



News Release

SOCIAL SECURITY

Social Security Administration Launches New Program in Delaware to Help People with Disabilities Go to Work

Ticket to Work Program Provides More Choices, Expanded Opportunities

The Social Security Administration (SSA) launched a new program Tuesday designed to help people with disabilities go to work.

Jo Anne Barnhart, Commissioner of Social Security, delivered the first Tickets to Work under SSA's Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program (Ticket Program). The recipients of these first Tickets are Rose Blair of Lincoln, Vernard D'Amboise, Jr. of Lewes, Ormaine Hawthorne, and Phyllis Keys, both of Wilmington.

"It is my pleasure to present the first Tickets in the First State," said Commissioner Barnhart. "Today, only about one percent of the people who get Social Security and SSI disability benefits leave the rolls each year to go to work. We can do better, and we must do better. President Bush said, 'My Administration is committed to tearing down any barriers that unreasonably prevent the full participation of Americans with disabilities.' And he said that he will work 'to help disabled Americans realize their dreams through meaningful and successful careers.' And the Ticket to Work gets us there."

The kick-off event took place at Discover Bank, a subsidiary of Discover Financial Services Inc., in New Castle. Discover plays an important private sector role in helping people with disabilities return to work through its "BOOST" (Business Organization & Occupational Services Training) program. In recognition of Discover's support of BOOST, Commissioner Barnhart presented David Nelms, President and Chief Operating Officer of Discover Financial Services, with the Social Security Administration Public Service Award.

Commissioner Barnhart also recognized two Delawareans whose efforts led to the creation of the Ticket Program: Larry D. Henderson, Executive Director of Independent Resources, Inc., of Wilmington, a member of the national Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Advisory Panel; and U. S. Senator Bill Roth (Ret.), who authored the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act, which was passed by Congress unanimously in 1999.

“Senator Roth, you have always believed one person can make a difference,” said Barnhart. “You certainly made a difference in the lives of millions of Americans with disabilities. We thank you for creating the legislation that created this wonderful program.”

Social Security disability and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) disability beneficiaries in Delaware will receive a Ticket that may be used to obtain vocational rehabilitation, job training, and other support services. Delaware is one of the first 13 states to participate in the Ticket Program, which will be in operation nationwide by January of 2004.

Tickets will begin arriving in mailboxes this week. Over the next five months, about 21,000 Social Security and SSI beneficiaries with disabilities in Delaware will receive a Ticket to Work. The mailings will be staggered, based on the last digit of a beneficiary’s Social Security number. Anyone who wants a Ticket immediately can call 1-866-968-7842 (1-866-YOURTICKET). TDD/TTY users should call 1-866-833-2967 (1-866- TDD2WORK).

Individuals may take their Ticket to any of the employment service providers who offer services in Delaware. These providers are called Employment Networks. A list of participating networks is included in the press packet, and can also be found at www.ssa.gov/work, by clicking on service providers.

Here’s how the program works: a Ticket holder gives the Ticket to an Employment Network. The network and the Ticket holder together design an individual employment plan outlining the services to be provided to assist the beneficiary in reaching his or her employment goal.

The Ticket Program is voluntary. Social Security and SSI beneficiaries who receive a Ticket are not required to work, but may choose to use their Ticket to attempt to go to work. Likewise, Employment Networks are not required to accept Tickets.

The Ticket Program is designed to provide people with disabilities with more choices and expanded opportunities to help them go to work. Individuals will receive services from an Employment Network for free. SSA will pay the Employment Networks for successfully helping a beneficiary go to work. Employment Networks may choose to be paid based solely on helping an individual achieve self-sufficiency, or they may choose to receive payments when beneficiaries achieve different milestones during their attempt to go to work.

The Ticket Program is the cornerstone of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act, which was passed by Congress and signed into law in December 1999. Other provisions of the law are already in place to help support people with disabilities as they go to work. These provisions include expanded health care coverage.

Many of the barriers that would force people to choose between health care coverage and work have been removed by the legislation. Social Security disability beneficiaries are eligible for Medicare, the Federal health insurance plan. Effective in October 2000, most Social Security disability beneficiaries are protected by Medicare for up to eight years and six months after they go to work. Medicare coverage continues even if an individual no longer receives a monetary benefit from Social Security. Most SSI beneficiaries are eligible for Medicaid, which is a state

health benefit. These individuals should contact the state Medicaid office in their area for more information. For more on the difference between Social Security disability and SSI disability, see the fact sheet in this press packet.

Between February and June, approximately 2.4 million beneficiaries will receive tickets in the following states: Arizona, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Iowa, Illinois, Massachusetts, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, Vermont and Wisconsin.

The second phase of the Ticket Program is scheduled for late 2002 in the following states: Alaska, Arkansas, Connecticut, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Tennessee and Virginia, and in the District of Columbia.

The final phase of the Ticket Program is scheduled for 2003 in Alabama, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, Washington, West Virginia and Wyoming, as well as in American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Those who have questions about the Ticket Program should call Maximus, Inc. Maximus, the organization selected by SSA to administer the Ticket Program, may be contacted toll-free at 1-866-968-7842 (1-866-YOURTICKET). TDD/TTY users should call 1-866-833-2967 (1-866-TDD2WORK). Internet users can visit www.yourtickettowork.com --Maximus' website.

For general information about the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act, please go to SSA's Internet website-- www.ssa.gov/work --*The Work Site*.

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