SOCIAL SECURITY

WISE

Work Incentive Seminar Event
Choose Work

Webinar Accessibility
Agenda

1. Welcome and Introduction
   Ray Cebula, Cornell

2. The Social Security Administration’s Commitment to Veterans
   David Melton, Social Security Administration

3. WISE Presentation
   Ray Cebula, Cornell

4. Employment Network Presentation
   Cristina Mousel, Paralyzed Veterans of America

5. Other Resources
   Ray Cebula, Cornell

6. Questions and Answers
The Social Security Administration’s Commitment to Veterans

Disability Benefits For Wounded Warriors

Military service members can receive expedited processing of disability claims from Social Security. Benefits available through Social Security are different than those from the Department of Veterans Affairs and require a separate application.

The expedited process is used for military service members who become disabled while on active military service on or after October 1, 2001, regardless of where the disability occurs.

The following questions link to answers to questions most people ask about applying for disability benefits. Knowing the answers to these questions will help you understand the process.

Questions

What types of benefits can I receive?

What is Social Security’s definition of disability?
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

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?
Disability Benefit Programs

- Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Both SSDI and SSI = Concurrent benefits
Veteran’s Compensation

✓ For veterans with service-connected disabilities
✓ Tax-free benefit
✓ Not means-tested
✓ Not affected by income and resources
✓ No impact on eligibility or monthly payment amount
Veterans Compensation

✓ Compensation based on level of severity of disability
✓ Additional compensation may be provided for:
  ✓ Very severe disabilities
  ✓ Loss of limb(s)
  ✓ Dependent spouse, child(ren) and/or parents
✓ Presumptive eligibility for specific disabilities diagnosed in certain veterans caused by military service
VA Disability/Aged Pension

✓ Provides payments to wartime veterans with low incomes, who are permanently and totally disabled as a result of injuries or illnesses not related to their military service or are age 65 or older. An individual may be eligible if:

✓ They were discharged from service under other than dishonorable conditions, AND

✓ They served 90 days or more of active duty with at least one day during a period of war time, AND

✓ Their countable family income was below a yearly limit set by law, AND

✓ They are permanently and totally disabled, OR

✓ They are age 65 or older.
How Social Security can help

✓ Work
Incentives
✓ Ticket to Work
Reminder: Please type any questions you may have in the question box on your webinar browser.
Will I lose my Benefits?

SSDI Work Incentives

- 9 month Trial Work Period allows you to work and receive benefits
- Automatic reinstatement for the first 3 years
- Additional 5 years of reinstatement if work stops and there is no medical improvement
Disability Compensation and Impact of SSI and SSDI

- There is no reduction in VA Compensation due to earned or unearned income
- VA Disability Comp is not offset by SSDI
- SSDI is not offset by VA Disability Comp
Will I lose my Benefits?

SSI work Incentives

✓ SSA counts *less than half* of your earned income

For example:

- $885 in wages
- $400 counts against SSI

✓ Certain impairment related work expenses can also be deducted from your gross wages.
SSI Continued

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

* Contact your local WIPA for more information

http://www.ssa.gov/work/WIPA.html
Veterans Compensation & SSI

✓ VA Disability Comp is treated as **unearned** income under the SSI program

✓ Reduces SSA cash benefit dollar-for-dollar after the $20 income exclusion.
The HEART Act

✓ Treats most cash military compensation as earned income for SSI purposes, which generally provides a higher benefit to the service member as a result of the SSI program's more favorable consideration of earned income;

✓ This will apply to ACTIVE DUTY personnel.
How do I get the skills and experience I need?
Your Social Security employment team

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

A ticket you can use to get free employment services
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

Free!

Choose Work

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
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 you call the EN office:

✓ If you are committed to working up to your potential and perhaps be willing to eventually terminate from cash benefits, an EN will probably meet with you in person.

✓ If you are not sure how much you can work, the Ticket to Work is designed so that you can take small steps, including starting at part time work. EN agencies understand it may take time to adjust to working and build up your stamina and balance your daily life routine.
When you call the EN office:

✔ The EN should explain how the Ticket program works and the services it provides
✔ The EN should discuss your work goals and intentions about work
✔ Ideally, the EN should talk with you about any fears you may have
Face to Face Appointment

- Your signature on the Individual Work Plan assigns your ticket to the EN agency.
- The EN may have some other routine forms for you to sign allowing it 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 the EN is not a good match.
Example of EN Services

- Develop a resume and provide advice on how to fill out a good application
- Interview skills and tips on how to explain long absences from work without disclosing your disability
- Job accommodation information and resources
- Tax incentive information
- Automatic referral to your state WIPA
More EN service examples

✓ Job leads and information on employers who are hiring, job fairs, recruiting events, etc.
✓ Access to resource centers -- computers, internet, email, phones, and fax.
✓ Job development on your behalf.
✓ Referral to agency partners and continuity of your Ticket assignment with state VR office.
After you start work:

- You will be expected to provide paystubs to the EN every month until you go off of cash benefits.
- As always, you will need to report earnings to SSA. Some EN’s offer to report these earnings to SSA for you as well as your progress to the Ticket to Work program.
- Maintain a proactive follow up schedule with the EN.

*To find a list of Ens that serve your area: [http://www.yourtickettowork.com/endir](http://www.yourtickettowork.com/endir)
Paralyzed Veterans of America

Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program
Target Population for PVA

SPINAL CORD INJURY
- A spinal cord injury often causes permanent disability or loss of movement (paralysis) and sensation below the site of the injury.

SPINAL CORD DISEASES
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS)
- Spina bifida
- Spinal stenosis
- Syringomyelia (SM)
- Transverse myelitis

Most studies on vocational adjustment for persons with SCI report relatively low rates of employment – PVA estimates that 85% of veterans with SCI/SCD are unemployed
PVA Vocational Rehabilitation Program

Mission:

To improve the productivity and employment rates of veterans with SCI/SCD so that they have an opportunity to:

- Achieve a satisfactory quality of life that allows full participation in society
- Improve and maintain an effective level of psychosocial adjustment
- Contribute their talents to the work force
- Achieve better financial security
PVA Vocational Rehabilitation Program

Success of the PVA Vocational Rehabilitation Program is dependent upon the effectiveness of strategic partnerships.

In addition to the veteran, there are 3 main partners:

✓ Corporate Entities
  ✓ Rate of program expansion is linked to the availability of corporate sponsorship

✓ Existing Vocational Rehabilitation Service-providers
  ✓ Ensures that PVA program participants have access to the full range of vocational services necessary for them to achieve their vocational goals

✓ Employers
  ✓ The only way to achieve program outcomes will be through effective linkages with employers
PVA Vocational Rehabilitation Program

Employment Out comes

National Stats:
July 2007 – October 2010

Number Employed – 113

Average age of Veterans – 46

Average Annual Salary after six months – $37,468
A 5 minute MiND TV program on Disability Benefits for Wounded Warriors that was produced by the Philadelphia Regional Communications Office (SSA) can be viewed at
http://www.socialsecurity.gov/phila/mindtv.htm

To view last year’s Wounded Warrior Webinar or other SSA resources, please visit
http://ssa.gov/woundedwarriors/
Other Resources (continued)

✓ www.choosework.net

✓ www.yourtickettowork.com
Other Resources (continued)

Work Incentive Information and Referral Center

✓ (866) 968-7842 (voice)
✓ (866) 833-2967 (TDD)
Questions and Answers

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