

The Basics

Ticket to Work Basics

Ticket to Work is an employment program created in 1999 by the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act and is administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA). The initial program regulations were published in December 2001.

Ticket to Work is a voluntary program that offers beneficiaries age 18 through 64, and who are receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and/or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) based on disability, expanded opportunities to obtain the services and supports that they need to work and to achieve their employment goals.

SSA does this by paying providers of services, referred to as “Employment Networks” or “ENs”, for assisting beneficiaries in reaching designated Milestones and Outcomes associated with achieving self-supporting employment.

The ultimate goal of this program is to reduce reliance on Social Security disability benefits and to promote increased self-sufficiency for beneficiaries with disabilities through work.

An Evolving Program

Because this is a new approach to service delivery, Congress instructed SSA to use its regulatory authority to refine and improve the program. In September 2005 and August 2007, SSA issued Notices of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) which proposed changes to the Ticket regulations. These proposals were designed to improve the Employment Network payment systems and to provide greater financial incentives and flexibility for ENs. The goal was to encourage service providers, educational entities and employers to become ENs by making the Ticket Program more appealing. The final Ticket regulations are now in effect. SSA, working with its Program Manager for Recruitment and Outreach, CESSI, is undertaking national, regional, state, and local initiatives to recruit qualified entities to become ENs and to inform beneficiaries with disabilities about the Ticket Program and other work incentives. Additionally, SSA and CESSI want to connect beneficiaries to ENs and community resources through local Work Incentive Seminars (WISE Events).



Overview of the Ticket to Work Program

Any entity can apply to become an Employment Network (EN).

- Application assistance is provided by CESSI, SSA's Program Manager for Recruitment and Outreach. To become an EN call CESSI at 1-877-743-8237 (v/tty), e-mail application@cessi.net or visit http://www.cessi.net/contracts/pm/ssa_pmro.html
- Obtain the EN Request for Proposals at: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/work/enrfp.html>.
- The application is processed and approved by SSA.
- Once approved as an EN, MAXIMUS, SSA's Operations Support Manager, offers an array of training and support services to help ENs get set up and operate a Ticket to Work Program. MAXIMUS also administers the assignment of Tickets and manages information on approved ENs. Call MAXIMUS at (866) 968-7842 (v) or (866) 833-2967 (tty), or visit www.yourtickettowork.org to learn more about the Ticket to Work Program and functioning as an EN.

ENs receive information on beneficiaries with Tickets available for assignment in their area and beneficiaries receive information on ENs available to serve them.

The Ticket Process

The beneficiary and the EN agree to work together and develop an Individual Work Plan (IWP) that outlines the mutual commitment they are making to each other.

To understand the effects of work on their benefits, many beneficiaries will wish to meet with a representative of a Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) Program prior to entering into an agreement. Find the WIPA nearest you by visiting <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/oesp/providers.nsf/bystate>.

The IWP is approved by MAXIMUS.

- The EN provides the agreed upon return to work services.
- The beneficiary performs the agreed upon actions to go to work.
- The beneficiary will not be subjected to a medical Continuing Disability Review by Social Security as long as the beneficiary's Ticket is assigned or "in-use," and the beneficiary is making timely progress towards self-supporting employment.

Once the Ticket Holder is working at a level that justifies a payment to the EN, the EN submits a request for payment to MAXIMUS, along with applicable documentation of earnings.

- Payments are direct deposited into the EN's bank account.

If at any point in time, the EN or the beneficiary chooses to exercise their right to dissolve the relationship, MAXIMUS must be contacted in writing.

For more information about attending a WISE event, or about becoming an Employment Network (EN), call CESSI toll-free 1-877-743-8237 (v/tty) or visit www.socialsecurity.gov/work.