



Securing today
and tomorrow

Your Ticket to Work

SocialSecurity.gov





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Introduction

Several million disabled and blind Americans receive monthly Social Security benefits, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments, or both.

Many also have help from Medicare or Medicaid in paying medical bills. Many people with disabilities, however, want to work. To help them, Social Security has work incentives, including the *Ticket to Work* program.

Some of the work incentives allow you to keep some Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or SSI benefits, and your Medicaid or Medicare, while you transition to the workplace. And, if you find that you can't work, it's easy to start your payments again.

Your *Ticket to Work*

If you are an adult age 18 through 64, and you get disability benefits, you qualify for the *Ticket to Work* program. You can use the *Ticket to Work* program to get the services and support you need to go to work. The goal is to help you earn enough money so you can become financially independent.

This booklet answers questions about the program and tells you where to go if you need more help. If you have questions not answered here, call the *Ticket to Work* Help Line toll-free at **1-866-968-7842** (TTY **1-866-833-2967**). See the following sections for help in working with an employment network.

The *Ticket to Work* program helps you, free of charge, to get vocational rehabilitation, training, job referrals, and other employment support services.

How the program works

When you take part in the *Ticket to Work* program, you can get help finding a job, vocational rehabilitation, or other support. Employment networks and state vocational rehabilitation agencies provide these services. These networks include private organizations and government agencies that have agreed to work with Social Security. They provide employment services and other support to beneficiaries with disabilities.

How do I start?

If you are interested in using the *Ticket to Work* program, you can find information online at [**www.ssa.gov/work**](http://www.ssa.gov/work) or [**choosework.ssa.gov**](http://choosework.ssa.gov) by selecting the “Find Help” tab. You can also get job search assistance or other vocational services by calling the *Ticket to Work* Help Line toll-free at **1-866-968-7842** (TTY **1-866-833-2967**). The *Ticket to Work* Help Line’s staff can answer most of your questions about the program. When you call the Help Line, representatives can also give you the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of employment networks, or the state vocational rehabilitation agency or One-Stop Career Center in your area.

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 to Work* program gives you the opportunity to choose from various employment networks.

Employment networks can be a single organization, or a group of providers, that provide all the services you need. The employment network you choose may also work with others who aren't part of the employment network to provide the services you need.

Before you decide to use an employment network, carefully choose the one you think can best help you reach your employment goal. You're free to talk with as many employment networks as you want before choosing. You can see a profile for some employment networks at ***choosework.ssa.gov***. From there, select the "Find Help" tab and "Guided Search" or "Direct Search". The "Guided Search" option asks about your work history and specific needs. The "Guided Search" tool will supply a list of providers based on the answers you provided. The "Direct Search" option will allow you to manually search for a provider. Entering a ZIP code will filter the results to display only the providers in your area. You can further filter the results based on other options such as type of provider, virtual or in-person services, and services provided.

See the following sections for help in working with an employment network.

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

To decide if they can help you, staff members will ask questions about your disability, your work history, and other subjects. Feel free to ask questions about how they can help you find and keep the job that is best for you.

Can an employment network or state vocational rehabilitation agency contact me?

Yes, they may contact you to find out if you have an interest in working with them. They will give you details to help you decide if you're interested in help to find employment.

How will an employment network or state vocational rehabilitation agency know that I qualify?

We keep a record of people who qualify for the program, and who are not working with employment networks. We give this information to employment networks and state vocational rehabilitation agencies

What if I don't want to be contacted?

If you don't want to be contacted, call the *Ticket to Work* Help Line, and ask them to remove your name from the list. You

can still take part in the Ticket program if you are not on the list.

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 to work together. If you can't agree, you should contact another employment network. If you sign a plan with a network or state agency, you can still change your mind and go to another network or agency. If you decide to work with your state vocational rehabilitation agency, it may also be possible to receive services from another state vocational rehabilitation agency in your region as long as the services you receive from both agencies are different.

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 work you want to do, and may include the salary you want to earn. The plan will also 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 choose another employment network if you are not satisfied with the services you get.

- Information on available services and help resolving disputes through the state protection and advocacy system. Find more information about Protection and Advocacy services at choosework.ssa.gov/about/meet-your-employment-team/index.html#PABSS

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

You or your representative (if you have one) and the network or state vocational rehabilitation agency must sign the plan before you can start getting services. The employment network or vocational rehabilitation agency should give you a copy of your plan in an accessible format. 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 get employment support from that network. If you or the employment network decides you cannot work together, one of you must let Social Security know by contacting the *Ticket to Work* Help Line. You cannot work with another employment network without signing a new plan with them.

If you sign a plan with a state vocational rehabilitation agency, you can get employment support from an employment network later, but you

must finish your plan with the state agency first.

Promptly report any earnings, as well as when you start or stop working, to Social Security. You must also report your earnings to your employment network.

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

All employment networks have a process to resolve the concerns of unhappy clients. If this process isn't successful, you can call the *Ticket to Work* Help Line staff and ask them to assist in resolving your problem informally. If they can't resolve your problem informally, they will report your problem to us.

If you work with a state vocational rehabilitation agency, they will give you a description of the services available through the Client Assistance Program. The agency must also give you the opportunity to resolve your grievance through mediation or a fair hearing.

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

How does taking part in the *Ticket to Work* program affect medical reviews of my disability?

Usually, we conduct reviews of your medical condition to see if you still qualify for disability benefits. If we find

that you're no longer disabled, we may stop your benefits.

However, if you're taking part in the *Ticket to Work* program, and making timely progress in your return to work plan, **we won't conduct a review of your medical condition.** You'll get more information about these requirements after you sign a plan with an employment network or state vocational rehabilitation agency.

Do I have to take part in the program?

No, the Ticket to Work program is free and voluntary. If you can't work, or have no interest in the program, you don't have to take part. If you decide not to take part in the program, it will not affect your disability benefits. If you change your mind and decide to take part in the program, contact the *Ticket to Work* Help Line

Where can I get more information or advice?

Local state protection and advocacy services can provide information and advice about the *Ticket to Work* program. And they can help you with any problems you have with the employment plan you develop with the employment network.

The agencies can also give you information and advice about vocational rehabilitation and employment services, and help you select an employment

network. Additionally, these agencies can tell you how your work may affect your benefits.

If your circumstances make paying for prescription medications difficult, visit www.healthfinder.gov to find out if you qualify for help.

Other work incentives

In addition to the *Ticket to Work* program, Social Security has other special rules called “work incentives” that serve as a bridge between disability benefits and financial independence. These work incentives include:

- Some cash benefits while you work.
- Medicare or Medicaid while you work.
- Help with extra work expenses you may have because of your disability.
- Expedited reinstatement.
- Plan to achieve self-support (PASS).

You can find more information about Social Security and SSI work incentives in the publication *Working While Disabled — How We Can Help* (Publication No. 05-10095).

Other Social Security programs and resources

Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) projects

These organizations support disability beneficiaries and help them make wise choices about work. WIPA programs

help working beneficiaries to make successful transitions to financial independence and to build economically secure futures.

These organizations have Community Work Incentives Coordinators (CWICs) who offer counseling and information about how work affects disability benefits.

CWICs work with beneficiaries to gather accurate information. They also guide beneficiaries as they return to work or enter the work world for the first time.

Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS)

There are 57 PABSS nationwide. They are part of each state's Protection and Advocacy program. Attorneys and advocates at these projects give support and guidance on disability beneficiary rights. When necessary, they will offer free legal services, including representation. The PABSS goal is to remove barriers preventing you from working so employment can be a real option.

The WIPAs and PABSS work together closely and are excellent resources.

For information on special rules for blind persons, there is *If You Are Blind or Have Low Vision — How We Can Help* (Publication No. 05-10052).

How organizations can become an employment network (EN)

To find out more about becoming an employment network (EN), visit yourtickettowork.com. You can also contact Social Security's Employment Network Service Branch toll-free at **1-866-584-5180** (TTY **1-866-584-5181**). Or, you can email them at ENService@ssa.gov.

Contacting Social Security

The most convenient way to contact us from anywhere, on any device, is to visit socialsecurity.gov. There are several things you can do online: apply for benefits; get useful information; find publications; and get answers to **frequently asked questions**.

When you open a *my* Social Security account, you have more capabilities. You can review your *Social Security Statement*, verify your earnings, and print a benefit verification letter. You can also change your direct deposit information, request a replacement Medicare card, request a replacement Social Security card (if you have no changes and your state participates), and get a replacement SSA-1099/1042S.

If you don't have access to the internet, we offer many automated services by telephone, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call us toll-free at **1-800-772-1213** or at our TTY number, **1-800-325-0778**, if you're deaf or hard of hearing.

A member of our staff can answer your calls from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday. We ask for your patience during busy periods since you may experience a higher than usual rate of busy signals and longer hold times to speak to us. We look forward to serving you.

Notes

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