



# News Release

SOCIAL SECURITY

## **Social Security Announces Improvements to the Ticket to Work Program**

The Social Security Administration issued final rules designed to improve the Ticket to Work program. The changes will improve the effectiveness of the Ticket program in assisting beneficiaries with disabilities who want to work.

“These rules outline a new and improved Ticket to Work program and are based on learning from our experiences, listening to input from interested parties, and responding to their suggestions,” said Michael J. Astrue, Commissioner of Social Security. “Beneficiaries with disabilities will have greater flexibility and expanded choices in obtaining the services they need to attain their employment goals.”

The new Ticket to Work program rules:

- **Include more beneficiaries under the Program**--The population of individuals eligible for a Ticket is expanded to include beneficiaries who are expected to medically improve.
- **Increase incentive payments for Employment Networks (ENs)**--The new rules modify the EN payment systems to create greater financial incentives for service providers to participate, which will improve beneficiary access to services and expand the pool of quality providers available to serve beneficiaries.
- **Increase the value of the Ticket**--The rules for Ticket assignment are changed to enable beneficiaries with disabilities to take advantage of a more effective combination of services from both State Vocational Rehabilitation agencies and ENs.
- **Synergize efforts**--The new rules promote better alignment of the Ticket to Work Program, the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Program, the Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security Program, and other Social Security work incentive initiatives.

"Thus far, the results of the Ticket to Work program have been less than everyone expected and clearly less than Congress intended," Commissioner Astrue said. "We need to monitor the results of today's regulation closely, but it is highly likely that Congress will need to revisit the statute in the next few years in order to achieve the goals that Congress intended."

In preparation for the new Ticket to Work program, Social Security is undertaking a major recruitment effort to increase the number of organizations functioning as ENs. Social Security also is initiating targeted outreach to promote the Program to more beneficiaries and to encourage their participation. In addition, Social Security is presenting at national and state conferences and bringing beneficiaries and ENs together at local Work Incentives Seminars (WISE events) throughout the country.

The Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 established the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program. The purpose of the Ticket to Work program is to expand the universe of service providers available to beneficiaries with disabilities who are seeking vocational rehabilitation, employment and related support services. These service providers are available to assist beneficiaries in obtaining, regaining and maintaining self-supporting employment. Available in all 50 States and the US territories, the Ticket to Work program is an important component in a coordinated series of work incentives and initiatives that are designed to help overcome barriers to employment often experienced by beneficiaries with disabilities.

The final rule can be accessed through the *Federal Register* online at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) .

For general information about the Ticket to Work Program, visit Social Security's website--*The Work Site*: [www.socialsecurity.gov/work](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/work) .

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