

OESP-07-1 and the date of this announcement.

For information regarding the application submission process, you may also contact: Phyllis Y. Smith or Gary Stammer, Grants Management Team, Office of Acquisition and Grants, Social Security Administration, 1st Floor—Rear Entrance, 7111 Security Blvd., Baltimore, MD 21244. The telephone numbers are: Phyllis Y. Smith, (410) 965-9518, or Gary Stammer, (410) 965-9501. The fax number is (410) 966-9310.

VIII. Other Information

Process Evaluation

SSA plans to conduct a formal independent process evaluation of the WIPA Program, as well as individual projects, beginning in FY2007 to further assess the overall efficacy of the program in terms of assisting beneficiaries with disabilities return to work. The purpose of a process evaluation is for SSA and the awardees to assess how the WIPA Program functions and how the process (es) might be improved to provide more efficient and effective work incentives services, as required under section 1149 of the Act. The process evaluation will require both data collection and qualitative observational evaluation through site visits and/or project reporting.

Participant Experience

The goal of these cooperative agreements is the provision of services to enhance beneficiary awareness and understanding of SSA work incentives and thereby enhance a beneficiaries' ability to make informed choices regarding work. The goal is not to provide employment services, however employment is ultimately the key for many beneficiaries with disabilities in terms of gaining greater self-sufficiency.

Projects shall submit periodic reports to SSA, OAG. Data and information that are used in preparing the reports can be used, for example, to improve the efficiency of the project's operations, use of staff, and linkages between the project and the programs for which work incentives planning is needed to better meet the needs of target populations. In addition, the evaluation results will be disseminated to other projects to promote learning, program refinements, and facilitate partnership and achievement of project objectives. Timely comprehensive MI data also allows for cost accounting, which helps improve the efficiency of service approaches and may inform future policy decisions.

Paperwork Reduction Act

This notice contains reporting requirements. The information is collected by the *Grants.gov* Apply facility. However, in rare circumstances, the information may be collected using form SSA-96-BK, Federal Assistance Application, which has the Office of Management and Budget clearance number 0960-0184.

Dated: October 10, 2006.

Martin H. Gerry,

Deputy Commissioner for Disability and Income Security Programs.

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SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

[Docket No. SSA-2006-0077]

Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) Program Pre-Application Teleconference Seminars

AGENCY: Social Security Administration (SSA).

ACTION: Notice of Teleconferences.

DATES: October 26, 2006

Time: 1 p.m. (Eastern Time) duration two hours.

Call-in telephone number: (toll free) 877-922-4780.

Pass code: WIPA.

Leader: Debbie Morrison.

October 27, 2006

Time: 4 p.m. (Eastern Time) duration two hours.

Call-in telephone number: (toll free) 877-922-4780.

Pass code: WIPA.

Leader: Debbie Morrison.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Type of meeting: Informational pre-application teleconference seminars open to all potential applicants for the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) Program (formerly the Benefits Planning, Assistance and Outreach (BPAO) Program).

Purpose: SSA will hold informational pre-application teleconference seminars to solicit interest and encourage community-based organizations to apply for cooperative agreement awards. All interested applicants are invited to attend this call.

Section 1149(d) of the Social Security Act (as added by Section 121 of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999, Public Law 106-170) required SSA to establish community based benefits planning and assistance in every State, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, American

Samoa, and the Virgin Islands. As authorized by Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act, SSA established a program of cooperative agreements (monetary awards) granted to community-based organizations. These programs were formerly called the Benefit Planning and Assistance programs (BPAO). The new name for this program is the Work Incentive Planning and Assistance (WIPA) Projects. The WIPA program is to provide all of SSA's beneficiaries with disabilities access to work incentives planning and assistance services. Section 407 of the Social Security Protection Act (Pub. L. 108-203) extended the authorization of this program through Fiscal Year 2009.

SSA released a competitive Request for Applications in May 2006 but did not receive sufficient qualifying proposals to provide full national coverage. In October 2006 SSA released a competitive Request for Applications to announce funding availability for new cooperative agreements awards for the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) Program, for these specific areas:

State of Alabama, the counties of Autauga, Baldwin, Barbour, Bullock, Butler, Choctaw, Clarke, Coffee, Conecuh, Covington, Crenshaw, Dale, Dallas, Elmore, Escambia, Geneva, Henry, Houston, Lee, Lowndes, Macon, Marengo, Mobile, Monroe, Montgomery, Pike, Russell, Washington, and Wilcox;

State of Indiana, the counties of Clark, Crawford, Davies, Dearborn, Dubois, Floyd, Gibson, Grant, Greene, Harrison, Hendricks, Jackson, Jefferson, Jennings, Knox, Lawrence, Martin, Monroe, Ohio, Orange, Parke, Perry, Pike, Posey, Ripley, Scott, Spencer, Sullivan, Switzerland, Vanderburgh, Vermillion, Vigo, Warrick, Washington, and White;

State of Kentucky, the counties of Bath, Bell, Bourbon, Boyd, Bracken, Breathitt, Carter, Clark, Clay, Elliott, Estill, Fleming, Floyd, Garrard, Greenup, Harlan, Harrison, Jackson, Johnson, Knott, Knox, Laurel, Lawrence, Lee, Leslie, Letcher, Lewis, Madison, Magoffin, Martin, Mason, McCreary, Menifee, Montgomery, Morgan, Nicholas, Owsley, Pendleton, Perry, Pike, Powell, Robertson, Rockcastle, Rowan, Whitley, and Wolfe;

State of Nevada, all counties;

State of New York, the counties of Albany, Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Ulster, and Westchester;

State of Ohio, the counties of Ashtabula, Mahoning, Portage, Stark, Summit, and Trumbull;

Pacific territories of Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa to be effective in calendar year 2007.

The schedule (including date, time and call-in number of each pre-application seminar as it becomes available) will also be posted at the following Internet site: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/work>.

Agenda: SSA will use the seminars to provide guidance and technical assistance to interested parties as they prepare to submit their applications. There will be a presentation of information followed by an operator-assisted question and answer period. The agenda will be posted on the Internet at <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/work> one week before commencement of the seminars. The agenda can also be requested electronically or by fax upon request.

Contact Information: Anyone requiring additional information should contact SSA Project Officer, Debbie Morrison by calling (410) 965-9054, or

- Mail addressed to Social Security Administration, 6401 Security Blvd., Room 107 Altmeyer Building, Baltimore, MD 21235.
- Fax at (410) 966-1278.
- E-mail to debbie.morrison@ssa.gov.

Dated: October 10, 2006.

Martin H. Gerry,

Deputy Commissioner for, Disability and Income Security Program.

[FR Doc. 06-8730 Filed 10-16-06; 8:45 am]

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OFFICE OF SPECIAL COUNSEL

No FEAR Act Notice

AGENCY: Office of Special Counsel

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) is publishing its notice under the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (Pub. L. 107-174), as required by the Act and 5 CFR 724.

DATES: October 17, 2006.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dorothy Timbs, Special Assistant, by mail at 1730 M Street, NW, Suite 218, Washington, DC 20036; by telephone, at (202) 254-3643; or by fax, at (202) 653-5161. Additional information can be found on OSC's web site at <http://www.osc.gov>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under the "Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002" (known as the No FEAR Act),

agencies are required to notify employees, former employees, and applicants of their rights and remedies under Federal antidiscrimination and whistleblower protection laws applicable to them. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has published implementing regulations at 5 CFR 724, which require notice and training, and include model language for agency notices.

For these reasons, OSC is publishing this No FEAR Act Notice (also published on the agency's web site at <http://www.osc.gov>):

On May 15, 2002, Congress enacted the "Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002," which is now known as the No FEAR Act. One purpose of the Act is to "require that Federal agencies be accountable for violations of antidiscrimination and whistleblower protection laws." Public Law 107-174, Summary. In support of this purpose, Congress found that "agencies cannot be run effectively if those agencies practice or tolerate discrimination." Public Law 107-174, Title I, General Provisions, section 101(1).

The Act also requires this agency to provide this notice to Federal employees, former Federal employees and applicants for Federal employment to inform you of the rights and protections available to you under Federal antidiscrimination and whistleblower protection laws.

Antidiscrimination Laws

A Federal agency cannot discriminate against an employee or applicant with respect to the terms, conditions or privileges of employment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status or political affiliation. Discrimination on these bases is prohibited by one or more of the following statutes: 5 U.S.C. 2302(b)(1), 29 U.S.C. 206(d), 29 U.S.C. 631, 29 U.S.C. 633a, 29 U.S.C. 791 and 42 U.S.C. 2000e-16.

If you believe that you have been the victim of unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin or disability, you must contact an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) counselor within 45 calendar days of the alleged discriminatory action, or, in the case of a personnel action, within 45 calendar days of the effective date of the action, before you can file a formal complaint of discrimination with your agency. See, e.g., 29 CFR 1614. If you believe that you have been the victim of unlawful discrimination on the basis of age, you must either contact an EEO counselor as noted above or give notice of intent to

sue to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) within 180 calendar days of the alleged discriminatory action. If you are alleging discrimination based on marital status or political affiliation, you may file a written complaint with the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) (see contact information below). In the alternative (or in some cases, in addition), you may pursue a discrimination complaint by filing a grievance through your agency's administrative or negotiated grievance procedures, if such procedures apply and are available.

Whistleblower Protection Laws

A Federal employee with authority to take, direct others to take, recommend or approve any personnel action must not use that authority to take or fail to take, or threaten to take or fail to take, a personnel action against an employee or applicant because of disclosure of information by that individual that is reasonably believed to evidence violations of law, rule or regulation; gross mismanagement; gross waste of funds; an abuse of authority; or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety, unless disclosure of such information is specifically prohibited by law and such information is specifically required by Executive order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or the conduct of foreign affairs. Retaliation against an employee or applicant for making a protected disclosure is prohibited by 5 U.S.C. 2302(b)(8). If you believe that you have been the victim of whistleblower retaliation, you may file a written complaint (Form OSC-11) with the U.S. Office of Special Counsel at 1730 M Street, NW., Suite 218, Washington, DC 20036-4505, or online through the OSC Web site (at <http://www.osc.gov>).

Retaliation for Engaging in Protected Activity

A Federal agency cannot retaliate against an employee or applicant because that individual exercises his or her rights under any of the Federal antidiscrimination or whistleblower protection laws listed above. If you believe that you are the victim of retaliation for engaging in protected activity, you must follow, as appropriate, the procedures described in the Antidiscrimination Laws and Whistleblower Protection Laws sections above (including, if applicable, administrative or negotiated grievance procedures) in order to pursue any legal remedy.