

Employment Network

HANDBOOK

for Employers

Turning Diversity into Dollars...

*The Many Benefits of Hiring
Workers with Disabilities*

DRAFT



Letter from Dan O'Brien, Acting Associate Commissioner, Office of Employment Support Programs

Dear Employer:

We are pleased to provide this handbook on how employers can become Employment Networks (ENs) under the NEW Ticket to Work (Ticket) program. By using this guide you will see that becoming an EN is an exciting new venture that provides you with access to a whole new source of potential employees, and at no cost to your company. To make becoming an EN easy, we have assembled a first-rate team to provide ongoing support to you every step of the way.

Two important benefits to an employer who becomes an EN are —

- 1. You can recruit from thousands of Social Security beneficiaries with disabilities who want to work; and*
- 2. It is possible to generate over \$4,800 in income within the first 9 months of a beneficiary's employment. There is even more to be earned over time. To see what your earning potential may be, check out the EN Revenue Estimator at: www.cessi.net/en_estimator/*

You are probably wondering why the Social Security Administration (SSA) is offering a financial incentive to employers to hire beneficiaries with disabilities. The goal of the Ticket program is to reduce dependence on Social Security disability benefits by increasing the financial independence of beneficiaries with disabilities and improving their quality of life through gainful employment. We know that the majority of people with disabilities want to work, but often employers are misinformed about hiring and retaining employees with disabilities. The financial incentives in the Ticket program provide employers with a unique opportunity to discover that people with disabilities are qualified, reliable and productive workers who will help grow your organization's bottom line.

This handbook will provide you with what you need to know to become an EN. We hope you will join the other businesses and companies that have become ENs and have experienced great success in hiring beneficiaries with disabilities.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for more information.

Sincerely,

Dan O'Brien


Dan O'Brien

Acting Associate Commissioner

Office of Employment Support Programs

Social Security Administration





The Employment Network Handbook for Employers was developed by the Social Security Administration's Office of Employment Support Programs, CESSI, the Ticket to Work Program Manager for Recruitment and Outreach, and Wilson Resources, Inc. under Contract SS00-06-60017 with CESSI Division of Axiom Resource Management, Inc. The handbook was revised in July 2009.

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Benefits of an Untapped Employee and Customer Market

Where would the world be without the contributions of people with disabilities?

Hiring people with disabilities is like hiring anyone else. And, just like any other group, people with disabilities have made significant contributions to the greater good. The following are some notable examples.

Stephen Hawking: Perhaps the world's most accomplished astrophysicist whose theories draw upon both relativity theory and quantum mechanics. Much of his work was done after he was diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, also called "Lou Gehrig's Disease."

James Earl Jones: One of America's best known actors with a resonant voice once stuttered badly.

Sir Winston Churchill: The eloquent scholar who led Great Britain through World War II worked hard all his life to overcome a speech impediment.

Annie Sullivan: Helen Keller's teacher and lifelong friend was herself nearly blind due to a childhood illness.

Pythagoras: The first "pure mathematician" from Greece had epilepsy.

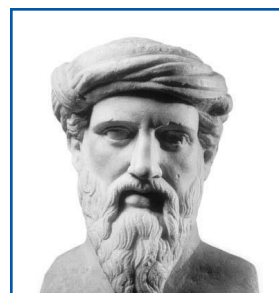
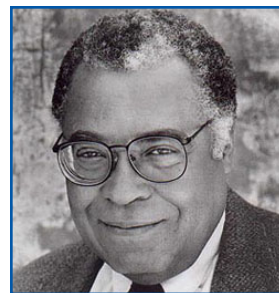
People with disabilities are America's largest minority group. It is estimated that 1 in 5 Americans has a disability (19.3%).

Source: Census 2000 Brief

According to the U.S. Census 2003 American Community Survey, there are 19,871,681 working age Americans with disabilities between the ages of 21-64. This number will increase as baby boomers grow older and more veterans with disabilities return from Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Employment is the largest gap area for people with disabilities, with 35% of people with disabilities working full or part-time as compared to 78% of the rest of the population. That equates to a 65% unemployment rate."

Source: The 2004 National Organization on Disability/Harris Survey on Americans with Disabilities





Dispelling Myths about Hiring Workers with Disabilities

The Business Case for Hiring Workers with Disabilities

A 2007-08 Florida survey of employers found that the leading impediment to hiring people with disabilities, in their opinions, was “attitudes at all corporate levels.”

(Survey conducted by Wilson Resources, Inc. in cooperation with The Able Trust)

Employer Myth #1: “Accommodations are too expensive!”

Most accommodations (81%) cost under \$100 and in 2003, 73% of employers found that their employees with disabilities did not require accommodations. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Florida found that accommodations made for employees with disabilities benefited its existing aging workforce.

The vast majority of people with disabilities do not require job accommodations but if they do, there are many useful resources such as: www.jan.wvu.edu/soar/disabilities.html.

An Example: Walgreens

- In 2008, Walgreens’ Anderson, South Carolina Distribution Center employed 185 workers with disabilities. This meant that nearly half (43%) of their 430 workers were employees with disabilities. Walgreens found that the distribution center in Anderson is no less productive than its other centers. In fact, Anderson is more productive. The training and technologies that help workers with disabilities do their jobs help all employees do their jobs better. (Source: ABC News feature story on Walgreen’s disability hiring initiative, February 2008)

Employer Myth #2: “I’ll be sued!”

Very few businesses experience disability-related claims. In fact, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) 2007 data show that people with disabilities filed fewer claims than people of color, gender or age.

An Example: U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Center for Workforce Preparation

- In a 2003 survey, 91% of respondents indicated that they were not aware of any Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complaints filed against their companies in the last 12 months.

Employer Myth #3: “My Workers’ Compensation Rates will be affected!”

Workers’ Compensation rates are based on the nature of the business, the jobs employees perform and use of benefits. People with disabilities have not been found to increase Workers’ Compensation rates.



An Example: Walgreens

- In 2008, Walgreen's Anderson, South Carolina Distribution Center employed 185 workers who had disabilities (43% of the workforce). Over the course of 9 months, Walgreens saved \$17,000 due to fewer incidents caused by its employees with disabilities. Incidents that occurred were less costly, there was less property damage and the workers with disabilities returned to work in less time. (Source: Walgreens, March 2008)

Employer Myth #4: "They cannot perform the job!"

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Center for Workforce Preparation found that industry reports in 2002 showed employees with disabilities were average or above average in performance, attendance, and safety.

An Example: DuPont

- A 1990 DuPont study which involved 2,745 employees with disabilities found that 92 percent of employees with disabilities rated average or better in job performance compared to 90 percent of employees without disabilities.

Employer Myth #5: "They all quit!"

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Center for Workforce Preparation found that hiring a worker with a disability is both a retention and an employment strategy – workers with disabilities have higher than average retention rates and company loyalty.

Employer Myth #6: "Hiring people with disabilities will scare my customers away!"

Marketing studies in 2003 found that 54% of households patronize businesses that feature people with disabilities in their ads. Disability friendly businesses earn the lucrative and loyal patronage of people with disabilities, their families and friends.

A 2006 report on a national survey of 803 consumers randomly selected from across the U.S. found that 92% felt more favorable toward companies that hire people with disabilities and 87% said they would prefer to give their business to such companies.

Employer Myth #7: "I do not know where to find qualified applicants with disabilities!"

There are organizations in every community dedicated to helping people with disabilities find jobs. Vocational Rehabilitation providers (both public and private) are in every state and most areas. One-Stop Centers (servicelocator.org) and Veterans' groups are also available to help you locate qualified applicants with disabilities. If you become an EN under the Ticket program, you have the option of receiving a monthly CD with the names and contact information of Ticket Holders in your specified geographic location. To receive this CD, someone in your organization will have to go through an SSA security clearance.

Employers' Fact Sheet

“SSA’s NEW Ticket program may be a way for your company to be PAID in excess of \$20,000 when you hire and retain employees with disabilities who are SSA beneficiaries.”

Leslie L. Wilson, CEO, Wilson Resources, Inc., Tallahassee, Florida

SSA pays cash benefits to qualified people with disabilities under two different programs: Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). More than 11 million Americans receive monthly benefits under these programs and many of these beneficiaries want to work.

SSA’s Ticket program is aimed at providing beneficiaries with disabilities the resources and choices to enter and maintain gainful employment.

An employer who becomes an approved EN under SSA’s Ticket program can receive payments when the employer hires a qualified Ticket Holder and that person attains certain levels of work and earnings. These payments can potentially exceed \$20,000 for each Ticket Holder hired and retained.


As an employer participating in the Ticket program, you will:

- Grow your bottom line. You can get PAID for hiring qualified employees who happen to be currently receiving disability benefits from SSA.
- Have increased access to qualified and dedicated employees. SSA offers a large pool of beneficiaries who want to work.
- Be able to diversify your workforce and help meet your organization’s Affirmative Action requirements.
- Expand and diversify your business connections. The Ticket program encourages collaboration between employers and other community organizations.
- Have access to timely and responsive support from SSA. The Ticket program offers an efficient application process, training and technical assistance, responsive individualized support, and tracking of your payment requests through to payment. There is guidance and assistance at every step in the process of becoming and operating as an EN.

Some of the earliest payments are made based on the beneficiary having earnings consistent with part-time work and have the potential to generate more than \$4,800 in the first nine months of the beneficiary’s employment. (Please note that EN payments are dependent upon a number of variables and the total payments received may be different for each beneficiary who is hired.)

By taking advantage of the SSA’s Ticket program and also accessing the federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), your organization may be able to recoup more than \$7,000 in first year wages for each Ticket Holder hired.





For more information about SSA's Ticket program, please contact CESSI, SSA's Program Manager for Recruitment and Outreach at 1-877-743-8237 (v/tty) or visit: www.cessi.net/ttw.

Overview of the Ticket to Work Program

Who Can Become an Employment Network (EN)?

There are few limitations on who can become an EN as long as they are qualified to provide or arrange for employment-related services and supports that will help Ticket Holders enter and maintain employment. Individuals, family members, educational institutions (postsecondary and vocational/technical), charitable organizations, hospitals, service providers (traditional and non-traditional), employers, state agencies, county and local governments, sole proprietors, nonprofit and for-profit corporations, as well as partnerships and coalitions of organizations, are all eligible to become ENs, pending SSA's approval of their EN applications. Federal agencies cannot become ENs and Ticket Holders cannot function as their own ENs.

Ticket to Work Program Design

Individuals receiving cash disability benefits (SSDI and/or SSI) receive paper Tickets in the mail that can be taken to either the State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agency or an approved EN to secure services and supports to enter the workforce and move towards self-supporting employment. When a Ticket Holder is ready to explore work, she or he can contact MAXIMUS, the Operations Support Manager (OSM) for the Ticket program, or visit the MAXIMUS website at www.yourtickettowork.com to get information on ENs available to serve them. Ticket Holders are free to contact the State VR agency and/or as many ENs as they want before deciding where to assign their Tickets.

Based on the Ticket Holder's employment goal and the services and supports offered by the EN, a Ticket Holder and an EN that agree to work together will need to develop an Individual Work Plan (IWP) that outlines the mutual commitment they are making to each other. The IWP must spell out, among other things, the Ticket Holder's specific vocation goal and the supports and services the EN will provide to assist the Ticket Holder in achieving that goal.

In the case of an employer functioning as an EN, when the employer is not in the business of providing rehabilitation or employment services, this may seem daunting. However, it can be quite simple. The employment goal would be success in the position for which the Ticket Holder is being hired. The IWP should list as services to be provided any on-the-job training and/or ongoing support services that the Ticket Holder will need to maintain and advance in employment. For example, any adaptive equipment or software, a modified work station, or adjusted work hours to accommodate extra breaks could be considered ongoing support services.

The IWP must also assess the Ticket Holder's recent work history to identify any work above the Trial Work level (i.e., \$700/month in 2009 and \$670/month in 2008) in the 18 months just prior to Ticket assignment. This may impact payment of the Phase 1



Milestones based on the Recent Work Rule in the new Ticket regulations. (See the Outcome/Milestone Payment System Section, Table 1 description for more details.)

When the IWP is completed and signed by both the Ticket Holder and a representative of the EN, the EN must submit it to MAXIMUS for approval. Once the IWP is approved, the Ticket is assigned to that EN.

When the Ticket Holder is working at a level that justifies a payment to the EN, the EN submits a “Request for Payment” to MAXIMUS with documentation of the Ticket Holder’s earnings, e.g. copies of pay stubs or some other wage reporting mechanism.

If at any point in time, the EN or the Ticket Holder decide that the relationship is not working, either the EN or the Ticket Holder can send a written request to MAXIMUS, asking that the Ticket be un-assigned.

2009 EN Payment Rates

The Ticket to Work is an outcome-based program. Revenue is realized when a Ticket Holder achieves employment-related Milestones and/or Outcomes. Approved ENs invoice based on the earnings of the Ticket Holders who have assigned their Tickets to the EN. Once SSA approves an EN's application, the EN must choose between being compensated under either the Outcome Payment system or the Outcome/Milestone Payment system. Milestone and Outcome payments are direct deposited into the EN's bank account. SSA does not place any requirements or restrictions on how an EN can use the revenue paid out under the Ticket program.

The charts in the following sections provide the 2009 rates for the Outcome and Outcome/Milestone Payment systems.

Outcome Payment System

Under the Outcome payment system, an EN can submit a request for payment when a Ticket Holder's earnings exceed the amount SSA designates as Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) and the Ticket Holder enters the zero cash benefit status (i.e., is no longer receiving a monthly disability check). SSA has established two SGA amounts based on type of disability. These amounts increase a little each year. In 2009, the SGA amount for individuals with disabilities other than blindness is \$980 and the SGA amount for individuals who are blind or visually impaired is \$1,640.

Outcome payments are based on the savings that SSA will realize each month a Ticket Holder is no longer receiving a monthly disability check because of work or earnings. These payments are calculated based on the average SSDI or SSI payment for the previous year. Under the Ticket program, a portion of these savings are passed on to the EN that successfully assisted the Ticket Holder in reaching the level of work and earnings that resulted in the cessation of monthly disability benefits.

Under the new Ticket regulations, the amount of savings passed on to the EN was increased from 40 to 67 percent of the monthly savings to SSA. In 2009, an EN that has chosen the Outcome payment system and is successful in getting a Ticket Holder on SSDI to the zero cash benefit status will receive \$676 a month for each month the Ticket Holder stays off cash benefits for up to 36 months (totaling \$24,336). For a Ticket Holder on SSI, the EN would receive \$386 a month for up to 60 months (totaling \$23,160).



Outcome/Milestone Payment System

Under the Outcome/Milestone payment system, SSA pays an EN when a Ticket Holder attains certain Milestones and Outcomes in moving towards self-supporting employment. As explained in this section, this payment option offers two sets of Milestone payments (Phase 1 and Phase 2) as well as subsequent Outcome payments.

Table 1: Phase 1 Milestone Payments

2009 Rates

Payment Type	Ticket Holder Gross Earnings	EN Payment (SSDI)	EN Payment (SSI)
Phase 1			
Milestone 1	\$350/mo for 1 calendar month	\$1,211	\$1,211
Milestone 2	\$700/mo for 3 months w/in 6 months (cumulative)	\$1,211	\$1,211
Milestone 3	\$700/mo for 6 months w/in 12 months (cumulative)	\$1,211	\$1,211
Milestone 4	\$700/mo for 9 months w/in 18 months (cumulative)	\$1,211	\$1,211
Total Potential Phase 1 Milestone Payments		\$4,844	\$4,844

Table 1 outlines the “Phase 1 Milestone Payments” which are based on a Ticket Holder’s gross earnings. Although SSA can pay an EN for up to four Milestones achieved by a beneficiary after he/she has assigned his/her Ticket to an EN, there are certain factors that can impact an EN’s eligibility for Phase 1 Milestone payments. First, all Phase 1 Milestones require that the beneficiary work at or above the TW level earnings amount (\$700 a month in 2009). Second, the work must be associated with a real job. Consequently, paid vocational training with no record of continued self-supporting employment will not meet the criteria for payment. Third, no Phase 1 Milestone payments will be available to the EN if the beneficiary was previously served by a State VR agency under the Cost Reimbursement program and was rehabilitated (i.e., working at the time the VR case was closed). Fourth, Phase 1 Milestone payments may not be available to an EN if the beneficiary achieved the Milestone within the most recent 18-month period prior to the Ticket assignment, as explained in the following more detailed information on the Phase 1 Milestones.

- Phase 1, Milestone 1 is payable when a beneficiary begins a job and has gross earnings at or above the Trial Work (TW) level (see: www.ssa.gov/OACT/COLA/twp.html) for one calendar month. An EN may submit for Phase 1, Milestone 1 when a beneficiary earns at least 50% of the monthly TW level earnings amount during the first month of employment as long as the monthly

earnings would normally constitute TW level earnings or the beneficiary is expected to achieve a full month of TW level earnings within the subsequent 2 months. Phase 1, Milestone 1 **will not be available** if the beneficiary has worked above the TW level in the calendar month prior to the beneficiary's first assignment of his/her Ticket.

- Phase 1, Milestone 2 is payable after the beneficiary works and has gross earnings at or above the Trial Work level earnings amount for 3 out of 6 months. Phase 1, Milestone 2 **will not be available** if the beneficiary has worked above the Trial Work level in 3 out of 6 months prior to the beneficiary's first assignment of his/her Ticket.
- Phase 1, Milestone 3 is payable after the beneficiary works and has gross earnings at or above the Trial Work level earnings amount for 6 out of 12 months. Phase 1, Milestone 3 **will not be available** if the beneficiary has worked above the Trial Work level in 6 out of 12 months prior to the beneficiary's first assignment of his/her Ticket.
- Phase 1, Milestone 4 is payable after the beneficiary works and has gross earnings at or above the Trial Work level earnings amount for 9 out of 18 months and the EN has completed at least half of the services agreed to in the IWP. To request payment of Phase 1, Milestone 4, the EN must report on the services provided and must have completed at least half of the services committed to in the IWP. Phase 1, Milestone 4 **will not be available** if the beneficiary has worked above the Trial Work level in 9 out of 18 months prior to the beneficiary's first assignment of his/her Ticket.

[NOTE: The work and earnings that trigger all Phase 1 Milestone payments are cumulative, meaning Trial Work level earnings that count towards one Phase 1 Milestone payment also count towards the next one.]

Table 2: Phase 2 Milestone Payments

2009 Rates

Type	Ticket Holder Gross Earnings	EN Payment (SSDI)	EN Payment (SSI)
Phase 2	Gross > SGA (\$980/non-blind; \$1,640 for blind)	\$363/mo. (up to 11 mos.)	\$207/mo. (up to 18 mos.)
Total Phase 2 Payments		\$3,993	\$3,726
Total Potential Ticket Payments Phases 1 and 2		\$8,837	\$8,570

Table 2 outlines "Phase 2 Milestone Payments," which are also based on the Ticket Holder's 'gross' earnings. In order for the EN to continue invoicing the Ticket program



after the Phase 1 Milestones have been reached, the Ticket Holder must have gross monthly earnings that exceed SSA's 2009 SGA level, i.e., \$980 a month for Ticket Holders with disabilities other than blindness and \$1,640 a month for Ticket Holders who are blind. If these criteria are met and as long as the Ticket Holder continues to work and earn at this level, the EN can invoice the Ticket program for Phase 2 Milestone payments at the rate of \$363 a month for up to 11 months if the Ticket Holder is a SSDI recipient and \$207 a month for up to 18 months if the Ticket Holder is a SSI recipient.

The potential total EN Ticket payment for Phase 1 and 2 Milestones (Tables 1 and 2) is \$8,837 for Ticket Holders who are SSDI recipients and \$8,570 for SSI recipients.

Table 3: Outcome Payments

Under Outcome/Milestone Payment System

2009 Rates

Payment Type	Ticket Holder Net Earnings	EN Payment (SSDI)	EN Payment (SSI)
Outcome Phase	Net Earnings > SGA (\$980/non-blind; \$1,640/blind) AND zero cash benefit status	\$363/mo. (up to 36 mos.)	\$207/mo. (up to 60 mos.)
Total Outcome Payments		\$13,068	\$12,420
Total Potential Ticket Payments (Phases 1 & 2 and Outcomes)		\$21,905	\$20,990

Table 3 outlines the “Outcome Payments” available to an EN under the Outcome/Milestone Payment system if the Ticket Holder continues to work, has ‘net’ monthly earnings that exceed the SGA amount, and enters the “zero cash benefit status” (i.e., is no longer receiving monthly cash benefits under SSDI or SSI). If these criteria are met and as long as the Ticket Holder continues to work and earn at this level, the EN can invoice the Ticket program for Outcome payments at the rate of \$363 a month for up to 36 months if the Ticket Holder is a SSDI recipient or \$207 a month for up to 60 months if the Ticket Holder is a SSI recipient. Total Outcome payments equal \$13,068 for SSDI recipients and \$12,420 for SSI recipients.

Over the life of the program, if the Ticket Holder remains with the same EN and meets the earnings’ Milestones as outlined in Tables 1, 2, and 3, the EN has the potential to generate over \$20,000 working with only one Ticket Holder (see Table 3).

Ticket to Work Support

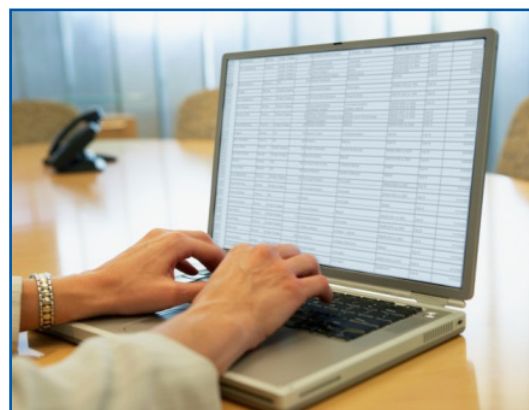
SSA contracts with two organizations, CESSI and MAXIMUS, to implement the Ticket program:

CESSI, SSA's Program Manager for Recruitment and Outreach, will assist your organization to explore the benefits of becoming an EN and to complete the application process. CESSI Account Managers are assigned to ENs based on geographic regions of the country or by area of expertise.

To get individualized EN application technical assistance, contact CESSI: 1-877-743-8237 (v/tty). You may also wish to sign up for an EN Application Walk-Through, a thorough review of the EN proposal including what sections to complete and submit to SSA for approval. To register, please visit: www.cessi.net/ttw or e-mail: application@cessi.net.

MAXIMUS, SSA's Operations Support Manager, handles all aspects of the Ticket program following approval of an EN's application. After an EN is approved, the CESSI Account Manager will connect the EN with a corresponding Regional Account Representative at MAXIMUS. MAXIMUS offers a wide array of training (e.g., Ticket Training Tuesdays) and support services (e.g., sample Individual Work Plan) to help get ENs started and operating as part of the Ticket program.

Contact MAXIMUS at 1-866-949-ENVR (v) or 1-866-833-2967 (tty), or visit: www.yourtickettowork.com

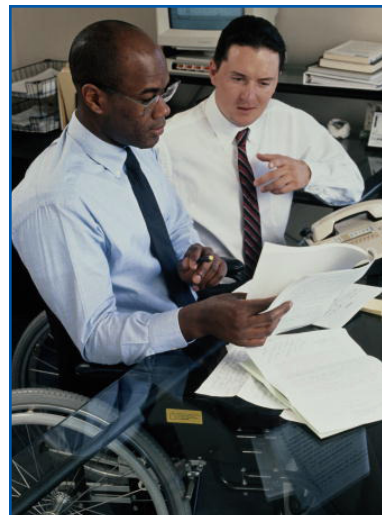




Benefits of Becoming an EN, an Employer Partner, or Both

As an employer, there is more than one way you can participate in the Ticket program.

1. As a free-standing EN, your organization can generate revenue when you hire Ticket Holders who attain specific earnings' milestones (see section on 2009 EN Payment Rates). As noted in this handbook, Ticket Holders can potentially generate up to \$4,800 in revenue for your company in the first nine months of their employment as a result of earning a paycheck.
2. As an **Employer Partner**, your company can be showcased as a disability-friendly employer and offer you exposure to thousands of SSA beneficiaries with a link to your career website/job postings. Your organization will provide a copy of your company's logo and a diversity statement that includes your commitment to the employment of people with disabilities (www.cessi.net/ttw). SSA also asks that you code applications coming from the Employer Partner website so that you can track the number of Ticket Holders applying for your company's position.



If you are a Federal contractor, becoming an EN and/or an Employer Partner can help your company meet Office of Federal Contract Compliance Policy rules related to the recruitment of people with disabilities.

If you are interested in becoming a free-standing EN or participating as an SSA Ticket to Work Employer Partner, please contact: Susan Samuels, ssamuels@cessi.net, or 703.448.6155 ext. 235.

3. The best of both worlds: An approved EN and an Employer Partner.

Comparison of Employer Benefits—Ticket to Work EN and Employer Partner Programs: Table 4 outlines the benefits and valuable opportunities the Ticket program offers you as an employer.



Table 4: Benefits of Becoming an EN and an Employer Partner

Benefits of Becoming an EN	Benefits of Becoming an Employer Partner	Benefits of Becoming Both an EN and an Employer Partner
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Company listed in MAXIMUS online EN Directory providing the name of your company, location, contact person, and services/positions you offer as EN to Ticket Holders. (www.yourtickettowork.com) ✓ After your organization becomes an EN and hires a Ticket Holder, you receive payment from Social Security. Payments are calculated as your employee reaches prescribed earnings' Milestones or Outcomes. ✓ As an EN, you will gain access to a pool of qualified candidates through the MAXIMUS Beneficiary Referral CD, other local ENs, and your State VR agency. ✓ For Ticket Holders hired, your company may qualify for the Work Opportunity Tax Credit: www.doleta.gov/business/Incentives/opptax/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ FREE posting of your company logo, a link to your careers website/job postings, and your company's diversity hiring statement on CESSI's Ticket to Work website, www.cessi.net/ttw ✓ Get noticed by thousands of Americans with disabilities. Research has found people with disabilities and their families prefer to give their business to disability-friendly companies. ✓ For Ticket Holders hired, your company may qualify for the Work Opportunity Tax Credit: www.doleta.gov/business/Incentives/opptax/ ✓ Meet your company's diversity hiring goals and reduce employee turnover. 	<p>ALL of the benefits of both programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ FREE posting of your company logo, a link to its careers website, and the company's diversity hiring statement posted on CESSI's Ticket to Work website. ✓ Marketing of your company's career opportunities and benefits of working at the company through the MAXIMUS online EN Directory (www.yourtickettowork.com) and the Employer Partners section of the CESSI Ticket to Work website (www.cessi.net/ttw/employer/partners.html). ✓ Receive additional non-restrictive revenue through EN payments after successful hire and from the Work Opportunity Tax Credit for eligible Ticket Holders. ✓ Meet your company's diversity hiring goals.

Benefits of Becoming an EN	Benefits of Becoming an Employer Partner	Benefits of Becoming Both an EN and an Employer Partner
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Meet your company's diversity hiring goals and reduce employee turnover. ✓ Promote your company's commitment to diversity and a positive work environment that is accessible to all applicants and employees. ✓ Lower your company's turnover rate. Employees with disabilities statistically have a higher rate of loyalty and longevity. ✓ Increase visibility to local service provider ENs and State VR agencies who can help you find qualified job candidates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Promote a commitment to diversity, and a positive work environment that is accessible to all applicants and employees. ✓ Lower your company's turnover rate. Employees with disabilities statistically have a higher rate of loyalty and longevity. ✓ Increase visibility to local service provider ENs and State VR agencies who can help you locate qualified job candidates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Gain access to a pool of candidates through the Beneficiary Referral CD. ✓ Promote your company's commitment to diversity and a positive work environment that is accessible to all applicants and employees. ✓ Lower your employee turnover rate. Employees with disabilities statistically have a higher rate of loyalty and longevity. ✓ Increase visibility to local service provider ENs and State VR agencies who can help you find qualified job candidates.





Identifying and Gaining Access to Ticket Holders

SSA determines which Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) beneficiaries are eligible to receive Tickets. Generally, eligible beneficiaries:

- Are 18 or older and have not reached age 65 (ages 18 through 64); and
- Are Title II disability beneficiaries - SSDI (exceptions are stated in the legislation and regulations); and
- Are in “current pay status” for monthly Title II cash benefits based on disability (exceptions stated in the legislation and regulations); and/or
- Are a Title XVI disability beneficiary - SSI (exceptions stated in the legislation and regulations); and
- Are in “current pay status” for monthly Ticket XVI cash benefits based on disability or blindness.



Accessing Ticket Holders

MAXIMUS maintains the list of beneficiaries who are Ticket-eligible and the list of beneficiaries with Tickets available for assignment, and administers the process for assigning and unassigning Tickets. To determine whether a beneficiary’s Ticket is available for assignment or whether a particular Ticket has any remaining value, the EN should contact the MAXIMUS Regional Account Representative. Regional representatives are assigned after the EN’s application has been approved.

MAXIMUS has created a tool that can be used in exploring a Ticket Holder’s recent work history. The 18 Month Prior Earnings tool can be used when talking to a Ticket Holder about his/her prior work history. Access the tool on line, fill in the month you obtained the Ticket assignment, and designate each month that the Ticket Holder had earnings above the Trial Work level (\$700 in 2009 and \$670 in 2008) in the 18 months prior to Ticket assignment. The tool will tell you which Phase 1 Milestone Payments are likely to be available to the EN with the Ticket assignment. To access the 18 Month Prior Earnings tool, visit: www.yourtickettowork.com/training_2.

Marketing to Ticket Holders

This can be accomplished in a number of ways. Invite Ticket Holders to attend in-house hiring events or career fairs; post your job openings on job boards designed for job seekers with disabilities; share job opportunities and announcements at career/job fairs; post your company’s job openings on the Employer Partners section of the CESSI Ticket to



Work website (www.cessi.net/ttw/employer/partners.html); and/or utilize the Beneficiary Referral CD that is available to ENs who meet SSA security requirements.

How Can an EN Determine If an Applicant Is a Ticket Holder?

Learn from other Employer ENs!

Model 1: The employer has everyone who is offered a position complete the paperwork for the Federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit. This includes IRS 8850 Pre-Screening Form, which asks if the individual is receiving SSI or has been referred by an EN or State VR agency.

In combination, these forms identify those receiving SSI and those who have been referred by an EN and State VR agencies, all of whom are likely to be Ticket Holders.

Since “everyone” who is “offered” a position completes the forms, this practice is not discriminatory. For more information on the WOTC and to access the necessary forms on-line, go to: www.doleta.gov/business/incentives/opptax/.

Model 2: The employer uses a combination of items to identify prospective and current employees who are Ticket Holders.

1. All applicants hired are given the opportunity to sign IRS form 8850, which may identify them as a SSA beneficiary, a Ticket Holder, or other group eligible for their employer to receive the WOTC
2. The employer tracks the applicant’s referral source to determine if the new employee was referred by a disability organization such as a State VR agency.
3. Employers who are “approved” ENs can use the Beneficiary Referral CD to find eligible Ticket Holders. The CD is available to approved ENs that have designated at least one person to be the CD Manager. This person must complete the forms necessary for SSA to conduct a security clearance. For more information, contact your Account Representative at MAXIMUS at 1-866-949-ENVR, or visit the MAXIMUS website at www.yourtickettowork.com and look for the Beneficiary Referral CD Update under “Breaking News.”

How Is the Ticket Assigned or Unassigned?

Ticket Assignment

If the beneficiary (Ticket Holder) chooses to work with your organization as an EN, both you and the Ticket Holder must complete and agree upon an Individual Work Plan (IWP). The template for the IWP can be downloaded at: www.yourtickettowork.com/training.

The IWP identifies the Ticket Holder’s employment goal (e.g., a particular position at your company) and outlines the services necessary to assist the Ticket Holder in achieving that goal. Examples of services employers might provide include: 1) On-the-job training associated with a particular position within your company; 2) Mentoring or job coaching;

3) Employment-related supports on the job; and/or 4) Accommodations, as deemed appropriate.

Once the IWP is submitted to and approved by MAXIMUS, the Ticket is officially assigned to your organization.

Unassigning a Ticket

Even after a beneficiary's Ticket has been assigned to an EN or a State VR agency, the beneficiary may take his/her Ticket out of assignment for any reason. The beneficiary must notify MAXIMUS in writing that she/he wishes to take the Ticket out of assignment. The written notice to MAXIMUS must include the beneficiary's name, Social Security Number, and the name of current EN/agency holding the Ticket assignment. The request must be signed and dated by the beneficiary and faxed to MAXIMUS at (703)683-3289 or mailed to MAXIMUS at: MAXIMUS – TTW, P.O. Box 1433, Alexandria, VA 22313.

The Ticket will no longer be assigned to that EN or State VR agency effective with the first day of the month following the month in which the beneficiary notifies MAXIMUS in writing of the desire to have the Ticket taken out of assignment. After the Ticket is unassigned, the beneficiary may reassign the Ticket to another EN or seek assistance from the State VR agency.

If an EN decides it no longer wishes to work with a Ticket Holder, the EN contacts MAXIMUS in writing, requesting that the Ticket be unassigned from that EN. The request must include the EN's name and EIN number and the Ticket Holder's name and Social Security Number. After it is signed and dated, it should be faxed to MAXIMUS at (703)683-3289 or mailed to MAXIMUS at: MAXIMUS – TTW, P.O. Box 1433, Alexandria, VA 22313. The Ticket Holder is then responsible for finding a new EN to continue in the program, if the Ticket Holder wishes to do so.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: A request to unassign a Ticket, whether from a Ticket Holder or an EN, should never be emailed because it contains both the name and the Social Security Number of the beneficiary.

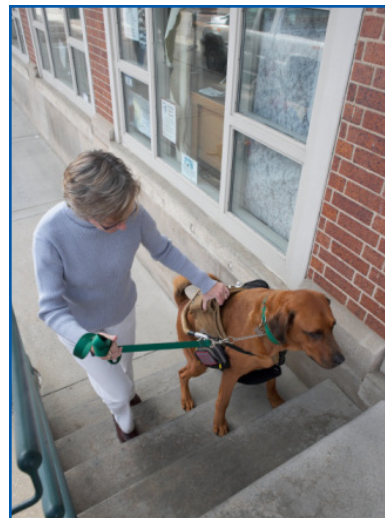




How to Become an EN – Forms and Other Requirements

CESSI, SSA's Program Manager for Recruitment and Outreach (PMRO), will help your organization explore the benefits of becoming an EN and complete the application process. CESSI Account Managers are assigned to ENs based on geographic regions of the country or by areas of expertise. If you have any questions or need guidance in completing the EN RFP, a CESSI Account Manager is ready to assist your company every step of the way.

To sign up for an EN Application Walk-Through, e-mail: application@cessi.net. To get individualized EN application technical assistance, contact CESSI at: application@cessi.net or call 1-877-743-8237 (v/tty).



Information relating to the operational aspects of functioning as an EN under the Ticket program is handled by MAXIMUS, SSA's Operations Support Manager, and can be found at: www.yourtickettowork.com.

Where Do I Get the Forms to Get Started?

The application to become an EN, called a Request for Proposal (RFP), complete with all instructions and requisite forms, is available for review and downloading at: www.ssa.gov/work/enrfp.html.

NOTE: The RFP refers to an "Offeror" which is the organization applying to become an EN.

Before you begin the RFP process, you will need the following items. All information must be current.

- ☐ EIN: Your Employer Identification Number (EIN) or Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN). Your company must have an EIN, and the EIN must be issued in the name of the Offeror listed in the EN RFP. You cannot use your Social Security Number in lieu of an EIN. An EIN may be obtained from the Internal Revenue Service by calling 1-800-829-4933 or via the web at: www.irs.gov.
- ☐ DUNS: The Offeror name listed in the EN RFP must have a matching Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and profile at Dun & Bradstreet. The DUNS number is a 9-digit number assigned by Dun & Bradstreet Information Services. Every EN must have a DUNS number. The DUNS number is the Federal Government Contractor Identification code for all procurement related activities. If your organization does not already have a



DUNS number, one may be obtained directly from Dun & Bradstreet at 1-866-705-5711, or you may apply online at: www.dnb.com.

To apply online at: www.dnb.com:

- Home Page, go to “Get a D&B DUNS Number”;
- Next go to “U.S. Government Contractors, Vendors and Grant Recipients”;
- and
- “Click here to request your DUNS number via the web.”

You will generally receive your DUNS number within 24-48 hours. There is no cost to apply.

- ☐ **CCR:** Register or verify that your organization’s DUNS number is registered as a Federal Contractor on the Central Contractor Registration (www.ccr.gov), the primary registrant database for all Federal government contractors. This is a requirement of all ENs and an important step in the application process.

If your organization previously registered on www.ccr.gov, please log into your CCR account to ensure your CCR registration is active.

If inactive, renew your registration by clicking on the “Update or Renew Registration” link on www.ccr.gov and follow the instructions provided. You must renew your company’s CCR registration every year. If you are unsure whether your company has registered as a Federal contractor in the past, you should conduct a search on the CCR website (using your DUNS number) prior to completing a new registration. If, after the search, your company does not appear in the registration database, register by clicking on “Start New Registration” and follow the instructions provided.

Other Important Information That Must be Submitted:

- ☐ **EN QUALIFICATIONS:** Your organization must submit evidence demonstrating that your staff is qualified to provide or arrange for employment-related services, vocational rehabilitation services, or other types of services and supports to assist beneficiaries to obtain and maintain employment.

Demonstrating Qualifications to be an EN: To be approved to be an EN, your organization must demonstrate that it is qualified to provide or arrange for the provision of employment-related services, vocational rehabilitation services, or other types of services and supports to assist Ticket Holders to enter and maintain employment. A copy of a current license or certification to provide such services in your State is sufficient. Having either a certification or accreditation from a national rehabilitation and employment services accrediting body or having a vendor agreement or contract with your State VR agency or another State agency to provide employment-related services will also satisfy this requirement. If you do not have such evidence, you will need to submit a qualifications statement and a business plan with your EN application,

explaining how you are going to serve Ticket Holders. The new EN RFP explains exactly what should be included in this business plan.

As an employer EN, you will want to describe any on-the-job training provided to new employees and/or any employment-related accommodations that your organization will provide to help Ticket Holders maintain and advance in employment.

- ❑ **GENERAL OR PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE:** Your EN's name must be on your insurance policy. A copy of the insurance policy or a certificate of insurance signed by the agent or broker is necessary before an EN contract can be awarded. All ENs must have insurance as described below. (The insurance must be maintained during the entire term of the contract.):
 - All contractors are required to maintain either general liability or professional liability insurance with a minimum coverage of \$500,000 per occurrence.
 - In addition, contractors who provide health care services are required to obtain Medical Liability Insurance with a minimum coverage of \$500,000 per occurrence.
- ❑ **ACH VENDOR/MISCELLANEOUS PAYMENT ENROLLMENT FORM:** Your EN name must be on the direct deposit bank account used for EN payments. To complete the ACH Vendor/Miscellaneous Payment Enrollment Form, you will need your company's financial institution information. This includes your bank's Automated Clearing House (ACH) Coordinator name, 9-digit routing transit number, and the signature and title of an authorized bank official. This form is used for ACH payments with an addendum record that contains payment-related information processed through the Vendor Express Program.

EN RFP Checklist

Download the EN RFP at: www.ssa.gov/work/enrfp.html.

Don't let the length of the RFP (92 pages) frighten you. Much of it is background information on the Ticket program, information on the EN payment systems and the payment process, and information on the protection of personal information about beneficiaries. It also includes contract boilerplate language and several pages of assurances.

While you need to become familiar with all of the information in the RFP, you only need to complete Part IV–EN Proposal Documentation Requirements (pages 61 through 90) and the forms required for security clearances, as described in this section. For an EN application to be complete, these completed parts must be submitted along with



documentation of your qualifications to provide EN services and documentation of your liability and, as appropriate, medical liability insurance.

Part III—Contract Clauses

Section 5 H. EN Security and Suitability Requirements (pages 38 through 45)

Please note that you must submit the security and suitability forms at the time you submit your EN proposal. The only form that requires mailing is the Applicant Fingerprint Chart.

☐ **Optional Forms 306, Declaration of Federal Employment**

This form must be completed for each EN contractor employee who acquires, handles or has access to SSA beneficiary personally identifiable information (PII) in performing duties under an EN contract.

☐ **Beneficiary CD**

For any EN that wants to receive beneficiary information in CD format directly from MAXIMUS to help market their services, a more thorough background check will be required for the staff person designated as the “CD Manager.” A simple background check using Optional Form 306, as described above, will be required for those EN employees who are provided beneficiary information from the CD by the CD Manager as long as that information is limited to the beneficiary’s name, address and telephone number. The CD Manager and any other EN employee who is provided information from the CD, in addition to the beneficiary’s name, address and telephone number, will be required to undergo the more thorough background check, which includes submission of the following:

- Optional Form 306, Declaration of Federal Employment
- Form FD-258, Applicant Fingerprint Chart
- Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) Authorization Form
- Standard Form (SF) 85, Questionnaire for Non-Sensitive Positions

Section 5 J. SSA Security Awareness: Contractor Personnel Security Certification (page 46)

This form does not need to be submitted as part of the EN application. Within 45 days of the EN contract being awarded, each employee working under the EN contract must read and sign this form to certify that she/he has received and understands SSA’s Security Awareness Training requirements. Within 60 days of the contract award, the EN contractor must confirm that all EN employees working under the contract have signed this form by sending an email to the EN Contracts Team (ENCT) at: ENContracts@ssa.gov. Each employee must be listed by name.

New employees must read and sign this form within 45 days of beginning work on the EN contract and the contractor must send an email to: security.awareness.training@ssa.gov, with a copy to the ENCT (ENContracts@ssa.gov), to confirm that any new employees have completed this form. These signed forms must be kept on file at the EN for a period of three years.

Please make sure you read this section for additional requirements.

Section 5 L. Protecting and Reporting the Loss of Personally Identifiable Information: Responsibilities Concerning Individual Employees (pages 56-59 with instructions for completing this worksheet found on page 60)

This information is not to be submitted with the EN application. It applies only if and when a violation of SSA's requirements regarding personally identifiable information (PII) has occurred.

Part IV—EN Proposal Documentation Requirements (pages 61 through 90)

Section 1

- ☐ **Standard Form 1449, Solicitation/Contract/Order for Commercial Items** (page 62)
Complete blocks 17a, 17b, 30a, 30b, and 30c.

Section 2

- ☐ **Completed Section 2, EN Information Sheet** (pages 64 through 72)
This section asks for basic EN information. You will need to have your Employer Identification Number (EIN) and your Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number.

Item G, Location of Services

If you will be providing services in additional or different locations, an Addendum Information Sheet should be completed for each additional or different office location that your organization wants to be listed publicly for beneficiaries to access through the online EN Directory at: www.yourtickettowork.com. Please fill out one addendum for EACH different location (See Section 3, page 73 of the RFP).

- ☐ **CCR**
Using your DUNS, your CCR registration must be in an “active” status before an award can be made and during the contract performance period. You may check on your CCR status (using the search function) or register your DUNS number by visiting: www.ccr.gov.
- ☐ **EN Payment System Election**
The EN will be paid in accordance with the payment system elected in its proposal. The two payment system options are Outcome and Outcome/



Milestone. SSA allows an EN to change its payment system once every 12 months. Any change in the elected EN payment system will apply to Ticket assignments after the EN changes its elected payment system. The EN's earlier elected payment system will continue to apply to all Tickets assigned prior to the change in election. An EN cannot unassign or have a beneficiary unassign his/her Ticket in order to circumvent this rule.

For more information on selecting an EN payment system, check out the Frequently Asked Questions Chapter of this handbook.

☐ **EN Qualifications Requirements Documentation**

You must demonstrate your qualifications to become an EN by submitting with your EN proposal one (1) of the items listed in Part II Statement of Work, Section 1, paragraph C. For employers, proof of EN qualifications would most likely fall under option 4 in this list.

Option 4: EN Qualifications Statement and Business Plan

Please carefully read Part II Statement of Work, Item C, Submitting Proof of EN Qualifications for the requirements of this business plan. The qualifications statement must clearly demonstrate the applicant's expertise and/or experience in providing employment services. It must include the following information:

- How the Offeror will recruit beneficiaries;
- The types of beneficiaries who will be recruited;
- The services to be provided beneficiaries;
- An explanation of how the Offeror's services will enable beneficiaries to maximize their economic self-sufficiency and advance to sustained, self-supporting employment;
- Time frame for setting up EN operations;
- Goal for the number of Ticket assignments accepted in the first and second years of operations;
- Estimated revenue that will be generated from the Ticket program during that time frame; and
- Revenue sources outside the Ticket program (considering that SSA pays ENs only when a beneficiary achieves certain work-related Milestones and/or Outcomes).

☐ **Proof of Liability Insurance**

Please attach a copy of the insurance certificate with your EN application. Make sure the name on the insurance policy is the same name as the one on the EN application.

Section 3

☐ **EN Information Sheet (Addendum)** (page 74)

Complete only if you will be providing services in multiple locations (see item G on page 65), and wish the additional locations to appear in the EN Directory found at: www.yourtickettowork.com.

Section 4

☐ **Standard Form 3881, ACH Vendor/Miscellaneous Payment Enrollment Form** (page 76)

Please remember to complete Payee/Company Information and Financial Institution Information sections. The shaded signature block at the bottom of the form must be signed by the bank official. The ACH Vendor/Miscellaneous Payment Enrollment Form must be completed and submitted with your proposal to allow SSA to direct payments electronically to your designated bank account. We recommend that an official of your company's financial institution complete the Financial Institution Section of this form.

Under the portion of the form entitled Financial Institution Information, the "Depositor Account Title" is the name that should appear on the account. This should be the same name as the one on the EN application.

The information you provide on this form is for government use only to facilitate the electronic payment from SSA to the EN contractor and will not be released to entities outside of MAXIMUS (the OSM for the Ticket program), SSA, or your designated financial institution. The representations and certifications contain grey shaded areas that do not need to be completed.

Section 5

☐ **Offeror Representations and Certifications** (pages 77 through 90)

Complete all requested information. If you have completed your annual representations and certifications electronically, please complete and submit paragraph (b) on page 79.

Submitting Your RFP

Electronically/Fax Combined: The fastest, most efficient and preferred way to submit the RFP is to complete all of the applicable sections of the RFP in Word, save the document, and email it to: ENContracts@ssa.gov. Then fax your supporting documentation (e.g., signature pages, proof of EN qualifications, proof of liability insurance, and the suitability forms) to (410)597-0429.

Electronically: Another option is to complete all of the applicable sections of the RFP and save them electronically. Then put the entire package together, including the supporting documentation (e.g., proof of EN qualifications and



proof of liability insurance), scan the complete package, save it and email it to: ENContracts@ssa.gov.

TIP: If you do not have a high quality scanner, go to an office supply house or copy center and request that they scan the entire document for you and save it to a CD or jump/thumb drive. Then you can email it from your computer to: ENContracts@ssa.gov.

Fax: As an alternative if you are unable to submit the completed RFP electronically, you may fax the completed RFP and supporting documents to (410) 597-0429.

Mail: It is not advisable to submit your application by mail as it can significantly delay the processing of the application.

Once you have completed and submitted your EN application using one of the two recommended methods described above, Social Security's EN Contracts Team is available to explain the EN contract award process and provide technical support with any items missing from your EN RFP. To contact the EN Contracts Team, email: ENContracts@ssa.gov.

How Are Ticket Payments Processed?

Milestone & Outcome Payments are requested by submitting the EN Payment Request Form (found at: www.yourtickettowork.com/payment_options) and documentation of a Ticket Holder's work and earnings. There are three ways to document earnings.

Option 1: Evidentiary Payment Request (EPR)

When you use the EPR method, supporting documentation that constitutes direct evidence of earnings must accompany an Evidentiary Payment Request (EPR). Direct evidence of earnings include pay stubs, employer-prepared/signed earnings statements, and records of monthly earnings that can be accessed for some individuals through The Work Number, an income verification service found at: www.theworknumber.com.

Option 2: Certification Payment Request (CPR)

Documentation that must accompany a Certification Payment Request (CPR), which includes a statement of agreement to repay, includes:

- A recent, dated contact with beneficiary/employer, or
- An Earnings Inquiry Request (EIR) response showing earnings of 3 times the SGA amount for the quarter, or
- Information from the National Directory of New Hires (NDNH), or
- A Self-Employment Income (SEI) Form.

Option 3: Auto-Pay

SSA has developed an Auto-Pay option that uses data from the National Database on New Hires (NDNH) and SSA's data on payment status to confirm a beneficiary's earnings and zero cash benefit status (i.e., the criteria used to trigger Outcome payments). This option is currently only available for Outcome payments 13 and beyond. Any EN that chooses to use this option must sign and submit a "blanket repayment agreement" for those instances when SSA makes a payment to an EN and later finds that the criteria for the payment had not been met. To learn more about the Auto-Pay option and to download the Auto-Pay Form, go to: www.yourtickettowork.com/payment_options.

For complete Ticket payment and payment request information, check out "The Ticket to Work Payment Request Guide: Reference Guide for ENs and State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies" This guide and a copy of the EN Payment Request Form can be found at: www.yourtickettowork.com.



Splitting EN Payments

Partnerships are being formed between and among service providers and employers. Similar to State VR agencies, some ENs have established partnerships with local employers (both large and small) with whom they have a history of successful job placements. Although Partnership Plus is not a funding option when two or more ENs provide services to the same Ticket Holder, ENs sometimes split EN payments. This can be done based on a written agreement that spells out how EN payments will be split. If no such agreement exists, MAXIMUS can provide guidance and make recommendations as to how EN payment might be split based on the services provided by each EN and how those services contributed to the Ticket Holder's achievement of specific Milestone and Outcome payments.

Social Security Beneficiaries and the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)

Your business may take advantage of the WOTC and the SSA's Ticket program at the same time. By accessing both programs, it is possible for your company to generate up to \$7,100 in the first 12 months for each new hire who meets both programs' specific criteria.

The WOTC is a Federal tax credit that reduces the Federal tax liability of tax-paying organizations that hire individuals from certain targeted groups. These employers may have their Federal taxes reduced by up to \$2,400 for each qualified employee with a disability and up to \$4,800 for qualified veterans with disabilities in their first year of work. Social Security beneficiaries described below may qualify their employers for the WOTC.

First, SSDI and SSI beneficiaries who are clients of a State VR agency, or who assigned their Tickets to an EN and are referred to the employer upon completion of (or while receiving) services through the State VR agency under an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), or from an EN under an Individual Work Plan (IWP) may qualify their employers for the WOTC.

Second, SSI recipients who received SSI benefits for any month ending within the 60-day period ending on the hiring date (the day the individual is hired by the employer) may qualify their employer for the WOTC.

"Hiring date" means the date that a definite oral or written agreement to employ is reached between a job seeker and a prospective employer.

Most Ticket Holders will qualify their employers for the WOTC.

NOTE: An individual is not considered a member of a targeted group for purposes of WOTC unless the designated local agency certifies him or her as a member. The designated local agency is the State Employment Security Agency now sometimes called the State Workforce Agency. Also, there are other requirements which must be met before an employer can claim a tax credit for hiring a member of a targeted group.

Internet sites providing information about the WOTC are:

- **The United States Department of Labor:**
www.doleta.gov/business/incentives/opptax/
- **Internal Revenue Service:**
www.irs.gov/publications/p954/index.html
or call 1-800-829-3676.





Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

In completing the EN RFP, the application asks for EN Qualifications. What documentation can our organization provide to show our qualification to become an EN?

For an employer, the best documentation to submit as the EN qualifications would be the fourth option in the EN RFP, i.e., an EN Qualifications Statement and Business Plan, listed in Part II Statement of Work, Item C, Submitting Proof of EN Qualifications. The business plan must describe how the business will operate as an EN, what type of employment opportunities will be provided, support services that are available, and include items such as:

- How the business will recruit beneficiaries (Beneficiary Referral CD, internal marketing, partnerships with community-based organizations, etc);
- The services to be provided to beneficiaries who are hired;
- The time frame for setting up EN operations;
- A goal for the number of Ticket assignments accepted in the first and second years of operations; and
- The estimated revenue that will be generated from the Ticket program during that time frame (see www.cessi.net/en_estimator to estimate the revenue your organization can potentially generate from the Ticket program).

What if a company has multiple offices?

As long as all offices operate under one federal Employer Identification Number (EIN), you may include the additional offices in Part IV, Section 3, Information Sheet. Note, the company may not provide services/employment to Ticket Holders at its headquarters/main office, so therefore, in Section 3, Item E, the address of the physical location where Ticket Holders will receive services/employment can be listed. Then in Item F, the headquarters/main office address can be provided.

Preferred Impairment Groups Served?

Given that each position in my organization has its own unique skills and abilities, how should my company determine which “Preferred Impairment Groups” to target for serves/employment?

This applies to service organizations who only work with a specific population based on specialty areas and/or resources available to them. As an employer, you would not want to exclude anyone and instead base your decision to consider/interview/hire on a Ticket Holder’s skills and abilities.



How will we know who is a beneficiary in our area?

A Beneficiary Referral CD is available to approved ENs; however, the EN must first go through SSA's suitability determination and background check procedures prior to requesting this monthly CD that is customized for your EN.

Will our company be deluged with phone calls from beneficiaries seeking employment?

If you are concerned about receiving unsolicited calls from beneficiaries looking for employment and/or services, you may list the qualifications associated with the employment opportunities your organization offers (i.e., under the section in the RFP where you provide the EN Directory contact information) or you can opt out of having your organization's contact information listed in the EN Directory found on the MAXIMUS website (www.yourtickettowork.com). Please see Part IV, Section 2, in the EN RFP for more directions on how to list your EN in the directory.

Which payment option should my company select?

There are two payment options: Outcome and Outcome/Milestone. Although your organization must select a payment option when you first sign the EN contract, you are allowed to change that payment option once a calendar year. Tickets that are assigned under a particular payment option must remain under that option even if your organization elects to change its payment option at a later day. Which payment option you choose depends on your organization's pay scale and the types of positions for which you are likely to hire Ticket Holders.

If your organization pays well and Ticket Holders are likely to be hired in positions where they will be earning above the applicable SGA level (i.e., in 2009, \$980/month if the Ticket Holder is not blind or \$1,640/month if the Ticket Holder is blind) at the on-set or shortly after accepting a position, if your organization tends to hire only people with previous work experience, or if your organization hires individuals who are being placed by the State VR agency, you may want to consider the Outcome payment system. Although you may have to wait a number of months before a Ticket Holder enters the "zero cash benefit status" that triggers Outcome payments, the total potential payments under the Outcome payment system are 10 percent higher than the total potential payments under the Outcome/Milestone payment system. In addition, when your organization elects the Outcome payment system, there is no potential loss of Phase 1 Milestone payments (e.g., based on a Ticket Holder's recent work history or based on the State VR agency serving the Ticket Holder first and placing that Ticket Holder with your organization).

On the other hand, if your organization offers lower paying jobs or if your organization needs the revenue generated by the Ticket program as soon as possible, you will probably want to choose the Outcome/Milestone payment system. This payment option offers more upfront monies and, assuming there

is no recent work history and the State VR agency did not close the Ticket Holder's case after placing him/her in employment, the EN payments can begin with Phase 1, Milestone 1 when the Ticket Holder earns \$350 in a calendar month. The expectation is that the Ticket Holder will continue working, but at a minimum, at the Trial Work level (\$700 in 2009) and that the EN will subsequently continue submitting for Phase 1 Milestone payments.

Are there additional resources available to assist my company in understanding the business case for hiring people with disabilities and to learn about disability etiquette, job accommodations, and/or success stories?

The following websites are excellent resources for employers on hiring people with disabilities:

- www.earnworks.com/docs/FactSheets/Employer/FS-ER-Communicating.pdf
Read about Affirmative Phrases and Negative Phrases: Positive choice of language reflects your recognition of the individuality, equality and dignity of a person with a disability.
- www.earnworks.com/employers/success/employer.asp:
Learn from other companies such as Sears, Marriott, Manpower, and IBM who share their stories about hiring people with disabilities on this link.
- www.earnworks.com/BusinessCase/index.asp:
Read the business case of benefits to hiring people with disabilities including return on investment, human capital, value in the marketplace and workplace, product and service innovation.
- www.jan.wvu.edu/
The Job Accommodation Network, JAN, is a service provided by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). JAN's mission is to facilitate the employment and retention of workers with disabilities by providing employers, employment providers, people with disabilities and their family members, and other interested parties with information on job accommodations, entrepreneurship, and related subjects. JAN represents the most comprehensive resource for job accommodations available.





Resources Available, SSA Contacts and Others Who Provide Technical Assistance

Where to Get Help: Participating in the Ticket Program

Exploratory Phase: Considering Becoming an EN

CESSI, the Program Manager for Recruitment and Outreach for the Ticket program, can answer questions, assist with the application process, and help a potential EN connect with local organizations or potential partners. CESSI Account Managers are assigned to ENs based on geographic regions of the country or by area of expertise, e.g., employers.

To get individualized EN application technical assistance, contact CESSI: 1-877-743-8237 (v/tty). To sign up for an EN Application Walk-Through, e-mail: application@cessi.net.

Responding to the Request for Proposal (RFP): Becoming an EN

The EN application, or RFP, can be downloaded at: www.ssa.gov/work/enrfp.html. CESSI Account Managers are available to conduct courtesy pre-submission reviews of completed applications. These reviews ensure that all of the required information is obtained prior to submission. This greatly reduces errors and omissions that can delay an EN's approval. If questions remain after talking with a CESSI Account Manager, SSA's Employment Network Contracts Team (ENCT) can provide answers about the EN RFP, explain the EN contract award process in detail, and assist with the EN application. Contact SSA's ENCT: 1-866-584-5180 (v), 1-866-584-5181 (tty), or e-mail: encontracts@ssa.gov.

Starting Operations: Developing and Implementing Your Business Model and Accepting Tickets

After an EN is approved, the CESSI Account Manager will connect the EN with a corresponding Regional Account Representative at MAXIMUS, the Operations Support Manager for the Ticket program.

MAXIMUS offers a wide array of training and support services (e.g., sample Individual Work Plan) to help get ENs started and operating as part of the Ticket program:

- **Ticket Training Tuesdays:** www.yourtickettowork.com/training

Interactive training modules are designed to assist ENs with the fundamentals of working within the Ticket program. These calls offer a great opportunity to train new and existing staff and to network with fellow ENs and EN Ambassadors to share tips and promising practices.



The “Ticket Training Tuesdays” calls begin at 1:00 PM ET. To join the calls, simply dial 1-800-480-6924 and provide the participant code: “Ticket to Work” and your name and contact information to the operator. You can download teleconference materials at: www.yourtickettowork.com. There is no need to pre-register. This training series is also available for free on CD-Rom. To request a CD, email: ENOperations@yourtickettowork.com. Simply provide your name, address and desired quantity.

For more information on Ticket Training Tuesdays, please contact MAXIMUS at 1-866-949-ENVR (3687).

- **Enhanced EN Directory Listing (Notes Field)**

An enhanced EN Directory listing is available with a text message to further define services and advertise additional services, partners, or accomplishments. Text messages can be up to 270 characters in length and will appear beneath the organization’s name on the EN Directory that is mailed to beneficiaries and available at: www.yourtickettowork.com.

- **Beneficiary CD**

Information on each beneficiary listed on these monthly CDs includes the name, address, phone number, date of birth, limited work history (i.e., a yes/no response), last two digits of the beneficiary’s Social Security Number, and, where applicable, contact information for the beneficiary’s legal guardians/representative payee. Each CD is customized to address beneficiaries who live within the designated geographic area that the EN has listed as its service delivery area. These CDs are only available to ENs that have completed the SSA required suitability determination and security clearance procedures. The CD is provided to the EN to help the EN market its services to Ticket-eligible beneficiaries in its service area. The CD is intended for internal use only and information contained on the CD cannot be shared with individuals outside the EN.

For more information on how to obtain the Beneficiary CD, contact your Account Representative at MAXIMUS by calling 1-866-949-ENVR or 1-866-833-2967 (tty), or visit the MAXIMUS website at: www.yourtickettowork.com.