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WISE

Work Incentives Seminar Event
Agenda

1. Welcome and Introduction
   Tom Gloss, Program Specialist, CESSI, A Division of Axiom
2. WISE Presentation
   Kendra Berry, Community Work Incentive Coordinator, Indiana Works
3. Employment Network Presentation
   Karen Davidson, A Ticket to Success
4. Vocational Rehabilitation Presentation
   Nora Bishop, Connecticut Vocational Rehabilitation Ticket Administrator
5. Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS) Presentation
   Terri Uttermohlen, Project Officer, Social Security Administration
6. Federal Hiring Initiative, Tom Gloss
7. www.choosework.net
8. Questions and Answers
WISE stands for Work Incentive Seminar Event.

WISE is a program of the Social Security Administration.

The purpose of the WISE is to provide SSI/SSDI beneficiaries and their families the opportunity to learn how to take advantage of Work Incentives, including Ticket to Work.
What Can you Expect from this Seminar?
Reasons to Work

- More income
- Independence
- Learn New Skills
- Meet New People
Disability Benefit Programs

- Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Both SSDI and SSI = Concurrent benefits
How Social Security can help

- Work Incentives
- Ticket to Work
Your Questions

✓ Will I lose my benefits?
  ✓ Cash payments
  ✓ Health care

✓ How do I get the skills and experience I need?

✓ What if I have to stop working?
Work Incentives
Work Incentive Advantages

✓ Provide the safety net so you can:
  ✓ Try different jobs
  ✓ Be trained
  ✓ Build skills
  ✓ Gain confidence
  ✓ Start a new career
SSDI Work Incentives
What happens if I go to work?

A 9-month Trial Work Period allows you to work and receive benefits.
What happens after I complete my Trial Work Period?

- Automatic reinstatement for the first 3 years
- Additional 5 years of reinstatement if work stops and there is no medical improvement.
Other work incentives can reduce the amount of your earnings that SSA counts.
What happens to Medicare if SSDI benefits stop?

- Continues for at least 93 months (7 years & 9 months) after the 9 month Trial Work Period
- After that you may be able to purchase Medicare coverage
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Reminder: Please type any questions you may have in the question box on your webinar browser.
SSI Work Incentives
How earnings affect SSI payments

✓ SSA counts less than half of your earned income

  For example:
  ✓ $885 in gross wages per month (before taxes)
  ✓ $400 counts against SSI

✓ Certain impairment related work expenses can also be deducted from your gross wages.
What happens if my earnings are so high that my SSI stops

- Benefits can start again if you stop working or your earnings decrease
- If your earnings are so high that your SSI payments stop:
  - Medicaid continues until you earn above a threshold
  - People with high medical costs can earn even more

Choose Work
You may be eligible to do a Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS)

A PASS can help you reach your job goal
If you get both SSI & SSDI

- All of the work incentives apply to you
- Talk to a work incentives specialist!
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How do I get the skills and experience I need?
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Ticket to Work
Your Social Security employment team

- Employment Network (EN)
- Work Incentive Planning & Assistance (WIPA)
- Operations Support Manager (Maximus)
- State Protection and Advocacy
- Social Security employees
What is a Ticket to Work?

A ticket is something you can use to get free employment services.

Maximus 1-866-968-7842
Who will take my Ticket?

✓ Employment Networks:
  ✓ Private companies
  ✓ Public organizations
  ✓ State Vocational Rehabilitation agency
  ✓ Employment agencies, schools, etc.

✓ Under contract with Social Security
Why use your Ticket?

- No medical review while ticket is in use
- The program is voluntary
- You are in charge!
- You select the Employment Network
- Employment Network works for you
- Change your Employment Network if necessary
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Selecting and Negotiating with an Employment Network (EN)
Examples of Services

✓ Skills testing
✓ Interest testing
✓ Resume preparation
✓ Interviewing skills training
✓ Job search & placement services
✓ Work Incentives counseling
✓ Job Coaching or other ongoing services
When you contact an Employment Network

✔ Discuss work goals & disability as it relates to reaching your work goal
✔ Ask about their success rate
✔ What will they do for you and what is expected of you?
Selecting an Employment Network to work for you

- Did you feel welcome and comfortable?
- How do they assign a counselor?
- Did you develop the plan together?
- Can you and your EN both follow through on the plan?

Choose Work

Employment Network Presentation
Our Employment Network

✓ Location – Southern San Joaquin Valley, CA

✓ Services we Provide (Not all ENs provide same)
  ✓ Job Readiness
  ✓ Job Placement Assistance
  ✓ Referrals to other Services as needed like transportation, computer classes, interview clothes
  ✓ Retention Services – We will help you keep your job and help you navigate through the process of transitioning off cash benefits
Services we provide

✓ We will assist you in reporting your earnings to Social Security
✓ We will explain how your Continuing Medical Reviews will be waived while actively participating.
✓ We will make sure you understand what work incentives are available to you and how and when your cash benefits will change when you return to work
Services we provide

✔ We will make sure you understand how you can keep your Medicare or Medicaid after your start work.

✔ We will help you through difficult situations at work, provide moral support and understanding.

✔ We will provide re-employment services if your job does not work out.
Process

✔ If you are interested in the Ticket to Work program, Maximus can provide you with a list of Employment Networks or you can find a list online in the EN Directory at www.yourtickettowork.com

✔ Call a few Employment Networks in your area to determine which one is a good fit for you
When choosing an Employment Network:

- Ask them how successful they have been at assisting their clients in obtaining employment.

- If they are a new EN with Ticket to Work, ask them about their prior experience in job services.

- Research their website.
When you call our office:

- We will explain how the Ticket program works and the services we provide
- We will discuss your work goals and motivation to return to work
- We will talk with you about any fears you may have
- We will answer your questions about the program
When you call our office:

- If you are serious about working and eventually want to get off of disability, we will probably set up a face to face appointment with one of our job developers closest to where you live.

- If you are not sure how many hours you can work, you can start part time at first. We understand it may take time to adjust to working and build up your stamina and balance your daily life routine.
Face to Face Appointment

- We will assess your work history, knowledge, education, hobbies, and interests to come up with an employment goal together.
- We will identify any barriers to employment, limitations due to your disability, and any special accommodations you may need in the workplace.
- We will complete an Individual Work Plan with you outlining your employment goal and earnings expectations.
Face to Face Appointment

✓ Your signature on the Individual Work Plan assigns your ticket to our agency.
✓ We will have some other routine forms for you to sign allowing us to work with you on your case with Social Security and possibly other service providers on your behalf.
✓ You can unassign your ticket at any time if you change your mind or decide we are not a good match.
Job Readiness

- We will help you develop a resume and provide advice on how to fill out a good application.
- We will help you set up a free email account if you don’t have one – and teach you how to email and apply for jobs online.
- We will assist you with interview skills and tips on how to explain long absences from work without disclosing your disability.
Job Placement Assistance

✓ We expect our clients to find their own jobs
✓ We will provide you with plenty of job leads and information on employers who are hiring, job fairs, recruiting events, etc.
✓ We will provide you with access to resource centers within our own offices for free use of computers, internet, email, phones, and fax.
Job Placement Services

- We will not disclose your disability to employers
- Since you will be choosing which jobs you want to apply for – most employers won’t know you have a disability unless you tell them
- We will expect you to keep in touch with us weekly on your progress and let us know when you get a job
After you start work:

✓ You will be expected to provide paystubs to us every month until you go off of cash benefits.
✓ We will report these earnings to SSA for you as well as your progress to the Ticket to Work program.
✓ After you go off of cash benefits, we will check in with you once per month to see how you are doing for about the first 12 months.
Retention Services

✓ Please let us know if you are having any problems at work – We can help you work these out

✓ Please report to us any promotions, advancements, good things that happen as well – we are always looking for good success stories.
About our Employment Network

✓ We have over 700 assigned Ticketholders
✓ We have assisted over 350 return to work
✓ We have been a provider for Ticket to Work for over 6 years and several of our Ticketholders have been off of Social Security cash benefits for 5 years or more and are totally self-sufficient.
✓ We don’t get paid unless you go to work – so we are motivated to help you become successful!
Success Story - James

James started part time – for 2 years
Serious mental illness to overcome
Full time as mental health counselor
Promoted to Supervisor – Problems at Work
Almost Quit Twice – Off cash benefits 12 months
Now refers Ticket clients to us
Contact Information:

✔ If you live in the central valley of California or are interested in talking to us about Ticket to Work, call us at:

1-800-540-0307
Vocational Rehabilitation Services

&

Ticket to Work
Role of Ticket for Vocational Rehabilitation Consumers

✓ Presumptive Eligibility for Social Security consumers

✓ Consumer and counselor develop an employment plan with Vocational Rehabilitation Services

✓ Ticket will be “in-use” with VR when employment plan is signed.
Ticket incentives while in Plan with VR

- Continuing Disability Reviews are exempted while consumer is making timely progress towards employment

- Referral is made to Community Work Incentives Coordinator (CWIC)
Consumer and counselor discuss the opportunity to have an Employment Network provide employment supports when VR services end.

Consumer and counselor will decide on an Employment Network – such as community rehabilitation providers, one-stop agencies, employers, etc.

Partnership Plus referral is made to Employment Network for warm handoff from VR when employment is stable.
VR Program Closure

✓ Consumer can now assign the ticket to an Employment Network for follow along employment supports.
Consumer may come back to VR for services if necessary. Ticket stays assigned to Employment Network.
Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS)
Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS)

- PABSS services are located throughout the states and all U. S. territories.
- Designed to help Social Security and SSI beneficiaries with disabilities go to work.
PABSS services are... (cont)

✓ Free to everyone that receives a Social Security benefit or Medicare based on his or her own disability
✓ Free to anyone that receives SSI or SSI Medicaid based on his or her own disability
PABSS Services

Assist Beneficiaries to

✓ Advocate for workplace accommodation
✓ Advocate for vocational services from Employment Networks or state Vocational Rehabilitation
✓ Provide information, referral and advocacy around benefits
✓ Otherwise assist beneficiaries to remove barriers to work.
Do I need to be using my Ticket to Work?

✔ Do I need to be using my Ticket to Work?

✔ PABSS services are designed to help eliminate barriers to work. You are eligible, however, even if you do not have a Ticket to Work, or your Ticket to Work is not assigned.

✔ To find your local PABSS provider, check the provider list on the socialsecurity.gov/work website
Federal Hiring Initiative

- During 2009, SSA placed an emphasis on hiring people with disabilities
- We used the Ticket program, State VR agencies, Employment Networks and WIPA to publicize this opportunity
- More than 600 people with disabilities were hired by SSA
- In 2010 many other Federal agencies are interested in hiring people with disabilities
- We are creating a “Gateway to Federal Employment” website as an easy way to access information and links to Federal jobs
- Watch [www.cessi.net/ttw](http://www.cessi.net/ttw) for details
Other Resources

✔️ www.yourtickettowork.com

✔️ www.chooseworkwork.net
Questions and Answers

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