

State of Rhode Island
OFFICE OF REHABILITATION SERVICES
Department of Human Services



PARTICIPANT GUIDE



Helping You Today
So You Succeed Tomorrow



Your journey starts here!

**PARTICIPANT GUIDE
TICKET TO WORK (TTW)**



The information is intended to serve as a guide and is not intended to be all inclusive of what the Social Security Ticket to Work Program offers. More information on the Social Security Ticket to Work (TTW) program is available at <https://choosework.ssa.gov>

WHAT IS TICKET TO WORK?

The Ticket to Work program is a free voluntary program run through the Social Security Administration (SSA) for individuals ages 18 to full retirement age who are beneficiaries of Social Security Disability (SSDI) and/or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) disability benefits. Services are intended to increase opportunities and choices for beneficiaries looking to obtain competitive integrated employment.

WHAT DOES THE TICKET TO WORK PROGRAM DO FOR ME?

Ticket assignment with Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) or another SSA approved Employment Network (EN) provides you with access to services and support in reaching your employment goal.

Assigning your ticket affords protection from Continuous Disability Reviews (CDRs) provided you are making what Social Security calls “Timely Progress” toward your employment goal.

For ORS/VR you must have a signed IPE and be actively working toward your employment goal and have met SSA’s scheduled Timely Progress reviews.

If you have used your Ticket to Work before and have not met the SSA specific guidelines, you may not be protected from a CDR medical review.

For information on a list of providers, go to <https://choosework.ssa.gov>

WHAT IS A MEDICAL CONTINUOUS DISABILITY REVIEW?

This is a routine review by Social Security of your disability to verify it continues to meet Social Security disability benefits rules. If your Ticket has been assigned to an approved EN before a medical CDR has been scheduled, you will not have a CDR while you are participating in the Ticket to Work program and making timely progress within Social Security's timeframes.

WHO WOULD I BE WORKING WITH?

Employment services to assist you with obtaining and maintaining competitive integrated employment are provided by approved Social Security providers. The ORS/VR is one of the agencies you can choose to seek services from, or you may choose another SSA approved provider called an Employment Network (EN) to assist you with services to reach your employment goal.

HOW DOES THE TICKET TO WORK PROGRAM WORK WITH ORS/VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION?

You and your Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) will determine your eligibility for VR services. Once this is done you will work with your VRC to create an Individual Employment Plan (IPE). Keep your VRC informed throughout your services of any changes in your income and if you receive SSI and/or SSDI disability benefits provide them with verification of this.

If you are between the age of 18 and full retirement and receiving SSI/SSDI disability **cash benefits now or in the future**, by signing the Individual Plan for Employment/ Amendment Signature Page, you are choosing to work with ORS/VR. If you have an available Ticket, ORS/VR will notify Social Security of this agreement and will automatically put your Ticket in-use with ORS/VR.

Ticket assignability is determined by SSA criteria. For example, if you are not in current pay/receiving cash benefits at the time ORS seeks to put your Ticket in-use SSA will not accept the Ticket. However, upon you notifying ORS/VR and/or ORS/VR learning you return to a current pay status with SSA ORS/VR will look to put your Ticket in-use with SSA. At the time your ticket is put in-use you will start receiving Ticket to Work information in the mail from SSA.

If you do not receive Ticket to Work Information indicating your Ticket has been put in-use and you understood it had been, notify your VRC or one of the ORS contacts listed at the end of this guide ASAP and they will check the in-use status.

A ticket may only be assigned to one EN at a time and ORS/VR does expect you to put your ticket in-use with VR while working with ORS and will request you un-assign your ticket if it is assigned to another EN. You have the right at any time to request un-assignment of your ticket and you may choose to re-assign the ticket to another EN or VR agency providing your ticket status at that time meets assignability requirement set by SSA.

To ensure you have information to make an informed decision, discuss with your VRC if you do not want your Ticket put in-use with ORS/VR.

WHAT IF I OBTAIN SSDI AND/OR SSI DISABILITY BENEFITS AFTER MY IPE WAS DEVELOPED?

It is important to inform your VRC so they and you can discuss work incentives and benefits planning if applicable. As indicated in the question above, based on your having a signed IPE/Amendment, your Ticket if assignable will automatically be put in-use upon your receipt of SSI/SSDI disability benefits.

When your Ticket is put in-use you will begin to receive information from Social Security indicating the Ticket has

been put in-use. If you do not receive information from Social Security and believe you put your Ticket in-use, follow up ASAP with your Vocation Rehabilitation Counselor or call the ORS contacts noted at the end of this guide and they will check for you.

To ensure you have information to make an informed decision, discuss with your VRC if you do not want your Ticket put in-use with ORS/VR.

DOES SSA MONITOR MY ENGAGEMENT IN TICKET PROGRAM?

Yes! SSA/Ticket to Work program regularly reviews whether you are making "Timely Progress" towards achieving specific goals of work and earnings or education leading toward becoming and staying employed and lowering dependence on SSDI or SSI payments cash benefits.

Timely Progress is based on SSA guidelines not the Individualized Plan for Employment developed with ORS.



WHAT HAPPENS IF SSA DETERMINES I AM NOT MAKING TIMELY PROGRESS?

If SSA determines you are not making progress towards your goal of becoming and staying employed, or education leading

toward becoming and staying employed, you will go back on the schedule for CDR.

WHAT HAPPENS WITH MY TICKET WHEN ORS CLOSES MY CASE?

At time of case closure with ORS, SSA will be notified, and your Ticket will be taken out of in-use status with ORS/VR. However, your Ticket may still have value and based on SSA determination of your Ticket status you may have up to 90 days to re-assign your Ticket to another SSA-approved EN for continued support in your employment. Assignment of your Ticket with another EN is based on determination of your ticket status with SSA.

WILL MY SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS BE AFFECTED IF I GO BACK TO WORK?

Income from working or any other type of income may impact some or all the benefits you receive (housing, Social Security, medical, food stamps, etc.). Meeting with a benefits counselor is a good way to learn more about how earnings will affect your Social Security Disability Benefits.

HOW DO I FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BENEFITS COUNSELING?

To enable your informed choice on this service, you are encouraged to discuss benefits counseling with your VRC while still open with ORS.

Employment Networks (ENs): ENs are also a potential resource for information on benefits counseling and some may provide the service.

Work Incentives Planning Assistance (WIPA) and Benefits Counseling: Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities provides

free seminars to beneficiaries on Social Security disability beneficiaries to help you make informed choices about work. Visit <https://w3.ric.edu/sherlockcenter/index.html> to learn more on these valuable seminars

Work Incentive Seminar Events (WISE): WISE webinars are free and offered by Social Security for individuals ages 18 to 64 who receive SSDI/SSI disability benefits. The webinars provide information on TTW and work incentives. Visit <https://choosework.ssa.gov> to learn more.

WHAT IF I AM UNHAPPY WITH THE EMPLOYMENT NETWORK I AM WORKING WITH?

It is always advisable to meet with your EN and seek to resolve any concerns prior to requesting ORS or another EN release your Ticket. If you would like to change your SSA approved EN provider, contact the service provider or the Ticket to Work Helpline at 1-866-969-7842 or 1-866-833-2967 (TTY). They can assist you with answering questions about your Ticket to Work, your TTW assignment and provide you with other EN options.

Disability Rights Rhode Island (DRRI) is also a resource available to assist you with a concern with an Employment Network, (401) 831-3150 (V) or (401) 835-5335 (TTY) or <https://drri.org>.



**AGAIN, WHERE CAN I GO TO GET MORE
INFORMATION ABOUT THE
TICKET TO WORK PROGRAM?**

Additional information about Ticket to Work can be found at <https://choosework.ssa.gov> or call 1-866-968-7842 (Voice) or 1-866-833-2967 (TTY) weekdays 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern Time.



Contact:
Julie Furmanski-Donais
401 871-1847
Julie.furmanski@ors.ri.gov

Linda Deschenes
401-486-6494
Linda.deschenes@ors.ri.gov



40 Fountain Street, Providence, RI 02903
Voice 421-7005 ~ TDD 421-7016 ~ Spanish 272-8090
~ Fax 222-3574
RI Relay 711

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