



A Ticket to Work Employment Network *Supporting Workers with Disabilities in Maintaining Long-Term Employment*

Updated December 17, 2010

ERI PLUS is an Employment Network under the Ticket to Work Program funded by the Social Security Administration that supports workers with disabilities to maintain employment.

ERI PLUS offers choices to ticket holders who are already working:

- **Benefits Counseling:** Benefits counseling helps to keep ticket holders informed about changing benefit and health insurance issues.
- **TicketShare:** A direct cash payment to ticket holders (up to 75% of the monthly ticket payment or potentially \$275+ per payment) to support work related expenses such as car payments, childcare, bus-fare, clothing, technology, etc.
- **Connections:** Connecting ticket holders to local resources across Wisconsin.

How we are unique:

As a person moves from dependency on Social Security to employment, we provide both cash payments to support employment goals AND help in sorting out very complicated federal and local public benefit issues. We also have access to qualified employment service providers across Wisconsin.

We want to meet the needs of ticket holders already working as well as advance our mission of increasing community employment opportunities of all people with disabilities across Wisconsin.

MISSION:

ERI PLUS assists people across Wisconsin receiving Social Security disability benefits to maintain employment, fully understand their individual public benefit situation, and work toward independence.

Potential income that may be generated through the Ticket to Work Program is used to fund services that enhance community employment opportunities for people with disabilities across Wisconsin.

WHO IS ERI PLUS FOR?

To be eligible for the ERI PLUS program, you must be:

- employed or actively looking for work on your own;
- eligible for SSDI or SSI payments;
- able to meet earning requirements;

For more information about the ERI PLUS Ticket to Work Program, contact the ERI Ticket Coordinator

phone: 608-246-3444 x 225 ■ toll-free: 1-800-710-9326 ■ email: ticket@eri-wi.org ■ web: www.eri-wi.org/ticket.htm



Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Ticket to Work Program?

Ticket to Work is a program that offers Social Security Administration (SSA) disability beneficiaries choices in selecting employment services. If you receive SSDI or SSI benefits and would like to increase your earnings through work, this program can help you obtain the individualized support and services that you need to reach your goals.

Can anyone assign their Ticket to ERI PLUS?

No. In order to be eligible for the ERI PLUS program, you must be: employed or actively looking for work on your own; eligible for SSDI or SSI payments (even if you currently do not receive a payment); able to earn above SGA (\$1000 in 2011).

What does the Ticket look like?

The ticket is red, white, and blue, and is 6 by 9 inches in size. Your name, a ticket number, and a claim number are printed on the ticket. Please know that you do not need to have a paper ticket in your possession to be eligible for services. If you receive SSI and/or SSDI payments, you may be eligible. We can help you verify your eligibility status.

Do you provide counseling, follow-along support, or other ongoing services?

Yes. ERI PLUS provides benefits counseling services and opportunities to work with employment service providers in your local area.

What is benefits counseling?

Benefits counseling helps people with disabilities wade through complex benefits programs and helps individuals make informed choices about the impact of work on their benefits. Benefits Specialists can provide a written and oral analysis of a person's services and benefits and how work will change their cash payments, medical coverage, and continued eligibility.

Will I receive 75% of every Ticket payment?

You will receive up to 75% of every ticket payment after the cost of initial benefit related services are deducted.

Will you really pay me to keep my job?

Yes. You may contact the Social Security Administration Ticket to Work program at 866-968-7842 to verify that ERI PLUS is an approved Employment Network (EN). The federal Ticket to Work program is designed to provide cash payments to any EN that supports a beneficiary in earning above SGA. Most Employment Networks keep 100% of their Ticket payments to cover expenses associated with job placement and counseling. We guarantee that as long as your work earnings garner Ticket payments for ERI PLUS, you will receive up to 75% of every ticket payment after the cost of initial benefit related services are deducted.

Why should I assign my Ticket to ERI PLUS instead of national ENs in other states?

ERI PLUS is a non-profit Wisconsin-based EN with a mission to advance employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Along with TicketShare payments, ERI PLUS also provides benefits counseling and support. When you call us, you'll find that we are more than just an answering machine or email address; we provide each client with personal support. Revenues from our Ticket to Work program are used to support employment and benefits counseling programs in local communities.

Are my payments tax-free?

Your payments are tax-free because they are considered to be cash that you receive for the purpose of rehabilitation. You do not need to claim them as income on your income taxes. You can read more about this policy in IRS Publication 535 (Website: www.irs.gov/publications/p525/ar02.html).

Are my payments counted as income for other benefits I receive?

Your payments are considered "unearned income" for benefits such as FoodShare, state Medicaid programs, etc. As part of your ERI PLUS services, you will receive benefits counseling which will address how your benefits will be affected by both earned and unearned income. You can choose to opt out of receiving payments.

How long will my Ticket last?

It's different for every person. When you sign up to participate in the Ticket program, we will help you determine how many months remain on your Ticket. You may also find out by contacting Maximus at 866-949-3687. Depending on your situation, ticket payments can last a few months to over 4 years -- potential ticket payments of \$15,000+ if you continue working.

What is Maximus?

Maximus is the organization with whom the Social Security Administration has contracted to manage the Ticket to Work program. Maximus' website is www.yourtickettowork.com and their toll-free phone number is 866-949-3687.

Where can I find out more about Ticket to Work?

We would like to provide you with as much information as possible before making any decisions. Please do not hesitate to contact the ERI PLUS Ticket Coordinator:
phone: 608-246-3444 x225
toll-free: 1-800-710-9326
email: ticket@eri-wi.org
web: www.eri-wi.org/ticket.htm