



**American
Stroke
Association.**
A division of the
American Heart Association.

ReturntoWork

Ticket to Work Program

If you're 18 to 64 years old and receive Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and/or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits because of your disability, you're eligible to participate in the Ticket to Work program. Participation is free and voluntary. The goal of the program to help you reduce dependence on disability benefits and earn more income than benefits alone can provide.

The Ticket to Work Program provides most people receiving Social Security benefits (beneficiaries) more choices for receiving employment services. Most beneficiaries become eligible for the program when they start receiving SSDI or SSI benefits based on disability. Beneficiaries may assign their tickets to an Employment Network (EN) of their choice to obtain employment services, vocational rehabilitation services or other support services needed to achieve a vocational (work) goal.

The [Employment Network](#) is under contract with Social Security to provide free services to beneficiaries under the Ticket to Work program. If the EN accepts your ticket, they'll coordinate and provide appropriate services to help you find and maintain employment. While services vary, ENs commonly provide assistance in areas such as resume building, interview coaching, job search techniques and job accommodation planning. Some ENs also provide valuable benefits consulting. This helps you understand the complexities of incentives and benefits to know how employment may affect your overall financial situation.

You can also work with your [State Vocational Rehabilitation \(VR\) agency](#). If they agree to take you on as a client, they'll work with you to develop an

individual plan that will help you get a job. VR agencies often provide more significant types of rehabilitation or training services than an EN. You'll continue to receive your benefits until you begin earning wages or self-employment income above the applicable earnings limit for the Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance program, known as [Substantial Gainful Activity \(SGA\)](#).







Work Incentives

Work Incentives make it possible for you to explore work while still receiving health care and cash benefits. They're designed to help you succeed!

- You may keep your Medicaid/Medicare while you work.
- You have access to individualized support services.
- You can select part-time or work-from-home alternatives to help you reach your goal of financial independence.
- You can try work with confidence, knowing that some or all of your benefits could continue during your transition period.

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The Ticket to Work program is just one of many Work Incentives available to you. Here are some examples of other Work Incentives you may be eligible for:

Work Incentives	Who's Eligible	Description
Trial Work Period (TWP) 	SSDI recipients only 	The TWP allows you to test your ability to work for at least nine months. During your TWP, you'll receive full SSDI benefits no matter how much you earn, as long as your work activity is reported and you have a disabling impairment.
Expedited Reinstatement (EXR) 	SSDI and SSI recipients 	If your benefits stopped because of your earnings level, you can request to have your benefits reinstated without having to complete a new application. While Social Security determines your benefits reinstatement, you're eligible to receive temporary benefits for up to six months.
Protection from Medical Continuing Disability Reviews (CDR) 	SSDI and SSI recipients 	If you assign your ticket to an approved service provider before you receive notice of a medical CDR, you will not have to undergo the medical review while you're participating in the Ticket to Work program and making progress within Social Security's timeframes.

Your road to employment through the Ticket to Work program is a two-way street: You receive free assistance from your service provider in preparing for, finding and keeping a job while you work your way toward financial independence. In return, you pledge to Social Security that you will take specific steps — determined by the individualized plan you developed with your service provider — within specific timeframes set by Social Security to work at a specified earnings level or complete certain educational or training requirements.

When you participate in the Ticket to Work program, you work with your EN or VR to reduce or eliminate your dependence on SSDI and/or SSI cash benefits. Taking

the agreed-upon steps toward employment within Social Security's timeframes is referred to as making "timely progress" toward:

- Receiving the education and training you need to succeed at work and your long-term career
- Becoming and staying employed
- Reducing your dependence on SSDI or SSI payments
- Earning your way off cash benefits, if possible

For you, the return for making "timely progress" is that you succeed in achieving a more financially independent life.