

WHEN you **CHOOSE** to use your Ticket:

- ❑ **Understand the rules of the different programs from which you receive public benefits and then determine how income from work will impact:**
 - Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and/or Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
 - Adult Public Assistance
 - Veterans Benefits
 - Medicare
 - Medicaid
 - Housing
 - State, County or Municipal Benefits, such as, Food Stamps, Cash Assistance, Housing, or Transportation Assistance

- ❑ **Meet with Benefits Planning, Assistance and Outreach programs to answer the above questions:**
 - SSA Benefit Planning Assistance and Outreach Project:
Ken Hamrick – UAA Center for Human Development – 272-8270
ankeh1@uaa.alaska.edu

 - For training, technical assistance or to discuss benefit planning options:
Call Jennifer Jones – Alaska Works Initiative - UAA Center for Human Development – 272-8270 – anj@uaa.alaska.edu

- ❑ **Decide whether you want to work at a level that may stop your cash benefits from Social Security:**
 - Employment Networks involved in the Ticket to Work Program only get fully paid for working with you if you work at a level that disqualifies you from receiving cash benefits from SSA. If you choose DVR as your employment network, DVR can be paid either as an EN, or by finding you employment so that you earn income at the substantial gainful activity level for nine months.

 - The Social Security Administration (SSA) has a number of employment supports to allow beneficiaries to test their ability to work and become gradually self-supporting and independent, while they continue to receive their cash benefits. You can find out more about this when you meet with a benefits planner from the Benefits Planning, Assistance and Outreach programs, mentioned above.

❑ **Determine what employment services you will need in order to go to work at a level where you will eventually become ineligible for cash benefits:**

- Determining a Vocational Goal
- Career Exploration
- Education or further training
- Interviewing Skills
- Job Development
- Transportation
- Assistive Technology
- Job Coach
- Professional, Peer or Natural Supports to help you to keep the job

❑ **Find the Employment Networks in Your Area**

- Call Maximus, the Program Manager, at 866-968-7842 or check the Maximus website at www.yourtickettowork.com.
- Request a listing of all the Employment Networks serving individuals in your geographical area. Make sure to request a listing of all the networks and ask them to mail the list to you.

❑ **Find the Employment Networks in your Area**

- **Exercise Your Right to Choose Who Will Serve You!**
- Call all of the Employment Networks in your area. Some EN's may traditionally serve individuals with certain types of disabilities. However, under the Ticket to Work Program, most of these EN's have shown an interest in serving people with disabilities that they have not traditionally served.
- Ask to speak to a staff person dealing with the Ticket to Work Program and tell them that you have a Ticket and may be interested in placing your Ticket with them.
- You will be asked a series of questions to find out more about you and your employment goals. They will be trying to determine if the services they offer match your needs.
- Take this opportunity to discuss your employment goals and ask them questions about their services and how they can help you reach your goals.

- You want to pick the EN that you feel comfortable working with and that you believe can best serve you and help you reach your goals.
- Don't be discouraged if an EN decides not to accept your ticket. There may be many reasons why the EN chooses not to work with you and it may have nothing to do with your ability to work. This is why it is important for you to contact all the EN's serving your area.
- **All EN's have the right to choose not to work with you just as you have the right to choose not to work with them. If you decide to take your ticket to ORS, they will decide if you are eligible to receive services from them under the Rehabilitation Act.**

□ **Choose an Employment Network**

- If you and the EN agree to work together towards your employment goals then together you will both create an Individualized Work Plan (IWP).
- This IWP spells out exactly what the EN will do and what you will do to get employed.
- **PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROCESS!**
- You have the power to decide with the EN what this plan will say, and to change or modify this plan so that it is satisfactory to you!
- **Your Ticket is not officially placed with the EN until this plan is submitted to Maximus! It cannot be submitted without your approval!**
- If you cannot agree with the EN on a plan, you can try to place your Ticket with another EN.

□ **Work Toward Your Goal**

- Once your Ticket is assigned, concentrate on following your IWP.
- SSA will not conduct a Continuing Disability Review to determine if you are still disabled, as long as you are using your Ticket.

□ **Understand your Responsibilities under the Ticket to Work Program**

- SSA will measure your progress under the IWP to see if you are using your Ticket.

- There is no requirement to work during the first twenty-four months of the Plan. You are only required to actively follow your IWP with the EN.
- During months 25-36 of your plan, you must earn a gross income over the SGA (\$800 in 2003) for 3 months out of a twelve-month period.
- During months 37 through 48 of your plan, you must earn a gross income over the SGA (\$800 in 2003) for 6 out of the 12 months.
- During months 49 – 60 of the plan, you must have a gross income that disqualifies you from receiving SSDI or SSI cash benefits.
- If you do not meet these goals of timely progress, it does not mean that you will be withdrawn from the Ticket to Work Program or that you will lose your benefits.
- However, if SSA decides that you have not met these goals, you could be subject to a Continuing Disability Review (CDR). If SSA decides that you are no longer disabled through this CDR, you could lose your benefits.

□ **Understand Your Right to Quality Services Under the Ticket to Work Program**

- You and the EN should be working together to reach your employment goal.
- If you are dissatisfied, you have two options:
 - ◆ First you may choose to utilize the dispute resolution system created by SSA. If your EN is the ORS, you may also exercise your right to file an appeal under their pre-existing system (the CAP Program)
 - ◆ Second, you can pull your Ticket from the EN that you assigned as your provider. If you pull your Ticket you can try to place your ticket with another EN. You can take as much time as you want to find another EN. However, after three months, SSA will consider your Ticket not in use and you may be subject to a CDR until your Ticket is placed with another EN.
- If you are dissatisfied with the services that an EN has provided to you, or are thinking about changing EN, you should call Equip for Equality, Inc. at 800-537-2632 (V) or 800-610-2779 (TTY). They will be able to assist you in using the dispute resolution system or discuss with you the positives and negatives of changing Employment Networks.

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Alternative formats are available upon request.

CHECKLIST FOR USING YOUR 'TICKET TO WORK'

**Alaska Works Initiative
(907) 272-8270, 1-800-243-2199, (907) 274-4802 Fax
2210 Arca Drive, Anchorage, AK 99507**

**Disability Law Center of Alaska
(907) 565-1002, 1-800-478-1234
3330 Arctic Blvd. Suite 103, Anchorage, AK 99503**