



# TICKET TO **W**ORK & **W**ORK INCENTIVES ADVISORY **P**ANEL



September 5, 2006

Dear Colleagues:

The Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Advisory Panel (the Panel) will be having a Beneficiary Summit in Atlanta, Georgia on February 6-7, 2007, for individuals who receive (or recently received) a Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and/or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefit and/or their health insurance from Medicare or Medicaid (beneficiaries).

Beneficiaries will be invited to the Summit to give us their thoughts and ideas on the way that Social Security disability and other programs operate now and how they can be made better for people who want to go to work. Also, beneficiaries attending the Summit will propose an ongoing process for beneficiary involvement in the work of the Social Security Administration (SSA).

We need the help of your organization to get the word out and to assist us to recruit beneficiary participants from across the United States. We hope to assemble a diverse group of individuals who represent many racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds, as well as many different types of disabilities. We encourage transition-age youth to apply. In order to achieve diversity, we need to receive applications from a broad spectrum of beneficiaries. An application to participate in the Summit is attached to this letter.

**Applications must be submitted or postmarked no later than October 6, 2006.**

400 Virginia Avenue, SW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20024

Phone: 202-358-6430 • Fax: 202-358-6440

Website: [www.ssa.gov/work/panel](http://www.ssa.gov/work/panel) • E-mail: [TWWIAPanel@ssa.gov](mailto:TWWIAPanel@ssa.gov)

## **What is the Panel?**

The Panel was created to give advice to the President, the Congress, and SSA about the program Ticket to Work, as well as Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medicaid, Medicare, and other work incentives. The Panel has 12 members from all over the country and working in many different areas of disability policy.

The Panel provides recommendations on how to improve programs for people with disabilities, and that is why we are holding the Summit. We want to hear from current and recent beneficiaries about what changes could be made that would encourage more beneficiaries to go to work.

## **What is the Summit?**

The Summit will be a meeting of about 50 beneficiaries to discuss the disability programs as they are now and what could be changed to make them work better for people with disabilities. Recommendations will focus on work and what SSA and its partners can do to encourage work for more beneficiaries.

## **How much does it cost?**

It costs nothing to attend the Summit. The beneficiaries who are selected to attend will have their travel, meal, lodging, transportation, and incidental costs paid by the Panel. In addition, if a beneficiary requires a personal assistant or support person in order to participate, those costs will be paid by the Panel as well.

## **What Are Attendees Committing to Do?**

Participants at the Summit will be making a commitment. That commitment will be that:

1. They will work with the person who contacts them to learn more about the Summit and to prepare for it in advance,
2. They will come to the two-day Summit prepared to participate in the discussion (with personal assistance and support, if needed), and
3. They will return home prepared to speak in their community and to policy makers about what they learned at the Summit and the changes that were recommended by the group.

If an applicant needs a support person to attend the Summit with them in order to do these things, the cost of that support person's travel and time will also be paid by the Panel.

## **What is this letter for?**

Attached to this letter is an application to participate in our Beneficiary Summit. We need your help in order to receive applications from as many beneficiaries as possible. We want applications from all across the country, from a broad spectrum of ethnic, racial, and cultural communities, and representing many age groups, individuals with many types of disabilities, and those who have experience with many types of programs and supports.

## **Who should apply to attend the Summit?**

The application includes questions that show us what experience each individual applicant has with Social Security disability programs and going to work. We understand that not everyone will understand every question, so we ask that individuals answer the questions to the best of their ability, and there are no wrong answers.

Individuals wishing to attend the Summit should send the attached application back to us, and they might be chosen to participate. Nothing about coming to the Summit will affect participants' benefits. We will arrange travel so that there will be no cost, but also no income to affect benefits. We encourage beneficiaries to apply without being afraid. Participating in the Summit will not harm their disability status with SSA, their housing, or other benefits. Individual comments can be recorded anonymously.

### **How do individuals apply to participate in the Beneficiary Summit?**

Current beneficiaries of Social Security programs (or people who stopped receiving benefits within the last five years) can apply to participate at the Summit. Individuals who would require a personal assistant in order to fully participate are welcome to apply. Simply fill out the attached form and send it back using the e-mail, fax, or address below. If an individual needs to submit their application over the phone, they can call the number below for assistance.

We hope to have beneficiaries attend the Summit who live in all types of housing arrangements, like group and nursing homes, and we look forward to receiving applications from beneficiaries who volunteer in their community, work in a sheltered workshop, or those who live and work in the community.

Applications can be sent via e-mail to Jenn Rigger with the Panel to [TWWIAPanel@ssa.gov](mailto:TWWIAPanel@ssa.gov) or faxed to: 202-358-6440. They can also be mailed to the:

Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Advisory Panel  
400 Virginia Avenue, SW, Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20024  
Attn: BENEFICIARY SUMMIT

If there are questions about the application, call Jenn Rigger at 202-358-6425. REMINDER: The deadline for applications is October 6, 2006.

Thank you for reading this letter. We hope that you will distribute it to your network so that we have a broad representation of individuals with disabilities at the Beneficiary Summit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Berthy De La Rosa Aponte".

Berthy De La Rosa Aponte