

Ticket to Work Procedures for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors

The following procedures are for counselors to follow when working with consumers who are eligible for the Ticket to Work Program. The purpose of these procedures is to assure that the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) performs in a manner that is consistent with the principles of consumer choice, partnership, and quality economic outcomes that are common to both the Ticket Program and the public Vocational Rehabilitation Program. As we strive to maximize long term employment for all individuals with significant disabilities we will be advocating for our consumers to engage in follow along services provided by the Ticket as they leave the VR program successfully employed. By so doing we will also maximize the allowable payments to the Bureau from the Social Security Administration for consumers who become employed as a result of vocational rehabilitation services and continued employment supports. These administrative procedures should not substantially influence the vocational rehabilitation counseling process.

I. APPLICATION

Ask whether individuals are beneficiaries of either SSI or SSDI. **Refer to the Desk Reference Guide SSDI and SSI Beneficiaries.**

Ask if the consumer has a Ticket. If the consumer does not know about the Ticket program, give an overview using the following materials:

- Just the Facts on Ticket-To-Work
- Benefits Counseling Program

If the individual has received a Ticket, the counselor should discuss the opportunity for employment supports after the consumer becomes employed under the Ticket Partnership Plus Program.

If an individual still has questions about where to assign their Ticket, or about the services of other Employment Networks, they should be given contact information for both Maximus at 1-866-968-7842 and the Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS) project at 1-800-842-7303.

II. PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Ticket consumers are eligible for CDR protections while the Ticket is in-use with BRS. Verify from the RSA-911 that the individual is on SSI/SSDI.

- For those consumers who are not sure if they are eligible for the Ticket program, let them know when the Ticket will be available for assignment with an EN when they BRS case is closed. It is at that time the consumer will assign their Ticket to an Employment Network.
- Consumers who sign an IPE with BRS will have a Ticket in-use status which will give CDR protection while the Ticket is being used.
- Refer consumer to Benefits Counseling for follow up.

Plan Development when the consumer signs the Employment Plan:

As appropriate, encourage the individual to consult with a benefits counselor regarding the potential impact of employment on their benefits and healthcare coverage.

Discuss the opportunity/benefits for consumer to engage in ongoing employment supports with an EN. Consumer will be able to assign Ticket to an EN when the case is closed with BRS. Consumer should be given a list of ENs to choose from with counselor guidance.

Plan development when the individual has assigned the Ticket to an Employment Network with or without BRS as a partner:

Provide the Ticket Coordinator with the name of the EN that has received the consumer's Ticket. If the EN is not in partnership with BRS, the Ticket Administrator will initiate efforts to develop a cost sharing agreement with them.

Even when consumers assign their Ticket to an Employment Network BRS is still legally responsible to serve them. However the Employment Network is responsible for providing whatever services are specified in its Individual Work Plan for that consumer. Counselors should view those services as "comparable benefits" and thus not purchase or directly provide those particular services. The Ticket Coordinator is available to assist counselors in determining this information.

Consumers should be asked to present the counselor a copy of the Individual Work Plan (IWP) that they hold with the other EN. Sharing this copy and all amendments of the IWP will be required as part of the consumer responsibility in BRS's Employment Plan. If you are unable to get the IWP plan right away, proceed with IPE development. A Plan amendment may be necessary once the IWP is received.

III. ONGOING PROCEDURES

- Review cases for any changes in Ticket status that will need to be discussed with the consumer. Discuss follow along services with EN and consumer.
- Review the Ongoing Employment Support Desk Guide while in Plan development and ongoing Plan activity.
- Review Employment Plans for those consumers who have provided IWP plans signed with other providers, for potential comparable benefits and BRS plan amendments.

IV. CASE CLOSURE

For all SSI/SSDI consumers who are served and closed by BRS in competitive employment, the following issues should be addressed and incorporated as needed in the closure amendment to the Employment Plan:

- A Referral form to EN for services when closing the case should be done before closure; send copy to Ticket Coordinator. Consumer will have 90 days after case closure to assign the Ticket to an EN in order to keep CDR protection. In the BRS closure letter, provide the consumer with EN contact information.
- A long term Benefits Management Plan developed in cooperation with a Benefits Counselor when appropriate. Changes in employment over time generally lead to changes in benefit status.