Disability

Ticket to Work

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3 MIN READ

We all have bad days at work when we dream about how nice it would be to not have to earn a paycheck. But how long would we be happy?

The truth is, regardless of the “bad” days, we derive much of our personal and social identity from work. It contributes to our self-esteem, self-confidence, and sense of self-worth and productivity. A regular paycheck allows us to provide for our families and have access to goods and services and activities. And because most of us spend so much of our waking hours at work, whether in the office or remotely, it can be a primary source of social interaction and sense of community for many people.

A debilitating injury or illness can take all that away and can have devastating effects on someone’s physical and mental well-being. People who receive disability payments might feel demoralized, lonely, bored, isolated, or helpless to change their situation. But at the same time, may be concerned that if they attempt to return to work, they could potentially lose their Social Security Disability benefits.

A program offered by the Social Security Administration (SSA) is designed to change all that, by supporting career development for disability beneficiaries who want to work and progress toward financial independence.

What is the Ticket to Work (Ticket) program?

This voluntary program was developed from the Ticket to Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 (with additional enhancements in 2009), which Congress signed to increase opportunities for people who are on disability but want to return to work. It operates under the SSA, and individuals aged 18 to 64 who receive disability benefits through Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) are all eligible. These beneficiaries, called ticket holders, can get help finding employment, education, and support services like career counseling and training.

How does it work?

The SSA has a list of approved Employment Networks, entities that have proven their ability to provide employment, vocational rehabilitation, or related services to people with disabilities. They must have experience providing services like job placement, job coaching, job development, and career planning and development. Employment Networks present a business plan to the SSA as to how they will provide Ticket to Work services and demonstrate that they have adequate staff and facilities to do so. Ticket holders may also work directly with their state’s Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) office.

The Ticket to Work program can benefit ticket holders in many ways:

- Receive their full SSDI amount and some of SSI while working
- Retain Medicare or Medicaid medical coverage
- No requirement to undergo a medical review of their disability if they are working with an Employment Network or their state's VR agency and meet certain criteria
- Ticket to Work program covers all costs of Employment Network activities for return-to-work services and employment support once a ticket holder returns to work.
- Receive the services of the Employment Network or state VR agency including, but not limited to, resume development, interview preparation, job search assistance, job leads, support and guidance for job stabilization and retention.

As a Ticket to Work provider for the Social Security Administration, Genex's national network of vocational case managers have the experience and knowledge to help people with disabilities reach their highest functional potential. You can learn more about these services here.



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