

## Update on Implementation of the New Ticket to Work Regulations

The new TTW regulations were published May 20, 2008 and went into effect July 21, 2008. These regulations include significant improvements that are based on some of the lessons SSA learned during the initial implementation of the Ticket program --

- Some beneficiaries need a mix of benefits and earnings to feel safe enough to try work.
- Self-sufficiency is an incremental, multi-step process.
- Part-time work is a good start.
- Ongoing supports will be necessary for some beneficiaries to maintain employment over time.
- Community partnerships are critical and they work!

With the new regulations now in effect for six months, SSA is seeing strong indications that the new TTW program is making great progress. SSA and its contractor, CESSI, employed the following strategies to conduct outreach and recruitment for the new Ticket program:

- **The NEW Ticket Express:** The NEW Ticket Express is a key element of CESSI's strategic plan for recruitment and outreach that focuses on creating Employment Network (EN) Recruitment Fairs specific to each state. While a major focus to date has been the five big states (CA, FL, IL, NY and TX), Ticket presentations were made in 23 states in 2008, including statewide conferences in MI, SD, UT, VA and WI, to name a few. In addition to generating a significant number of new ENs, these events have significantly increased the number of beneficiaries who are assigning their Tickets to ENs.
- **National and Regional Conferences:** Representatives of SSA and CESSI presented and exhibited at over 100 major events during 2008, including national, regional, state and local conferences, training seminars, and meetings sponsored by organizations such as AHEAD, APSE, the ARC, BLN, CSAVR, Easter Seals, NRA, PVA, UCP, USPRA, etc. Presentations have also been made for groups such as the Mental Health Treatment Study group, the Project SEARCH, the RSA Employment Conference, and Workforce Innovations. During 2008, CESSI reached over 24,000 people with the TTW message through these conferences and the teleconferences and webinars described next.
- **Teleconferences and Webinars:** SSA and CESSI have hosted 38 national and statewide teleconferences and produced 3 webinars which have reached thousands of people who are interested in learning about the NEW TTW program and how to make it work in their communities. CESSI also conducts an EN Application Walk-Through teleconference every other Wednesday at 2:00 pm. Over 300 organizations participated in these bi-weekly teleconferences in 2008.
- **Ticket to Work Listserv:** Following the National TTW Summit that CESSI sponsored in March 2008, a TTW listserv was created as a way of keeping in contact with individuals that have expressed an interest in the NEW TTW. This list has grown from the 425 Summit participants to over 8,000 people, with many signing up via CESSI's Recruitment and Outreach web site. This is an indication of grass-

roots and community-based interest to find alternative funding sources for programs during these challenging economic times.

- Partnership Plus:** SSA and CESSI have undertaken a variety of activities to promote Partnership Plus, to educate State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies across the country about the unique opportunities offered by Partnership Plus, and to engage VR agencies in recruiting their vendors to become ENs. Examples of these activities include entering into a joint policy-making partnership with the Rehabilitation Services Administration, multiple presentations about the Ticket program at CSAVR's Spring and Fall Conferences, a July 2008 Partnership Plus teleconference for the VR national network, and individuals phone calls to VR Directors and staff. In February we will be conducting a national teleconference with the individuals in each State VR agency that have been designated as the Single Point of Contact for employers. The call will focus on Partnership Plus and the benefits of employers becoming ENs.
- More and Better Choices for Beneficiaries:** Since the new regulations went into effect, SSA has seen the largest single month ever of new Employment Network (EN) contracts issued—53 in October 2008! Fifty-three new contracts is more than 10 times the monthly average prior to the revised regulations going into effect. A total of 292 new ENs were approved in 2008! These ENs are providing services in 399 locations and are greatly increasing access to supports and services for Social Security beneficiaries with disabilities. In addition, Partnership Plus eliminates the need for a beneficiary to choose between an EN and VR and permits them to use both, greatly enhancing the services and resources for the individual beneficiary
- More Payments to ENs:** There has also been a steady increase in the number of Ticket payments made under the new regulations. The data below provides significant evidence that the new payment structure is working.

Total Monthly Outcome & Milestone Payments Made under New Rules

Paymt Mo.	# of Payments		Paid Amounts		Totals
	#Outcomes	#Milestones	\$ Outcomes	\$ Milestones	
July 2008	1	0	\$392.00	\$0.00	\$392.00
Aug 2008	42	21	\$14,443.39	\$23,893.00	\$38,336.39
Sept 2008	334	87	\$106,410.94	\$99,927.00	\$206,337.94
Oct 2008	560	98	\$179,581.20	\$111,750.00	\$291,331.00
Nov 2008	584	240	\$209,842.00	\$272,292.00	\$482,134.00
Dec 2008	686	584	\$289,640.00	\$605,557.00	\$895,197.00

Total Monthly EN Payments under Old & New Regulations: 8/08–12/08

August	\$485,152
September	\$583,806
October	\$511,885
November	\$647,935
December	\$1,168,037

- Cost Reimbursement Payments Have Increased:** SSA has also seen an increase in Cost Reimbursement payments to State VR agencies. FY 2008 was the second largest year the CR program began in 1981, with a total of over \$124 million being paid to VR agencies nationwide. SSA believes this amount will potentially double over the next couple of years as State VR agencies take advantage of the new Partnership Plus option and ENs provide the job retention and ongoing support services that many beneficiaries need to maintain employment after VR case closure.
- WISE Events:** Between April 3 and November 20, 2008, CESSI partnered with 68 Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Projects from around the country to conduct 104 Work Incentives Seminar Events (WISE) in 40 states WISE are free community events the provide beneficiaries who are interested in exploring work with the opportunity to learn about available Work Incentives and the TTW program through accessible, informal learning opportunities. Representatives of employers, ENs, VR, SSA, the WIPA, the P&A, and other employment support programs are invited to these meetings to share information about available services and opportunities for beneficiaries in the community. At these events ENs speak one on one with beneficiaries about their return-to-work options. Close to 1,800 beneficiaries and 350 ENs participated in the 2008 WISE programs. Similar events are being planned for 2009, although the WIPAs will have more flexibility in how these events are conducted.
- Assignment of Tickets:** An average of 313 Tickets were assigned by beneficiaries to ENs each month between May and November of 2007. An average of 871 Tickets were assigned each month between May and November of 2008. The chart below highlights the increase in Tickets being assigned to ENs in the big 5 states.

Ticket Assignments to EN's—Focus on Big 5 States

Tickets in Assign to EN's				
STATE	08/04/08	11/20/08	01/08/09	INCREASE
CA	3,069	3,451	3,559	490 (15.9%)
FL	966	1,310	1,459	493 (51.0%)
IL	519	650	683	164 (31.5%)
NY	1,031	1,288	1,350	319 (30.9%)
TX	1,097	1,261	1,320	223 (20.3%)
TOTAL Nationally	15,042	18,000	18,989	3,947 (26.2%)

**It's About the Individual Beneficiary's Success -** The real importance of these numbers is that they represent individuals with disabilities achieving their employment goals. The following numbers from February 2002 through December 2008 are the real indicators that the TTW program is working; the numbers also explain how the program will pay for itself over the next few years.

- 5,272 Ticket Holders had earnings that generated payments to ENs
- 2,450 Ticket Holders have had their cash benefits suspended and/or left the rolls due to work and earnings (i.e., beneficiaries in Outcome phase)
- 41,247 months for which benefits were not paid due to work and earnings (EN Outcome payment months)

**Ticket Success Story:** About 3 months ago, SSA processed the 60th (final) Ticket payment to another EN. John Doe was 13 years from retirement when the last payment was made, so he has the potential to work another 13 years. A Win-Win-Win program:

- EN Perspective -- Increased cash flow, ability to provide enhanced services to more consumers
  - Total Ticket payments for J Doe (under old regs) = \$21,372
  - Ticket payments provide ENs with ability to: 1) offer more services, hire additional staff, and/or serve more consumers.
- SSA Perspective -- Accomplishment of program objectives, enhanced cost-effectiveness
  - Title II Benefit Savings = \$ 98,496
  - FICA Taxes Paid = \$ 46,649
  - Gross Savings = \$145,145
  - Ticket Payments = \$ 21,372
  - Net Program Savings = \$123,773
- Beneficiary Perspective -- Improved financial well-being, increased self-sufficiency, heightened feeling of self-worth
  - Earnings 2003-2008 = \$310,998
  - Title II Benefits = \$ 98,496
  - Additional Income = \$212,502

Note: There are other benefits, both tangible and intangible, that derive from a successful return to work effort.

If you are interested in learning more about the NEW Ticket to Work program, visit one of the following web sites:

SSA Work Site: [www.socialsecurity.gov/work](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/work)  
MAXIMUS web site: [www.yourtickettowork.com](http://www.yourtickettowork.com)  
CESSI web site: [www.cessi.net/ttw](http://www.cessi.net/ttw)