

"MAKING WORK PAY" FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

What we want to do

Advance a brand **new form of public support** for people with disabilities who want to work and contribute back to their support system.

We call it

"Making Work Pay" (MWP)

What is it?

- **It's Out of the Box Thinking by People with Disabilities MWP is paradigm shifting Work Incentive Reform** designed by people with significant disabilities and high cost long-term care needs.

- **MWP is "evolutionary"**

It builds on the equity concepts and state authority in the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act (TWWIIA). Like the TWWIIA Medicaid buy-in authority, MWP allows for the elimination of income and asset tests for essential public benefits in exchange for a cost-sharing premium. MWP expands the TWWIIA Medicaid "buy-in" concept across SSA disability cash and HUD housing benefits. Public health care, affordable housing and basic cash supports remain intact in exchange for a cost-share "assurance payment" derived from gross earned income.

- **It's out of the Silo public program management**

MWP is "revolutionary" because it offers a **work incentive cost-sharing program that "crosses"** public program silos (e.g. SSA, HUD, HHS) and creates a "one-stop portal" for managing entitlement benefits when an individual goes to work. The cost share, billed quarterly and paid on the first dollar earned, is a simple 15% of gross earned income. Efficient, easy to understand; cost effective and simple to manage!

- **It's about economic advancement**

MWP is an economic advancement model based on individual earnings capacity, not disability. MWP allows employed; taxpaying citizens with significant disabilities to earn what they are worth (no earnings caps) and buy what they want (no asset controls).

- **It's about economic integration into the community through employment**

MWP elevates persons with significant disabilities from “second class” citizens entitled to living in, on the edge of, or with the threat of poverty to “first class” citizens by maximizing employment potential while providing a safety net of entitlement benefits that assures community living supports and stability during periods of work disruption.

- **It's about economic returns, buying in and paying back**

MWP expands existing public revenue streams (e.g., FICA, income taxes, UI taxes . . .) **and creates a new public revenue stream** (an individual “cost share” premium payment). MWP is for the significant portion of working age SSA beneficiaries who choose to remain entitled – those who work, but restrain their earnings capacity under the benefit loss trigger points. For this group, MWP has the potential to generate more revenue to the Social Security Trust fund than any other SSA work incentive program – simply by increasing earning capacity and taxes generated from that expanded capacity. MWP also creates a brand new revenue stream in the form of a “first dollar earned” cost share assessed on the individual’s earned income.

What we want to do

Test the Making Work Pay reform model in Wisconsin with SSA, CMS, and HUD federal demonstration authority and research financing.

- The MWP model offers a timely and strategic interagency model for addressing employment and economic advancement barriers to community living and integration.
- We envision a partnership between SSA, HUD, and HHS/CMS that creates and then extends an interagency agreement to other key agencies and programs for the purposes of piloting the Making Work Pay initiative in Wisconsin.