



Disability Services: Structure and Funding

Section Purpose

Provide One-Stop staff a basic understanding of the disability service structure, and various disability funding agencies, to assist them in their efforts to meet the needs of people with disabilities by utilizing the full range of services that are available

Section Contents

- A) **The Disability Service System - A Basic Overview:** A summary of the various agencies and service structures serving people with disabilities
- B) **The Supported Employment Model:** A summary of supported employment, which has proven to be a successful model for assisting individuals with more significant disabilities to become employed, through the availability of ongoing supports
- C) **Funding Sources for Disability Services:** A summary of the various funding sources that can be utilized to fund services for people with disabilities
- D) **The Ticket to Work Program and One-Stop Systems:** A summary of the new Ticket-to-Work Program, which One-Stop Systems could potentially utilize as a funding source for serving people with disabilities

The Disability Service System: A Basic Overview

The disability service system can seem confusing; however, it can be divided into two basic categories: public and private agencies.

Public Agencies

In most states, public disability agencies involved in employment include:

- public Vocational Rehabilitation (a mandated One-Stop system partner)
- Agency for Blind and Visually Impaired - (part of the public Vocational Rehabilitation [VR] system - may be housed within VR agency or function as a separate, co-equal department, and is a One-Stop system partner)
- a Department of Mental Health
- a Department of Developmental Disabilities/Mental Retardation

States and local areas may have other public disability agencies as well. While the structure varies significantly from state to state, in general these public agencies operate in two ways:

1. They provide services directly to individuals who qualify for their services
2. They fund community organizations (typically private, non-profit agencies) and private contractors to provide services to individuals.

Public agencies have various funding streams, programs, and contracting mechanisms. One-Stop Centers may find it useful to become familiar not only with the public agencies in their local area, but the various mechanisms they use to fund services.

Additionally,

- the Social Security Administration funds employment services for people with disabilities through a number of mechanisms (and is expanding its role in this area).
- the Veteran's Administration provides services for veterans with disabilities.

Private Agencies

A variety of private agencies provide employment-related services to individuals with disabilities. The major funding source for these agencies is typically one or more of the public disability agencies. (Other sources are the federal government, private foundations, charitable contributions, and user fees). These organizations vary considerably in size, type of services, quality of services, and population served. For example, some agencies focus exclusively on employment, while others offer a wide variety of services, such as non-employment daytime activities, housing and family support. Some agencies focus on one population group (such as individuals with developmental disabilities), while others serve people with a variety of disabilities. These community based organizations go by many different names, but some of the more typical ones are:

- Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs)
- Supported Employment Programs
- Employment Service Providers
- Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services (for individuals with mental health issues)
- Club Houses (a program for people with mental health issues)

In addition to private agencies which provide employment services, there are a number of other private entities which provide a wide range of support services for people with disabilities, such as Independent Living Centers.

Administrative Structure

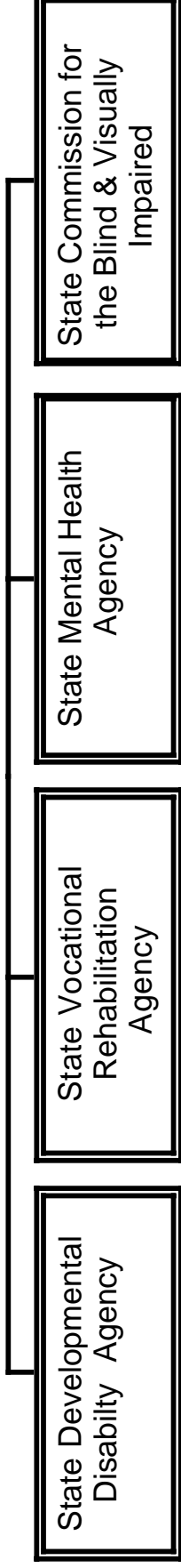
States administer disability services in a wide variety of ways, and different agencies within a state may use different administrative structures. In some cases, agencies have a central office, with a network of local offices throughout the state. Services may also be administered at a county level, possibly through a county mental health or public health department. Case management and service coordination is also handled in a variety of ways. This may be done by a public agency, or it may be handled by a private agency under contract with the state or county. Local One-Stop systems are advised to become familiar with the administrative structure of services within their local areas.

Community Employment vs. Facility-Based Programming

Over the past fifteen to twenty years, there has been an increasing emphasis on community employment as the preferred outcome for disability services. At one time, agencies that provided adult services for people with disabilities were almost exclusively focused on facility-based programming, where people with disabilities stayed together in a building as a group, and did sub-contract work for companies (typically assembly work done at a piece rate), work related activities (such as vocational assessments), and non-work activities. While facility-based programs such as sheltered workshops, day activity centers, adult training centers, and similar entities still exist, many of these programs have been either totally or partially been shifting their resources towards assisting individuals to find employment in the community. The disability service system has consistently shown that people who were considered “unemployable” outside of a facility-based program, can work successfully in the community, and the number of people with disabilities working in the community continues to steadily increase. The One-Stop system can support and be part of this movement away from facility-based programming, and towards employment in the community as the preferred outcome for people with disabilities.

THE DISABILITY SERVICE SYSTEM - EMPLOYMENT

STATE AGENCIES (Provide services & contract for services)



Private providers are mainly funded by contracts with state agencies.

PRIVATE PROVIDERS

- Employment Programs (Supported Employment, Supported Work, Competitive Employment)
- Day Programs
- Sheltered Employment
- Day Activity Centers
- Psycho-Social Rehab. Programs
- Clubhouses
- Adult Training Centers
- Day Habilitation

Social Security Administration

Provides some funding to VR. & private providers
People w/disabilities may also use Social Security Work Incentives (PASS & IRWE) to pay for services

Veterans Administration

Operates services for veterans with disabilities

SCHOOL DISTRICTS: provide funding & services for individuals moving from school to adult life (14-22)

The Supported Employment Model

What is Supported Employment?

Supported Employment is competitive employment for individuals with disabilities in integrated work settings with ongoing training and ongoing support provided on and/or off the job site as needed and requested by the worker with a disability or the employer. Much of the progress in employment of people with significant disabilities has resulted from techniques learned in Supported Employment.

How is Supported Employment different from other vocational programs for individuals with disabilities?

Traditional day programs (such as sheltered workshops) emphasize getting individuals “ready” for employment before placement on a job. Supported Employment presumes that individuals are “ready”, even if they need additional support.

- Positions are matched to an individual’s specific interests and needs.
- The individual learns the necessary skills on the job site, and is able to meet an employer’s specific needs. The transferability of skills from facility-based work training programs for people with significant disabilities has often been limited.
- A customized support system is developed to enable the individual to succeed long-term on the job.
- Employers have a resource available to them to assist with any issues that may arise

Why would someone use these services?

Supported Employment enables a person with more significant support needs to work at a regular job in the community alongside people who don’t have disabilities.

Who provides Supported Employment services?

Supported employment services are provided by private human service agencies (often known as community rehabilitation providers) and public agencies. Private agencies are usually funded by state agencies; mechanisms vary from state-to-state. Individuals can also use Social Security Work Incentives to pay for services (see section 9, “Social Security”) or pay out of their own funds.

How is support provided?

Once the person with a disability has been hired for a position, a rehabilitation agency staff member called an Employment Specialist (also called a Job Coach or Employment Consultant) works in partnership with the business on methods for training and supporting the individual. (Much of the groundwork for this is done prior to the individual’s start date). Emphasis is placed both on learning the tasks of the job, and integrating the person into the social fabric of the workplace culture. Training methods that the Job Coach or Employment Specialist can use with the employer and individual, can include:

- Demonstrating or modeling of tasks and behavior
- Using verbal or physical prompts
- Breaking down tasks into individual components
- Redesigning tasks and techniques
- Teaching various self-management techniques

- Developing accommodations
- Assigning a mentor to the employee with a disability.
- For individuals with longer learning curves, performance of some tasks by the Employment Specialist in the early stages of employment, to ensure that the worker is performing tasks properly and at a sufficient rate to meet the position requirements.

The Employment Specialist may initially spend significant time at the job site. However, the intent is that the Employment Specialist will spend just enough time (and no more) to be a resource of necessary supports for the employer and individual. Excessive presence of the Employment Specialist at the job site can be an intrusion to the natural employer-employee relationship, and create a sense of dependency.

The role of the Employment Specialist depends on the specific needs of the business and the worker. The goal is for the employer to do as much of the training and support as possible, to assure integration into the work place. However, if an individual has significant challenges and needs an extended training period which is beyond the resources of the employer, the Employment Specialist may do much of the one-on-one training. Nonetheless, emphasis is placed on fostering “natural supports” and typical employer/employee relationships, to enable the business to support the individual. Self-management techniques are developed that enable the individual to perform tasks with minimal support.

Follow-Up Support

- As an individual becomes assimilated and independent on a job, the presence of agency staff on the job site gradually decreases. To assure continued success, periodic follow-up support usually continues.
- The supported employment agency is typically available for consultation on an on-going basis as requested by the employer or the individual. This consultation may include assistance with additional training or retraining.
- The level and duration of follow-up support can vary significantly, depending on the funding source and needs of the individual. In some cases, support is on-going for an extended period of time. In some instances, a low level of support consisting of periodic check-ins by the rehabilitation agency staff, is virtually permanent, in an effort to be pro-active in ensuring an ongoing, successful employment experience.

How can One-Stops use Supported Employment as a resource?

When a local One-Stop system is assisting an individual who will need long-term support, a Supported Employment provider (who has the necessary expertise) can step in. Here are some ideas on funding and finding providers of such services.

- Examine funding availability (such as ITAs) for funding short- and long-term job supports for people with disabilities. Experience and research have consistently proven that support to an individual after they have found a job is key to employment success. Determine if the One-Stop system either currently has the capacity or could identify resources to provide at least some short-term support to individuals with disabilities on the job.

- Find out who funds and provides Supported Employment and job coaching services in your area. A good place to start is the state Vocational Rehabilitation agency (a One-Stop system partner), which typically funds supported employment and job coaching services. Other options include your state or county developmental disability or mental health agency.
- Collaborate with and utilize the expertise of supported employment providers in assisting job seekers with disabilities to succeed in employment.

Further information on supported employment can be obtained from:

The Association for Persons in Supported Employment (APSE)
1627 Monument Avenue, Richmond, VA 23220
Voice: (804) 278-9187
Fax: (804) 278-9377
E-mail: apse@apse.org
Web site: www.apse.org

Funding Sources for Disability Services

Employment services for people with disabilities are funded through a variety of sources. In examining options for funding of services for people with disabilities, there are a couple of considerations that One-Stop systems should bear in mind:

- VR does not serve everyone: As a One-Stop partner, public Vocational Rehabilitation is the disability-focused agency that One-Stop staff are probably most familiar with. However, many people with disabilities are not served by this system. Individuals are often served by other public disability agencies (such as Departments of Mental Health or Developmental Disabilities/Mental Retardation) or are not connected with the disability service system at all.
- Disability agencies are not the only option: Services for people with disabilities do not necessarily have to be funded by agencies that only serve people with disabilities. People with disabilities are entitled to use services funded and operated by the same full range of agencies and organizations available through the One-Stop system as anyone else.

While it is important that One-Stop staff not automatically or only consider disability-specific funding and service options for customers with disabilities, there are a range of options available for people with disabilities with which One-Stop staff should be familiar. Familiarity with these funding sources is important for a number of reasons:

- Possible sources of funding of intensive and training services from the One-Stop system.
- Use of these sources for expertise on disability issues.
- Utilization of non-partner funding sources for help in providing services to One-Stop customers .

The specifics of how these agencies operate varies significantly from state to state, as does collaboration between agencies. In some states, a number of different agencies may collaborate to fund services for one person; in other states, a person may typically receive funding from only one agency. Also, additional resources may be available in local areas.

Vocational Rehabilitation

Each state has a Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) system, which is a mandated One-Stop partner. The VR system is funded mainly through federal funds from the Rehabilitation Services Administration, which is part of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services in the U.S. Department of Education (federal funding is supplemented by state funding). To be eligible for VR services, a person must:

- have a physical or mental impairment that is a substantial impediment to employment;
- be able to benefit from VR services in terms of employment; and
- require VR services to prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain employment.

Priority is given to people with the most significant disabilities. VR services are typically oriented towards a specific employment goal and are thus seen as time-limited in nature. An individual's case is typically closed, and funding of services is discontinued, once an individual is stable on a job for 90 days. If an individual is going to need funding for job support beyond 90 days (such as job coaching services), then another source of funding must be found for these services. A listing of state VR agencies and links is located at: www.nchrtm.okstate.edu/pages/state_VR.html

Agency for Blind and Visually Impaired

Each state has an agency that serves individuals who are blind or visually impaired. These agencies are part of the VR system, but are considered to be separate from basic VR services. They may be housed within state VR agencies or function as a separate, co-equal department. Like general VR services, the Blind/Visually Impaired Agency is a One-Stop partner and is funded by the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration. A listing of State Blind/Visually Impaired Agencies and links is located at: www.nchrtn.okstate.edu/pages/state_VR.html

Developmental Disability/Mental Retardation (DD/MR)

Each state has an agency or department that is responsible for services for people with developmental disabilities and mental retardation. The name varies from state to state - Division or Office of Developmental Disabilities, and Department or Office of Mental Retardation are typical names. In some states, it is a separate state agency or department, and in others it is a department or division within the state human service or mental health agency. Such agencies or departments fund and/or provide case management, employment and day services, residential services, and other services to assist individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. The scope of services provided and individuals served varies from state to state. DD/MR agencies are typically funded through state funds, although a substantial amount of funding for these agencies comes from Medicaid. DD/MR agencies typically provide long-term funding for individuals. A listing of state DD/MR agencies is located at: www.caccb.org/orgs/caccb/ddrc/states.htm

Mental Health Agencies

Every state has a public mental health department or agency that meets the needs of individuals with psychiatric disabilities. In some states, it is a separate state agency or department, and in others it is a department or division within a state human service agency. Mental health agencies fund and/or provide employment and day services, residential services, case management, mental health treatment (group and individual), medication management, and other support services. Mental health agencies are typically funded by a combination of state and federal funds. Services are both short-term and long-term in nature. A listing of state mental health agencies is available at: www.nasmhpd.org/members.htm

Social Security Administration

In addition to providing cash benefits to individuals with disabilities, the Social Security Administration (SSA) funds employment services.

- The Social Security system Ticket to Work program begins in January 2001, with a complete roll-out across the country by 2004. Under this new program, individuals receiving Social Security disability benefits will receive a “Ticket to Work”, to obtain services for finding employment. Details of the system are still being determined, and it will not be fully phased in across the country until 2004. However, One-Stop Centers should stay up-to-date on this new system, as One-Stops are among the organizations that can be reimbursed for services under the Ticket program. Additional information on the Ticket to Work Program is contained elsewhere in this section.

- Through the PASS (Plans for Achieving Self-Support) program, individuals can pay for employment and training services by putting aside income that would normally result in a reduction of their cash benefits. This may be an option for people with disabilities who use One-Stop Centers that have mechanisms for individuals to directly pay for services (see additional information in section 9, “Social Security Disability Benefits: The Impact of Employment”).

In addition, SSA directly reimburses public VR for service delivery.

Information on Social Security employment services is available from the Social Security Administration web site at: www.ssa.gov/work

Department of Veteran's Affairs

The Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA) Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR & E) program helps veterans with service-related disabilities by providing assistance to prepare for, obtain, and maintain suitable employment. One-Stop systems may find it worthwhile to pursue collaborative relationships with the VA to help meet the needs of veterans with disabilities. Note: The Department of Veteran's Affairs is separate from the U.S. Department of Labor Veteran's Employment and Training Program, which is a One-Stop partner. Additional information is available on the Department of Veteran's Affairs web site at: www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre/vbsvre.htm

School System Funding

Individuals with disabilities who receive special education services and have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) are entitled to funding of employment services by their school system until they turn 22 or until they graduate, whichever comes first. One-Stop systems can potentially receive funding from school systems for providing intensive and training services to students with disabilities, as long as these services are listed in the student's IEP (see additional information in section 10, “Transition and Youth Services”).

The Ticket to Work Program and One-Stop Systems

The Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act (TWWIIA) is currently in the process of being phased in. This law includes several important new opportunities for people who receive Social Security disability benefits who want to work. Among the changes is the establishment by the Social Security Administration of a new “Ticket to Work” program. This program starts in 2001 in Arizona, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Massachusetts, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, Vermont, Wisconsin. Full implementation nationwide will be completed by 2004. Under this program, people who receive Social Security disability benefits have the opportunity to use a “ticket” to obtain services to assist them to find employment, with Social Security providing payment to the vendors that provide these services. The details of how the system will operate are still being determined as of March 2001, but One-Stop Centers are among the entities that are specifically mentioned in the legislation as they types of entities that may accept this “Ticket” for provision of services to people with disabilities. The general outlines of the Ticket to Work program are as follows:

- An individual receiving Social Security disability benefits (SSI or SSDI) will receive a “ticket” which they can then use to obtain employment services from an approved “Employment Network”.
- The individual has the choice of receiving services from any approved Employment Network. Similarly, Employment Networks can decide on a case-by-case basis, whether to serve an individual under the Ticket program.
- Employment Networks consist of a wide range of entities. They can include public and private agencies and systems. They can also consist of a single entity (such as an individual One-Stop Center), or combination of entities (such as several One-Stop Centers, or a local One-Stop system working with a community rehabilitation provider or public agency).
- Under the current proposed regulations for the Ticket program, the Employment Networks receive most or all of their payments from SSA only when an individual is employed in a position where earnings are enough to reduce the individual’s cash benefits to zero. Since there are two social security disability benefit programs, the amount where cash benefits are reduced to zero, will differ depending on what social security program the individual is on. Individuals on Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) will need to have gross earnings of at least \$740 per month (2001 figure); individuals on Supplementary Security Income (SSI) could need gross earnings up to approximately \$1,150/month. (For more information on these benefits and calculations, see Section 9, “Social Security”.)
- Under the current proposed regulations, the Employment Network will receive a payment from Social Security every month that the individual does not receive cash benefits for up to 60 months (the 60 months do not have to be consecutive). Monthly payments are expected to be approximately \$170 to \$270 a month. (Please note that these are strictly estimates based on current information. The specifics of the payment system are still being finalized.)
- Proposed regulations for the Ticket Program were issued in December 2000. It is expected that final regulations will be issued sometime in mid-2001. When these final regulations are issued, specifics of the reimbursement mechanisms will be clearer. It is also expected that the reimbursement mechanisms may be modified as the program is being phased in, depending on the initial results of the Ticket Program.

How Does a One-Stop Delivery System Become an Employment Network?

- RFPs to become Employment Networks are available as of April, 2001 (remember though that the Ticket Program will not be fully phased nationally until 2004). The RFP will be published in the Commerce Business Daily, and will also be available for downloading at the Federal Government procurement web site: www.eps.gov
- You can request to be on the mailing list for the Employment Network via the web site of the Ticket Program Manager, Maximus, Inc. at: www.maximus.com/ttw/index.htm, or by calling Maximus at:
Voice: 1-866-YourTicket (1-866-968-7842); TDD: 1-866-TTD2WORK (1-866-833-2967).
- It is expected that the RFP process will be ongoing and open. One-Stop systems interested in becoming Employment Networks should not be concerned with having to submit applications by a specific deadline.

Considerations for One-Stop Systems Interested in the Ticket Program

- Stay up to date on when the Ticket Program is being implemented in your state.
- When the Ticket Program is implemented or about to be implemented in your state, the One-Stop system should determine whether they wish to participate.
- One-Stops should examine the reimbursement structure for the Ticket Program and determine if it makes fiscal sense. As currently designed, the Ticket Program will work well fiscally if an Employment Network is able to quickly assist an individual to obtain employment at an earnings level which reduces the individual's SSI/SSDI cash benefits to zero, and the individual maintains employment at that earnings level.
- One-Stop systems should determine if they wish to be Employment Networks on their own as individual centers or local systems, or whether they wish to combine with other entities to form an Employment Network.
- Key to success under the Ticket Program will be the ability of Employment Networks to assist individuals with disabilities to maintain employment. This could involve everything from a low-level of phone follow-up with the individual, quick re-placement of the individual upon job loss, to support on the job site. One-Stop systems will have to decide whether they wish to be the source of this ongoing support, or whether they wish to become an Employment Network with another entity which will provide post-placement support.
- One-Stop Centers which become Employment Networks should develop some kind of process for identifying individuals on SSI and SSDI as part of their intake process, so that the One-Stop can discuss possible participation in the Ticket Program with the individual.
- Given that Employment Networks decide on a case-by-case basis whether they wish to serve an individual under the Ticket Program, it makes sense for a One-Stop system to at least respond to the RFP for the Ticket Program. In that way, the One-Stop system is a qualified Employment Network, and has the option of serving people under the Ticket Program.
- One-Stop systems are advised to keep in contact with the Social Security Administration, to learn more about the Ticket Program. Additional information and updates are available online at: www.ssa.gov/work or by e-mail at: ttwwiia@ssa.gov

Fact Sheet - Ticket to Work Program

What is the Ticket to Work Program?

The Ticket Program is something new in the Social Security Administration (SSA). The program offers SSA disability beneficiaries greater choice in obtaining the services they need to help them go to work.

When does the Ticket Program begin?

Some beneficiaries begin to receive Tickets in 2001.

Is the Ticket Program starting everywhere at the same time?

No. During the first year of operation, 2001, the program is available only in certain States. The first states participating in the program are: Arizona, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Massachusetts, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, Vermont, Wisconsin. In the next couple of years, SSA will expand the program to other parts of the country. The program will be operating in the entire country by January 1, 2004. So, people will receive their Tickets at different times.

How will I know where the Ticket Program is available?

SSA is announcing our plans in many different places where people who receive Social Security disability benefits get information about SSA, including Social Security's Internet web site, www.ssa.gov/work

What does a Ticket look like?

The Ticket is a paper document that has some personal information and some general information about the Ticket Program.

How does a person with a disability get a Ticket?

SSA is working with an organization the law calls a Program Manager. The Program Manager, Maximus, Inc. of McLean, VA is helping SSA to manage the Ticket program. Maximus will help SSA send the Ticket in the mail with a letter explaining the program.

The responsibilities of Maximus include:

- recruitment of employment networks
- facilitation of access by beneficiaries to employment networks
- ensuring availability of adequate employment services
- ensuring reasonable access to services for people with disabilities
- operating a toll-free telephone number to answer questions about the Ticket Program
- overall administration and oversight for ongoing Ticket Program operations.

Where does a person with a disability take his/her Ticket to get services?

You take your Ticket to what the law calls an Employment Network. The Employment Networks are private organizations or public agencies that have agreed to work with Social Security to provide services under this program. One-Stop Centers are among the entities that can accept the "ticket" if they are an approved vendor.

How does a person with a disability find out about the Employment Networks?

The Program Manager, Maximus, will send people with disabilities a list of the approved Employment Networks in their local area when SSA sends you your Ticket. Employment Networks may also directly contact people with disabilities to offer their services. This information also will be available on the SSA web site and in other places.

How will people with disabilities choose an Employment Network?

People with disabilities can contact any Employment Network in their local area to see if it is the right one for them. Both the individual with a disability and the Employment Network have to agree to work together.

Can people with disabilities change Employment Networks?

Yes. People with disabilities have the right to stop working with one Employment Network and begin working with another one. Before the individual makes this decision, however, the person with a disability should make sure he/she fully understands how the Employment Network plans to help you to work.

How can I get more information about the Ticket program?

You can contact the Program Manager:

Maximus Corporation

Voice: 1-866-YOURTICKET (1-866-968-7842)

TDD: 1-866-TTD2WORK (1-866-833-2967)

Web site: www.maximus.com/ttw/index.htm

You can contact the Social Security Administration:

Voice: 1-800-772-1213

TTY: 1-800-325-0778

E-mail: ttwwiia@ssa.gov

Web site: www.ssa.gov/work

SSA will have pamphlets and other written material available at local Social Security offices.

Information about the Ticket program is also available from many other private and government organizations that help people with disabilities.

If people with disabilities get a Ticket, do they have to use it?

No. The Ticket Program is voluntary.

This information is based on a fact sheet and other information provided by the Social Security Administration and from Maximus, Inc.