

LET'S TALK TICKET

Choosing an Employment Network

Number 3 in a series of fact sheets about the Ticket to Work program.

Ticket to Work is a **Social Security Administration** (SSA) program that helps people with disabilities get the services they need in order to work. SSA will begin mailing Tickets to eligible SSA beneficiaries in Maryland in November 2003. Once you receive your Ticket in the mail, you can take it to any **Employment Network** to receive free services to help you start working. The program is voluntary – you do not have to use your Ticket. Your Ticket has no cash value, and no one can use your Ticket except you.

An Employment Network (EN) is approved by SSA to accept Tickets and provide employment services (vocational rehabilitation, job training, etc) at no cost to you. An EN is a place where people with Tickets can get free employment services. An EN can be a public or private agency, large or small, non-profit or for-profit business. Not all ENs are the same – each may offer different services, and may serve different people.

If you decide that you want to use your Ticket, you will need to choose an EN. You should call several ENs to find one that offers the services you want. Explore your options and ask lots of questions to find the EN that is the best match for you. Take notes, and compare services. You may want to consider the following things when choosing an EN:

- Is the EN knowledgeable about the services, supports, and accommodations you need?
- Is the EN familiar with career choices and options?
- Does the EN understand your employment goals and your needs?
- Does the EN have experience providing services to people with disabilities similar to yours?

- What kinds of services does the EN offer? Does the EN have a specialty?
- How will the EN encourage your active involvement in service planning?
- How will the EN work with you to identify and reach your employment goals?
- How much time will you spend in group training vs. individual training?

- Are you allowed to visit the EN and tour the facility before assigning your Ticket?
- Are you comfortable talking with the EN? Do you feel welcome?
- Will the EN send you written information about their program?

The Ticket to Work program is all about **CHOICE**. If you choose to use your Ticket, then you choose which EN will serve you. You should choose very carefully. However, if you assign your Ticket to an EN and then decide that another EN can better meet your needs, you can re-assign your Ticket. SSA has hired a private contractor, **Maximus**, to help manage the Ticket to Work program. For a complete list of ENs in your area, call Maximus at 1-866-968-7842 (TDD: 1-866-833-2967), or visit their website at www.yourtickettowork.com

Where can I get more information about the Ticket to Work program?

Benefits Planning Assistance & Outreach (BPAO) Projects

BPAO projects will help you plan for changes that might occur to your Federal and State benefits as a result of employment. They will help you understand the Social Security work incentives, including Ticket to Work, so you can make an informed choice about employment.

Benefits Resource Center

Serving Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Anne Arundel, Carroll, Harford & Howard counties

Phone: 410-444-1400 Toll Free: 1-888-560-2221
Fax: 410-444-0825 TTY: 1-800-735-2258
Email: mcil@mcil-md.org

Benefits InfoSource

Serving Montgomery & Prince George's counties, Southern MD, Western MD, & Eastern Shore

Phone: 301-587-4137 Toll Free: 1-888-838-1776
Fax: 301-588-3951 TTY: Dial 711 for MD Relay
Email: gcoffey@innow.org

State Partners

Division of Rehabilitation Services

(DORS) is the State-operated vocational rehabilitation agency in Maryland. DORS is a part of the Maryland state government, and is one of the places you can use your Ticket to get employment services.

Contact: Tom Scheurich
Phone: 410-554-9307 Toll Free: 1-888-554-0334
Fax: 410-554-9412 TTY: 410-554-9411
Email: Tscheurich@dors.state.md.us

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Advocacy Resources

These agencies will help you understand your rights and your choices under the Ticket to Work program. They will provide you with information about the Ticket program, and in some cases they may be able to provide direct advocacy assistance.

Maryland Disability Law Center

Statewide legal assistance for people with disabilities

Phone: 410-727-6352 Toll Free: 1-800-233-7201
Fax: 410-727-6389 TTY: 410-727-6387
Email: intake@mdlcbalto.org
Website: www.mdlcbalto.org

Client Assistance Program

Statewide assistance regarding services available under the Rehabilitation Act

Phone/ Toll Free: 1-800-638-6243
Fax: 410-554-9362 TTY: 410-554-9360
Email: cap@dors.state.md.us

National Partners

Maximus

Call Maximus anytime after November 2003 to get a Ticket, to replace a lost Ticket, or to get a list of ENs near you. Call anytime for answers to general questions about the Ticket to Work program.

Phone/ Toll Free: 1-866-YOUR TICKET
1-866-968-7842
TTY/ Toll Free: 1-866-TDD-2WORK
1-866-833-2967
Website: www.yourtickettowork.com

Social Security Administration

For information about the Ticket to Work program, call your local Social Security office or go to the SSA website: www.ssa.gov/work