TICKET TO WORK
for Beneficiaries Who are Blind
or Have a Visual Impairment

Work Incentives Seminar Event

Date: Wednesday, June 22, 2011
Time: 3:00 p.m. EST
Adjusting Audio Mode

Audio

Ctrl+F2

Teleconference available

Helping You Today
So You Succeed Tomorrow
Audio and Questions Panels

Helping You Today
So You Succeed Tomorrow
Webinar Accessibility
1. Welcome and Introduction  
   Ray Cebula, Employment & Disability Institute, Cornell Univ.

2. Work Incentive Planning & Assistance (WIPA) Projects  
   Ron Mulvaney, Illinois Assistive Technology Program

3. Ticket to Work and Work Incentives  
   Ron Mulvaney

4. Employment Network  
   Ellen D. Farnham, Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind

5. Vocational Rehabilitation  
   Rita Howells, Illinois DHS/DRS, Bureau of Blind Services

6. Assistive Technology Project  
   TJ Schlouski, Illinois Assistive Technology Program

7. Protection & Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS)  
   Cheryl Martin, PABBS Associate

8. Other Resources

9. Questions and Answers
What can you expect from this seminar?

• Information on the Ticket to Work program and Work Incentives

Helping You Today
So You Succeed Tomorrow
What can you expect from this seminar?

- Information on the Ticket to Work program and Work Incentives
- Answers to Frequently Asked Questions
What can you expect from this seminar?

- Information on the Ticket to Work program and Work Incentives
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- Where to Find More Information
What can you expect from this seminar?

- Information on the Ticket to Work program and Work Incentives
- Answers to Frequently Asked Questions
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- Success Stories from People who Used Their Ticket to Work
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ticket to Work for You!</th>
<th>Melanie’s Story</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Melanie worked through a VR agency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Her VR agency helped her with education, mobility, and technology skills like CCTV and ZoomText</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mel is familiar with both SSI and SSDI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When she received her Ticket she took advantage of the Trial Work Period while still receiving her cash benefits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• While working, Mel continued to use her Ticket to receive other job supports</td>
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Why should you work?

- Earn more income
Why should you work?

• Earn more income
• Gain independence
Why should you work?

- Earn more income
- Gain independence
- Learn new skills
Why should you work?

- Earn more income
- Gain independence
- Learn new skills
- Meet new people
Common Concerns

Will I lose my benefits?

How do I get the skills and experience I need?

What if I have to stop working?
Work Incentives Planning & Assistance (WIPA) Projects

Ron Mulvaney, Illinois Assistive Technology Program
Work Incentives Planning & Assistance Projects (WIPA)

- WIPA projects are SSA-approved organizations that assist beneficiaries in making informed choices about work AND their services are FREE!
- WIPA projects staff:
  - *Are trained to provide information* about Ticket to Work and Work Incentives
  - *Can answer questions* about how work will affect your benefits
  - *Can help you* find the resources or services to achieve your work goals
  - *Host Work Incentives Seminar Events (WISE)*
You’re Ready to Explore Your Work Options:

Where Do You Go from Here?

- Learn more about all the Work Incentives that apply to you
You’re Ready to Explore Your Work Options:

Where Do You Go from Here?

- Learn more about all the Work Incentives that apply to you
- Build your employment team

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You’re Ready to Explore Your Work Options:

Where Do You Go from Here?

- Learn more about all the Work Incentives that apply to you
- Build your employment team
- Stay positive and look for opportunities
Social Security Disability Benefit Programs

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

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Social Security Disability Benefit Programs

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
Social Security Disability Benefit Programs

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Both SSDI and SSI = Concurrent Benefits
• What risks am I taking by starting a new job training program or going back to school?
• I’m concerned about my SSI checks being reduced, or jeopardizing my SSDI entitlement by getting a paying job.
• What happens if I get into an overpayment situation? How can I prevent that from happening?

Change can be scary, but a lot less scary when you know some basic program rules!
Ticket to Work for You!

David’s Story

- David is an attorney who is completely blind
- He assigned his ticket to the Bureau of Blind Services (BBS)
- Through BBS David received his education at Southern Illinois University
- David received benefits counseling through a local Work Incentives Planning & Assistance Project
- Because of his successful law business in Newton, IL, David no longer depends on SSI and Medicaid
The Ticket to Work Program
Ron Mulvaney
What is Ticket to Work?

• A FREE and VOLUNTARY program to assist SSA beneficiaries with disabilities who want to work
• Most people with disabilities ages 18 through 64 who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) qualify
What does the Ticket to Work program do?

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<td>...overwhelmed. Who can help me get started and stay with me through the entire process?</td>
<td>...connect you with the people, resources and services you need to develop a work plan.</td>
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How does the Ticket to Work program work?

• Ticket to Work is **FREE** and **VOLUNTARY**

• Adults ages 18-64 who receive Social Security benefits because of a disability qualify

• You do not need a paper ticket to participate!

• To get started, call the Ticket to Work Help Line or visit ssa.gov/work to find a WIPA near you
Work Incentives

Ron Mulvaney
What are Work Incentives?

Helping You Today

So You Succeed Tomorrow
Work Incentives have many advantages

Work Incentives provide you with a safety net so you can:

• Receive training for new skills
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- Improve the skills you already have
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- Try different jobs
- Start a career
- Gain confidence
# Common Work Incentives

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<td><strong>Trial Work Period (TWP)</strong> (SSDI recipients only)</td>
<td>The TWP allows you to test your ability to work for at least nine months. During your TWP, you will receive full SSDI benefits no matter how much you earn as long as your work activity is reported and you have a disabling impairment.</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Extended Period of Eligibility (EPE)</strong> (SSDI recipients only)</td>
<td>During the 36 months after the Trial Work Period, Social Security may restart your SSDI benefits without a new application, disability determination, or waiting period.</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Earned Income Exclusion (EIE)</strong> (SSI recipients only)</td>
<td>Less than half of your earnings are counted by Social Security as earned income which may allow you to continue receiving an SSI check while working.</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Expedited Reinstatement (EXP)</strong> (SSDI and SSI recipients)</td>
<td>If your benefits stopped because of your earnings level, you can request to have your benefits reinstated without having to complete a new application. While Social Security determines your benefits reinstatement, you are eligible to receive temporary benefits for up to six months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Protection from Medical Continuing Disability Reviews (CDR)</strong> (SSDI and SSI recipients)</td>
<td>You will not have to undergo a medical continuing disability review (CDR) while you are participating in the Ticket to Work program.</td>
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Blind Work Expenses (BWE) are available if you receive SSI based on blindness.

- Income that you use to meet work expenses is not counted in deciding your SSI eligibility and payment amount.
- Work expenses do not have to be related to your blindness.
- Some BWE examples include:
  - Service animal expenses
  - Transportation to and from work
  - Federal, state, local income taxes
  - Social Security taxes
  - Attendant care services
  - Visual and sensory aids
  - Translation of materials into Braille.
Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) for SSDI beneficiaries who work or are self-employed

Benefit dependency to self-sufficiency

- When your monthly earnings are more than the SGA earnings level
  - For 2011, if you work and are legally blind, you can begin moving off benefits as soon as you earn more than $1640/month
  - If you are self-employed and legally blind, you can begin moving off benefits as soon as you earn more than $1640/month, and you can achieve this goal by working as many hours as you like
Reminder: please type your questions in the questions box
When you’re ready to use your Ticket to Work...

Build your **Employment Team** and get the skills and experience you need:

- Employment Network (EN)
- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Agency
- Work Incentive Planning & Assistance (WIPA)
- State Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS)
- Area Work Incentives Coordinator (AWIC)
- Work Incentives Liaison (WIL)
Employment Network

Ellen D. Farnham, Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind
When you’re ready to use your ticket, you can:

• Call the **Ticket to Work Help Line** at 866-968-7842 (voice) or 866-833-2967 (TDD) to speak with a Certified Work Incentive Coordinator (CWIC) and request a list of Employment Networks that serve your area

• Visit [www.yourtickettowork.com](http://www.yourtickettowork.com) to access a list of Employment Networks near you
Selecting an Employment Network (EN) to work for you... Ask questions!

Questions You May Want to Ask:

• How many people have you helped through the Ticket to Work program?
• What kinds of companies do you work with for job placements?
• What kinds of jobs might be available to me?
• How often will we communicate and meet?
When you call the EN office, remember these tips

• 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

• The EN should talk with you about **any fears you may have**

• You and the EN will develop an **Individual Work Plan** that includes your employment goals and the services the EN will provide to help YOU get there
When you visit the EN office, remember these tips

• 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 un-assign your ticket at any time if you change your mind or decide the EN is not a good match.

• Your Continuing Disability Reviews (CDRs) are exempted as long as you are making timely progress towards employment.
Examples 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
- Referrals to other resources in your area
Examples of EN Services

- **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
- **Referrals to agency partners** and continuity of your Ticket assignment with state VR office
Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services

Rita Howells, Illinois DHS/DRS, Bureau of Blind Services
Services for people who are blind or have a visual impairment

VR Agencies like Bureau of Blind Services can provide you with specialized services, such as:

- Finding or keeping a job
- Teaching you to use adaptive devices and assistive technology
- Providing skills training to help you navigate your home, office, and community and remain independent
- Training and educational programs when you’re ready to work
- Assistance to employers and businesses in providing employment opportunities to those who are blind or visually impaired
When you use your Ticket for VR Agency services:

- There is Presumptive Eligibility for you as a Social Security beneficiary.
- You and your VR counselor develop an employment plan.
- Your Ticket is considered “in-use” with VR when you and your counselor sign your employment plan.
- Your Continuing Disability Reviews (CDRs) are exempted as long as you are making timely progress towards employment.
- VR will make a referral to a Community Work Incentive Coordinator (CWIC) on your behalf.
When you begin to work using your Ticket with a VR Agency...

- You and your counselor discuss the opportunity to have an EN provide employment supports when your VR services end
- When VR “closes” your case, you can use your Ticket with an EN for follow-on employment supports and services
Assistive Technology Program

TJ Schlouski, Illinois Assistive Technology Specialist Manager
Assistive Technology

• Software or physical access devices that are low tech or high tech and allow individuals greater independence

• **Low-Tech** Assistive Technology
  - Perkins Brailler, Signature Card, White Cane, Locator Dots, Handheld Magnifier, CCTV

• **High-Tech** Assistive Technology
  - Screen Reader, Screen Magnifier, Note Taker Device, Refreshable Braille, Optical Character Recognition, Talking GPS, Digital Talking Book Player, Accessible Cell Phone
Screen Readers

• Used by visually impaired and some low-vision individuals

• Screen Reader software interprets what is being displayed on the screen; through text-to-speech, a blind or low-vision user can navigate applications on their computer. A Refreshable Braille display is also available

• Screen Readers include JAWS, Window Eyes, Voice Over, Super Nova, System Access To Go, NVDA
Screen Magnification

• Software is for low-vision individuals
• Software magnifies what is displayed on your computer and allows you to customize the magnification level and color contrast. Some Screen Magnifiers have the text-to-speech option also
• Screen Magnifiers include ZoomText, Magic, Super Nova Magnifier, Zoom, and other freeware/shareware to try
Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS)

Cheryl Martin, PABSS Associate
Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS)

PABSS services are:

• Located throughout the States and all U. S. territories

• Designed to help SSI and SSDI beneficiaries with disabilities go to work

• FREE to everyone that receives a Social Security benefit or Medicare/Medicaid based on disability

• Available even if you do not have a Ticket or your Ticket is not assigned
Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS)

PABSS assists beneficiaries by:

- Advocating for workplace accommodations
- Advocating for vocational services from Employment Networks or state Vocational Rehabilitation agencies
- Providing information, referral and advocacy around benefits
- Assisting beneficiaries to remove barriers to work
- Addressing overpayment issues
Other Resources
Visit: [www.ssa.gov/work](http://www.ssa.gov/work) to find your local WIPA, Employment Networks, and other Ticket to Work and Work Incentive information.

Call:
Ticket to Work Help Line:
✓ 866-968-7842 (voice)
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What are your questions?

Like us on Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/choosework

Follow us on Twitter: http://www.twitter.com/chooseworkssa

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