

Part	Name	Effective Date
422	Additional Guidelines For SSI/SSDI Recipients	*August 21, 2015**

Authorization

Federal Register, Volume 66, Department of Education, 34 CFR 361, Part VI, State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program, §361.41, §361.42, §361.45, §361.46, §361.48 §361.52, and §361.54.

422.1 SPECIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Refer to Part 405, SSI/SSDI Recipients for information on presumption of eligibility, use of existing information and Part 405.2 for placement in the order of selection.

422.2 INDIVIDUAL'S PARTICIPATION IN THE COST OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

Refer to Part 411, Individual Participation in Cost of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, SSI/SSDI Recipients.

422.3 GUIDELINES FOR PROCESSING TICKETS-TO-WORK

The following guidelines are to be used when working with the Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work/Work Incentive Improvement Act (TWWIA) regulations. Neither the Ticket-To-Work program nor the payment mechanisms built into the program shall influence the implementation of the basic vocational rehabilitation process according to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

I. INTAKE**A. Regional Office Processing of Incoming Ticket Inquiries**

1. LRS has a statewide Ticket Hotline number (1-800-260-8876) that will route calls from SSA recipients to the 8 regional offices. The regional offices will receive primarily 2 types of inquires from Ticket recipients:
 - a. SSA recipients who have an open case with LRS
 - b. SSA recipients who do not have a current case with LRS
2. The majority of the inquiries will be by phone; however, regional offices may receive some walk-in inquiries. The receptionist will determine if the recipient has an open case with LRS, or if the recipient is trying to find out more information about the Ticket.
 - a. If the recipient has an open case with LRS, the consumer will be referred to his/her Counselor.
 - b. If the recipient does not have an open case with LRS, the receptionist shall refer the inquirer to the Contact of the Day.

3. The Contact of the Day will process the call and forward to a Counselor to:
 - a. Explain the general guidelines for Ticket-To-Work using the Prompt Sheet - Ticket to Work Basic Questions (Refer to [IV] in this section).
 - b. If the recipient wants to meet with a Counselor after being given a general overview of LRS, the usual referral information should be completed and processed (Refer to Part 404 – Applicant Interview).

B. Interview

The Counselor will complete the items listed below when conducting the initial interview in addition to adhering to the guidelines outlined in Part 404, Applicant Interview.

1. During the interview the Counselor will:
 - a. Inquire if the applicant receives SSI/SSDI benefits resulting from his/her own disability.
 - b. Inquire if the applicant has been issued a Ticket from SSA
 - c. Record consumer's Ticket status in AWARE, Pages, Ticket-To-Work section.
 - *d. If the consumer is unsure of ticket status but meets TTW guidelines (Receives SSI or SSDI due to disability and is between the ages of 18 and 64), the counselor should indicate that the consumer is a TTW participant in the Ticket-To-Work section. If the consumer's ticket status is questionable (i.e. consumer unsure if receipt of SSA benefits is due to his/her disability or survivor benefits), the counselor or counselor associate should forward the applicant's name and Participant ID number to the Ticket to Work Program Coordinator at State Office for ticket verification.**
2. During interview, the Counselor will also give applicant the LRS consumer brochure, *Your Ticket to Work*. The Counselor will advise the applicant that their Ticket will automatically be assigned to LRS as In Use SVR at the point that an Individualized Plan or Employment (IPE) is approved and it cannot be assigned to and Employment Network (EN) while the consumer has an open case with LRS. The Counselor will also briefly explain the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) project. The Counselor will emphasize that WIPA is a free service that can assist the applicant with SSA work incentive benefits and explain how Ticket to Work will affect current benefits.

3. The applicant's Ticket status information shall be recorded in AWARE on the Ticket to Work Page in Participant Module, Number 1 – Ticket Information.
 - a. If the consumer has a ticket, select “YES.” No additional entries are needed. The other boxes on this page must be completed later at the point of IPE completion.
 - b. If the consumer does not have a ticket, select “NO.” No further action/documentation is needed or required.

C. Ticket-To-Work Program Participation

1. The consumer must make a key decision regarding their Ticket:

The consumer must choose to proceed with their application for VR services and have their ticket assigned to LRS as In Use SVR, or choose to use the Ticket to receive services from an approved EN.

If the consumer chooses to proceed with their application for VR services and have their Ticket assigned to LRS as In Use SVR and the Ticket is not already assigned to another VR agency or EN; then the Counselor must have a thorough discussion with the consumer to ensure the consumer understands that by signing the IPE the Ticket will be automatically assigned to LRS as In Use SVR (this is applicable for all eligible SSA-Ticket cases opened July 21, 2008 and thereafter).

2. The counselor must advise the consumer of the Partnership Plus Program that will allow them to assign their Ticket to an EN to receive long-term job support/follow-along services after the VR case is closed.

II. IPE DEVELOPMENT AND TICKET ASSIGNMENT

A. During the planning interview, the Counselor will:

1. Remind the consumer that their Ticket will be automatically assigned as In Use status with LRS at the point that the IPE is approved; and
2. Review the fact that after their VR case is closed they will be able to receive long-term job support/follow-along services under the Partnership Plus Program.

B. Ticket Assignment/IPE Development

1. Ticket Assignable to LRS

To assign the ticket to LRS, go to the TTW page in AWARE, select “Active” in Ticket Status, then click the “New” button under Section 2, Ticket in Use, and enter the In Use Begin Date.*

2. Non-Ticket Case

If the consumer is not eligible for a Ticket (Non-Ticket Case), the Counselor will choose in AWARE “No” in Ticket Program Participant and “Not Applicable” in Payment System in AWARE.

3. Ticket Not Assignable

LRS’ position in providing services to a consumer will not be affected by the Ticket being assigned to an EN. However, if the EN refers the consumer to LRS for services, and the ticket is assigned to the EN, the Counselor will contact the Program Coordinator for Social Security Initiatives in State Office with this information. The Program Coordinator will contact the EN to attempt to negotiate a suitable agreement. The Counselor will choose “No” in the AWARE Ticket Program Participant section and “Bill other EN” in the AWARE Payment System.

4. Un-Assigning Ticket

If a consumer chooses to un-assign their ticket which will result in closing their case, the counselor shall notify the State Office Program Coordinator in writing (via email, fax, or written notice). State Office Program Coordinator shall notify MAXIMUS via email or electronic data file.

III. CASE CLOSURE

At the point of case closure (Rehabilitated or Other), the counselor will:

A. Closure – Rehabilitated

1. Explain to the consumer that they can receive long-term job support follow along services through an EN;
2. Provide the consumer with a list of ENs that they can contact to arrange long-term support/follow along services;
3. In AWARE on the Ticket to Work Page, change Ticket Status to “Unassigned” and enter “In Use End Date” in Ticket In Use Section.

B. Closure – Other

1. Provide the consumer with a list of ENs that they can contact to arrange long-term support/follow along services;
2. In AWARE on the Ticket to Work Page, change Ticket Status to “Unassigned” and enter “In Use End Date” in Ticket In Use Section.

IV. PROMPT SHEET - TICKET TO WORK BASIC QUESTIONS

Question: What is the Ticket to Work program?

Answer: The Ticket to Work program, known as the “Ticket”, is an employment program created in the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 and administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA). It is a voluntary program that offers individuals, age 18 through 64, who are receiving cash benefits under the Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) program and/or the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program based on disability or blindness, expanded choices for obtaining the services and supports to enter and maintain employment.

Question: How does the Ticket program help people receiving disability benefits go to work?

Answer: People with disabilities receiving benefits from SSA can use the Ticket issued to them by SSA to obtain services and supports to assist them in preparing for work and entering and maintaining employment.

Question: What is an Employment Network (EN)?

Answer: An Employment Network (EN) is an agency, organization, a consortium of organizations, or an individual which are approved service providers.

Question: How does the Ticket Program work?

Answer: Under this program the SSA issues a ticket to eligible individuals who, in turn, may choose to assign the ticket to an Employment Network (EN) of their choice to obtain employment services, vocational rehabilitation services, or other support services needed to get a vocational (work) goal. The EN, if they accept the ticket, will coordinate and provide appropriate services to help the Ticket Holder find and maintain employment. For Employment Networks, Social Security compensates the EN for assisting the Ticket Holder to achieve employment-related milestones and outcomes and move towards self-supporting employment. State VR agencies are eligible for cost reimbursement compensation which is reimbursement for cost of services provided.

Question: Do I have to use my ticket?

Answer: *Ticket to Work is a voluntary program that offers an expanded opportunity to obtain the services and supports that you need in order to work and to achieve your employment goals.**

Question: If I don't use the ticket, will it affect Social Security my benefits?

Answer: No, your Social Security benefits will continue regardless of ticket use.

Question: What are my benefits in using the Ticket to Work program?

Answer: When you choose to use your ticket and timely progress is being made towards your employment goal, you are exempt from Continuing Disability Reviews (CDR). In addition you will have greater choice in selecting a service provider to help you in getting a job. Also there is expanded health coverage that allows you to keep health benefits for a longer period of time even when you begin working.

Question: What happens if I lose my job, can I get my benefits back?

Answer: Yes, you would be eligible for expedited reinstatement with Social Security as a way of regaining benefits if you lose a job.

Question: What happens if I am not satisfied with my service provider?

Answer: The Protection & Advocacy of Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS) has been set up by Social Security to help you with any problems you might have with your provider. If the problem between you and the provider cannot be resolved, then you can pull your ticket from one provider and assign it to another after contacting Maximus.

Question: Why should I choose LRS?

Answer: You should choose LRS because:

1. LRS has many years of experience in working with SSI/SSDI beneficiaries;
2. Has highly trained and skilled compassionate staff;
3. Has locations statewide including eight regional offices; and
4. LRS can provide multiple services over an extended period of time.

Question: What is the Partnership Plus?

Answer: The new Ticket to Work (TTW) regulations were designed to encourage partnerships. TTW offers new prospects for VR-EN partnerships which means a better mix of services for consumers and improved coordination of services. Partnership Plus represents an opportunity for service providers and consumers to increase control over employment services. This constitutes a win-win situation for all involved.

Question: How will Partnership Plus help me?

Answer: Partnership Plus is an option a consumer may use to receive intensive VR services up front to meet their service needs and then once their VR case is closed, the consumer can assign their Ticket to an EN to receive ongoing support services. Also, if you decide within 90 days of LRS closure to assign your Ticket to an EN, you will continue to receive protection from Continuing Disability Reviews.

Question: Can I reassign my Ticket to a different EN while LRS has an open case on me?

Answer: No, you cannot assign your Ticket to an EN while you have an open case with LRS. When you apply for vocational rehabilitation services your ticket is automatically assigned to LRS once an IPE is written and approved. At the point your LRS case is closed, you may *assign* your ticket to an approved provider called an EN.

Phone Numbers for Additional Information:

Maximus	1-866-968-7842
LA-WIPA (Work Incentives Planning)	1-888-942- 8104
PABSS	1-800-960-7705
LOCAL SS	<u>Counselor adds local SS office number here</u>

*The web address to locate the Social Security Office in Louisiana is <https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp>. This will take you to the Local SSA Office Locator where you can enter the consumer's zip code to locate the nearest SSA office.**

Available Brochures:

If the caller seems interested in receiving additional information, the Counselor of the Day should obtain the caller's address and send the appropriate brochures listed below:

LRS Professional Brochure:

Ticket to Work Program Questions & Answers

LA-WIPA:

Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Project

PABSS:

Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of SS