What if VBA or Social Security tell me I'm “100% disabled” or “unemployable”?

If you want to work, CWT will help you regardless of whether a third party labels you “unemployable”. CWT is here to help you focus on what you CAN do, not what you can’t. We advocate for the empowerment of people with disabilities to reach their full potential. Many severely disabled individuals are able to live independently, maintain employment and be self-sufficient. The goal of CWT is to help Veterans set and achieve employment goals.

CWT staff can help you understand whether full-time or part-time employment could impact benefits such as Social Security Disability and Veterans’ benefits.

Is CWT the same thing as “Voc Rehab” offered by VBA under Chapter 31?

No, CWT is completely separate from the Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E) program offered through the Veterans Benefits Administration, which is administered through VBA’s Chicago Regional Office.

- If you have not been seen by a Mental Health provider in the last 12 months, you must first complete a Mental Health Intake.
- Ask your primary Mental Health provider (or the Mental Health Intake Center) to place a consult for CWT. (Note to referring providers: enter a consult for “Compensated Work Therapy” in CPRS).
- You will need to be medically cleared by a healthcare provider to participate.
- Once your consult is received, CWT will conduct a thorough review of your records to determine the most appropriate program.
- You will then be contacted and invited to participate in a CWT intake interview and develop a treatment plan that reflects your individualized goals toward employment.

Contact the Hines CWT Program:
Building 13, 3rd Floor
Phone: 708-202-2959

Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) is a vocational rehabilitation program designed to support Veterans in finding and keeping employment in the community.

CWT is made up of 3 programs:
- Supported Employment (SE)
- Transitional Work (TW)
- Community-Based Employment Services (CBES)
**Supported Employment (SE)**
- Highest level of care in CWT
- SE is an individualized, long-term program to help Veterans find and keep a permanent job in the community.
- SE is the program for Veterans with serious mental illness or severe disabilities such as psychosis, brain injury, spinal cord injury, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia.
- Veterans with other chronic, serious conditions may request SE if they feel they need long-term employment supports.

**Transitional Work (TW)**
- TW is a **time-limited** program that allows Veterans to gain work experience for up to six months while working to find a permanent job.
- Veterans who do NOT meet criteria for SE may be more appropriate for TW.
- TW is for Veterans with limited or unstable work histories due to disability, mental health conditions, homelessness, or substance abuse.

**Community-Based Employment Services (CBES)**
- CBES is an individualized, short-term program to help Veterans find a permanent job in the community.
- CBES is for Veterans who do not meet the criteria for SE or TW, but who are currently unemployed or underemployed, and want help finding work.

**Vocational Assistance**
Veterans who require less intensive services can receive help with job leads, applications, and interviewing on a less formal basis.

CWT is designed to help Veterans overcome barriers to employment. VA doctors and therapists prescribe medical and mental health treatment to help Veterans recover from illness and conditions that can be major barriers to employment. In order to be successful, Veterans must be active participants in their care and recovery. CWT cannot help those who choose not to help themselves.