example of a success story resulting from collaboration.

Authorized Representative

As mentioned earlier, the SSI/SSDI applicant is entitled to representation. If the applicant would like his/her advocate to be more involved in the process, s/he may appoint that advocate to be an authorized representative. The authorized representative is able to work on behalf of the applicant in a number of ways.

1. Review the applicant's file at the local SSA office;

2. Get information from the SSA about the claim, including notices and letters, just as the applicant does;

3. Represent the applicant at informal or formal hearings; and

4. Provide the SSA with evidence for the applicant, and/or help with the appeals process.

The authorized representative will receive a copy of the decision(s) that the SSA makes on the applicant's claim(s). When an applicant has chosen a representative, it is important to inform the SSA in writing of that decision. To do this, use Form SSA-1696-U4, *Appointment of Representative*. This form can be obtained on the SSA's website at http://www.ssa.gov/online/ssa-1696.pdf.

Authorized representatives may charge for their services. In order to do that, the representative must inform the SSA by submitting a fee agreement or fee petition. The representative cannot charge more than the SSA authorizes.

Remember:
No W-2 agency, W-2 agency staff member or W-2 agency subcontractor may charge the participant a fee for being the person's authorized representative.

W-2 Manual 7.4.3.3.1

Important Information about Authorized Representatives

- The applicant or authorized representative will receive a letter with the name of the disability specialist or examiner and toll free number.
- If the examiner's name and phone number are unknown, call the DDB's main number.
- Confidential information will be shared only with the claimant, his/her authorized representative and others whom the claimant has specified.
- The receptionist from the DDB or SSA may be able to provide a quick update on the status of the claimant's application.
- Identify yourself as being from the W-2 program.
- Authorized representatives must act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a claimant.
- Disability claims may be denied if the authorized representative fails to provide information or take other action.

Release of Information

Although you may not be appointed a participant's authorized representative, it may be a good practice to speak with the participant about signing a release of information. This will allow you to share important information with the SSA and/or DDB as well as to receive information from the SSA and/or DDB. It is important to note that this is different from being an authorized representative, and that a signed release of information does not allow you to act on the participant's behalf.

Activities to Support SSI/SSDI Advocacy

W-2 T participants can be assigned ***up to*** 40 hours/week of activities. The W-2 T participant with an SSI/SSDI focus may have multiple or severe barriers that prevent immediate attachment to the workforce, so it may be appropriate to assign other activities that support enhancement of living during the SSI/SSDI process. It is important to remember that participants already may be involved with other types of appointments. These should be incorporated into their EP.

Remember that the activity should be assigned the appropriate Component/Status code on WPCS/WPCH (see the W-2 Manual Appendix for the definitions of activity codes). If you are providing SSI/SSDI advocacy services, you also must include the advocacy activity code SD on WPCS/WPCH.

Personal Logs (PD)

As noted throughout this course, the goal is to provide FEPs with strategies to support the W-2 T participant's SSI/SSDI application. Use of Personal Logs as an activity can be a valuable evaluation tool for the W-2 T participant and the FEP.

An individualized log should be based on the participant's specific barriers and answer questions related to his/her functional ability. Consider creating the log yourself, with specific questions for the participant to answer. These questions can be structured in a way to gather necessary information for his/her SSI/SSDI application.

Questions that Personal Logs May Answer:

- What level of difficulty occurs with dressing, bathing, and other hygienic practices?
- How often are reminders needed to complete daily living tasks?
- What degree of routine is needed?
- What issues occur when daily routine is broken?
- How is care of children or others in the household accomplished?
- How are meals prepared?
- How frequently are household chores completed? What problems occur?

Ongoing Medical/Personal Care Activities (MP)

Use these activities when a participant is involved in ongoing medical appointments or during timeframes when s/he cannot be assigned to other work activities due to medical restrictions that are expected to last more than six months. The medical restrictions and the expectation that the activities will last more than six months must be certified by a qualified medical or mental health professional.

Life Skills Activities (LF)

The purpose of these activities is to teach a participant basic skills that can help him/her succeed in the workforce. Some of these skills can be developed and/or enhanced during the SSI/SSDI advocacy process. Examples of skills that may be covered are:

- Interpersonal skills
- Time management
- How to work with government, legal and school systems
- How to request reasonable accommodations
- How to understand equal employment laws

Personal Development Activities (PD)

These activities can help promote a healthy lifestyle, but are not medically necessary. Assign these activities with the intention of moving the participant toward employment. Examples of appropriate personal development activities are:

- Motivational reading
- Support groups (AA, NA, domestic violence support, etc.)
- Exercise at home

Counseling Activities (CA, CM)

Keeping in mind that assigned activities should assist the participant in overcoming his/her barriers, counseling activities may be appropriate. These activities could include:

- AODA Counseling
- Mental Health Counseling

These activities should be assigned when prescribed by an AODA or mental health professional.

Strategy Break

How do you identify the types of activities that may be appropriate for the participant?

How do you choose how many hours of each activity to assign?

How do you determine when an activity is no longer serving its purpose?

Who is available to the participant and you to collaborate with on these activities?

What community resources are available to assist you and the participant in the SSI and SSDI process?

Using Employment Search as an Advocacy Tool

From the very start, it is important to discuss employment-related services with the W-2 participant. Depending on where the participant is in the SSI/SSDI process and the severity of his/her limitations, the ratio of hours that are assigned for these activities may change. While keeping in mind the barriers and limitations a participant may have, the FEP also needs to consider the skills and resources the participant brings to the table and assign employment related activities accordingly.

These activities will assist the participant in achieving employment-related goals. These programs provide directly, or facilitate the provision of, vocational rehabilitation to individuals with disabilities that enable them to maximize opportunities for employment. Services may include vocational assessment, job readiness training, job placement and on-the-job support targeted at individuals with disabilities. Many W-2 activities can be included. ***Remember***, these are individualized activities chosen based on the participant's assessment information and his/her goals.

Career Planning and Counseling (CE)

These activities are designed for participants receiving services geared toward assessment of their career interests and guidance in the career planning process. Examples of these types of activities are:

- Career assessments
- Educational needs assessments
- Career exploration/job shadowing
- Review labor market information (LMI) and training opportunities
- Career guidance and counseling

Employment Search (ES)

Employment Search activities in the W-2 program are much more diverse than just independent employment search. Although independent employment search may be appropriate in certain circumstances during the SSI/SSDI application or appeals process, there is a wide variety of other supportive employment search activities that may be offered to SSI/SSDI focused W-2 T participants, including:

- Researching prospective employers
- Meeting with a job developer
- Attending a structured job search workshop
- Making contact with prospective employers, whether by phone, in person or via the internet, to learn of job openings
- Completing applications for vacancies
- Preparing for job interviews
- Interviewing for jobs

Remember that these activities should be tailored to the participant to meet his/her employment goals, needs and expectations.

Job Readiness/Motivation (MO)

When facing the uncertainty of whether or not SSI/SSDI benefits are going to be awarded, time can be well spent on activities that expand on a participant's soft skills, self-awareness and employment readiness. Job readiness/motivation activities should be used to learn general workplace expectations, work behavior and job retention skills necessary to compete successfully in the labor market. Well-developed programs can increase a participant's self-esteem and self-confidence. Some topics these activities encompass are:

- Developing networking skills
- Communication skills, personality types, and ability to relate to others
- Workshops on self-esteem and goal-setting
- Courses on basic computer skills and the use of the internet

Occupational Testing (OC)

Due to a disability, the participant may not be able to return to his/her former line of work. Understanding how his/her skills, aptitudes, interests and abilities fit into a new line of work is necessary information to gather. Occupational testing can provide that information. Examples of occupational testing are:

- Exploration
- Aptitude
- Skills
- Interest testing and interpretation

Work Experience (WE)

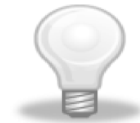
Work experience can be valuable in determining an SSI/SSDI applicant's capacity for work, either in a field in which s/he has experience or in a brand new field. This information then can be shared with the participant's advocate (if it is someone other than you), the DDB, the SSA and other parties with a need to know.

Efforts should be made to develop worksites and work experience assignments that can provide special accommodations, such as:

- Flexible work schedules
- Limited hours
- Other accommodated work environments

> These are just some of the activities that may be appropriate for a W-2 T participant receiving SSI/SSDI advocacy. The participant, however, is not limited to these activities. S/he may be assigned activities similar to a CSJ placement, but with more supervision. Consider the participant's strengths, goals, limitations, and barriers, and assign activities accordingly. You may find that it would be beneficial to assign activities not mentioned, e.g., Education and Training.

Strategy Break



1. What is the purpose of using career or occupational testing with SSI/SSDI applicants? Does it defeat the purpose of the SSI/SSDI application?

2. What types of Employment Search activities have you assigned to SSI/SSDI applicants? Why did you assign these activities? How can you structure these types of activities to assist the participant in overcoming his/her barriers?

3. Do W-2 T participants in your agency have access to a Job Club or other job readiness/motivational workshops? What best practices can you share about these activities/workshops? How do they benefit SSI/SSDI applicants?

4. How do activities with a stronger employment focus look for a participant who is going through the appeal process?

5. How can employment search related activities benefit the participant's SSI/SSDI application?

6. What supports can you tap into to assist the participant in being successful in his/her completion of these activities?

7. How do you personally support an SSI/SSDI applicant with his/her employment-related activities?

The SSI/SSDI Appeals Process

After the SSA makes its decision, a written Notice of Decision is sent to the applicant. If the applicant disagrees with the decision, s/he has the right to appeal. S/he has 60 days from the receipt of the decision to file an appeal in writing. The Notice of Decision includes directions on how to appeal the decision. If the SSI and/or SSDI application was denied based on medical reasons, s/he can file the appeal online at https://secure.ssa.gov/apps6z/iAppeals/ap001.jsp.

The Levels of Appeal

The SSA has four levels of appeals. At each level, the applicant has 60 days from the date s/he received the notice of decision to file an appeal.

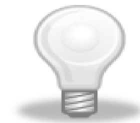
1. **Reconsideration:** This level involves a complete review of the applicant's information. Typically, the applicant would not need to be present.

2. **Hearing:** If the applicant disagrees with the decision of the Reconsideration, s/he may request a hearing. The hearing is conducted by an administrative law judge who has not been a part of the process up to this point. The applicant is present in person or by video conference for the hearing, and can be accompanied by his/her representative and witnesses. S/he can submit new evidence prior to the hearing. The judge will make a decision based on all the information in the case and will submit a decision to the applicant in writing. The hearing usually is held six months to one year after a request for a hearing is made.

3. **Appeals Council:** If the applicant disagrees with the decision made in the hearing process, s/he can request a review by Social Security's Appeals Council. The Appeals Council can choose to deny the request for review if it feels the decision by the administrative judge was correct. If it does choose to grant the review, it either will review the decision or send it back to an administrative law judge for review. A copy of the decision will be sent to the applicant.

4. **Federal Court:** If the applicant disagrees with the decision of the Appeals Council or its decision to not review his/her case, s/he may file a lawsuit in federal court.

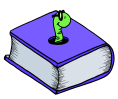
Strategy Break



What new information may you have that could benefit the W-2 participant during the appeals process?

How will the type of activities assigned on a participant's Employability Plan change during the appeals process?

When SSI/SSDI Is Approved



Policy Reference: W-2 Manual 7.4.4.1

When SSI/SSDI is approved, W-2 policy requires a Transition Plan. The Case Manager may begin to develop a written Transition Plan with the participant early in the SSI advocacy process, using the automated SSI/SSDI Transition Plan. This can be accessed from the W-2 Plans Application webpage at https://www.dwd.state.wi.us/dcfw2plans/ .

The Transition Plan must be developed during a face-to-face meeting between the FEP and the participant. After there is a formal decision on SSI/SSDI eligibility handed down by the SSA, the Transition Plan should be finalized with the participant. The final Transition Plan should be issued to the participant no sooner than 90 days prior to W-2 eligibility ending. The plan should be reviewed regularly with the participant up until W-2 eligibility ends. The Case Manager must document in CARES case comments when the final plan was printed and given to the participant.

Reminder:
If SSI/SSDI is approved, the W-2 participant remains eligible for W-2 until s/he receives his/her first SSI or SSDI payment.
W-2 Manual 2.2.1

What Is Included in the Transition Plan

Policy Reference: W-2 Manual 7.4.4.2

Each W-2 participant and his/her family has a different story. The Transition Plan should reflect the uniqueness of the participant's situation. Relevant information should include:

- Emergency Needs
- Housing Needs
- Household Budgeting/Money Management Needs
- Access to Economic Supports
- Education and Training Needs (participant and other family members)
- Legal Assistance Needs
- Employment Support Needs (with particular emphasis on work connection resources targeted at individuals with disabilities)
- Child Care Needs (for job search and work)
- Transportation Needs
- Personal and Family Health Care Needs
- Other needs identified by the participant

It is required that the following information be included:

1. A Plan of Action: A short-term plan of action should help the participant address emergency or short-term needs. A long-term plan of action includes the steps necessary to reach a goal of self-sufficiency, such as completing an education or training program or securing permanent housing.

2. Resource and Referral Information for known government and community resources that may help to address his/her needs: The purpose of each resource should be explained, and how each resource addresses or relates to the identified need should be included.

Other Important Information

The following information also should be considered when working with the participant to develop the Transition Plan:

- Benefits and supportive services targeted at individuals with disabilities, like Ticket to Work and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.
- Independent Living Centers, community-based, consumer-directed, not-for-profit organizations, providing services such as peer support, information and referral, independent living skills, and individual and system advocacy.
- Application information for Caretaker Supplement, a cash benefit available to parents who are eligible for SSI payments.
- Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRC), resources for the public to get accurate, unbiased information on all aspects of life related to living with a disability.
- Government-funded economic supports like FoodShare, BadgerCare Plus, child support, etc.
- Community-based supportive services, such as subsidized housing programs, transportation services, adult literacy services, etc.

What community resources do you typically include in a Transition Plan?

Ticket to Work

After a participant receives SSI/SSDI benefits, s/he still can become employed through the Ticket to Work program. The SSA will issue this ticket to eligible beneficiaries who then can choose an Employment Network (EN) to work with to obtain various employment-related services. Again, by assigning appropriate employment-related services, W-2 participants can be prepared to enter the workforce while still receiving SSI/SSDI benefits.

When SSI/SSDI Is Exhausted

When the SSI/SSDI application and subsequent appeals have been denied, your case management strategies will require an adjustment.

- Review the participation to date. Has the participant completed assigned activities and been successful? Are accommodations in place that can be applied to an unsubsidized work environment?
- Reassess the suitability of the W-2 T placement. Remember that informal assessments are an ongoing activity and are part of general W-2 case management. In addition, you must document all assessment information in CARES, utilizing the appropriate CARES screens, including case comments.
- You may determine that another formal assessment is necessary. When results of this assessment are received, you must use them to determine if the placement is correct, if the W-2 activities are appropriate, and if any necessary work-related accommodations need to be made. Any change made based on the formal assessment must be discussed with the participant, and the participant's EP must be updated accordingly.
- Create a new EP with input from your participant and those partners who have been collaborating with you on his/her case when new activities need to be assigned. The EP written after the SSI denial will necessarily have clear differences from the EP in place when the SSI application still was in process.
- Consider the usefulness of on-the-job training and paid work experiences. Discuss these activities as options with the participant.

What strategies can you use to create an EP that focuses the W-2 T participant on employment?

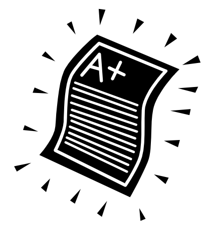
Putting It All Together

We covered a lot of information today: what SSI and SSDI are, the application and decision process, the appeals process, and strategies for providing case management throughout these processes. We now will recap and put it all together.

Let's Review!

Grab your "clickers" and have some fun!

1. How many steps are there in the Disability Determination Bureau's (DDB) sequential disability determination process?
   A. One
   B. Three
   C. Five
   D. Seven



2. Will an individual's SSI/SSDI claim be denied if his/her impairment(s) fails to meet or equal a listing in Step 3 of the disability determination process?
   A. Yes
   B. No

3. When DDB looks at an individual's ability to perform other work (Step 5), they must look at three factors. Which factor is **not** considered?
   A. Age
   B. Education
   C. Reason for leaving past work
   D. Past work experience (transferable skills)

4. If a participant states that s/he has Lou Gehrig's disease (ALS), you first must obtain documentation from his/her treating provider before deciding whether to offer SSI advocacy.
   A. True
   B. False

5. The eligibility requirements for both SSI and SSDI are the same.
   A. True
   B. False

6. The application for SSDI must be completed:
   A. In person
   B. Online
   C. Either A or B

7. It would be advantageous to have the participant complete the online ***Medical and Job Worksheet - Adult*** prior to completing the online SSDI application.
   A. True
   B. False

8. If an individual's wage documentation indicates that s/he is earning a gross monthly income of $1070, an application for SSI/SSDI will be denied automatically.
   A. True
   B. False

9. If an initial application for SSI/SSDI is denied, the applicant must submit a new application.
   A. True
   B. False

10. How many levels of appeal are there?
   A. One
   B. Two
   C. Three
   D. Four

11. It is necessary to consider where in the SSI/SSDI application process a W-2 participant is when assigning Employability Plan activities.
   A. True
   B. False

12. W-2 participants receiving SSI/SSDI advocacy never should be assigned any employment search/job readiness activities.
   A. True
   B. False

13. It is important to start discussing the SSI/SSDI Transition Plan with SSI/SSDI advocacy participants early in the SSI/SSDI application process.
    A. True
    B. False

Today’s Takeaways

Two things that I learned because of this training are:

1.

2.

Two new skills that I now have because of this training are:

1.

2.

Actions I will take to implement SSI/SSDI advocacy case management practices include:

References

Social Security Administration. (2012). *Disability benefits* (SSA Publication No. 05-10029). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Social Security Administration. (2013a). *What you need to know when you get Supplemental Security Income (SSI)* (SSA Publication No. 05-11011). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Social Security Administration. (2013b). *2013 red book* (SSA Publication No. 64-030). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Social Security Administration (2013c). *Supplemental Security Income home page.* Retrieved on Dec. 11, 2013, from http://www.socialsecurity.gov/ssi/index.htm.

Social Security Administration (2013d). *Benefits for people with disabilities.* Retrieved on Dec. 11, 2013, from http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disability/#sb=1.

Social Security Administration. (2013e). *Representing Social Security claimants.* Retrieved on Dec. 11, 2013, from http://www.socialsecurity.gov/representation/.

Social Security Administration (2013f). *Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits.* Retrieved on Dec. 11, 2013, from http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pgm/ssi.htm.

Resources

For more information on what SSI and SSDI are:
http://www.socialsecurity.gov/ssi/
http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disability/

To access the Social Security Administration's Red Book:
http://www.socialsecurity.gov/redbook/eng/TheRedBook2013.pdf.

To access materials to start an application:
http://www.benefits.gov/ssa
http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disability/disability_starter_kits_adult_eng.htm

For the online SSDI application:
https://secure.ssa.gov/iClaim/dib

To access forms and materials to represent an applicant:
http://www.socialsecurity.gov/representation/
http://www.ssa.gov/online/ssa-1696.pdf.

To start the appeals process:
http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pgm/appeal.html

Appendix

SSI Assessment Process Tool

This process tool is designed to provide guidance as you determine if Employment Services, SSI Advocacy, or a combination of the two service directions are appropriate for a new W-2 participant placed in a W-2 T employment position.

The information recorded in the first steps of the form will provide a summary of the information required and subsequently obtained during the assessment process. The latter steps will help you analyze the impact of medical information prior to making your decision regarding the appropriate services to provide.

W-2 Participant Name ________________________PIN_________________________

W-2 T Placement Date________________________DOB________________________

STEP 1: Gather Background Information

1. Presumptive Employment Services Case

If the participant's circumstances meet <u>either</u> of the following 2 conditions, the participant should be guided toward employment services.

☐ The participant is earning $1070/month or greater (in 2012). This figure may change each year (see **SSA Update** at http://ssa.gov/pubs/10003.pdf), **or**

☐ The participant was placed in a W-2 T position solely because s/he is caring for a dependent family member.

If the answer to **EITHER** item above is **checked,** go directly to STEP 8 to record your decision to offer employment services. If neither answer is **checked**, continue below.

2. Presumptive SSI Advocacy Case

If the participant's circumstance meets the condition below, the agency should work with the attorney or authorized representative while providing SSI advocacy services.

☐ The participant has an authorized representative/attorney representing him/her on an open SSI/SSDI claim.

Attorney/Authorized Representative:

Name ___________________________________

Address___________________________________

____

Phone ___________________________________

If the answer above is **checked**, record the attorney, and go directly to STEP 8 to record your decision to offer SSI Advocacy services. If the answer is **NOT checked**, continue below.

3. Education Level

____

4. Work History ☐None ☐None in past __years ☐Minimal ☐Short term ☐Other

Summary ____

____

5. **Impairments**____

____

____

____

6. **Is any alleged impairment on the Presumptive Disability or Compassionate Allowance List?**
   1. Presumptive Disability ☐YES ☐NO
   2. Compassionate Allowance List (CAL) ☐YES ☐NO

If the answer to **EITHER** item above is **YES,** circle the associated impairment listed in #5 above. SSI Advocacy services are appropriate; proceed to STEP 8 to record your decision to offer SSI Advocacy services. If both answers are NO, continue below.

7. **Treating Providers**
   Provider Name: ______________________________Title: ________________

   Provider Name: ______________________________Title: ________________

   Provider Name: ______________________________Title: ________________

   Provider Name: ______________________________Title: ________________

STEP 2: Obtain SSI/SSDI Claim Information

1. Does the participant have a pending SSI/SSDI claim?
   ☐YES ☐NO

2. If the participant has applied for SSI/SSDI and **has a pending claim**, but does not have an attorney or authorized representative, complete the claim information below, request an appeal if necessary, then request a copy of the participant's SSI/SSDI file.

   a) Participant applied for ☐SSI ☐SSDI

   b) Application Date ______________Status _________________________

   c) Request an SSI/SSDI appeal if necessary:

   Has the SSI/SSDI case recently been denied? ☐YES ☐NO If YES,

   - ✓ Does the participant need help filing an appeal? ☐YES ☐NO
   - ✓ Date of Request for Appeal ________________

d) Request a copy of the participant's SSI/SSDI file:

_____________ Date SSA-3288 (SSA Consent for Release of Information) is signed

_____________ Date of SSI/DI file request ________________Office contacted

Note: When there is an open SSI/SSDI claim, the FEP should immediately review all currently available SSI claim information for a potentially quick decision to support SSI Advocacy prior to requesting any additional formal assessments. This is especially important if the case is scheduled for a hearing in the near future.

3. If the participant **does not have a pending claim** for SSI/DI:
   a. ☐ The participant wants to apply for SSI/SSDI, or
   b. ☐ The participant is undecided about applying for SSI/SSDI, or
   c. ☐ The participant is not interested in applying for SSI/SSDI while participating in W-2.

Note: Continue the usual processing for this type of case. If the results indicate that the person **is a viable SSI/SSDI candidate**, re-discuss the advantages of applying for SSI/SSDI prior to your decision regarding providing SSI Advocacy services.

STEP 3: Enter BST Results

1. Date offered:__________________ ☐Completed ☐Declined

   Date completed or declined:____________________

2. If formal assessment(s) is required, type(s) indicated:

   ______________________________ _________________________________

STEP 4: Determine if Additional Formal Assessments Are Needed

1. Has the participant provided a current formal assessment from the treating physician(s) or other qualified assessing agency?

   ☐YES ☐NO If YES, complete the information below:

   Provider Name: _________________________________Title: _________________

   Documentation Type: ____________________________Date: ____________

2. Do results of the BST, informal assessment, or current provider's record indicate a need for school records, additional formal assessments or clarifications?

   ☐YES ☐NO If YES, complete numbers 3-4 below. If NO, skip to STEP 5.

3. Discuss the **W-2 Formal Assessment Agreement** with the participant, explaining the benefits of completing the appropriate formal assessments.

   Does the participant agree to participate in the recommended formal assessment(s)?

   ☐YES ☐NO ☐Agrees to some, but not all assessments deemed appropriate.

   Indicate the formal assessments recommended and agreed to by the participant:

   ______________________________ ______________________________

   ______________________________ ______________________________

   Date W-2 T Formal Assessment Agreement(s) is signed:______________

   Note: If more than one assessment is recommended, and the participant agrees to complete some, but not all, develop two Formal Assessment Agreements; one for those the participant agrees to complete, and one for those the participant does not want to complete.

4. As agreed to by the participant, request the formal assessment(s) and complete the information below:

Request Date	Information Requested	Provider Name	Received Date

IMPORTANT!

Note: When formal assessment results indicate that (1) the W-2 placement or activities should be revised, or (2) reasonable modifications or accommodations are necessary to help the participant succeed in any assigned activities, you must meet with the participant to update the EP and/or complete the **Services and Accommodations to Help You Do Your W-2 Activities** (DCF-F-2564-E) form within 30 days of the receipt of the formal assessment.

STEP 5: Review Assessment Information for Indicators of a Strong Employment Services Case

If the answer to **ANY** of the questions below is **YES**, enter the number(s) of the question(s):__________.

Employment Services activities are appropriate if the participant meets any of these criteria. Proceed to STEP 8 and record your decision to provide Employment Services.

1. Do the records fail to indicate any impairment(s) that impacts the participant’s ability to perform basic work activities? ☐YES ☐NO

2. Is the duration of the participant’s restriction(s) currently less than 12 months and clearly expected to be less than 12 months? ☐YES ☐NO

3. Is the participant ≤ age 50, not illiterate, and able to perform the full range of unskilled work at the sedentary level on a consistent, sustained basis? ☐YES ☐NO

4. Is the participant **not** interested in applying for SSI/SSDI? ☐YES ☐NO

STEP 6: Review Assessment Information for Indicators of a Strong SSI Advocacy Case

If the answer to **either question** below is **YES,** enter the number of the question: _____. SSI Advocacy is appropriate if the participant meets either of these criteria. Proceed to STEP 8 and record your decision to provide SSI Advocacy services.

1. Do medical records indicate that the severity of the participant's condition has met the 'Listings' for Social Security as indicated in the SSA's Blue Book? ☐YES ☐NO

2. Does the impairment(s) satisfy any of the criteria listed in Module 3, 'Identifying Strong SSI/SSDI Cases,' in the Assessment Basics for SSI Advocacy PTS distance learning course? ☐YES ☐NO

   If Yes, provide details:

   ____

   ____

   ____

STEP 7: Determine if Referral to a Disability Law Expert Is Appropriate

If the case does not meet a strong indicator for Employment Services (STEP 5) or SSI Advocacy (STEP 6), **and** you are uncertain regarding the appropriate services to provide, you may want to consider a Disability Review from a disability law professional.

Disability Review is requested by case worker. ☐YES ☐NO
If YES, Name___________________ Date______________
If NO, proceed to STEP 8.

Disability Review request is approved by Supervisor. ☐YES ☐NO
If YES, Name___________________ Date______________
If NO, proceed to STEP 8.

Check appropriate file information to be sent to disability reviewer:
Note: Be sure to check the appropriate items below to indicate the file information that should be included for the review.

__Functional assessments

__Medical Examination & Capacity Form (DCF Form 2012)

__Other medical records requested from the treating doctor or SSA

__Supportive Services, cultural and language services, and any accommodations that assist the participant in program participation

__DVR records

__CD of SSI/SSDI file

__Mental health assessments

__Mental Health Report (DCF Form 126)

__Other qualified assessment information, including career assessments/tests
____
____
____
____
____

__Information about other records requested, but not received

__Observations from case worker such as participant's approach to W-2, situational assessment results, immediate needs assessment, etc.

Disability Review Request:______________________ Agency ______________Date

Disability Review Results:

Reviewer Name:___________________________ Date Received: _________________

Recommendations:____

____

____

STEP 8: Determination of Appropriate Services to Provide

1. Determination: Date:_________________________

   ☐Employment Services Worker:________________________

   ☐SSI Advocacy

2. Summary of rationale for the determination of the appropriate services to provide. Include the relative strength of the SSI case when supporting SSI Advocacy and approximate ratio of SSI Advocacy activities to Community Rehabilitation employment related activities.

____

____

____

____

____

Activity Appendix

Scenario A: Maria

Part 1

Maria, age 28, is a single woman, never married, with 2 children, Marquis, 5 years, and Clydie, 3 years.

Maria never completed high school, but does have her GED. She has no other formal education. She worked at Target for 8 years in a variety of jobs, from overnight stocking to team lead of 1st shift cashiers. She quit working at Target a year ago due to frequent absences that she felt were unfair to her coworkers. If she had remained at work, she would have constantly been in the restroom due to nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Before she quit working, she had moved in with her mother; she and her boyfriend, Mark, the father of Marquis and Clydie, had separated. Mark also was sick much of the time, and she had tired of his drug use. She didn't want her children seeing that sort of thing.

When Mark was diagnosed HIV-positive, Maria went to be tested. She received her HIV-positive diagnosis two months ago. Neither child has tested positive.

Maria is new to the W-2 program. During her interview, she asks the Case Manager about Social Security disability. She said her mother also told her to check into that. The Case Manager discusses with Maria what she knows about SSI/SSDI and recommends that Maria consider applying for that program as well as W-2. Maria continues through the W-2 application process.

What assessment information would you gather during this initial application process?

How would you use the assessment information to determine if Maria is a good candidate for SSI/SSDI?

How would you start the SSI/SSDI advocacy process?

Part 2

Maria reports to the Case Manager that she has decided to apply for SSI/SSDI.

The Medical Examination and Capacity form that arrives on the Case Manager's desk soon after Maria's W-2 T placement confirms the HIV-positive diagnosis. Maria's doctor notes that because it is early in her treatment, he recommends the Case Manager proceed slowly with her in W-2. His reason for this is because the infection's symptoms frequently may interfere with simple work tasks. He also notes that it is too early to say if she is "making positive progress," adding that in any case it would be likely that she would have "bad" days. The doctor's additional note with the Medical Examination and Capacity form points out that medications used in the treatment of HIV infection also may have effects on Maria's mental functioning, including memory, concentration, and mood, and may result in depression, severe fatigue, joint and muscle pain, and insomnia. The symptoms of HIV infection and the side effects of medication may be indistinguishable from each other.

Describe how you would support Maria in the SSI/SSDI application process. In your response, be sure to include with whom it would be helpful to collaborate and how, or in what manner.

What forms or documents would you complete and compile in support of Maria's SSI/SSDI application and her assigned activities in the W-2 T placement? In your response, provide an explanation about each form's specific usefulness in Maria's case. What strategies would you employ to keep track of this information and documentation?

What would you want to know in order to create an Employability Plan (EP) with Maria that would support her SSI/SSDI application? In your response, be sure to include activities you would consider assigning Maria on her EP, the EP's timeframe (e.g., 1 week, 2 weeks, 1 month, etc.) and your rationale for the activities and for the timeframe.

Part 3

It has been eight months since Maria applied for SSI benefits. She has received her award letter from the Social Security Administration. Her SSI payments will begin next month.

You and Maria need to develop a Transition Plan. What information and community resources would you include in that plan?

What steps will you take to close down Maria's case?

Scenario B: Gregory

Part 1

Gregory, age 37, is a divorced father of 3, and has twins Staci and Laci, 13 years, and Brooks, 10 years. Their mother, last known to be living out of the state, had been paying child support regularly, but those payments have stopped. She keeps in contact with the children via e-mail and telephone. You are just receiving Gregory's case through an inter-agency transfer.

Gregory graduated from high school and has an Associate's degree in Culinary Arts from the state technical college. He had worked as the sous-chef at a local restaurant until two years ago when he left due to chronic back pain, the emotional upheaval of the divorce, and gaining custody of his children.

Gregory has been in a W-2 T placement based largely on a back-related disability, the result of a car accident that occurred when he was 22 years old. He has not made any significant strides in moving forward with employment due to his disability. You mention that perhaps applying for SSI/SSDI could be beneficial. Gregory agrees that it is an option to consider.

The assessment information in Gregory's file is more than 6 months old. What new assessment information would you gather?

How would you use the assessment information to determine the viability of his SSI/SSDI application? What barriers or "red flags" are you going to look for?

How would you start the SSI/SSDI advocacy process?

Part 2

You receive a Medical Examination Capacity form completed by Gregory's doctor, who has been treating him since the accident. The doctor sets strict limitations to work involving sitting or standing for long periods of time and lifting anything weighing 20 pounds or more. His symptoms, according to the doctor, will in all likelihood continue and be debilitating throughout his life, supported or eased by physical therapy and pain medication. You and Gregory decide to start the SSI/SSDI application process.

Describe how you would support Gregory in the SSI/SSDI application process. In your response, be sure to include with whom it would be helpful to collaborate and how, or in what manner.

What forms or documents would you complete and compile in support of Gregory's SSI/SSDI application and his assigned activities in the W-2 T placement? In your response, provide an explanation about each form's specific usefulness in Gregory's case and how it would support his application. What strategies would you employ to keep track of this information and documentation?

What would you want to know in order to create an Employability Plan (EP) with Gregory that would support his SSI/SSDI application? In your response, be sure to include activities you would consider assigning Gregory on his EP, the EP's timeframe (e.g., 1 week, 2 weeks, 1 month, etc.) and your rationale for the activities and for the timeframe.

Part 3

Within the last week, Gregory received a denial of his application for SSI/SSDI benefits. The letter from the SSA stated that, based on the information submitted, his condition would not prevent him from adjusting to other work. His age, education, training, and work experience also were considered by the SSA in determining whether he could do another kind of work. With his doctor's diagnosis firm as to his inability to do any substantial work, Gregory is submitting a request for reconsideration.

Describe how you would support Gregory's participation in the W-2 program after the initial SSI/SSDI application has been denied.

What would you want to know in order to create an Employability Plan (EP) with Gregory, taking into consideration the SSI/SSDI denial and Gregory's request for reconsideration? In your response, be sure to include activities you would consider assigning Gregory on his EP, the EP's timeframe (e.g., 1 week, 2 weeks, 1 month, etc.) and your rationale for the timeframe.

What forms or documents would you complete and compile in support of Gregory's request for a reconsideration of the SSI/SSDI denial? In your response, provide an explanation about each form's specific usefulness in Gregory's case and how it would support his appeal.

Scenario C: Lucy

Part 1

Lucy is a 39-year old mother of 2 children, Kent, age 18 and in his senior year of high school, and Kendall, age 16. Lucy divorced from her husband Ron, the father of the children, seven months ago. The family has been surviving on what little savings Lucy received in the divorce settlement, on the child support for the children and on some financial assistance from family members.

Lucy feels her financial situation is in dire straits and comes to your agency to apply for W-2 services because she understands from a friend that she can get a check. During the intake, you discover that she has not worked in recent history. Lucy had been a stay at home mother, and Ron had been the bread winner. She informs you that she no longer has any savings. She spent it all in the first two months. Her family has been getting by with help from other family members, but no longer can keep using them for financial support.

Lucy self-discloses that some days she cannot get out of bed, and admits that on those days she does not shower or make any of the family meals. Yet on other days, she can be very productive and clean the entire apartment floor to ceiling. As you explain the W-2 program, Lucy starts to cry and appears agitated. She tells you that she cannot work. Lucy continues through the application process. You have concerns over Lucy's mental state, and discuss your concerns with her.

What assessment information would you gather during this initial application process?

Based on your concerns, how would you use the assessment information to determine if Lucy is a good candidate for SSI/SSDI?

How would you start the SSI/SSDI advocacy process?

Part 2

The Mental Health Capacity form that arrives on the Case Manager's desk soon after Lucy's W-2 T placement indicates that she has been diagnosed with bipolar disorder. Lucy's doctor notes that because it is early in her treatment, he recommends the Case Manager proceed slowly with her in W-2. His reason for this is because it will take time to get her new medication adjusted to the right level, and they just started psychosocial treatment. He also notes that it is too early to say if she is "making positive progress," adding that in any case it would be likely that she would have "bad" days. The doctor's additional note points out that common symptoms of bipolar disorder include feelings of hopelessness, difficulty concentrating, poor judgment and extreme irritability and distractibility.

After having a conversation with Lucy and her doctor, you decide that applying for SSI may be a good option for Lucy.

Describe how you would support Lucy in the SSI/SSDI application process. In your response, be sure to include with whom it would be helpful to collaborate and how, or in what manner.

What forms or documents would you complete and compile in support of Lucy's SSI/SSDI application and her assigned activities in the W-2 T placement? In your response, provide an explanation about each form's specific usefulness in Lucy's case. What strategies would you employ to keep track of this information and documentation?

What would you want to know in order to create an Employability Plan (EP) with Lucy that would support her SSI/SSDI application? In your response, be sure to include activities you would consider assigning Lucy on her EP, the EP's timeframe (e.g., 1 week, 2 weeks, 1 month, etc.) and your rationale for the activities and for the timeframe.

Part 3

Within the last week, Lucy received a denial of her application for SSI benefits. The letter from the SSA stated that, based on the information submitted, her condition would not prevent her from working. Her age, education and medical condition were considered by the SSA in determining whether she could work. With her doctor's diagnosis firm as to her inability to hold down a job for any sustained period of time, Lucy is submitting a request for reconsideration.

Describe how you would support Lucy's participation in the W-2 program after the initial SSI application has been denied.

What would you want to know in order to create an Employability Plan (EP) with Lucy, taking into consideration the SSI denial and Lucy's request for reconsideration? In your response, be sure to include activities you would consider assigning Lucy on her EP, the EP's timeframe (e.g., 1 week, 2 weeks, 1 month, etc.) and your rationale for the timeframe.

What forms or documents would you complete and compile in support of Lucy's request for a reconsideration of the SSI denial? In your response, provide an explanation about each form's specific usefulness in Lucy's case and how it would support her appeal.