



Social Security

Your Ticket To Work

www.socialsecurity.gov

Contacting Social Security

Visit our website

Our website, www.socialsecurity.gov, is a valuable resource for information about all of Social Security's programs. At our website, you also can:

- Apply for certain kinds of benefits;
- Get the address of your local Social Security office;
- Request important documents, such as a *Social Security Statement*, a replacement Medicare card or a letter to confirm your benefit amount; and
- Find copies of our publications.

Call our toll-free number

In addition to using our website, you also can call us toll-free at **1-800-772-1213**. We treat all calls confidentially. We can answer specific questions from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday. We can provide information by automated phone service 24 hours a day. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, you may call our TTY number, **1-800-325-0778**.

We also want to make sure you receive accurate and courteous service. That is why we have a second Social Security representative monitor some telephone calls.

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Several million disabled and blind Americans receive monthly Social Security or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments. Some receive both. Many also have help from Medicare or Medicaid in paying medical bills. The impact of these programs in meeting people's needs is significant. However, many people with disabilities want to work. To help them, Social Security has a variety of work incentives, including the Ticket to Work Program.

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.

Your Ticket to Work

This booklet is for people who receive a Ticket to Work from Social Security. The information in this booklet will answer questions about your Ticket. It also tells you where to go if you have other questions and how to get additional help using the Ticket. If you have questions that are not answered here, you should call the Ticket Program Manager, MAXIMUS, Inc., at **1-866-968-7842**, toll-free (TTY **1-866-833-2967**).

You can use your Ticket 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.

How the program works

When you use your Ticket, you can get help finding a job, vocational rehabilitation or other assistance. These services are provided by employment networks, which are private organizations or government agencies that have agreed to work with Social Security to provide employment services and other support to beneficiaries with disabilities and state vocational rehabilitation agencies.

How do I get started?

If you are interested in using the Ticket program to go to work or get vocational services, you should call MAXIMUS, Inc., at **1-866-968-7842**, toll-free (TTY **1-866-833-2967**). MAXIMUS is a

private company that is working with us to help manage the Ticket program. MAXIMUS can answer most of your questions about your Ticket and can give you the names, addresses and telephone numbers of employment networks or the state vocational rehabilitation agency in your area.

What is an employment network?

Employment networks are organizations that can help you find a job and provide other employment 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 give your Ticket to 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 without having to give one your Ticket.

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?

You can call or visit any employment network or state vocational rehabilitation agency. If you visit either, remember to bring your Ticket with you. They may need to get information about you from our records. 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.

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

Yes, they may contact you to find out if you are interested in working with them. They will give you detailed information to help you decide if you are interested in giving them your Ticket.

How will an employment network or state vocational rehabilitation agency know that I have a Ticket?

MAXIMUS will keep a record of people who have Tickets and are not working with employment networks. MAXIMUS will give this information to employment networks and state vocational rehabilitation agencies.

What if I do not want to be contacted?

If you do not want to be contacted, call MAXIMUS to remove your name from the list. Even if you are not on the list, you still can participate in the Ticket program.

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 take your Ticket and 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 move your Ticket 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 take your Ticket back if you are not satisfied with the services you are receiving from the employment network; and
- Information on the availability of services and help in resolving disputes through the state protection and advocacy system. You can find more information about these services on pages 13-14.

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 or your representative (if you have one) and the employment network or state vocational rehabilitation agency will have to sign the plan before you can start working with it. 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 “assigned” your Ticket to the employment network and you cannot work with another employment network without taking your Ticket back. If you or the employment network decide that you cannot work together, you can then reassign your Ticket to another employment network.

If you sign a plan with a state vocational rehabilitation agency, your Ticket is still available to assign to an employment network, but you must finish your work with the state vocational 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 MAXIMUS and ask to resolve your problem informally. If MAXIMUS cannot resolve your problem informally, it 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 give your Ticket to an employment network or sign a plan with a 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 in using your Ticket, or that you are not able to work, you do not have to take part. If you decide not to use the Ticket, it will have no effect on your disability benefits. However, you should keep the Ticket we sent you in case you change your mind and decide to take part in the program.

How to get help in using the Ticket

Where can I get more information or advice?

By calling MAXIMUS, Inc., you can also get the phone numbers for two other important sources of information and advice about the Ticket program.

1. The state protection and advocacy system

You should ask MAXIMUS to help you contact your local state protection and advocacy system if you have a disagreement with your employment network which you are unable to settle.

These state protection and advocacy agencies can help you with any complaints you have about an employment network or other provider that is helping you. And it can help you with any problems you have with the employment plan you develop with the employment network.

The state protection and advocacy system also can give you information and advice about vocational rehabilitation and employment services, including helping you select an employment

network. Additionally this agency can tell you how your work may affect your benefits.

2. Work Incentives Planning and Assistance organizations

Social Security pays local community agencies to help you understand special rules that can help you go back to work.

Representatives from this program can tell you how your earnings would affect your disability benefits and the benefits you may be receiving from other government programs.

These agencies also can tell you about the other government benefits you may be able to receive.

Call MAXIMUS to find the state protection and advocacy system or Work Incentives Planning and Assistance organization nearest you.

Other work incentives

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

- Cash benefits while you work;
- Medicare or Medicaid while you work; and

- Help with any extra work expenses you may have as a result of your disability.

You can find more information about Social Security and SSI work incentives by contacting us and asking for *Working While Disabled—How We Can Help* (Publication No. 05-10095).

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Social Security Administration

SSA Publication No. 05-10061

ICN 463262

Unit of Issue - HD (one hundred)

December 2008 (Destroy prior editions)