

CWP Policy and Procedure Manual

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A. Purpose

To establish policy and procedures for the provision and coordination of employment support services to Social Security Disability beneficiaries who participate in the Ticket to Work (TTW) program in Connecticut's North Central Region. The TTW program offers Social Security beneficiaries with disabilities choices, opportunities and supports needed to find and keep employment, increase their earnings through work, and reduce their reliance on cash benefits to the greatest extent possible (See 20 CFR Part 411).

B. Definitions

Employment Network (EN): An employment network (EN) is any qualified entity that enters into an agreement with Social Security Administration (SSA) to function as an EN under the Ticket to Work program. Capital Workforce Partners (CWP) is a qualified employment network (EN).

Ticket Holder: Individuals age 18 through 64 who receive Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) cash benefits, or both, based on a disability that creates an impediment to work who have been deemed eligible and issued a ticket to work by the Social Security Administration.

Timely Process: Timely progress is the standard of time used to determine if a beneficiary is successfully participating in the Ticket to Work program. Timely progress means the beneficiary passes a periodic review by demonstrating he or she has completed at least a certain amount of work and/or educational activity during a 12-month period. If the beneficiary is making timely progress as defined in Regulations, Section CFR 20 411.180, SSA will not initiate a medical review for continued eligibility.

Work Incentives: Ticket to Work is part of a SSA's comprehensive work incentive package. A beneficiary can use the Ticket to Work in conjunction with other work incentives such as SSA's earned income deduction for impairment-related expenses and a nine-month trial work period.

C. Policy

As an SSA qualified employment network (EN), CWP is committed to the TTW program's underlying principles of choice and individualized services. A Ticket Holder's participation in the program is voluntary and free. The Ticket beneficiary can choose if, when and where to use the Ticket. CWP's Disability Resource Coordinator (DRC) coordinates and delivers employment services in partnership with American Job Center (AJC) staff and offers benefits counseling and supportive services to Ticket Holders based on the needs of the individual beneficiary and available resources.

D. Procedures

1. Referral

- a. Referrals for CWP's EN TTW program come from a variety of sources. Ticket Holders self-refer after finding the program on the SSA Choose Work website or hearing about it during the American Job Center's (AJC's) Career Services Information Session or during a regional Resources Fair. Ticket Holders are also referred by AJC staff and other entities such as CT's Vocational Rehabilitation Services, ENs outside of our region or personal networks. Regardless of the means of referral, AJC staff are trained to identify potential Ticket to Work participants and follow the internal referral procedures.

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- b. Internal Referral:
 - i. Once AJC staff are made aware that a customer is a Ticket Holder, they provide the Ticket Holder's name and CTHires ID to their supervisor as a potential candidate for CWP's EN TTW program. The referral to the supervisor is made in person or via email. If referral to supervisor is made via email, the email subject line is "Possible referral". Including Personally Protected Information or making reference to the TTW program in unencrypted email is prohibited to ensure protection of the customer's privacy.
 - ii. The supervisor adds the following information to the Possible Ticket Referrals List: Ticket Holder's name, phone number, Social Security number and the referring staff members name. The supervisor notifies the DRC that a new referral has been added to the list.
 - iii. The Possible Ticket Referral List is stored electronically on a secured drive in a secured folder. Access to the secured drive is limited to the DRC and AJC supervisors.
 - iv. After receiving the referral, the DRC searches the Social Security Portal for the Ticket Holder to determine the ticket status and assignability.
 - v. The DRC notifies the referring staff member and supervisor of the results of the Ticket search.
 - vi. If the ticket is assignable, the DRC contacts the referring staff to discuss the coordination of services and reaches out to the Ticket Holder to schedule a meeting to provide information about the CWP's EN Ticket to Work program.
 - c. External Referral:
 - i. Upon receiving the referral from an AJC partner agency or another EN, the DRC reaches out to the Ticket Holder and conducts a phone screening.
 - ii. During the phone screening, the DRC:
 - a) Confirms that the Ticket Holder is a current recipient of SSDI or SSI.
 - b) Inquires about services being received through other agencies.
 - c) Confirms the Ticket Holder's understanding of the TTW program.
 - d) Determines the Ticket Holder's skills, abilities, functional limitations, employment and education history and interests.
 - e) If it appears that CWP's EN TTW program is a suitable match for this Ticket Holder's employment needs, provides the Ticket Holder with information on CWP's EN TTW program including Steps to Services, individualized employment services and the WIOA introductory informational workshop.
 - f) If it appears that CWP's EN TTW program is not suitable, refers the Ticket Holder to the State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agency, other suitable program, Choose Work website or the Beneficiary Help Line.
 - g) If the Ticket Holder is out of the CWP region, DRC provides information on their region's approved ENs.
2. Intake and Assessment
- a. If after the initial meeting and/or phone call with the DRC, the Ticket Holder is interested in exploring CWP's EN TTW program services, the DRC takes the following actions:
 - i. Describes CWP EN TTW's program requirements and Social Security's TTW program expectations and Work Incentives.

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- ii. If the Ticket Holder is not currently enrolled in WIOA, provides them with written steps on how to enroll in WIOA at the AJC, participate in employment-related assessments provided at the AJC and inform the DRC when the assessments are completed.
 - iii. Reviews the results of the WIOA assessments in relationship to the Ticket Holder's employment goals and the services offered by the CWP EN TTW program
 - iv. Provides one-on-one benefits counseling sessions to ensure that the Ticket Holder understands Social Security work incentives, Timely Progress and SSA requirements
 - v. Ensures that the Ticket Holder understands that the goal of participation in the TTW program is to reduce reliance on cash benefits and ultimately become financial independent
 - b. If, based on the results of the assessments and counseling sessions, both the Ticket Holder and the DRC agree that that CWP's EN TTW program is a suitable match, they create the Ticket Holder's Individual Work Plan (IWP) and the DRC assigns the beneficiary's ticket to the CWP EN. If at this time, the Ticket Holder is not interested in assigning their TTW, they may choose to continue to participate in WIOA services at the AJC. If they do continue to participate in WIOA services, the DRC provides technical assistance to the WIOA staff on how to accommodate the Ticket Holder's employment needs and coordinates additional supportive services to address their barriers, if needed.
3. Developing an Individual Work Plan (IWP)
 - a. WIOA Individual Employment Plan (IEP): The DRC and the AJC WIOA staff meet with the Ticket Holder to discuss developing a WIOA IEP, any necessary accommodations and/or supportive services to carry out the IEP activities. If the Ticket Holder was referred to CWP's EN TTW program by an AJC WIOA staff member after an IEP was created, the DRC and the assigned AJC staff member review and update the IEP with the Ticket Holder, if necessary.
 - b. Release of Information Form: If the Ticket Holder needs additional services outside the AJC, the DRC ensures that the Ticket Holder completes and signs a Release of Information form before sharing information about the Ticket Holder outside the CWP EN TTW program.
 - c. Creating the IWP: Before the beneficiary's Ticket is assigned to CWP EN's TTW program, the DRC and the Ticket Holder develop an Individual Work Plan (IWP) based on the WIOA IEP. The IWP is developed following SSA Guidelines with measurable goals.
4. Assigning the Ticket

Once the IWP is completed, the beneficiary's Ticket is assigned to CWP's EN TTW program. The DRC assigns the Ticket to the CWP EN using SSA's Ticket to Work portal.
5. Services
 - a. Once the ticket is assigned to CWP's EN TTW program, the DRC provides ongoing assistance to the Ticket Holder in the successful completion of the IWP and the various phases of the Social Security Work Incentives. CWP's EN TTW program services include:
 - i. benefit counseling,
 - ii. goal setting,
 - iii. job counseling,

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- iv. job development,
 - v. training,
 - vi. job placement assistance and
 - vii. long-term employment supports.
- b. **Integrated Resource Team (IRT):** If necessary, the DRC convenes an Integrated Resource Team meeting with staff from other programs to discuss leveraging resources to best meet the needs of the Ticket Holder and to support successful completion of the IEP.
- c. **Monthly Contact:** While the Ticket Holder is seeking employment, the DRC provides ongoing assistance to the Ticket Holder, and maintains regular contact with the Ticket Holder at least once per month via phone, text, email or in-person visit to follow-up on progress and provide support, if necessary.
- d. **Retention:** Once the Ticket Holder is employed, the DRC provides job retention services by contacting the Ticket Holder at least once per quarter via phone, email or in-person visit.
- e. **Case Notes:** The DRC maintains the Ticket Holder contact logs with case notes using Contacts Dates Excel spreadsheet stored in a locked folder in CWP's secured drive. Hardcopies of the case notes are stored in a locked filing cabinet.
6. **Non-compliance**
If the Ticket Holder is non-compliant with the IWP without good cause, the DRC contacts the Ticket Holder via phone call or text and, if necessary, via email or letter to notify the Ticket Holder that their ticket is at risk of closure. If the Ticket Holder remains non-compliant, the DRC unassigns the ticket on SSA portal and notifies the Ticket Holder via letter that the ticket is closed.
7. **Certification of Services (COS)**
CWP EN TTW Program staff adheres to the following SSA requirements:
- a. Maintain compliance by completing COS statement & provide proof of ongoing supports provided to Ticket Holders.
 - b. Adhere to annual services and supports reviews by providing case notes and IWPs upon request.
 - c. Agree to satisfy requests for Quality Assurance (QA) reviews as stated in the Ticket to Work Agreement (TPA).
 - d. Submit Security Awareness Training certifications, using form SSA-222, by due dates.
 - e. Ensure any new Ticket to Work staff follows SSA's Suitability Determination process.