Checklist for using your ‘Ticket to Work’

Protection & Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS).

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When you consider to use your Ticket:

1. Understand the rules of the different programs from which you receive public benefits and then determine how income from work will affect:
   - Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)
   - Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
   - Medicare
   - Medicaid
   - Federal Housing Subsidies and
   - State benefits, such as, Food Stamps, Cash Assistance, Housing, or Transportation Assistance

2. Contact the Benefits Planning, Assistance and Outreach program to help you learn how income from work will affect your public benefits:
   Kansas Benefits Counselors Network
   Cerebral Palsy Research Foundation
   5111 E. 21st Street
   Wichita, KS 67208
   316-652-1532
   800-550-5804 ext. 532 (toll-free)

3. Decide if you want to earn an income that would eventually reduce or eliminate your Social Security cash benefits:
   - The Social Security Administration (SSA) has several employment supports that allow beneficiaries to test their ability to work and become gradually self-supporting and independent, while they continue to receive their cash benefits.
   - You can learn about these employment supports when you contact a benefits planner from the Benefits Planning, Assistance and Outreach Program.

   Appeal the decision first to MAXIMUS and then to SSA. If your Employment Network is Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS), you may exercise your right to file an appeal using the grievance system provided by the Rehabilitation Act and use the services of the Client Assistance Program.

   - Second, you can take your Ticket out of assignment from the Employment Network. If you take your Ticket out of assignment you can reassign your Ticket to another Employment Network. You can take as much time as you need to find another Employment Network. However, after three months, SSA will consider your Ticket not in use and you may be subject to a Continuing Disability Review. Once you place your Ticket with another Employment Network no additional Continuing Disability Reviews will occur.

   - If you disagree with the action taken by an Employment Network, or if you are thinking about changing Employment Networks, you can contact Disability Rights Center of Kansas, Inc. at 877-776-1541 (Voice/TTY). That organization can help you with the dispute resolution process and counsel you about the pros and cons of taking your Ticket out of assignment and changing Employment Networks.

   See Disability Rights Center of Kansas’s (DRC) A Consumer’s Quick Guide to Ticket to Work in Kansas for information about the Ticket to Work Program and answers to commonly asked questions.
out of a 12-month period. The months do not need to be consecutive and any months of employment at SGA level during the initial 24 months can count toward this requirement.

- During months 37 through 48 of your IWP, progress toward self-supporting employment requires that you earn a gross income over the SGA level for 6 out of the 12 months. The months do not need to be consecutive.
- During months 49 through 60 of your IWP (and later 12 month review periods), progress toward self-supporting employment requires that you have a gross income that disqualifies you from receiving SSDI or SSI cash benefits for 6 out of 12 months. The months do not need to be consecutive.
- If you do not meet these goals of timely progress, it does not mean that you will be withdrawn from the Ticket to Work Program or that you will lose your SSDI or SSI cash benefits.
- However, if SSA decides that you have not met these requirements for progress toward self-supporting employment, you could be subject to a Medical Continuing Disability Review. If SSA decides that you are no longer disabled through this Medical Continuing Disability Review, you could lose your SSDI and SSI cash benefits.

4 Determine what employment services you will need to go to work at a level where you will eventually become ineligible for cash benefits:
- Determine a Vocational Goal,
- Career Exploration,
- Education or Further Training,
- Interviewing Skills,
- Job Development,
- Transportation,
- Assistive Technology,
- Job Coach, and
- Professional, Peer or Natural Supports to help you to keep the job.

5 Find the Employment Networks in your area:
- Call MAXIMUS, the agency SSA has contracted with to administer the Ticket to Work Program, at 866-968-7842 or check the MAXIMUS website at www.yourtickettowork.com. The website has an Employment Network Directory listing the names, contact information, services provided and disabilities served by all Employment Networks. The directory listings are available by state, county or city.
- Obtain a listing of all the Employment Networks serving Social Security beneficiaries in your geographical area. If you contact MAXIMUS by telephone, ask its staff to mail the list to you.

6 Contact the Employment Networks in your area:
- Exercise your right to choose who will serve you,
- Contact the Employment Networks in your area. Many Employment Networks traditionally served individuals with certain disabilities. However, under the Ticket-to-Work Program, some Employment Networks have shown an interest in serving people with disabilities that they have not traditionally served. The Employment Network Directory available from MAXIMUS includes information about the disabilities served by each Employment Network.
• Ask to speak to a staff person dealing with the Ticket to Work Program and tell them that you have a Ticket and may be interested in placing your Ticket with that Employment Network.
• The Employment Network Staff will ask you a series of questions to learn more about you and your employment goals. The Employment Network staff will be trying to determine if their services match your needs.
• Take this opportunity to discuss your employment goals. Ask the Employment Network staff questions about their services and how they can help you reach your goals.
• You want to pick the Employment Network that you feel comfortable working with and that you believe can best serve you and help you reach your goals.
• Do not be discouraged if an Employment Network decides not to accept your Ticket. The Employment Network may have many reasons to choose not to work with you, and those reasons may have nothing to do with your ability to work. This is why you need contact information for all the Employment Networks serving your area.
• All Employment Networks have the right to choose not to work with you just as you have the right to choose not to work with them.

7 Choose an Employment Network:
• If you and the Employment Network agree to work together on your employment goals, you and the Employment Network will then create an Individualized Work Plan (IWP).
• This IWP spells out specifically the services the Employment Network will provide to you and IWP also sets out the action you will take to get employed.
• PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROCESS.

8 Work toward your goal:
• Once you assign your Ticket to an Employment Network, concentrate on following your IWP.
• SSA will not conduct a Continuing Disability Review to determine if you are still disabled while you are using your Ticket.

9 Understand your responsibilities under the Ticket to Work program:
• MAXIMUS will measure your progress toward self-supporting employment under the IWP and determine if your Ticket is in use.
• While your Ticket is assigned to an Employment Network, you must make timely progress toward self-supporting employment by showing an increasing ability to work at levels that reduce or eliminate your SSDI or SSI cash benefits.
• During the first 24 months after you assign your Ticket to an Employment Network, timely progress toward self-supporting employment requires that you actively follow your IWP.
• During months 25 through 36 of your IWP, timely progress toward self-supporting employment requires that you earn a gross income over the federal Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) level (non-blind $800 and blind $1,330 in 2003) for 3 months.