

Mapping Your Path to Work

Answers To Your Work Questions
From New York Makes Work Pay

Ticket to Work

Choosing the Right Employment Network

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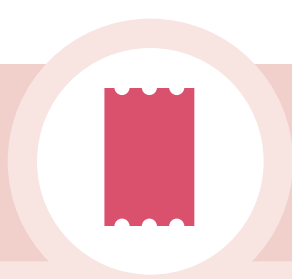
 New York **Makes Work Pay**

In This Guide

The purpose of this guide is to educate New Yorkers with disabilities who have a Ticket to Work from the Social Security Administration on how to secure the services and supports to go to work by choosing an Employment Network.

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This booklet is part of a series of New York Makes Work Pay publications that help New Yorkers with disabilities plan a path to employment.



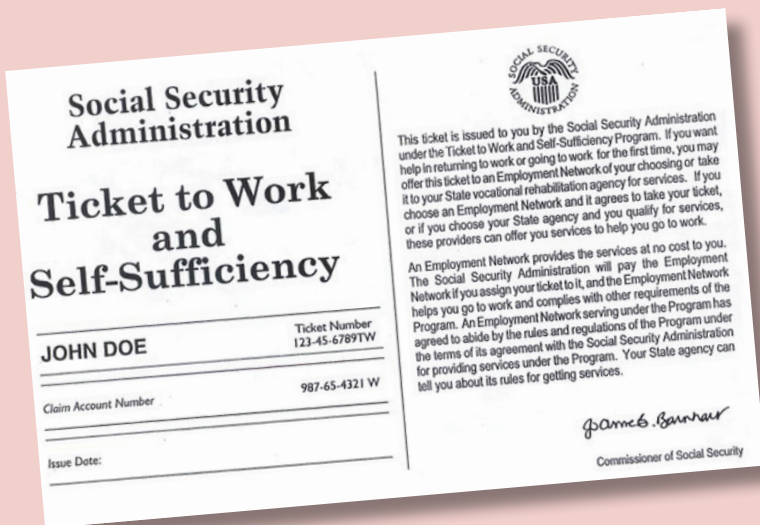
What is the Ticket to Work?

The Ticket to Work is a Social Security Administration (SSA) program that helps people with disabilities interested in working to get the services and supports they need to accomplish their desired work goals.

SSA has been mailing the “Ticket to Work” to individuals who receive Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) since November 2003.

Once you receive your Ticket to Work in the mail, you can participate in the program by taking it to any Employment Network (EN) approved by SSA to receive free services and supports to help you start working. The program is completely voluntary – you only have to use your Ticket if you want to find work and earn money.

A Ticket looks like this:



EN

What is an Employment Network?

An Employment Network (EN) is an organization contracted with SSA to coordinate the delivery of employment services, vocational rehabilitation services, or other support services to Ticket to Work beneficiaries.

An EN can be a public or private agency, large or small, non-profit or for-profit entity. Not all ENs are the same – each may offer different services, and may serve different people. For example, an EN might be a trade school or college, a local employer or business, a community rehabilitation program, a temporary employment agency, and the list goes on.

To locate the ENs in your local area, go online to the following website: www.yourtickettowork.com. Then click on the “Directory of ENs” in the left hand column. You can then search ENs in your area by zip code, city, county, and/or state. You can also get this information by placing a toll-free call to **1-866-Your Ticket (1-866-968-7842)**.

If you decide that you want to use your Ticket, you will need to choose an EN. You should contact several ENs to find the one that offers the services that best fit your needs and support your work goals. Explore your options and ask lots of questions to find the EN that is the best match for you. Take notes, and compare services. After all, you are the customer.



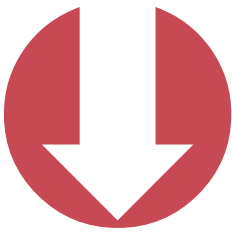
Important Questions to Ask When Choosing an EN

What services does the EN provide?

- ✓ Does the EN work with individuals with disabilities similar to your disability? Remember, ENs can limit their services to persons with specific disabilities or needs.
- ✓ Is the EN knowledgeable about career choices and options for individuals with disabilities similar to yours?
- ✓ Is the EN knowledgeable about the services, supports, and accommodations you need and want?
- ✓ Does the EN understand your employment goals and needs?
- ✓ How will the EN work with you to identify and reach your employment goals?

What are the qualifications and experience of the staff who would be working with you?

- ✓ What training, educational background, and credentials do the staff have?
- ✓ Do the individuals providing the services for the EN have experience in providing employment services to individuals with disabilities with needs similar to your needs?
- ✓ Is the EN willing to share their successes and failures with you?
- ✓ Will the EN provide you with a reference you can contact to discuss their experience? Remember, you are hiring them to do a very specific task.



After Hearing From the EN, Ask Yourself These Questions

Remember, the Ticket to Work program is all about CHOICE. If you choose to use your Ticket, then you also choose which EN will serve you. Take the time you need to feel comfortable with the choice you are making.

- Are you comfortable talking with the EN?
- Did the EN make you welcome?
- Will the EN allow you to visit and tour their facility before assigning your Ticket?
- Did the EN explain your obligations, so that you understood them, if you were to give your ticket to it?
 - For example, if you participate in training, would you have to finish the training within a specific time frame?
 - Would the EN expect to meet with you? If so, how often and where?
 - Should you become employed, what information will the EN expect you to share with them?

More Questions

What if the relationship with the EN does not work out?

Each EN is required to have a grievance procedure that you can use to resolve problems. If you cannot resolve your problem through the grievance, you can ask MAXIMUS, the private contractor SSA hired to manage the Ticket to Work program, to help. If MAXIMUS cannot resolve your grievance, you can ask SSA to review the problem.

If an EN is not providing the services and supports you feel are necessary and to which you agreed, you can take your Ticket back and re-assign it to an alternative EN. You may want to keep a list of your top three choices for ENs in the case that an alternative EN is needed.

For a complete list of ENs in your area, call Maximus at **1-866-968-7842 (TDD: 1-866-833-2967.)** Or, you can visit their website: www.youtickettowork.com

Will my benefits be impacted by going back to work?

If you have any questions about how your benefits will be impacted by going back to work, you can contact Neighborhood Legal Services at **1-888-224-3272**. The hotline is available during business hours Monday through Friday, except on holidays. Every effort will be made to return calls the same day or within one business day.

SSA has contracted with local organizations to provide work incentive and planning services for Social Security SSDI and SSI beneficiaries. The Work Incentive Planning Adviser (WIPA) agencies have people who have been specially trained to help individuals with disabilities considering returning to work or returning to work. You can get a list of the WIPA's in New York at the following website: <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/oesp/providers.nsf/bystate>

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