



Legal Aid
Society of
Hawai'i

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SSI/SSDI: Ticket to Work

Use this brochure for eligibility and application information on the Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work program.

For more information, contact Legal Aid at:

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Visit our Web site at <http://www.legalaidhawaii.org>

Ticket To Work:

Eligibility/ How to Apply

WHAT IS THE TICKET TO WORK PROGRAM?

The Ticket To Work program is operated through the Social Security Administration, and is designed to assist disabled or blind people receiving SSI and/or SSDI to return to work. The goal of the program is to help people earn enough so that they will no longer need benefits from Social Security.

THE PROGRAM IS COMPLETELY VOLUNTARY. No person is forced to participate in the Ticket to Work program, and a decision not to participate will have no effect on benefits.

- Anyone receiving SSI or SSDI benefits is entitled to a Ticket.
- The Ticket entitles the holder to employment, vocational rehabilitation or other support services.
- **YOU DO NOT NEED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE TICKET TO WORK PROGRAM TO CONTINUE RECEIVING SSI/SSDI.**

HOW DO I GET STARTED?

Every person receiving SSI or SSDI will get a “ticket” in the mail. If a recipient does not receive or loses her ticket, she can call MAXIMUS at 1-866-968-7842 (TTY 1-866-833-2967) and request a new one. MAXIMUS is a private company that is working with Social Security Administration to help disability recipients to re-enter the job market. Please note that only the beneficiary can call to request a replacement ticket. The ticket entitles the recipient to call any one of a number of organizations called Employment Networks. Employment Networks are private organizations or government agencies that have agreed to work with Social Security in providing employment services to beneficiaries. To get a list of the Employment Networks in Hawaii, a ticket recipient will need to call 1-866-968-7842 (TTY 1-866-833-2967) or go to <http://www.yourtickettowork.com>.

HOW DO I USE MY TICKET TO WORK?

When a recipient’s ticket arrives in the mail, it must be assigned to an Employment Network. Before doing this, a ticket recipient should find out what services each Employment Network offers. As each Employment Network may provide different services, recipients should consider their employment goals and which Employment Network has the resources to best help them. A recipient can do this by meeting with representatives from any number of Employment Networks. Once a recipient has found the right Employment Network, a plan will be developed which will include employment goals as well as the exact services that the Employment Network will provide to meet those goals. The plan should also explain the recipient’s rights under the program including the recipient’s ability to take back the ticket to work should the services be unsatisfactory. Once the plan is completed and signed, you have “assigned” the ticket.

WHAT IF I BECOME UNHAPPY WITH THE EMPLOYMENT NETWORK?

If the recipient becomes unhappy with the Employment Network's services, in addition to taking the ticket back and searching for another Employment Network, a recipient may file a complaint with the Employment Network, who must have a process to deal with such situations. If the recipient is not satisfied, they can then call Maximus to resolve the grievance. If Maximus cannot resolve it, Maximus will report the situation to Social Security. The Hawaii Disability Rights Center (HDRC) may also be able to assist a recipient in resolving their grievance.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I GO BACK TO WORK?

If a recipient returns to work with the assistance of the Employment Network, the recipient must report this to the Social Security Administration. Recipients may be able to receive some or all of their benefits while they test their ability to work. Various employment supports are available to both SSI and SSDI recipients.

<u>SSI Employment Supports</u>	<u>SSDI Employment Supports</u>
1. Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA)	1. Trial work period
2. General Income Exclusion	2. Substantial gainful activity level (SGA)
3. Earned Income Exclusion	3. IRWE/Subsidy and Special Conditions
4. Student child earned income exclusion	4. Extended period of Eligibility
5. IRWE	5. Continuation of Medicare
6. Blind work expenses	6. Medicare for the working disabled
7. PASS	7. Expedited Reinstatement of benefits
8. Continuation of Medicaid Eligibility	8. Recovery During Vocational Rehabilitation
9. Quick Reinstatement of Benefits	
10. Recovery During Vocational Rehabilitation	

WORKING WHILE DISABLED AND RECEIVING SSI

- **Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA).** A blind individual is eligible for SSI payments even if engaging in SGA, provided the other requirements for eligibility are met (income and resources). For all other disabilities, SGA only applies when the initial disability decision is made. After the prerequisite month is met, SSI recipients who are disabled may continue to receive payments until their countable income exceeds the SSI limits.
- **General Income exclusion.** \$20 per month of any income is excluded.
- **Earned Income exclusion.** \$65 per month of earned income plus one-half of the remaining earned income in the month is excluded.

- **Student child earned income exclusion.** For an unmarried blind or disabled child under age 22 who is a student regularly attending school, up to \$1,460 per month of earned income (but not more than \$5,910 in a calendar year) is excluded.
- **Impairment related work expense.** Certain expenses for things a person with a disability needs because of his or her impairment in order to work may be deducted when counting earnings to determine if a person is eligible and to figure the payment amount.
- **Blind work expenses.** Represents any earned income of a blind person which is used to meet any expenses reasonably attributable to earning the income.
- **Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS).** A SSI recipient who is blind or disabled may set aside income and resources toward an approved Plan for Achieving Self-Support.
- **Continuation of Medicaid Eligibility (1619B).** Medicaid may continue for SSI recipients who are blind or disabled and earn over the SSI limits if they cannot afford similar medical care and depend on Medicaid in order to work. There is a “Threshold test” and a “Medicaid use test”

Threshold test: Cannot have earnings sufficient to replace SSI cash benefits, Medicaid benefits, and publicly-funded personal or attendant care that would be lost due to his or her earnings. SSA has computed a threshold amount for each State, however, if the individual is not eligible using the charted threshold amount they may be eligible under an individualized threshold calculation.

Medicaid use test: An individual must depend on Medicaid coverage to continue working. An individual depends on Medicaid if he or she: used Medicaid coverage within the past 12 months; or expects to use Medicaid coverage in the next 12 months; or would be unable to pay unexpected medical bills in the next 12 months without Medicaid.

- **Expedited Reinstatement of benefits.** Within 60 months from the month of termination of benefits due to work, if the individual is unable to work because of the same medical condition, they can file a request for reinstatement of benefits. While Social Security is making a new determination, the individual may receive up to six months of provisional benefits, including Medicare and Medicaid, as appropriate.
- **Recovery During Vocational Rehabilitation.** If a person recovers while participating in a vocational rehabilitation program that is likely to lead to becoming self-supporting, benefits may continue until the program ends (Section 301 benefits).

WORKING WHILE DISABLED AND RECEIVING SSDI

- **Trial work period.** A period of nine months (not necessarily consecutive) in a rolling 60 consecutive month period when earnings of a Social Security beneficiary who is blind or disabled will not affect his or her benefit. Effective 01/2006 months with earnings of more than \$620 are counted as trial work months.
- **Substantial gainful activity level (SGA).** \$860 a month effective 01/2006 for people who are disabled, \$1,450 a month for people who are blind.

- **Impairment related work expense (IRWE)/Subsidy and Special Conditions.** Things a person with a disability needs because of his/her impairment in order to work are impairment related work expenses and may be deducted when counting earnings to determine if the person is performing substantial gainful activity. Subsidy and Special Conditions are also considered to determine SGA and are supports received on the job such as job coaching, extra supervision, and fewer or simpler tasks, these may be provided by the employer or a third party.
- **Extended period of Eligibility.** For three years after a trial work period, a Social Security beneficiary who is blind or disabled may receive a disability check for any month that his/her earnings are below the substantial gainful activity level.
- **Continuation of Medicare.** If Social Security disability payments stop because of substantial gainful activity, but the person is still disabled, Medicare can continue for at least 93 months after the trial work period. Hospital Insurance (HI/Part A) is free, however a premium is required for Supplemental Medical Insurance (SMI/Part B) unless the State is paying the premium.
- **Medicare for the working disabled.** After the 93- month period of continuation of Medicare, the individual loses free Hospital Insurance. However, for as long as they continue to have a disabling impairment, a disabled individual who loses premium-free HI solely because they are working may enroll in hospital insurance only or hospital and medical insurance by paying monthly premiums. They may qualify for a reduced hospital insurance premium and/or the State may pay for their hospital insurance if they meet the criteria.
- **Expedited Reinstatement of benefits.** Within 60 months from the month of termination of benefits due to work, if the individual is unable to work because of the same medical condition, they can file a request for reinstatement of benefits. While Social Security is making a new determination, the individual may receive up to six months of provisional benefits, including Medicare and Medicaid, as appropriate.
- **Recovery During Vocational Rehabilitation.** If a person recovers while participating in a vocational rehabilitation program that is likely to lead to becoming self-supporting, benefits may continue until the program ends (Section 301 benefits).