

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT NOTICE	NO. 2-14
	DATE July 8, 2014

TO: STATE WORKFORCE AGENCIES
 STATE WORKFORCE ADMINISTRATORS
 STATE WORKFORCE LIAISONS
 STATE AND LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARD DIRECTORS
 AMERICAN JOB CENTER MANAGERS

FROM: PORTIA WU /s/
 Assistant Secretary
 Employment and Training Administration

KATHLEEN MARTINEZ /s/
 Assistant Secretary
 Office of Disability Employment Policy

SUBJECT: Receiving Ticket to Work Payments as an Employment Network

1. **Purpose.** To replace the previously issued Training and Employment Notice (TEN) No. 14-12, "Receiving Ticket to Work Payments as an Employment Network," issued on December 4, 2012. This TEN announces that the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Employment Network (EN) Payment Agreement has been rescinded by the Social Security Administration (SSA), and provides information on a new process for public workforce entities to become ENs under SSA's Ticket to Work and Self Sufficiency (TTW) Program.
2. **References.**
 - TEN No. 6-02, *The Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act (TWWIIA) and Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program Implementation*;
 - TEN No. 20-07, *Ticket to Work Program-Employment Networks*; and
 - TEN No. 6-11, *Increasing the Public Workforce Development System's Participation in the Ticket to Work Program (TTW) for Disability Beneficiaries*.
3. **Background.** The TTW program is the centerpiece of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act (TWIIA) of 1999, Public Law 106-170. This program provides individuals ages 18 to 64 receiving Social Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits with incentives and options for them to enter or re-enter the world of work. It provides disability beneficiaries with choices, opportunities, and supports needed to become employed, stay employed, and increase earnings. It has the potential for eventually reducing their dependency on public benefits by becoming

economically self-sufficient. The number of people receiving SSDI or SSI benefits continues to climb, reaching nearly 14 million people in the United States and territories.

Most adults who receive Social Security disability benefits are eligible for the TTW Program. They may assign their Tickets to an EN of their choice to obtain education, training, employment services, vocational rehabilitation, and other support services necessary to maximize their economic self-sufficiency through work opportunities. An EN is an entity that is approved by the SSA to serve individuals under the TTW Program. Once approved eligible by SSA, an EN can accept a Ticket from any individual who qualifies for the TTW Program. The individual has complete choice regarding the EN to which he/she assigns his/her Ticket, and the EN has complete choice regarding which Tickets to accept. When an individual becomes employed at specified earning levels, the EN receives a series of payments from SSA linked to that individual's outcomes.

State Workforce Agencies (SWA), State Workforce Investment Boards (SWIB) as established under WIA Section 111, Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIB) as established under WIA Sections 116 and 117, and American Job Centers (AJC) as established under WIA Section 121(d) are all deemed automatically qualified as an EN under SSA's TTW regulations. However, these public workforce entities must go through the process described below to become a SSA-approved EN in order to receive payments for serving Ticket Holders.

4. **DOL and SSA Partnerships for Ticket to Work Program.** The Department of Labor (DOL) has provided technical assistance to public workforce system entities to become active ENs (i.e., accepting Tickets and receiving payment for providing services to Ticket Holders) as part of its comprehensive effort to expand the capacity of the public workforce system to serve people with disabilities. As a result of these efforts, as well as SSA's technical assistance efforts targeted to the public workforce system, the number of public workforce entities that are ENs continues to increase annually, along with the number of beneficiaries choosing to assign their Tickets to public workforce ENs.

The ongoing partnership between DOL and SSA to expand the capacity of the AJC network to serve persons receiving Social Security disability benefits, and ultimately improve their employment outcomes, will help provide these individuals with a career pathway to economic self-sufficiency. This partnership has resulted in the development and implementation of several improved processes, such as:

- Simplifying and reducing the paperwork for public workforce entities to become ENs.
- Permitting the use of an Individual Employment Plan, rather than requiring the use of a SSA Individual Work Plan, to receive payment as an EN.
- Permitting the use of electronic tools, including eData Sharing, eTicket Assignment, and Workforce ePay, to expedite payments to public workforce ENs, which removes significant administrative burdens.

5. New Process for Public Workforce Employment Networks. Public workforce entities that are already an EN remain approved as an EN and do not need to submit a new application. All public workforce entities, such as SWAs, SWIBs, LWIBs, and AJCs that wish to become an EN must now submit to SSA an EN Request for Quotation (RFQ). SSA has streamlined the RFQ for public workforce entities by clearly outlining sections that are not applicable to qualifying workforce entities, and do not have to be completed. Once the RFQ is approved by SSA, a Blanket Purchase Agreement is placed on record and the SSA-approved workforce entity can begin operating as an EN. The RFQ can be found at: <http://www.ssa.gov/work/enrfq.html>. The previous WIA EN Payment Agreement designed solely for the public workforce system, announced in TEN No. 14-12, is no longer an available option.

6. Technical Assistance. The following provides a list of targeted technical assistance resources, funded by SSA or DOL, to provide information to the public workforce system, organizations/agencies applying to become an EN, and existing ENs:

- SSA has a Web site dedicated to providing general information and technical assistance to public workforce ENs. Visit: <https://yourtickettowork.com/web/ttw/en-workforce-one-stops>.
- SSA's EN Development Team within the TTW Operations Support Manager provides support focused on delivering improved training, enhancing internal procedures, and increasing Ticket assignments and payments. Visit: <https://yourtickettowork.com/web/ttw/informationcenter1>.

DOL also supports workforce system entities becoming ENs through the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI), an initiative jointly funded by the Department's Employment and Training Administration and the Office of Disability Employment Policy. The purposes of the DEI are to: 1) improve coordination and collaboration among employment and training programs implemented at state and local levels, including the TTW Program; and 2) build effective community partnerships that leverage public and private resources to better serve individuals with disabilities and improve employment outcomes. Visit:

https://disability.workforce3one.org/page/tag/dei_project/.

7. Action Requested. DOL asks recipients to distribute this TEN to appropriate managers and staff in SWAs, SWIBs, LWIBs, and AJCs and to other public workforce system partners.

8. Inquiries. Questions on this TEN may be directed to the appropriate ETA Regional Offices or Nancy Friedman, Social Security Administration, nancy.friedman@ssa.gov.

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