

2013

Ticket to Work Program Procedural Guide



DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Florida Department of Education

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I. Purpose

The purpose of this procedural guide is to assist counselors and support staff with the administration of the Ticket to Work Program in conjunction with the Division's Operational Policies and Procedures for DVR Counselors (Counselor's Policy Manual).

II. Ticket to Work Program

It is expected that the incentives in the Ticket to Work Program (TTW) will remove some of the disincentives that many beneficiaries with disabilities face when they attempt to work or increase their work effort. The program provides incentives for participants such as (1) expedited reinstatement of their benefits, if ceased because of employment and, (2) suspended Continuing Disability Reviews (CDR), which are reviews to determine if individuals still meet SSA's definition of disability. The CDR suspension provides that participants will not have their benefits terminated due to medical improvement while participating in the TTW Program.

Presumption of Eligibility

It is DVR Policy to presume SSA beneficiaries participating in the Ticket to Work Program as eligible for DVR services unless the individual cannot benefit from services due to the severity of their disability. Counselors should refer to Section 6.03 Presumption of Eligibility for Social Security Recipients and Beneficiaries.

A second confirmation of the status of the individual Ticket shall be done prior to the initiation of the IPE

Protection and Advocacy (P & A)

The Protection and Advocacy (P&A) System along with the Disability Rights Florida Individual comprise a nationwide network of congressionally mandated, legally based disability rights agencies. P&A Agencies have the authority to provide legal representation and other advocacy services, under all federal and state laws, to all people with disabilities (based on a system of priorities for services). All P&As maintain a presence in facilities that care for people with disabilities, where they monitor, investigate and attempt to remedy adverse conditions. These agencies also devote considerable resources to ensure full access to inclusive educational programs, financial entitlements, health care, accessible housing and productive employment opportunities.

It is the general practice of representatives of the P&A to send a Notice of Representation when an individual has engaged the services of the P & A and will be represented by the P & A. A special Authorization to Release Information Form has been adopted by DVR for use by the P & A to secure information from DVR on a case-by-case basis. [[Authorization to Disclose](#)]

[Information Form](#)] An individual's information can be released to the P & A following receipt of a dually executed authorization to release information form. You may contact the program at:

Protection and Advocacy Center
Disability Rights Florida
2728 Centerview Drive, Suite 102
Tallahassee, Florida 32301

Telephone (800) 342-0823 (voice)
Toll free TDD (800) 346-4127

Employment Networks (ENs)

Employment Networks are providers of employment and rehabilitation services under the TTW Program. Ticket-holders may assign their Ticket to any Employment Network authorized by MAXIMUS. SSA regulations require that an EN execute an Employment Network Referral and Partnership Agreement (EN Agreement) with DVR prior to referring an individual (whose Ticket is assigned to that EN) to DVR for services. DVR has developed and implemented a standard EN Agreement for this purpose. If an EN does not have an EN Agreement with DVR, it cannot refer individuals to DVR for services. Counselors shall inform individuals whose Ticket is assigned to an EN (other than DVR) at the time of referral that the EN with which the Ticket is assigned is obligated to provide the individual with employment and rehabilitation services.

No DVR employment or rehabilitation services can be purchased or provided to an individual whose Ticket is assigned to an EN.

III. Work Incentive, Planning and Assistance (WIPA) Program

[\[State of Florida WIPA map by County\]](#)

The goal of the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) Program is to better enable SSA's beneficiaries with disabilities to make informed choices about work. Each WIPA Project has Community Work Incentive coordinators (CWICs) who will:

- Provide work incentives planning and assistance directly to SSA's beneficiaries with disabilities to assist them in their employment efforts;
- Conduct outreach efforts in collaboration with MAXIMUS for Recruitment and Outreach to beneficiaries with disabilities (and their families), who are potentially eligible to participate in Federal or State work incentives programs;
- Work in cooperation with Federal, State, and private agencies and nonprofit organizations that serve beneficiaries with disabilities;
- Refer beneficiaries with disabilities to appropriate Employment Networks based on the beneficiary's expressed needs and types of impairments;
- Provide general information on the adequacy of health benefits coverage that may be offered by an employer of a beneficiary with a disability and the extent to which other

health benefits coverage may be available to that beneficiary in coordination with Medicare and/or Medicaid; and

- Provide information on the availability of protection and advocacy services for beneficiaries with disabilities and how to access such services.

The counselor must discuss WIPA services during orientation and initial interviews. It is mandatory that the counselor offers WIPA services to all Ticket holders who are in Plan Development status and above (see procedures below).

If the individual accepts WIPA services, the individual must sign the Referral to WIPA template along with two consent forms ([SSA-3288 1 of 2](#), and [SSA-3288 2 of 2](#)) to get a Benefits Planning Query (BPQY) from SSA.

Procedures for Referrals to WIPA Vendors

1. Once a month, WIPA Technical Assistance (TA) Liaisons will run a report in RIMS to identify all Ticket holders who have moved into plan development or above.
2. The list will be sorted by COUNSELOR, and the TA Liaisons will contact each COUNSELOR to remind him/her to offer WIPA services to the Ticket holders.
3. TA Liaison will follow up with an email confirming that the COUNSELOR was contacted, listing the Ticket holders that need to be offered WIPA services, and will copy the Unit Supervisor. To protect the Ticket holder's personal information, only VR ID numbers will be used in emails.
 - a. TA Liaison will briefly explain the process for offering WIPA services.
 - b. Provide [the "Script for offering WIPA services"](#) if needed.
 - c. Remind COUNSELOR to have individual sign the ["WIPA Referral Form"](#) and check either to accept or decline the services.
 - d. If services are declined, the counselor will place the signed "WIPA Referral Form" in the Ticket holder's file.
 - i. The counselor will note in the Case Notes that services were offered and declined.
 - e. If services are accepted, the counselor will send the referral form along with two signed SSA-3288s to the WIPA vendor by secured FAX line only.
 - i. The counselor will note in the Case Notes that services were offered, accepted, and referral was made.
 - ii. The referral for WIPA services will be documented as a "comparable benefit" in RIMS.
 - f. The counselor will receive the completed deliverable from the WIPA service provider, and will place it in the individual's file.
 - g. If there are questions regarding the content, quality, or timeliness of the deliverable, the counselor will contact the TA Liaison for assistance.

IV. Ticket Activation - Individuals who are ticket-holders prior to signing an IPE.

Self-Referral

New Applicants: When individuals come to DVR for services indicating they receive SSI or SSDI benefits and have received a Ticket, the counselor will provide information about the purpose of the Ticket to Work Program and the advantages of their participating in the Ticket to Work Program (SSA publication #05-10061, IGN463262). [Other resources to include: WIPA statewide map and WIPA Projects] The counselor will ask the individual if the Ticket has been assigned to any other EN. A confirmation that the beneficiary's Ticket is available for assignment must be obtained from MAXIMUS, (<http://yourtickettowork.com> or telephone number 1-866-949-3687, the national SSA Program Manager for the Ticket to Work Program.

Ticket Assigned to EN other than DVR

If MAXIMUS or the individual indicates a Ticket is assigned to an EN other than DVR, the counselor shall:

- Inform the individual that the EN where the Ticket is assigned is responsible for purchasing/providing employment and rehabilitation services. In addition, the counselor shall advise the individual that they may request reassignment of their Ticket by contacting MAXIMUS or close their case with DVR. Should the individual desire to keep his/her case open with DVR without reassignment of the Ticket to DVR, the counselor shall advise the individual that services under the IPE will be deemed comparable benefits and that these services are to be purchased/provided by the EN with which the individual Ticket is assigned.
- Rehabilitation Information Management System (RIMS) will be updated by the MAXIMUS Data Exchange Program to reflect that the individual's Ticket is assigned to another EN other than DVR.

Tickets Not Assignable

If MAXIMUS reports that the Ticket is not assignable, the counselor shall contact the individual to determine the reason(s) for their ineligibility and document the individual's record. RIMS will be automatically updated to reflect that the individual's Ticket is not assignable.

Individual Not in the MAXIMUS Database

If MAXIMUS reports that the individual is not in the database of MAXIMUS, RIMS will be automatically updated to reflect that the individual is not a Ticket-holder and, if applicable, not an SSA beneficiary.

Tickets Assignable

If MAXIMUS reports that the Ticket is assignable:

- RIMS will be automatically updated by way of the MAXIMUS Data Exchange (MDE) to reflect that the individual is a “Ticket-Holder” and the ticket is “Unassigned”.
- Upon completion of an IPE for an individual who is a Ticket-holder, the Counselor shall also complete SSA Form 1365 and secure the individual’s signature on both the IPE and SSA Form 1365. The counselor shall sign the IPE and SSA Form 1365 and ensure that all required information is included on each form. The counselor must retain a copy of the signed SSA form 1365 in the case record and provide a copy of the form to the SSA Coordinator. The SSA/TTW Program Unit will request the SSA Form 1365 for Ticket Assignment.
- Once an IPE has been initiated for an individual that is a Ticket-holder, the SSA/TTW Program Unit will review the IPE and coordinate placing the individual’s Ticket in use or securing the Ticket assignment.

Ticket Currently Assigned to DVR from Previous Case

If the MAXIMUS reports that the Ticket is still assigned to DVR, there is no need for the SSA/TTW Program Unit to complete the SSA form 1365. The SSA/TTW Program Unit will coordinate updating the individual’s new case record to show the Ticket assignment.

If the TTW Program Manager reports that the Ticket is no longer assigned to DVR, the SSA/TTW Program Unit shall follow the established procedures for updating the status of the Ticket (assigned to EN, not assignable, assignable, etc.)

Ticket-holder’s Signature on IPE

The counselor will select one of the following conditions on the IPE as it would apply to the individual’s Ticket and services to be provided by the DVR:

- I understand and acknowledge that my signature on this Individualized Plan for Employment will place the Ticket in use and authorize the Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to register the Ticket as assigned/in use.
- I acknowledge that the Ticket is currently in use and is assigned to an Employment Network. In addition, I understand and acknowledge that the Employment Network with which the Ticket is assigned is responsible for providing employment and rehabilitation services under the Ticket to Work Program and that such service will be deemed comparable benefits and services under this IPE.

The counselor shall review the above condition that applies to the individual/representative prior to the individual/representative signing the IPE.

Once an IPE is signed by an individual who is a Ticket-holder, it is DVR’s policy to place the individual’s Ticket in use or assign the Ticket in all cases where the individual has an

assignable ticket. The Counselor shall complete a SSA Form 1365 and have the individual sign the form upon signing the IPE. The signed SSA Form 1365 will be signed by the Counselor and forwarded to the SSA Area Coordinator who will maintain the form until requested by the TTW Program Unit.

In cases where the Ticket is being assigned to DVR, the SSA Form 1365 must be signed by the individual. The Program Manager will no longer accept a copy of the IPE signed by the individual in lieu of their signature on SSA Form 1365.

V. Pipeline Cases

A Pipeline Case is when an SSI/SSDI beneficiary has signed their original IPE prior to becoming Ticket eligible (determined eligible by SSA to participate in the Ticket to Work Program). The counselor must discuss assignment options with beneficiaries and should refer the individual to the local WIPA organization.

VI. Ticket Reassignment

Reassignment from DVR to an EN

Should the beneficiary wish to receive services from an EN, the counselor should discuss the decision with the beneficiary in an attempt to remedy any problems and retain the Ticket assignment. If, after counseling, the beneficiary chooses to reassign the Ticket, they must inform MAXIMUS in writing that they wish to remove the Ticket from the current DVR assignment.

- Upon learning of a beneficiary's decision to reassign a Ticket to an EN, the counselor obtains a copy of the beneficiary's request for reassignment to document the decision. DVR must notify MAXIMUS that the beneficiary has chosen to no longer receive services from DVR and the case record is closed as declining services.
- If the EN selected by the beneficiary has a MOA with DVR, then DVR will act according to terms specified in the MOA.

An individual has the option of taking their Ticket out of assignment with DVR or an EN at any time and for any reason. If the individual intends to reassign their Ticket to another EN, the beneficiary must inform MAXIMUS in writing that they wish to take the Ticket out of its current assignment. The beneficiary is eligible for an extension period of up to three months to reassign their Ticket.

- The beneficiary may apply for DVR's services while waiting for their Ticket to be taken out of assignment with another EN. The Ticket reassignment process must not delay the determination of eligibility or the IPE development. However, an IPE should not be initiated until the individual's Ticket is available for assignment to DVR.

- If the beneficiary does not reassign their Ticket within three months, the Ticket may be placed in an inactive status by MAXIMUS.

DVR will verify Ticket status with MAXIMUS to ensure it is available for assignment. Once the IPE has been completed and signed by the beneficiary, the counselor shall complete the SSA 1365 form, obtain the individual's signature and fax the SSA Form 1365 to MAXIMUS. Ticket reassignment becomes effective the 1st day of the month following MAXIMUS' receipt of the Ticket Reassignment Request. A copy of the signed SSA Form 1365 is retained in the case record as proof of reassignment.

VII. Procedures for Referring Ticket-Holders for Job Related Services (Partnership Plus Program)

Partnership Plus provides Ticket-Holders with the choice to access ongoing, post-employment support services, if needed. It is intended to help an individual maintain their job and to increase their earnings capacity over time and no more revolving doors. (See procedure below)

Procedures for Partnership Plus Referrals

1. Once a month, Technical Assistance (TA) Liaisons will run a report in RIMS to identify all Ticket holders who are "In Employment" status.
2. The TA Liaisons will review the date that each Ticket Holder's case went into "In Employment" status. Targeted cases are those, which are 80+ days old (or in supported employment cases 140+ days old).
3. The list will be sorted by COUNSELOR and the TA Liaisons will send each COUNSELOR an email to remind him/her to offer EN job related services to all Targeted Ticket holders in the email. A copy will be sent to the Unit Supervisor. **(Note: To protect the Ticket holder's personal information, only VR ID numbers will be used in emails.)**
4. In an email and along with the case listing, the TA Liaison will briefly explain the process for offering EN job related services and will provide the COUNSELOR with:
 - ["Script for offering EN services under Partnership Plus"](#) ;
 - ["Process Chart" for Partnership Plus](#)";
 - ["Procedures for Referrals – Partnership Plus"](#).
5. The COUNSELOR will use the script (attached to the email or available in SharePoint) to offer EN job related services to each Ticket Holder identified in the case listing.

(Note: No assessment or evaluation is required by the COUNSELOR to offer EN job related services. If Ticket Holder feels that one or more services may be beneficial, the COUNSELOR will coordinate providing such services through the TA Liaison.)

6. If services are declined, COUNSELOR will use RIMS to document general type case notes and will notify TA Liaison via email.
7. If services are accepted, COUNSELOR will use RIMS to document general type case notes and will notify TA Liaison via email. COUNSELOR will also notify TA Liaison of the date the case is closed successfully. COUNSELOR will transfer the original case file to the TA Liaison. COUNSELOR does not have to complete any case action in RIMS.
8. TA Liaison will keep an electronic record of COUNSELOR responses and follow up on non-responders every 7-10 days. TA Liaison will complete a monthly report on service offerings and forward a copy to the Unit Supervisor and HQ.
9. If services are accepted, the TA Liaison will contact the Ticket Holder to confirm acceptance.
10. If service is accepted by individual, the TA Liaison will assist the individual in selecting a service provider by providing the individual with a list of all of the ENs that offer post-employment services in the individual's area, along with any additional information that can help the individual to make an informed choice of provider, such as websites and brochures. This information will also include contact information for the provider ENs. **(NOTE: If the individual does not make a selection of an EN for post-employment services, the TA Liaison will rotate between the available ENs providing services in that area to make the referral.)**
11. After the referring COUNSELOR has closed the case successfully, the TA Liaison will reopen the case in Post-Employment Services.
12. The TA Liaison will amend the previous IPE to include Post Employment Job Related Services.
13. The TA Liaison will obtain approval of the TTW Administrator to initiate the Amended IPE.

14. The TA Liaison will complete the referral template and obtain the individual's signature on both the Referral form and Amended IPE.
15. The TA Liaison will forward a copy of the signed Referral form and Amended IPE to the selected EN along with a copy of the standard Monthly Progress Report. The TA Liaison will maintain the case file, attach the amended IPE when completed and signed by the individual along with the copy of the signed referral form.
16. TA Liaison will note in the General type case notes that services were offered, accepted, and the name of the EN to which the referral was made.
17. Upon receipt of the referral, the EN will contact the individual and begins services.
18. During the service period, the EN will complete a standard DVR approved Monthly Progress Report and forward to the TA Liaison no later than the 10th of each month.
19. The TA Liaison will follow up on the receipt of Monthly Progress Reports, review reports and work out any issues with ongoing support services to the individual.
20. When the individual achieves 7 months SGA within an 8 month period, the EN will submit an invoice and supporting documentation to the TTW HQ for review and to request payment.
21. TW HQ will review the supporting documentation to validate that 7 months of SGA was achieved.
22. If 7 months SGA is not achieved, TTW HQ will contact EN to return documentation. EN will resume ongoing support services.
23. If documentation is valid and shows that 7 months SGA was achieved, TTW HQ will submit invoice to VR Contract Manager to process payment to EN.
24. HQ will inform TA Liaison that the EN has achieved the outcome associated with the referral.
25. TA Liaison will update individuals' RIMS record and contact referring Counselor to obtain approval to close case.
26. Once the case has been closed, the case file will be returned to the referring COUNSELOR Unit to be maintained for the required retention period.

VIII. Timely Progress

When a beneficiary elects to participate in the Ticket to Work Program by placing their Ticket in use/assignment, they are required to make “timely progress” in order to be protected from medical Continuing Disability Reviews (medical CDRs) conducted by the Social Security Administration (SSA).

“Timely Progress” is a SSA term that refers to whether a Ticket-holder is making progress toward self-supporting employment. SSA considers the Ticket-holder to be making Timely Progress toward self-supporting employment when a Ticket-holder shows an increasing ability to work at levels that will reduce or eliminate his/her dependence on cash benefits. A individual must be making timely progress for his/her Ticket to be considered “in-use” which is the status that provides postponement of medical CDRs.

The SSA, through its TTW Program Manager, MAXIMUS, will monitor the progress of all Ticket-holders whose Ticket is in use/assigned on a periodic basis referred to as ‘progress certification periods.’ A “progress certification period” is every 12 months. Under the Timely Progress section of the TTW regulations, a Ticket-holder is protected from the initiation of a medical CDR, irrespective of ticket assignment, provided that the standard for each certification period of Timely Progress are met.

The Counselor will assist the Ticket-holder in understanding the Timely Progress requirements (as noted in the table below) initially during IPE development and as needed while the case is open. A fact sheet has been developed to assist Counselors in sharing information with Ticket-holders concerning Timely Progress requirements.

The Counselor will document the Ticket-holder’s progress every 12-months (as prompted by RIMS) for each certification period as long as the case is open. A standard template will be used to accomplish this task.

The SSA/TTW Program Unit will be responsible for reporting Timely Progress information to SSA and MAXIMUS as requested.

**Timely Progress Guidelines
During Each 12-month Progress Review Period**

<p>1st-12 months (after 12 months of ticket use)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete 3 months of work at Trial Work Level (TWL)¹, OR • Complete a GED or high school diploma, OR • Complete 60% of a full-time course load for an academic year in a college or technical/trade/vocational training program, OR • Complete a combination of this work and education requirement <p>2nd-12 months (13-24 months of ticket use)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete 6 months of work at Trial Work Level (TWL), OR • Complete 75% of a full-time course load for an academic year in a college or technical/trade/vocational training program, OR • Complete a combination of this work and education requirement <p>3rd-12 months (25-36 months of ticket use)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete 9 months of work at Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) level², OR • Complete an additional full-time academic year of study, OR • Complete a 2-year or 4-year college program, OR • Complete a 2-year technical/trade/vocational training program, OR • Complete a combination of this work and education requirement <p>4th-12 months (37-48 months of ticket use)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete 9 months of work at Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) level, OR • Complete an additional academic year of full-time study, OR • Complete a combination of this work and education requirement <p>5th-12 months (49-60 months of ticket use)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete 6 months of work at Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) level with no SSDI and/or SSI cash benefits in months worked, OR • Complete an additional academic year of full-time study, OR • Complete a 4-year degree program <p>6th-12 months (61-72 months of ticket use)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete 6 months of work at Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) level with no SSDI and/ or SSI cash benefits in months worked, OR • Complete a 4-year degree program <p>7th-12 months (73-84 months of ticket use)</p>

¹ TWL level is \$670 per month as of 2008.

² SGA level is \$940 per month for non-blind and \$1,570 for blind as of 2008.

months • Complete 6 months of work at Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) level with no SSDI and/or SSI cash benefits in months worked *

* The requirements for any subsequent 12-month Progress Review are the same as for the 7th -12th -month Progress Review

(NOTE: 10% Variance Tolerance applies to the above Timely Progress Guidelines. Variance Tolerance is the margin of flexibility whereby the SSA will consider a beneficiary to have met the requirement for completing a specified amount of post-secondary credit hours in an educational degree or certification program or the course requirements in a vocational or technical training program in the applicable progress certification period if the beneficiary's completion of credit hours is within 10% of the goal.)

IX. Inactive Status

"Inactive Status" is defined by the SSA as a status in which the beneficiary may place his/her ticket if the beneficiary is temporarily or otherwise unable to make timely progress toward self-supporting employment during a progress certification period. The new TTW regulations allow for SSI/SSDI individuals to put their ticket in "inactive status" anytime by submitting a written request to MAXIMUS. Similarly, the individual has the option to reactivate their status at a later date via a written request to MAXIMUS.

The following SSA rules apply while the ticket is in inactive status:

1. The SSI/SSDI individual's name goes back to the pool of beneficiaries with regularly scheduled medical CDRs. In other words, the individual is not protected from future medical reviews.
2. The months in which the individual's ticket is in inactive status do not count toward the time limitations for making timely progress.
3. State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies and/or ENs will receive a confirmation notice from Maximus of the individual's inactive status. Additionally, they will receive a confirmation notice from Maximus when the ticket is reactivated.

X. Reimbursement Claim Submission

The SSA/DVR Area Coordinator is responsible for tracking cases involving SSA beneficiaries to determine if the case meets the claim filing requirements set forth by SSA. If a case meets such requirements, the SSA/DVR Coordinator shall complete the SSA/DVR Worksheet template in RIMS (DOE/VR-VCMT019) and submit it to the SSA/TTW Program Unit at the DVR Headquarters Office. The SSA/DVR Area Coordinator shall save the completed SSA/DVR Worksheet in RIMS.

SSA/DVR codes, fiscal information, and report procedures are contained in the RIMS manual.

All SSA/DVR claims for reimbursement should be forwarded to the SSA/TTW Program Administrator in the DVR Headquarters Office.

Any questions or requests for additional documentation on a claim by SSA will be handled via the Area SSA/DVR Coordinator.

The State SSA/TTW Program Administrator should be called for any program clarification.

XI. Ticket Assignment Process and SSA Related Alerts

The [Ticket Assignment Process](#) provides an overview of the Ticket to Work Program. The [SSA alerts](#) will assist the counselors in RIMS through the SSA process.