

Overview

NEW Ticket to Work Regulations

Social Security has issued new regulations that significantly improve the Ticket to Work Program. These changes expand the choices available to Social Security beneficiaries with disabilities who want to enter or re-enter the workforce, and facilitate a wider array and better coordination of the services and supports available to beneficiaries. With increased support, a better payment plan, and incentives for partnering with State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies, the new regulations provide service providers and employers with terrific opportunities to become Employment Networks (ENs) and start incorporating the Ticket into their business practices.

Improvements Associated with Beneficiary Participation

- ◆ Eligibility for the Ticket has been expanded to all adult beneficiaries ages 18 through 64. Prior to this, certain beneficiaries were not eligible to receive a Ticket prior to completion of their first Continuing Disability Review (CDR) because medical improvement was expected to occur.
- ◆ Phase 1 Milestones based on part-time work and increases in self-sufficiency permit beneficiaries to receive a mix of benefit payments and earnings, recognizing that the road to self-sufficiency is often an incremental, multi-step process.
- ◆ Phase 2 Milestones based on gross earnings of Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) encourage the use of SSA and other work incentives.
- ◆ Several improvements have been made to the “timely progress” requirements associated with a Ticket being “in-use.”

Improvements Targeted for Employment Networks

- ◆ ENs earn milestones earlier in the process, more often, and at a higher rate.
- ◆ Some Milestones are available based on part-time work.
- ◆ Payments for SSI and SSDI beneficiaries are approximately the same.
- ◆ SSA can now pay a State VR agency and an EN for providing sequential services to the same beneficiary when VR serves the beneficiary under Cost Reimbursement and the beneficiary subsequently assigns his/her Ticket to the EN for job retention or ongoing support services.

Social Security believes these improvements in the regulations will:

- ◆ Encourage more organizations to become ENs and increase the range and number of ENs available to serve beneficiaries.
- ◆ Promote more partnering between organizations and expand the range of services offered to beneficiaries, as well as improve the coordination of services provided to beneficiaries.
- ◆ Promote better coordination of a variety of services available to beneficiaries at the Federal, State and local levels, including coordination of VR and EN services and better coordination of SSA Work Incentives.



New Ticket EN Outcome-Milestone Payment System

(2008 figures)

Payment Type	Beneficiary earnings	SSDI amount of payment	SSI amount of payment
Phase 1 (120% of SSDI PCB)			
Milestone 1	\$335 for two weeks work	\$1,177	\$1,177
Milestone 2	\$670/mo. x 3 months work (cumulative)	\$1,177	\$1,177
Milestone 3	\$670/mo. x 6 months work (cumulative)	\$1,177	\$1,177
Milestone 4	\$670/mo. x 9 months work (cumulative)	\$1,177	\$1,177
Phase 1 Milestones		\$4,708	\$4,708
Phase 2 (36% of PCB)			
SSDI Milestone Months 1-11	Gross Earnings > SGA (\$940/\$1,570)*	\$353 x 11 = \$3,883	
SSI Milestone Months 1-18			\$203 x 18 = \$3,654
Phase 1+2 Milestones		\$8,591	\$8,362
Monthly Outcome Payments (36% of PCB)			
SSDI = 1-36	Earnings > SGA (\$940/\$1,570)* / month and a federal cash benefit = \$0	\$353 x 36 = \$12,708	
SSI = 1-60			\$203 x 60 = \$12,180
Total Potential Milestone and Outcome Payments		\$21,299	\$20,542

* The 2008 monthly SGA amounts are \$940 for non-blind and \$1,570 for blind individuals.

Outcome Payment System: The Outcome EN payment system still exist with three significant changes.

- ◆ The total amount of potential Outcome payments has increased to 67% of the Payment Calculation Base: \$657 for SSDI and \$377 for SSI (2008 figures).
- ◆ The total potential Outcome payments for SSDI and SSI are almost equal (\$23,652/SSDI and \$22,630/SSI).
- ◆ The total payments available under the Outcome-Milestone payment system equals 90% of total payments available under the Outcome only payment system.

Important Reminder: Total EN payments received on behalf of different beneficiaries will depend on many variables. Two such variable are described below.

The new Ticket regulations create exciting opportunities for new EN-VR partnerships. Now SSA will pay a State VR agency and an EN for providing sequential services for the same beneficiary. A Ticket Holder may receive VR services to meet his/her intensive up front service needs and, after the VR case is closed with the beneficiary in employment, the beneficiary may assign his/her Ticket to an EN and receive job retention or other support services. While the EN has the opportunity to earn both Phase 2 Milestones and Outcome payments, the Phase 1 Milestones would not be available to the EN because VR provided those up-front, intensive services leading to employment.

SSA has determined that Phase 1 Ticket payments should be awarded based on work that an EN helps a beneficiary achieve. This means that one or more of the Phase 1 Milestones may not be available to an EN if the beneficiary worked during the 18 months prior to assigning his/her Ticket to that EN.

Transition to the New EN Payment System: The payment rate in effect at the time the Milestone or Outcome is attained is the rate that will be paid for that particular payment month.