

TICKET TO WORK

QUICK FACTS

WHAT IS TICKET TO WORK?

- Ticket to Work is a program implemented by the Social Security Administration (SSA) designed to reduce and, whenever possible, eliminate dependence on cash benefit programs. SSA started the Ticket to Work program to help people who get Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and/or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits get the services they need to find a job and to stay employed.

WHY WOULD I WANT TO REDUCE OR ELIMINATE MY SSA BENEFITS?

- SSDI and SSI amounts are often much lower than the federal poverty level. Even with part-time employment, it is unlikely that it would be enough income to achieve financial independence. Most people will find that they are better off financially by working at levels that would reduce or eliminate their cash benefit.

HOW DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?

- SSA has set up agreements with hundreds of community programs around the country so that people can find these services in their communities. These providers are called employment networks (ENs). Eligible beneficiaries “assign” their Ticket to an EN to receive the services they need to obtain a job, advance in their careers, and increase their financial independence. Services typically include career guidance, job placement, job coaching, and/or ongoing benefits counseling. Ongoing benefits counseling is particularly helpful in order to understand what to expect and what work incentives are available to you as you increase your earnings and reduce your benefits.

HOW DOES TICKET TO WORK HELP ME?

- Ticket to Work connects eligible beneficiaries with employment service providers to help you obtain their work goals, free of charge. Additionally, while you are participating in the Ticket to Work Program and making what Social Security considers Timely Progress on working towards self-sufficiency, you may be protected from Continuing Disability Reviews (CDR). This means that you don't have to worry that SSA will find that you are no longer eligible to receive your check due to improvement of your disability.



WHAT IS TIMELY PROGRESS?

- Timely Progress is simply making incremental progress towards financial independence. Each year that your Ticket is assigned, SSA will review your employment, earnings, and education completed during that time period. If you meet the Timely Progress benchmark for the year, your protection from the CDR will continue. If you do not meet Timely Progress, it does not mean that you will be disqualified from the program. It simply means you would not be protected from the CDR until you resume meeting time Timely Progress.

IF I GO TO WORK AND LOSE MY BENEFITS, CAN I GET THEM BACK IF I CAN'T CONTINUE TO WORK?

- The Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act (TWWIIA) of 1999 created an important work incentive called Expedited Reinstatement (EXR). EXR is a way for you to quickly return to Social Security disability benefits if your work were to be significantly reduced or stopped. In order to utilize EXR to have your benefits reinstated, you would have to be unable to perform SGA due to your disability. EXR also permits you to receive provisional payments while Social Security is processing the reinstatement request.

DO I NEED A PHYSICAL TICKET TO PARTICIPATE?

- No. You may receive a letter in the mail from SSA reminding you that you are eligible for the program, but you do not need to present it to participate.

HOW DO I ASSIGN MY TICKET?

- Tickets are assigned by working with an EN of your choosing to complete an Individualized Work Plan (IWP). The IWP includes information about your short- and long-term work goals, and the assistance you will need to achieve those goals. The IWP serves as the documentation that SSA needs to know that your Ticket is assigned and that you are working with an EN.

DO I HAVE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE TICKET TO WORK PROGRAM?

- No. The Ticket to Work Program is free and voluntary. You will not be penalized if you choose not to participate.

CONTACT THE

**MARYLAND EMPLOYMENT
NETWORK**

To find out if the Ticket to Work program is right for you, call us at 1-855-384-2844 or visit us online at www.ticket2workmd.org.

TODAY!

