

New Ticket to Work Regulations

What Is the Ticket to Work Program?

The Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program, commonly called the Ticket to Work Program, was authorized as part of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999. Individuals with disabilities who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and who want to work are issued a "Ticket" by SSA, which they can use to obtain employment services, vocational rehabilitation services, and other support services from a State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agency or other approved provider, referred to as Employment Networks (ENs). An EN is a private organization (for-profit and nonprofit), government agency, or employer that has agreed to work with the Social Security Administration (SSA) to provide employment services to beneficiaries with disabilities. Ticket to Work is a performance-based program, meaning an EN is paid when the Ticket holder achieves certain milestones and outcomes in moving toward self-supporting employment.

How Do the New Regulations Improve the Ticket to Work Program?

SSA issued new regulations to the Ticket to Work Program, which took effect July 21, 2008, to accomplish the following:

- Encourage more organizations to become ENs, which increases choices for beneficiaries
- Increase partnering between organizations
- Expand the scope of services available to beneficiaries
- Improve coordination of services to beneficiaries

How Will the New Regulations Achieve These Goals?

The new Ticket to Work regulations encompass the following changes:

- Expanded Ticket eligibility to all adult beneficiaries, ages 18 through 64, who are receiving disability benefits. Previously, certain beneficiaries were not eligible to receive a Ticket until they completed their first Continuing Disability Review because their medical condition was expected to improve.
- Structured EN payments so that:
 - ❖ Providers can earn milestone payments earlier in the employment process.
 - ❖ Providers receive milestone payments for lower levels of beneficiary earnings, which recognizes that some beneficiaries—including people who are homeless—may work for lower wages and/or part-time before they become self-supporting.
 - ❖ Providers receive milestone payments based on a Ticket holder's gross earnings at SSA's Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) amount. Previously, in determining an EN's eligibility for milestone payments, a person's SGA earnings were reduced by the value of any SSA work incentives he or she was receiving. This regulatory change encourages beneficiaries to use SSA work incentives and allows an EN to collect milestone payments while a beneficiary is still receiving cash benefits from SSA.
- Encouraged a partnership between State VR agencies and ENs. Under the new regulations, SSA can now pay a State VR agency under the cost reimbursement program and an EN for providing sequential services to the same beneficiary. A beneficiary can work with the State VR agency to receive such things as education, training, and placement services and then, after VR closes the case, assign his or her Ticket to an EN for continuing employment supports.

Where Can I Get More Information about Ticket to Work and the New Regulations?

The SSA Work Site has a wealth of information on the new Ticket to Work regulations. Go to www.socialsecurity.gov/work; click on "About Ticket to Work" on the left side of the page, and then select "Click Here to See NEW Ticket to Work Regulations." In addition, disability beneficiaries can register for Work Incentive Seminars by clicking on the "Receiving Benefits" link on the home page and then choosing "What Are Work Incentive Seminar Events (WISE)?"