



# Employment Brief

## Disability and Employment: VR Agencies Ticket to Work Program

### National Technical Assistance Center

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### Mission:

To increase employment opportunities for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders with disabilities nationwide.

### Based at:

University of Hawaii at Manoa, Center on Disability Studies

### In collaboration with:

Hawaii Centers for Independent Living

Hawaii Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the Blind Division

### Funded by:

U.S. Department of Education  
Rehabilitation Services Administration

*The purpose of this brief is to provide information and resources to help service providers incorporate the Ticket To Work Program in planning and implementing viable career options for consumers. It is adapted from the Ticket To Work information provided by the Social Security Administration.*

### What is the Ticket Program?

The Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program is the centerpiece of legislation signed by Former President Clinton on December 17, 1999, under the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999. It is a nationwide initiative designed to bring major positive change to the lives of individuals with disabilities including minorities with disabilities, such as Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (APIs).

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders come from nearly 50 countries and ethnic groups, each with distinct cultures, traditions and histories. APIs speak over one hundred Asian and Pacific Islander languages and dialects. Asian Americans are persons having origins from East Asia, Southeast Asia and the Indian subcontinent. Today, there are approximately 12 million APIs living in the United States, or about 5 percent of the total population. By 2020, the API population is projected to reach 20 million, and by 2050, approximately one out of every 10 Americans will be of Asian or Pacific Islander descent. Pacific Islanders are people having origins in Hawaii, Guam, Samoa or other Pacific Islands.

This comprehensive national initiative is designed to assist API's and all Americans with disabilities with the training and support they need to go to work by increasing their choices.

SSA began this Program in early 2002 by mailing Tickets to eligible beneficiaries in 13 states: Arizona, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Massachusetts, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, Vermont, and Wisconsin. Under the Program, SSA provides disability beneficiaries with a Ticket they may use to obtain services they need from an Employment Network (EN) of their choice.

In late 2002, SSA extended the Program to 20 additional states and the District of Columbia: Alaska, Arkansas, Connecticut, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Nevada, North Dakota, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Virginia.

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The final phase of the Program will expand to the remaining 17 states and five territories: Alabama, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, North Carolina, Ohio, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, Washington, West Virginia, Wyoming, and the territories of American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

## **Where and When is the Ticket to Work Program Taking Place?**

To ensure successful implementation, the Ticket to Work Program is being phased in gradually over a period of three years, which began in early 2002. Eventually, most Social Security beneficiaries with disabilities will receive a Ticket. Implementation of the Program will be completed nationwide by early 2004.

To view a list of states currently part of the Ticket Program, visit [www.ssa.gov/work](http://www.ssa.gov/work).

## **How Does the Program Work?**

The Program initially began in 2001 with SSA contracting with service providers to become Employment Networks (ENs). That system continues today with SSA having overall Program authority. SSA will determine the sequence and timing of the implementation of the Ticket Program in each State, determine beneficiary eligibility, schedule the mailing of Tickets to eligible beneficiaries, approve all EN contracts, and make payments to ENs for services provided to Ticket-holders.

The Ticket Program is voluntary. Beneficiaries receiving Tickets will have the option of contacting one or more ENs or State VRAs to discuss services and going to work. The EN and the beneficiary will work together to design an Individual Work Plan (IWP) that will outline the services to be provided to enable the beneficiary to reach his or her employment goal.

## **What is MAXIMUS' Role?**

The Ticket to Work legislation required SSA to identify a Program Manager (PM) to assist in administration of the Ticket To Work Program. On September 29, 2000, MAXIMUS was awarded a contract to serve as Program Manager. MAXIMUS is the largest provider of program management, consulting, and information technology services to state and local governments, and a leading service provider to the Federal government.

MAXIMUS' role as PM includes: recruitment of Employment Networks; assisting in the facilitation of access for beneficiaries to ENs; ensuring adequate employment services are available; ensuring reasonable access to these services for beneficiaries; operating a toll-free telephone line to answer questions about the Ticket Program, and overall administration and oversight for ongoing Ticket Program operations.

## **Who can Be an Employment Network?**

Any agency, or an instrument of a state (or political subdivision), or a private entity that takes responsibility for the coordination or the actual delivery of services is eligible to apply to be an EN.

ENs can be a single entity, a consortium, or an association of organizations collaborating to combine resources to serve Ticket-holders. Examples of organizations that may wish to become ENs include, but are not limited to:

- Employers that offer (or arrange for) job training, vocational rehabilitation, support, retention, or other types of job-related services and/or assistance for individuals with disabilities.
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- Any public or private entity that can provide directly or arrange for appropriate employment services including job readiness, placement, VR, training, support and/or retention services for individuals with disabilities.
  - One Stop delivery systems established under the Workforce Investment Act.
  - State VR agencies under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
  - Organizations administering VR Service Projects for American Indians with disabilities authorized under special sections in Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.
  - Alternate Participants (APs) currently operating under contract with SSA.
  - Public, or private, schools providing appropriate employment-related skills training, VR services, transitional education or career development services or programs.

## **What are the Employment Network's Payment Options?**

There are two payment options available to ENs under the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program. The two payment options are the Outcome Payment Option and the Outcome/Milestone Payment Option. The EN will elect one payment method at the time the EN enters into an agreement with the Social Security Administration (SSA). MAXIMUS will administer the payment process for ENs under the Outcome and Outcome/Milestone Payment Methods. MAXIMUS will not administer the payment process for State VR Agencies that choose to be paid under the traditional cost reimbursement payment method. For detailed information regarding selection and calculation of outcome payments for the two payment options go to the Ticket to Work website listed in the Resources section.

## **What is the value of becoming an EN?**

- Consumers need unlimited numbers of EN's
- Long-term contract - business expansion
- Increases choices for consumers
- RFP is open-ended and non-competitive
- No cost to apply to become an EN
- Applying is an easy process
- Many partnering options open to you
- Totally voluntary - you choose whom to serve
- Additional revenue source
- Does not replace existing funding sources
- Continue to receive referrals from VR and other agencies
- Continue to serve current clients - many will become Ticket-holders
- Additional work incentives for clients

## **How to Become an Employment Network?**

How do you get involved? It's a simple process. SSA will award an unlimited number of non-competitive contracts to qualified EN's through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process. Completed proposal (application) packages are forwarded to SSA and a copy is sent to the MAXIMUS Program Manager. MAXIMUS reviews the applications for completeness, and if all is in order, forwards them promptly to SSA for final approval and contract award. MAXIMUS works directly with prospective ENs to ensure that all applications are complete before submission to SSA.

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The RFP is available for electronic downloading at <http://www.yourtickettowork.com/rfp>. Should you require further information, clarification or assistance in obtaining or completing the RFP package, please call MAXIMUS at this toll free line: 1-866-YourTicket (1-866-968-7842) and ask to speak with an EN Marketing Coordinator for assistance.

## **Resources**

DisabilityInfo.Gov—The New Freedom Initiatives Online Resource for Americans with Disabilities <http://www.disabilityinfo.gov/Employment/34/291/>

The Work Site – Social Security Administration Ticket To Work Program for Service Providers <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/work/ServiceProviders/providers.html>

Ticket To Work – The official homepage of the SSA Ticket To Work website [http://www.yourtickettowork.com/program\\_info?select=payment#payment](http://www.yourtickettowork.com/program_info?select=payment#payment)

