

# Ticket To Work FACT SHEET

## The Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program

The Ticket to Work (TTW) and Self-Sufficiency Program is a program for people with disabilities who receive Social Security Administration's (SSA) Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and/or Supplemental Security Income (SSI). It is a voluntary program for people who are ages 18 through 64 and interested in going to work. The TTW Program provides access to the services and supports necessary to obtain, maintain and advance in employment. It can help you to be more financially independent through earnings.

## What is a Ticket to Work?

Most individuals on SSDI and/or SSI will receive a "Ticket" that can be used to obtain employment services and supports from State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Agencies or from SSA-approved service providers called Employment Networks or ENs. In NYS, ACCES-VR (formerly known as VESID) is the State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency for individuals with disabilities (other than individuals who are legally blind).

If you are interested in working, the TTW Program provides access to vocational rehabilitation, training, placement services and other supports. These services can be provided either by the State VR Program or by an EN. If you work with ACCES-VR, you will not be able to assign your Ticket to an EN until after VR services are completed. As an SSA beneficiary, you can elect to assign the "Ticket" to an EN. Participating in the Ticket Program is voluntary. While you are using your "Ticket" with ACCES-VR or an EN and making *timely progress*, SSA will not schedule a medical Continuing Disability Review (CDR). SSA pays ACCES-VR and/or ENs when the beneficiaries they are working with achieve certain levels of earnings from work.

## What Happens if You Choose to Work with ACCES-VR?

ACCES-VR is the New York State agency that provides vocational rehabilitation (VR) services to individuals with disabilities (other than blindness). VR services are services that enable people with disabilities to get a job. If you are eligible, you will work with an ACCES-VR counselor to outline a plan called the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). The IPE outlines the vocational rehabilitation services that will enable you to become employed. You or your representative (if you have one) and the ACCES-VR counselor sign the plan before services begin. Your ACCES-VR counselor will give you a copy of your vocational plan (in an accessible format if needed).

While working with ACCES-VR under an IPE, your Ticket is not available for assignment to an EN. When your VR services are completed and your case is closed, you can then assign your Ticket to an EN of your choice to receive additional services to help you keep your job or increase your earnings over time. The VR counselor will assist you with this process if requested.

## Partnership Plus: Working with an EN after ACCES-VR Services

Partnership Plus is a new feature of the TTW program. Under this new Partnership Plus option, you, as a Ticket Holder, may receive VR services to meet your intensive up front service needs and, after your VR case is closed, assign your Ticket to an EN to receive ongoing services and supports. These ongoing services and supports may help you keep your job, advance in the job or build your skills in order to increase earnings. A Ticket Holder can be served by ACCES-VR and an EN, although the services must be provided one after the other, not at the same time.

While assigning your ticket to an EN is voluntary, it extends the CDR protections of the TTW program. To continue protection from the CDRs, you need to assign your Ticket to an EN within 90 days after your ACCES-VR Program is completed (i.e. case is closed). You can still assign your Ticket after 90 days, but the CDR protection will be interrupted during that time period. In some situations, the EN may be the same organization that provided you with services while you were working with ACCES-VR. This could help to ensure the services that you need continue.

You can learn about ENs in your area by checking out the national Directory of ENs at [www.yourtickettowork.com](http://www.yourtickettowork.com).

## What Are Work Incentives?

Work Incentives are SSA rules that make it possible for you to work if you are receiving SSDI and SSI. Through the use of work incentives, essential financial and health care supports can stay in place or resume quickly when needed even though you have earnings from work. Work incentives make work possible by allowing options to receive some cash and/ or health care assistance as you increase your earnings through employment.

A work incentive connected to the Ticket to Work program is the **delay of medical CDRs**. SSA uses periodic CDRs to determine if beneficiaries still meet the medical requirements for disability benefits. If the beneficiary no longer meets SSA's requirements for disability, disability cash benefits will stop based on the results of a medical CDR. While you are using your "Ticket," SSA will delay your medical disability review as long as you are progressing towards your employment goal. To learn more about the progress you must make for SSA to continue to delay your medical CDR's, please refer to the attached **Timely Progress Guidelines**.

If you do not make the expected progress while using your Ticket, SSA will stop delaying your medical CDRs. This means that they will eventually conduct a medical CDR to see if your health has improved, unless you start making the expected progress towards your employment goal. If SSA conducts a medical CDR while you are in the Ticket to Work program and decides that your benefits should stop because your health has improved, you may ask SSA to allow your benefits to continue. You must file for what is called "**benefit continuation under Section 301**". If SSA decides that continuing your ACCES-VR plan will increase the likelihood that you will become financially independent, then you will be able to keep your cash benefits while you are pursuing the employment goal in your ACCES-VR plan.

## E-Z Back-On: Five Year Protection

If you are concerned about going to work and later losing your job, SSA has made it easy for you to get back on benefits when and if needed through a work incentive called **Expedited Reinstatement**

**of Benefits.** If your disability benefit checks stopped due to your work and earnings, there is a five-year period during which you can quickly get back on cash benefits if you lose your job. SSA will provide up to 6 months of temporary benefits while they do a medical review to determine if you are still eligible for benefits based on your disability. If you are eligible, your disability checks will continue. If SSA determines that you are no longer medically eligible for disability benefits, your cash benefit will stop; however, you will not be asked to pay back the temporary benefits you received (except in rare cases that SSA finds that you knew or should have known that you were not eligible for expedited reinstatement).

You can learn more about work incentives at: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/redbook> .

## Understanding How Work Affects Your Benefits

There are resources available, such as benefits counseling, to help you in understanding how earnings may affect your cash and health care benefits. Benefits advisors can provide information about work incentives so that you understand exactly what will happen to your monthly check and medical insurance when you go to work. These individuals can answer questions about how work would affect your benefits. The service is aimed at providing you with reliable information on utilizing work incentives. Work incentives are things you can do to keep benefits as you work more. To learn more about these resources in New York State go to: <http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/edi/nymakesworkpay/rny-benefits.cfm> .

Call the NY-MWP **Work Incentives Hotline, toll-free at 1-888-224-3272** for any questions.

[Work Incentive Planning & Assistance \(WIPA\) Projects](#) are sponsored by the Social Security Administration and located throughout New York State. WIPA services are free. WIPA staff can assist beneficiaries in using work incentives to enable them to work and increase their earnings.

To learn more about the Ticket to Work Program, contact the:

- Ticket to Work Call Center to verify your Ticket eligibility and status, and answer your questions about TTW: 1-866-968-7842 (Voice) or 1-866-833-2967 (TDD), email [support@chooseworkttw.net](mailto:support@chooseworkttw.net) or visit [www.yourtickettowork.com](http://www.yourtickettowork.com).
- Social Security Administration (SSA): answers to Ticket to Work or SSA questions: 1-800-772-1213 (Voice) or 1-800-325-0778 (TDD). SSA Ticket to Work web site: [www.ssa.gov/work](http://www.ssa.gov/work).
- ACCES-VR Ticket To Work toll free help line: answers general TTW inquiries and provides referral to local district offices: 1-800 807-5611 (Voice) or mailbox at [cdennihy@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:cdennihy@mail.nysed.gov).

## Protection and Advocacy Program (P&A)

Protection and advocacy services are provided free of charge to individuals with disabilities. They can assist you in obtaining information and advice about receiving vocational rehabilitation and employment services. These programs provide advocacy or other related services that beneficiaries with disabilities may need to secure or return to gainful employment. Two specific programs include the [Client Assistance Programs \(CAPs\)](#) that assist individuals with disabilities in securing services from the State VR Programs as well as Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS) which supports SSA beneficiaries. You can learn more about P&A services at <http://cqc.ny.gov/advocacy/protection-advocacy-programs> .

## Timely Progress Guidelines During Each 12-month Progress Review Period

<b>First Twelve Month Period</b>	<p><b>(After 12 months of ticket use)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Complete 3 months of work at Trial Work Level (TWL), OR</b></li> <li>• Complete a GED or high school diploma, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• Complete 60% of a full-time course load for an academic year in a college or technical/trade/vocational training program, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• Complete a combination of this work and education requirement</li> </ul>
<b>Second Twelve Month Period</b>	<p><b>(13-24 months of ticket use)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Complete 6 months of work at Trial Work Level (TWL), OR</b></li> <li>• Complete 75% of a full-time course load for an academic year in a college or technical/trade/vocational training program, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• Complete a combination of this work and education requirement</li> </ul>
<b>Third Twelve Month Period</b>	<p><b>(25-36 months of ticket use)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Complete 9 months or work at Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) level, OR</b></li> <li>• Complete an additional full-time academic year of study, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• Complete a 2-year or 4-year college program, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• Complete a 2-year technical/trade/vocational training program, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• Complete a combination of this work and education requirement</li> </ul>
<b>Fourth Twelve Month Period</b>	<p><b>(37-48 months of ticket use)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Complete 9 months of work at Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) level, OR</b></li> <li>• Complete an additional academic year of full-time study, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• Complete a combination of this work and education requirement</li> </ul>
<b>Fifth Twelve Month Period</b>	<p><b>(49-60 months of ticket use)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Complete 6 months of work at Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) level with no SSDI and/or SSI cash benefits in months worked, OR</b></li> <li>• Complete an additional academic year of full-time study, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• Complete a 4-year degree program</li> </ul>
<b>Sixth Twelve Month Period</b>	<p><b>(61-72 months of ticket use)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Complete 6 months of work at Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) level with no SSDI and/or SSI cash benefits in months worked, OR</b></li> <li>• Complete a 4-year degree program</li> </ul>
<b>Seventh Twelve Month Period</b>	<p><b>(73-84 months of ticket use)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Complete 6 months of work at Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) level with no SSDI and/or SSI cash benefits in months worked *</b></li> </ul>

\*The guidelines for any subsequent 12-month Progress Review are the same as for the 7<sup>th</sup> 12-month Progress Review.