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## **EMPLOYMENT:** Ticket to Work

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### **Your Ticket To Work**

The Ticket To Work program is one of the various work incentives that Social Security offers to people with disabilities who want to work. Some of the work incentives include keeping your cash benefits and medical coverage while you transition to the work place. And, if you find that you cannot work, it is easy to start your payments again.

If you are an adult and receive Social Security disability or SSI disability benefits, you qualify

You can use the Ticket program to get the services and support you need to go to work or to earn more money. The goal is to help you earn enough money so that you can become financially independent. The Ticket to Work program helps you obtain vocational rehabilitation, training, job referrals and other employment support services free of charge.

### **What is an employment network?**

Employment networks are organizations that can help you find and keep a job. Employment networks also provide other employment support services at no cost to you. The Ticket program gives you the opportunity to choose from a variety of employment networks.

An employment network may be a single organization that provides all of the services you need, or it can be a group of providers. The employment network you choose also may work with others who are not part of the employment network to provide the services you need.

Before you decide to use an employment network, you should carefully choose the one you think can best help you reach your employment goal. You are free to talk with as many employment networks as you want before choosing one. You can see a report card for each employment network at [www.chooseworkttw.net](http://www.chooseworkttw.net) by going to Find Help and selecting Report Card.

## **What happens when I contact an employment network or state vocational rehabilitation agency?**

You can call or visit any employment network or state vocational rehabilitation agency. You can expect staff members to ask certain questions about your disability, your work history and other subjects. This is necessary so they can decide if they can help you. You should feel free to ask them any questions about how they can help you find and keep the job that is best for you.

## **Do I have to work with a particular employment network or state vocational rehabilitation agency?**

No, you and an employment network or state vocational rehabilitation agency must agree that you can work together. If you cannot agree, you can contact another employment network. Even after you have agreed to work with an employment network or state vocational rehabilitation agency and signed a plan, you can still change your mind and go to another network or state vocational rehabilitation agency.

## **What happens if an employment network or state vocational rehabilitation agency and I agree to work together?**

First, the employment network will work with you to develop a plan that is right for you. The plan will state your goals for the type of work you want to do, and may include the amount of money you want to earn. The plan also will state exactly what services the employment network will provide to help you reach your goals. In addition, the plan will explain your rights under the program, including:

Your right to go to another employment network if you are not satisfied with the services you receive; and

Information on the availability of services and help in resolving disputes through the state protection and advocacy system.

If you and your state vocational rehabilitation agency agree to work together, and the state determines you are eligible, the state vocational rehabilitation agency will outline a plan to determine the services it will provide for you.

You and the employment network or state vocational rehabilitation agency will have to sign the plan before you can start receiving services. You can work with this organization to change your plan if your situation changes.

When you sign the plan with an employment network, you have agreed to receive employment support from that network. If you or the employment network decides that you cannot work together, one of you must let Social Security know by contacting the Ticket Call Center. You cannot work with another employment network without signing a new plan with the new employment network.

If you sign a plan with a state vocational rehabilitation agency, you can later receive employment support from an employment network, but you must finish your plan with the state agency first.

## **What if I am unhappy with the employment network or state vocational rehabilitation agency?**

There are several steps you can take if you are having a problem with your employment network.

We require all employment networks to have a process to deal with situations where clients are unhappy with them. If this process is not successful, you can call the Ticket Call Center staff and ask to resolve your problem informally. If they cannot resolve your problem informally, they will report your problem to us.

If you work with a state vocational rehabilitation agency, the state agency must give you a description of the services available through the client assistance program. It also must give you the opportunity to resolve your grievance through mediation or an impartial hearing.

You also can ask the protection and advocacy agency in your state to help you if you are unhappy with an employment network. You can ask your protection and advocacy state agency to help you at any stage of the grievance process.

## **How does participating in the Ticket program affect medical reviews of my disability?**

We ordinarily review your medical condition from time to time to see if you are still disabled. If we find that you are no longer disabled, we may stop your benefits.

If you are participating in the Ticket program and making timely progress pursuing your return to work plan, we will not conduct a review of your medical condition. We will send you more information about these requirements after you finalize and sign a plan with an employment network or state vocational rehabilitation agency.

## **Do I have to take part in the program?**

No, the Ticket program is voluntary. If you decide that you are not interested, or that you are not able to work, you do not have to take part. If you decide not to take part in the program, it will have no effect on your disability benefits.

The Ticket To Work call center can be reached at 1-866-968-7842; TTY: 866-833-2967 Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 8 p.m. Eastern Time.

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