

# Social Security Administration

## Questions and Answers

**On December 17, 1999, President Clinton signed the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999. This law includes several important new opportunities for people who receive Social Security disability benefits who want to go to work.**

### **I. The Ticket to Work Program**

#### **What is the Ticket to Work Program?**

The Ticket Program is something new in SSA. The program will offer SSA disability beneficiaries greater choice in obtaining the services they need to help them go to work.

#### **When will the Ticket Program begin?**

Before we officially begin this major new program, SSA will take one year to make sure that it will operate as well as possible. Some beneficiaries will begin to receive Tickets early in 2001.

#### **Will the Ticket Program start everywhere at the same time?**

No. During the first year of operation, which will begin January 2001, the program will be available only in certain States. In the next couple of years, we will expand the program to other parts of the country. The program will be operating in the entire country by January 1, 2004. So, people will receive their Tickets at different times.

#### **How will I know where the Ticket Program is available?**

We will announce our plans in many different places where people who receive Social Security disability benefits get information about SSA, including Social Security's Internet web site, [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)

#### **What will a Ticket look like?**

The Ticket will be a paper document that will have some personal information and some general information about the Ticket Program

## **How will I get my Ticket?**

When the program begins in January 2001, we will be working with an organization the law calls a **Program Manager**. The Program Manager, whom we have not yet selected, will help us to manage the Ticket program. The Program Manager will help us send the Ticket in the mail with a letter explaining the program.

## **Where would I take my Ticket to get services?**

You will take your Ticket to what the law calls an **Employment Network**. The Employment Networks will be private organizations or public agencies that have agreed to work with Social Security to provide services under this program.

## **How will I find out about the Employment Networks?**

The Program Manager will send you a list of the approved Employment Networks in your area when we send you your Ticket. Also, some Employment Networks may contact you to offer their services. This information also will be available on our web site and in other places.

## **How will I choose an Employment Network?**

You can contact any Employment Network in your area to see if it is the right one for you. Both you and the Employment Network have to agree to work together.

## **Can I change Employment Networks?**

Yes. You can stop working with one Employment Network and begin working with another one. Before you make this decision, however, you should make sure you fully understand how the Employment Network plans to help you to work.

## **How can I get more information about the Ticket program now?**

Before the program begins in January 2001, you can contact Social Security:

- You can call our toll-free number at 1-800-772-1213.
- We will have pamphlets and other written material available at local Social Security offices.
- Information about the Ticket program also will be available from many other private and government organizations that help people with disabilities.
- If you have access to the Internet, you can get information from our special web site, [www.ssa.gov/work](http://www.ssa.gov/work).

Beginning in January 2001, you will be able to contact the Program Manager. We will announce their toll-free telephone number, and the date they are available to answer questions.

**If I get a Ticket, do I have to use it?**

No. The Ticket Program is voluntary.

## **II. Expanded Availability of Health Care Services**

**Does the new law include changes in health care coverage?**

Yes. Starting October 1, 2000, the law extends Medicare Part A (Hospital) premium-free coverage for four and one-half years beyond the current limit for disability beneficiaries who work.

**What about Medicaid?**

The law includes several important changes to Medicaid. For example, it gives states the option of providing Medicaid coverage to more people ages 16-64 with disabilities who work.

## **III. Removal of Work Disincentives**

**If I go back to work, will I automatically lose my disability benefits?**

No, the new law has not changed our work incentives rules.

For more information about Social Security's work incentives you should:

- call our toll-free number at 1-800-772-1213;
- contact your local Social Security office; or
- visit our special web site at [www.ssa.gov/work](http://www.ssa.gov/work)

**If my disability benefits stop because I go back to work, will I have to file a new application if I can't work anymore?**

Starting January 1, 2001, if your benefits have ended because of work, you can request that we start your benefits again without having to file a new application. There are some important conditions:

- You have to be unable to work because of your medical condition.
- The medical condition must be the same as or related to the condition you had when we first decided that you should receive disability benefits.
- You have to file your request to start your benefits again within 60 months of the date you were last entitled to benefits.

**Will I have to wait for you to make a new medical decision before I can receive benefits?**

No. We *will* make a new medical decision, but while we are making the decision, you can receive up to six months of temporary benefits

**If you decide that you are unable to start my benefits again, will I have to pay back the temporary benefits?**

No.

**Will you still review my medical condition?**

Starting January 1, 2001, SSA will not review the medical condition of a person receiving disability benefits if that person is using a Ticket.

Starting January 1, 2002, under certain conditions, SSA will not review the medical condition of beneficiaries who have received Social Security Disability Insurance benefits for at least 24 months.

We will provide more information about medical reviews in the future.