

INCREASING OPTIONS: THE TICKET TO WORK AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM



The Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program is an avenue to employment for people with disabilities who want to join or reenter the workforce. Millions of adults with disabilities receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) are eligible for a *Ticket*, which can be used to access employment services, vocational rehabilitation services and other support services leading to self-supporting employment. Such services are provided at no cost to the individual.

How to Get a Ticket: The Ticket to Work Program was implemented in three phases beginning with the initial Ticket release in 2002 and concluding with the final release in 2004. During that period, Tickets were mailed to more than 10 million beneficiaries nationwide and in the U.S. territories. Since then, Ticket packages have been sent to approximately 75,000 new beneficiaries each month. Ticket to Work packages include instructions, information and the actual Ticket document. Individuals interested in the Ticket to Work Program should call the toll-free helpline at 1-866-968-7842 (V) or 1-866-833-2967 (TTY).

What the Ticket Looks Like: The Ticket itself is a red, white and blue document that looks like a certificate. The left side has the beneficiary's name, Ticket number and date of issue. The right side explains the Ticket's purpose.

What to do with the Ticket: The Ticket program is voluntary. Individuals who use the ticket may either:

- Use it to access employment services and supports to help them start or return to work.
- Hold on to it and use it at a later time.
- Choose not to use it. SSDI and SSI benefits are not affected.

When people decide to use their Ticket, the first step is to call the Ticket to Work helpline at 1-866-968-7842 (V) or 1-866-833-2967 (TTY). This helpline can provide contact information for Employment Networks.

Employment Networks: Employment Networks (EN) are SSA-approved organizations that provide job training and other employment services and supports to Ticket holders who want to work. ENs may be single organizations, agencies or partnerships of organizations or agencies collaborating to combine resources to serve Ticket holders.

An individual's Ticket serves as proof of SSA's agreement to pay an EN for needed services, and payments are structured to encourage ENs to provide the best possible assistance. Examples of organizations that may become ENs include businesses; state, local and tribal government agencies; One-Stop Career Centers; state Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies; schools and colleges; community and faith-based organizations; and centers for independent living and other disability-related organizations.

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Choosing an EN: Once contact information is obtained, an individual may call or visit one or more ENs to discuss the services they offer and how these services can help the individual achieve his or her employment goals. People may want to “comparison shop,” researching several ENs before choosing to assign their Ticket. A Ticket can be assigned to only one EN at a time, but individuals may change their EN if they become dissatisfied with the services provided.

Employment Goals and Work Plans: Once an EN is chosen, an individual works with EN staff to develop an Individual Work Plan (called an Individual Plan of Employment if working with a state VR agency). This plan is a written document prepared, agreed to and signed by both the individual and the EN that outlines the individual’s employment goals and the specific services the EN will provide in support of those goals. An EN may not charge an individual for services provided as an EN under the Individual Work Plan.

For More Information

- For information on the Ticket and ENs, visit www.yourtickettowork.com or www.ssa.gov/work/Ticket/ticket_info.html, or call 1-866-968-7842 (V) or 1-866-833-2967 (TTY).
- For information about how the Ticket and working affects disability benefits, talk to a benefit specialist at a Benefits Planning, Assistance and Outreach (BPAO) organization. To locate state BPAO organizations, visit www.ssa.gov/work/ServiceProviders/BPAODirectory.html.
- For guidance on how to handle a disagreement or dispute with an EN, contact the appropriate state’s Protection and Advocacy (P&A) agency. To locate each state’s P&A, visit www.ssa.gov/work/ServiceProviders/PADirectory.html.

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