



Guide to Payments Under the Ticket to Work Program

The Basics

The Ticket to Work (Ticket) program is an outcome-based employment program administered by the Social Security Administration. The program is for employment service providers participating in the Ticket program to assist Social Security Disability beneficiaries (Individuals receiving Social Security Disability Insurance and/or Supplemental Security Income benefits based on disability) become financially independent through sustained work at or above Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) level. The ultimate goal of the program is to reduce, and whenever possible eliminate, beneficiaries' dependence on Social Security cash benefits programs

Organizations selected to participate in the Ticket program are called Employment Networks (EN). Such organizations are required to provide employment services, vocational rehabilitation services and other supports that help beneficiaries, referred to as Ticket Holders, obtain and retain employment. Beneficiaries' participation in the program is voluntary and free. Beneficiaries can choose when and where to assign their Tickets and Social Security approves these organizations as ENs. Once the Social Security Administration approves an entity as an EN, the EN must choose between two systems to receive payments: the Milestone /Outcome and Outcome Only payment systems.

Since the Ticket program is an outcome-based program, Social Security rewards approved ENs financially for successfully assisting Social Security Disability Beneficiaries to enter, maintain and advance in employment. When an EN is eligible for a payment, the Ticket Program Manager (TPM – MAXIMUS) or Social Security staff will process the payment and the Department of the Treasury will deposit the funds via direct deposit into the EN's bank account. These funds represent unrestricted revenue for the EN because the Social Security Administration does not place requirements or restrictions on how ENs use revenue generated under the Ticket program. The Social Security Administration expects an EN to provide employment support services that afford Ticket Holders the opportunity to prepare for, obtain and retain career ladder jobs that will enable beneficiaries to become self-sufficient, leave and remain off federal cash benefits.

It is unacceptable for an EN to limit its business model to assisting Ticket Holders to engage in part time employment only. Social Security will terminate contracts of ENs that purposefully engage in such practices. Social Security requires that ENs provide actual services to Ticket Holders to help them reach their employment goals before issuing any payments.

Payments Systems

TPM pays an EN when a Ticket Holder attains certain Milestones and Outcomes in moving towards self-supporting employment. There are two options to receive payments, the Milestone/Outcome and Outcome-Only Payment Systems.

The Milestone /Outcome payment System

This payment system offers two sets of Milestone payments (Phase 1 and Phase 2), as well as subsequent Outcome payments.



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Phase 1 Milestones - Social Security establishes the same rate for all four Phase 1 Milestones regardless of the disability program to which the Ticket Holder is entitled.

The work and earnings requirement for Phase 1 Milestones is Trial Work Level (TWL). TWL earnings for Phase 1 Milestones are cumulative as long as the earnings occur within the established designated timeframe. This means the first month of TWL earnings needed to qualify for P1M1 counts towards the three months of TWL earnings needed to qualify for P1M2; the three months of TWL earnings needed to qualify for P1M2 counts towards the 6 months of earnings needed to qualify for P1M3; and so on.

There is one exception to the earnings requirement that applies to P1/M1. An EN can submit a payment request for P1/M1 if the beneficiary's earnings are $\geq 50\%$ of TWL (earned during the last period of the claim month requested) and $<$ full TWL and the beneficiary is expected to achieve TWL earnings within the next two months. However, it is highly recommended that an EN wait and submit a payment request once the beneficiary earns a full month of TWL earnings. This process will prevent a possible overpayment situation if the beneficiary does not achieve earnings at or above TWL within the 2-month period.

Please see the chart below, it outlines the Phase 1 Milestone payments based on a Ticket Holder's gross earnings

Phase 1 Milestone Payments 2017 Rates

Payment Type	Ticket Holder Gross Earnings	EN Payment (SSDI)	EN Payment (SSI)
Phase 1 Milestone 1	\geq \$840/mo. for 1 calendar month*	\$1,400	\$1,400
Milestone 2	\geq \$840/mo. for 3 months w/in 6 months (cumulative)	\$1,400	\$1,400
Milestone 3	\geq \$840/mo. for 6 months w/in 12 months (cumulative)	\$1,400	\$1,400
Milestone 4	\geq \$840/mo. for 9 months w/in 18 months	\$1,400	\$1,400
Total Potential Phase 1 Milestone Payments		\$5,600	\$5,600

To qualify for Phase 1/Milestone payment, the following criteria has to be met:

1. Beneficiary's benefits must be in current pay status, this means, the beneficiary is receiving a Federal cash benefit payment.
2. The beneficiary is working and earnings are at or above the Trial Work Level (TWL) TWL earnings for 2017 is \$840 a month.
3. The work must be associated with a job. This does not include paid vocational training with no record of continued TWL employment. Social Security recognizes that it can take time for a disability beneficiary to be able to work full-time and will compensate an EN when the services it provides help a Ticket Holder reach the Trial Work earnings level. However, the Ticket Holder must have earnings above SGA as an eventual goal and the Individual Work Plan (contract of services an EN agrees to provide a



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beneficiary) must include services and supports to assist the beneficiary to reach that earnings goal.

4. Some exclusions that apply to the Phase 1 Milestone payments can result in an EN being excluded from receiving these payments:
 - **Prior State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Rule:** No P1/MS will be available to the EN if the State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agency previously served the beneficiary and the VR successfully closed the most recent case. This rule applies to all successful closures since January 2002.
 - **18 Months Look Back Rule:** If a beneficiary had TWL earnings during some or all of the 18 months prior to the first Ticket assignment to the EN and after the date of disability onset, some or all of the P1/MS may be not available to the EN.
 - If the beneficiary worked the month immediately prior to the Ticket assignment date (TAD), then P1/M1 will be unavailable.
 - If the beneficiary worked 3 months out of 6 months prior the TAD, then P1/M2 will be unavailable.
 - If the beneficiary worked 6 months out of 12 months prior the TAD, then P1/M3 will be unavailable.
 - If the beneficiary worked 9 months out of 18 months prior the TAD, then P1/M4 will be unavailable.

Phase 2 Milestones - This set of Milestones is available to the EN based on the same criteria as P1/MS with the exception of the earnings requirement. The beneficiary's earnings must be at or above SGA or SGA Blind (SGA-Blind) for blind or visually impaired beneficiaries. SGA levels in 2017 are as follows: \$1,170/month for non-blind Ticket Holders and \$1,950 per month for Ticket Holders who are blind or visually impaired. The number of P2/MS the EN can receive vary depending on the type of disability benefits the Ticket Holder receives.

- SSDI beneficiaries: ENs can qualify for up to 11 Phase 2 Milestone payments
- SSI beneficiaries: ENs can qualify for up to 18 Phase 2 Milestone payments.

Please see the chart below, it outlines Phase 2 Milestone payments based on beneficiary's type of benefits (SSDI/SSI).

Phase 2 Milestone Payments 2017 Rates

Payment Type	Ticket Holder Gross Earnings	EN Payment (SSDI)	EN Payment (SSI)
Phase 2	Gross ≥ SGA (\$1,170/non-blind; \$1,950 for blind)	\$420/mo. (up to 11 months)	\$242/mo. (up to 18 months)
Total Phase 2 Payments		\$4,620	\$4,356
Total Potential Ticket Payments Phases 1 & 2	Phase 1 & 2	\$10,220	\$9,956



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Outcomes - If the Ticket Holder continues to work and have monthly earnings at or above SGA or SGA-Blind and is no longer receiving Federal cash benefits (benefits cease due to work and earnings), the number of Outcome payments ENs are entitled to receive varies depending on the type of disability benefits the Ticket Holder receives.

- SSDI beneficiaries: ENs can qualify for up to 36 Outcome payments.
- SSI beneficiaries: ENs can qualify for up to 60 Outcome payments.

The chart below outlines Outcome payments based on beneficiary's type of benefits (SSDI/SSI).

Outcome Payments under Milestone/Outcome Payment System

If a Ticket Holder moves into the Outcome payment phase before an EN receives all available Milestone payments (Phase 1/Phase 2), Social Security processes a reconciliation payment. Social Security processes a reconciliation payment after TPM processes the 12th Outcome payment. This one-time, lump-sum payment will be equal to any unpaid available Milestone payments that would otherwise have been available to the EN with the Ticket assignment. Unavailable Phase 1 Milestone payments due to Look Back earnings and VR successful closures are not included in this lump-sum reconciliation payment.

Please see chart below.

Payment Type	EN Payment (SSDI)	EN Payment (SSI)
Phase 1 Milestone	\$ 5,600	\$ 5,600
Phase 2 Milestone	\$ 4,620	\$ 4,356
Outcome	\$ 15,120	\$ 14,520
Total Potential Ticket Payments	\$ 25,340	\$ 24,476

The Outcome Only Payment System

Under this payment option ENs can submit a request for payment when a Ticket Holder's earnings are at or above SGA or SGA-Blind and he or she is no longer receiving Federal cash benefits (benefits cease due to work and earnings). The number of Outcome payments ENs are entitled to receive varies depending on the type of disability benefits the Ticket Holders receive.

- SSDI beneficiaries: ENs can qualify for up to 36 Outcome payments.
- SSI beneficiaries: ENs can qualify for up to 60 Outcome payments.

Under the Outcome-Only Payment System, the payment rate is higher than the Outcome payment rate under the Milestone/Outcome Payment System.



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Outcome-Only Payment System

Outcome Number	SSDI Rate (Title II)	SSI Rate (Title XVI)
1-36	\$782/month	
1-60		\$450/month
Total	\$28,152	\$27,000