

THE TICKET TO WORK AND WORK INCENTIVES IMPROVEMENT ACT (TWWIIA)

The Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 was enacted on Dec. 17, 1999. This law:

- increases beneficiary choice in obtaining rehabilitation and vocational services to help them go to work and attain their employment goals;
- removes barriers that require people with disabilities to choose between health care coverage and work; and
- assures that more Americans with disabilities have the opportunity to participate in the workforce and lessen their dependence on public benefits.

TICKET TO WORK PROGRAM

Qualified Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients receive a "ticket" in the mail. They may use their ticket to obtain vocational rehabilitation, employment or other support services from an approved provider of their choice to help them go to work and achieve their employment goals. The Ticket to Work Program is voluntary. The program was phased in nationally over a three-year period which began in 2002

EXPANDED AVAILABILITY OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES

The law allows States to provide Medicaid coverage to more people who are still working. States also may permit working individuals with income above 250 percent of the federal poverty level to purchase Medicaid coverage. This provision creates an experiment in which medical assistance will be provided to workers with impairments who are not yet too disabled to work.

In January of 2005, Oklahoma Health Care Authority began developing a Medicaid Buy-In for "qualified" working persons that have a disability under a proposed 1115a/HIFA Waiver. If the Waiver is approved by the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare, Oklahomans with disabilities that have employment earnings may access assistance for monthly premiums for health care insurance.

The law also expands Medicare coverage to people with disabilities who work. It extends Part A premium-free coverage for at least four and-a-half years beyond the current limit (39 months) for most Social Security disability beneficiaries who work. This is a minimum for 8 1/2 years for most Social Security disability beneficiaries who work.

EXPEDITED REINSTATEMENT OF BENEFITS

Effective January 1, 2001, the law allows another option for regaining entitlement to benefits when SSA previously terminated your entitlement to disability benefits due to work activity. The expedited reinstatement provision provides the option of requesting that prior entitlement to disability benefits, including Medicare and Medicaid, if applicable, be reinstated rather than filing a new application for a new period of entitlement. Beneficiaries must be unable to work because of their medical condition. They must file the request for reinstatement with Social Security within 60 months from the month their benefits are terminated. In addition, they may receive temporary benefits - as well as Medicare or Medicaid - for up to six months while their case is being reviewed. If they are found not disabled, these benefits would not be considered an overpayment.

DEFERRAL OF MEDICAL DISABILITY REVIEWS

Effective January 1, 2001, an individual who is "using a ticket" will not be subject to regularly scheduled continuing disability medical reviews. However, benefits can still be terminated if earnings are above the limits. Also, Social Security disability beneficiaries who have been receiving benefits for at least 24 months will not be medically reviewed solely because of work activity. However, regularly scheduled medical reviews can still be performed and, again, benefits terminated if earnings are above the limits.

WORK INCENTIVES ADVISORY PANEL

The law establishes a Work Incentives Advisory Panel within Social Security, composed of 12 members appointed by the President and Congress. The panel is to advise the Commissioner and report to Congress on implementation of the Ticket to Work Program. At least one-half of the panel members are required to be individuals with disabilities or representatives of individuals with disabilities, with consideration given to current or former Social Security disability beneficiaries.

THE TICKET TO WORK AND WORK INCENTIVES IMPROVEMENT ACT (TWWIIA), cont. . .

The law establishes a Work Incentives Advisory Panel within Social Security, composed of 12 members appointed by the President and Congress. The panel is to advise the Commissioner and report to Congress on implementation of the Ticket to Work Program. At least one-half of the panel members are required to be individuals with disabilities or representatives of individuals with disabilities, with consideration given to current or former Social Security disability beneficiaries.

WORK INCENTIVES OUTREACH PROGRAM

The law directs Social Security to establish a community based work incentives planning and assistance program to disseminate accurate information about work incentives and to give beneficiaries more choice. Social Security has established a program of cooperative agreements and contracts to provide benefits planning and assistance to all Social Security disability beneficiaries, including information about the availability of protection and advocacy services. For Oklahoma Benefits and Planning Assistance Project Contact:

Northeast Oklahoma Ability Resources
Tulsa, OK
(918) 592-1235 (TDD)
(800) 722-0886 (TDD)

Northwest Oklahoma
National Association for Mental Illness (NAMI)-
Oklahoma
Oklahoma City, OK
(405) 230-1900
(800) 583-1264

Southern Oklahoma Progressive Independence
Norman, OK
(405) 321-3203 (TDD)
(800) 801-3203 (TDD)

Statewide
Oklahoma Benefits Planning & Assistance Project
(405) 325-8310 (TDD)
(866) 608-8873 (TDD)

PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY

The law authorizes Social Security to make payments to protection and advocacy systems established in each State to provide information, advice and other services to disability beneficiaries. For Oklahoma protection and advocacy services contact:

Oklahoma Disability Law Center
2828 E. 51st Street, Suite 302
Tulsa, OK 74105
(918) 743-6220 (V/TDD)
(800) 266-5883 (V/TDD)

Oklahoma Disability Law Center
2915 Classen Blvd.
300 Cameron Bldg.
Oklahoma City, OK 73106
(405) 525-7555 (V/TDD)
(800) 880-7755 (V/TDD)

For information on Employment Networks contact:

MAXIMUS
(866) 968-7842
(866) 833-2967 (TDD)

For more information on the provision of the Ticket to Work contact:

Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services
3535 NW 58th St. Suite 500
Oklahoma City, OK 73112
(405) 951-3400
(800) 845-8476