

NEWS RELEASE

For Statewide Distribution



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State of Iowa to Employ Community Work Incentive Coordinator to Support Social Security Beneficiaries in Pursuing Careers

Des Moines, Iowa - Iowa Workforce Development is coordinating a collaborative effort with six other state agencies, which will support Iowa's Social Security beneficiaries who have disabilities in successful pursuit of careers. Additional agencies providing initiative leadership include Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Iowa Department for the Blind, Iowa Governor's Developmental Disabilities Council, Iowa Division of Persons with Disabilities, Iowa Department of Human Services, and Iowa Department of Education. The Social Security Administration will provide funding to this collaboration to support this effort.

This initiative will make Community Work Incentive Coordinators (CWICs) available as resources to Iowans on Social Security disability. This program builds on 12 years of effort in Iowa, to assist Social Security beneficiaries who might otherwise elect to not pursue employment for fear of becoming worse off for their effort.

CWICs will work closely with already established community networks, such as rehabilitation programs, advocacy organizations, One-Stop Employment Centers, other available benefits management resources, and Social Security Offices in order to be effective in this area. Capacity building and training will be one of the key roles, in addition to service and outreach, for the CWIC.

The program employs two CWICs who will coordinate the resources and services statewide. The state agency partnership has already selected Sheila Stoeckel, operating in the Region 2 Workforce Service Center in Mason City, to serve as one of the CWICs, and she has served in that capacity since early October of 2006. Sheila has served as a Social Security Benefits Planner in the Mason City workforce Center for 4 years prior to her recent assignment as a Disability Program Navigator in 2003.

Joining Ms. Stoeckel, and working out of Des Moines will be Suzanne Paulson. Her appointment begins November 20, 2006. Suzanne is a recent graduate of Drake University's Rehabilitation Counseling Program, and has operated in a support capacity to the seven state agencies in their implementation of the Navigator program statewide. Ms. Paulson's technical expertise and extensive knowledge of job seeker resources will complement the experience and skills that Sheila is already demonstrating, as well as the resources already available to all job seekers in the One-Stop workforce center system.

Anyone with questions on this new service is encouraged to contact Doug Keast, Program Coordinator, at (515) 281-9045.

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