

# Disability Program "Navigator" Initiative

Department of Labor  
and  
Social Security Administration



FACT SHEET  
JULY 2003



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

The Disability Program Navigator helps people with disabilities "navigate" through the enormous challenges of seeking work. Complex rules surrounding entitlement programs, along with fear of losing cash assistance and health benefits, can often discourage people with disabilities from working. DOL and SSA have established the Disability Program Navigator initiative to better inform beneficiaries and other individuals with disabilities about the work support programs now available at DOL-funded One-Stop Career Centers. These centers provide information, training and other employment-related services at a single customer-friendly location. DOL's Employment and Training Administration and SSA's Office of Program Development and Research signed an Interagency Agreement in September 2002 to jointly fund, implement, pilot, and evaluate the Navigator initiative with on-going collaboration of DOL's Office of Disability Employment Policy.

## Overview

- Approximately 100 Navigator positions will be established in FY 2003, with another 80-100 positions to be added in FY 2004.
- DOL, with input from SSA, has entered into grant agreements with the state level workforce system in 14 states where SSA is undertaking employment support initiatives: Arizona, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Vermont, and Wisconsin.
- DOL and SSA will train the Navigators on SSA employment support programs, One-Stop partner funded programs, and other programs that impact successful employment.
- DOL and SSA will work together to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the Navigator pilot.
- Each navigator will be hired and employed by the state or local workforce system

## The Disability Program Navigator Position

### The Navigator will:

- Assist people with disabilities to access and navigate the complex provisions of various programs that impact their ability to gain, return to, or retain employment.
- Develop linkages and collaborate on an ongoing basis with employers to facilitate job placements for persons with disabilities.
- Facilitate the transition of in- or out-of-school youth with disabilities to secure employment and economic self-sufficiency.
- Conduct outreach to agencies and organizations that serve people with disabilities.
- Serve as a resource on SSA's work incentive and employment support programs and the provision of services through Benefits Planning, Assistance and Outreach organizations (BPAOs); Protection and Advocacy systems (P&As); and SSA's employment-related demonstration projects.
- Serve as a resource to the workforce investment community to ensure the availability of comprehensive knowledge of Federal, State, local and private programs that impact the ability of persons with disabilities to enter and remain in the workforce.

DOL awarded grants to 14 states in June 2003. The first Navigators will be in place in the fall of 2003.