



What is the Ticket To Work Program?

The Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program is an employment program for people with disabilities who are interested in going to work. The Ticket Program is part of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 – legislation designed to remove many of the barriers that previously influenced people’s decisions about going to work because of the concerns over losing health care coverage. The goal of the Ticket Program is to increase opportunities and choices for Social Security disability beneficiaries to obtain employment, vocational rehabilitation (VR), and other support services from public and private providers, employers, and other organizations. Under the Ticket Program, the Social Security Administration (SSA) provides disability beneficiaries with a Ticket they may use to obtain the services and jobs they need from a new universe of organizations called Employment Networks (ENs). As of September 2004, the Ticket to Work program is available in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, as well as all the U.S. territories.

MAXIMUS, a private company, has been contracted by the SSA to function as the Operations Support Manager (OSM) and the Ticket Program Data Operations Center Manager (TPDOCM). It is MAXIMUS’ responsibility to administer oversight and process support necessary to sustain ongoing Ticket Program Operations.

Who is Eligible to Receive a Ticket?

You must be age 18 or older and have not reached age 65 to be eligible for a Ticket. Also, the individual must be either:

- a Social Security Disability Insurance beneficiary (i.e., a disabled worker, a disabled widow(er), a disabled surviving divorced spouse, or a childhood disability beneficiary); or
- a Supplemental Security Income recipient eligible for SSI benefits based on disability or blindness;
- must be receiving monthly Social Security cash benefits based on disability or blindness; and
- monthly Federal cash benefits based on disability or blindness under Supplemental Security Income are not suspended.

How will I get my Ticket?

Qualified Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) beneficiaries receive a "ticket" in the mail, along with a notice and a booklet explaining the Ticket Program. They may use their ticket to obtain: vocational rehabilitation, training, job referrals and other employment support services. The employment support services are provided free of charge from an approved provider of their choice to help them go to work and achieve their employment goals. Some of the work incentives include beneficiaries with disabilities keeping their cash benefits and medical coverage while transitioning into the work place. And, if they find that the beneficiary cannot work, it is easy to resume payment.

How Does the Program Work?

The Ticket Program is flexible and voluntary – Social Security Administration beneficiaries are not mandated to participate and in most cases, ENs can choose which services they want to provide, where, and to whom. Beneficiaries receiving Tickets can contact one or more ENs to discuss services and once an agreement between the beneficiary and EN is reached, the two work together to develop a work plan to assist the beneficiary in reaching his or her employment goal. Every month a Ticket-holder is employed at a certain wage level, ENs receive revenue.

What is an Employment Network (EN)?

Any agency or organization of a state (or political subdivision), or a private entity that takes responsibility for the actual delivery of services or the coordination/referral of services is eligible to apply to be an Employment Network (EN). Employment Networks can be a single entity, a partnership or alliance of entities (public and/or private), or a consortium of organizations collaborating to combine resources to serve Ticket-holders.

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How does work affect my check benefits?

First, you should know that if you go back to work, you will **NOT** automatically lose your disability benefits. The Ticket to Work and special rules called "work incentives" allow you to keep your cash benefits and Medicare or Medicaid while you test your ability to work. For the **Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) program**, there is a trial work period during which you can receive full benefits regardless of how much you earn, as long as you report your work activity and continue to have a disabling impairment.

The trial work period continues until you accumulate nine months (not necessarily consecutive) in which you perform what SSA calls "services" within a rolling 60-month period. SSA considers your work to be "services" if you earn more than \$670 a month in 2008. For 2007, this amount was \$640. After the trial work period ends, your benefits will stop for the months your earnings are at a level SSA considers "substantial" -- currently \$940 in 2008. For 2007, this amount was \$900. Different amounts apply to people who are disabled because of blindness. The monthly SGA amount for statutorily blind individuals for 2008 is \$1,570.

For an additional 36 months after completing the trial work period, SSA can start your benefits again if your earnings fall below the "substantial" level and you continue to have a disabling impairment. For more information about work incentives, SSA recommends that you read the pamphlet, [Working While Disabled-How We Can Help \(SSA Publication Number 05-10095\)](#).

If you receive **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)** your work may affect the amount of your check. However, SSA does not count the first \$65.00 of earnings in a month plus one-half of the remainder. This means SSA counts less than one-half of your earnings when figuring your SSI payment amount. You may still qualify for other work incentives, such as Ticket to Work, and continue to receive Medicaid. While participating in the Ticket to Work Program, you may be able to use a combination of other work incentives to maximize your income until you begin to earn enough to support yourself. Some of these work incentives include:

- A Trial Work Period (TWP)
- [Expedited Reinstatement of Benefits \(EXR\)](#)
- [Deferral of continuing disability reviews \(CDR\)](#)
- [A plan for achieving self support \(PASS\)](#)

To find out specifically how your participation in the Ticket to Work Program could affect your disability benefits, you may contact your local Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) project. You can find a list of the WIPA projects by state using the Social Security Administration's website: www.socialsecurity.gov/work/ then click on the [Service Provider Directory](#) link.

Who can help me better understand the Ticket to Work?

The Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) Program. The goal of the WIPA Program is to better enable SSA's beneficiaries with disabilities to make informed choices about work. The WIPA program replaced the Benefits Planning, Assistance and Outreach (BPAO) Program effective October 1, 2006. Each WIPA Project has Community Work Incentives Coordinators who

- will provide work incentives planning and assistance directly to SSA's beneficiaries with disabilities to assist them in their employment efforts;
- work in cooperation with Federal, State, and private agencies and nonprofit organizations that serve beneficiaries with disabilities;
- screen and refer beneficiaries with disabilities to appropriate Employment Networks based on the beneficiary's expressed needs and types of impairments.

[The foregoing information was obtained from the Social Security Administration's website: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/work/>.]

Quote of the Month

"The cautious seldom err." ~Confucius