

Introduction

The Ticket to Work and Self Sufficiency (Ticket) program was created in 1999 to provide Social Security disability beneficiaries the choices, opportunities and support needed to become and stay employed, increase their earnings, and eventually leave and remain off benefits by being fully self-supportive. Organizations selected to participate in the Ticket program are required to provide employment support services that afford Ticket Holders the opportunity and support to prepare for, obtain and retain career ladder jobs that will realistically enable them to leave and remain off of cash benefits.

Eligible Social Security disability beneficiaries, called Ticket Holders, may assign their Tickets to an Employment Network (EN) of their choice to obtain employment services, vocational rehabilitation services, or other support services necessary to maximize their economic self-sufficiency through work opportunities.

The Social Security Administration enters into purchase agreements with organizations, which are qualified and willing to provide or arrange for the provision of employment services, vocational rehabilitation services, or other services and supports to disability beneficiaries with Tickets, known as Ticket Holders. An approved organization is called an EN. An EN can be either an agency or instrumentality of a State (or political subdivision of the State) or a private entity that assumes responsibility for the coordination and delivery of employment, vocational rehabilitation, or other support services to those beneficiaries who have assigned their Tickets to the EN.

Participation in the Ticket program by disability beneficiaries is voluntary. A Ticket Holder can decide if and when to use his or her Ticket and can select with which participating EN to work. Once an EN and a Ticket Holder agree that they want to work together, the EN develops an Individual Work Plan, or IWP, outlining the services and supports the EN will provide.

Payment under the Ticket program is different than under most Federal programs. Rather than reimbursing an EN for the cost of services provided to Ticket Holders, the Ticket program is outcome-based. It provides payments to an EN as the beneficiaries they serve, and for whom they have Ticket assignments, attain certain milestones and outcomes associated with work and earnings as they move towards self-supporting employment.

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development has been approved as a statewide EN (DEED EN) for services delivered through the Minnesota WorkForce Center System. The DEED EN is separate and distinct from the statewide ENs operated by Minnesota's Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) and State Services for the Blind (SSB). **The procedures described in this guidance only apply to the DEED EN, not the VRS or SSB ENs.**

DEED As Administrative EN for Minnesota WorkForce Center System

DEED is serving as an Administrative EN for the services delivered through the Minnesota WorkForce Center System. Under this arrangement, DEED handles all of the paperwork and interaction with Social

Security and the Ticket Operations Support Manager (Maximus, also known as the OSM) while the WIBs and WorkForce Centers provide the EN services to Ticket Holders (including developing the IWP). The paperwork and interaction with Social Security and OSM involves:

- the identification and assignment of Ticket Holders,
- requesting/receiving Ticket payments, and
- complying with all reporting requirements of the Ticket program.

Individual Workforce Investment Boards or WorkForce Center operators may apply to Social Security to become an EN as a single, stand-alone organization, separate from the DEED EN. In this case, the WIB or WFC operator would be responsible for the identification and assignment of Ticket Holders, creating an Individual Work Plan (IWP) for each assigned Ticket Holder and delivering the EN services outlined in the plan, requesting/receiving Ticket payments, and complying with all reporting requirements of the Ticket program.

Determining If A WorkForce Center Customer Is A Ticket Holder

The WorkForce Centers are likely already serving a significant number of customers who have Tickets. Social Security disability beneficiaries (either SSI or SSDI) age 18 through 64 qualify for the Ticket to Work program. The Ticket program is voluntary for both Ticket Holders and ENs. Ticket Holders may choose if they wish to participate and to which EN they will assign their Ticket. ENs may choose whether or not to accept a Ticket assignment from a Ticket Holder.

Attached to this guidance is a “Workforce EN Ticket Flow Chart” (Attachment A) and “Ticket Assessment Guide” (Attachment B) created by the National Disability Institute (NDI) which help guide WorkForce Center staff in the process of assessing whether a Ticket is available and appropriate for assignment to the DEED EN.

DEED, as the administrative entity for the EN, has established the following processes specific to this EN for the assignment of Tickets:

Checking Ticket Assignability

To determine whether a customer has a Ticket, the EN (DEED) must provide the person’s Social Security Number (SSN) to Maximus and will receive confirmation as to whether a Ticket is available for assignment to the EN. Local sites are to follow the following steps to check Ticket assignability:

1. Obtain specific written consent from the customer to provide his/her SSN to Maximus to check for Ticket availability. A consent form for this purpose is included in this guidance as Attachment C. Minnesota’s Data Practices Act requires that the customer be informed and provide specific consent for this information to be shared with Maximus.
2. If the customer provides consent, communicate the SSN and name to Lynn Douma at DEED (Lynn.Douma@state.mn.us or 651-259-7536). If the communication is done through e-mail, the local site must use a secure transmission option to protect this private data.

3. DEED will check the Ticket assignability status with Maximus and respond to the local site contact with the results.

Note: If a message contains even one element of a customer's/beneficiary's personally identifiable information (full or partial name, initials, SSN, address, etc.) this information must be securely transmitted.

Assigning A Ticket to the DEED EN

If Maximus confirms that a Ticket is available for assignment, the customer can choose to assign the Ticket to the DEED EN.

The Individual Work Plan (IWP)

The Ticket Holder and EN representative must work together to create an Individual Work Plan (IWP) in order to assign the Ticket to the DEED EN. However, Individual Employment Plans (IEP) or Individual Service Strategies (ISS) prepared by one-stop delivery systems are acceptable in lieu of IWPs if they met the requirements of the U.S. Department of Labor. Therefore it is not necessary for the local site to create a new IWP for a customer who already has an IEP or ISS created for Workforce Investment Act participation. (Note that IEP in SSA/Maximus terminology means Individual Employment Plan, not Individual Education Plan which is created for youth receiving special education services.)

Provisions of Ticket to Work Which Must Be Explained to the Ticket Holder

The EN representative must explain to the Ticket Holder the goals of the Ticket Program relative to the Ticket Holder's employment, benefits and self-sufficiency so that the Ticket Holder can make informed choices regarding program participation.

Under the terms of DEED's Workforce Payment Agreement:

1. Ticket Holders must be informed of the following:
 - a. Your participation in the Ticket Program is voluntary. It is important that you understand the program's goals before deciding whether it is right for you.
 - b. The purpose of the Ticket Program is to offer you the support you need to increase your ability to work, your earnings, and the chance that you will become and stay self-supporting to the extent possible.
 - c. By agreeing to assign your Ticket and participate in the program, you are agreeing to make a steady effort to achieve these goals.
 - d. The Workforce EN's role is to do all we can to help you reduce and ultimately eliminate your dependency on disability benefits and to earn a better living than you do now. You will not be penalized if you cannot become fully self-supporting. However, if you decide to use your Ticket, you should make a commitment to try your best to achieve these goals.

- e. You can start out working and earning any amount during the first nine months, but should have a goal to become self-supporting in time. You should work towards having monthly earnings at or above the trial work level (TWL) amount by at least the 10th month after you start working with us. Also, you should work towards having monthly earnings at or above the substantial gainful activity (SGA) amount by at least the month following your first year of work.
 - f. The Ticket program is not right for every disability Ticket Holder, but if you are committed to trying to become employed and self-sufficient someday, we are here to provide you the services and support to help you to do so.
2. The Workforce EN shall not say or imply to any Ticket Holder:
 - a. You can work part time indefinitely with the support of the Workforce EN.
 - b. The Workforce EN will support or enable *parking* (i.e. artificially manipulating the Ticket Holder's earnings to remain on cash benefits).
 3. The Workforce EN shall provide the Ticket Holder with a full explanation of the services offered by the EN under the Ticket program, so that the Ticket Holder may make informed choices regarding the services and the provider who will actually render such services.
 4. The Workforce EN shall engage in one-on-one career counseling to support the development of individualized employment goals and supports in conjunction with the preparation of the IEP/ISS.
 5. The Workforce EN shall develop and implement an Individual Employment Plan (IEP)/Individual Service Strategy (ISS) in partnership with the Ticket Holder. The IEP/ISS must be in writing and signed by both the Ticket Holder (or the Ticket Holder's representative) and the Workforce EN indicating mutual agreement.
 6. The Workforce EN shall not charge the Ticket Holder for services provided to a Ticket Holder under an IEP/ISS.
 7. The Workforce EN shall protect the Ticket Holder's personal information, including information about the Ticket Holder's disability, from unauthorized disclosure. In order to protect the Ticket Holder's personal information, the Workforce EN shall maintain personal information files in secure locations and grant access only to authorized individuals.
 8. The Workforce EN shall explain the process for resolving any disputes between the Workforce EN and the Ticket Holder.
 9. The Workforce EN shall inform the Ticket Holder of the Timely Progress Review (TPR) guidelines, available at www.chooseworkttw.net. (Also included as Attachment D.)

10. In addition, the Workforce EN shall explain to the Ticket Holder that the:

- a. Ticket Holder may un-assign the Ticket at any time if he or she is dissatisfied with the services being provided.
- b. Workforce EN may un-assign the Ticket at any time if the Workforce EN is no longer willing or able to provide services to the Ticket Holder.
- c. Ticket Holder will be excused from a medical review by Social Security while participating in the Ticket Program if he or she makes expected levels of progress with work, education or technical training in accordance with TPR guidelines.
- d. Ticket Holder shall have complete access to information in the Workforce EN's records concerning that Ticket Holder. The Workforce EN shall allow the Ticket Holder to view the records at the Workforce EN's place of business and make copies of the records using the Workforce EN's copying equipment. If such information consists of medical records, the Ticket Holder may name a representative who would be willing to review the record and inform the Ticket Holder of its contents at the representative's discretion. Such representative may be a physician, other health professional, legal representative or other responsible individual.
- e. Workforce EN shall provide the Ticket Holder with a copy of the IEP in an accessible format chosen by the Ticket Holder.
- f. Ticket Holder may request amendments to the IEP. However, the Ticket Holder and the Workforce EN shall mutually agree to any IEP amendments. The Workforce EN shall provide to the Ticket Holder in writing an amended version of the IEP.

DEED has created a Ticket Assignment Agreement (Attachment E) to document that the Ticket Holder is assigning their Ticket to the EN and that key provisions of the Ticket program have been explained to them.

Steps in Assigning an Available Ticket to the EN

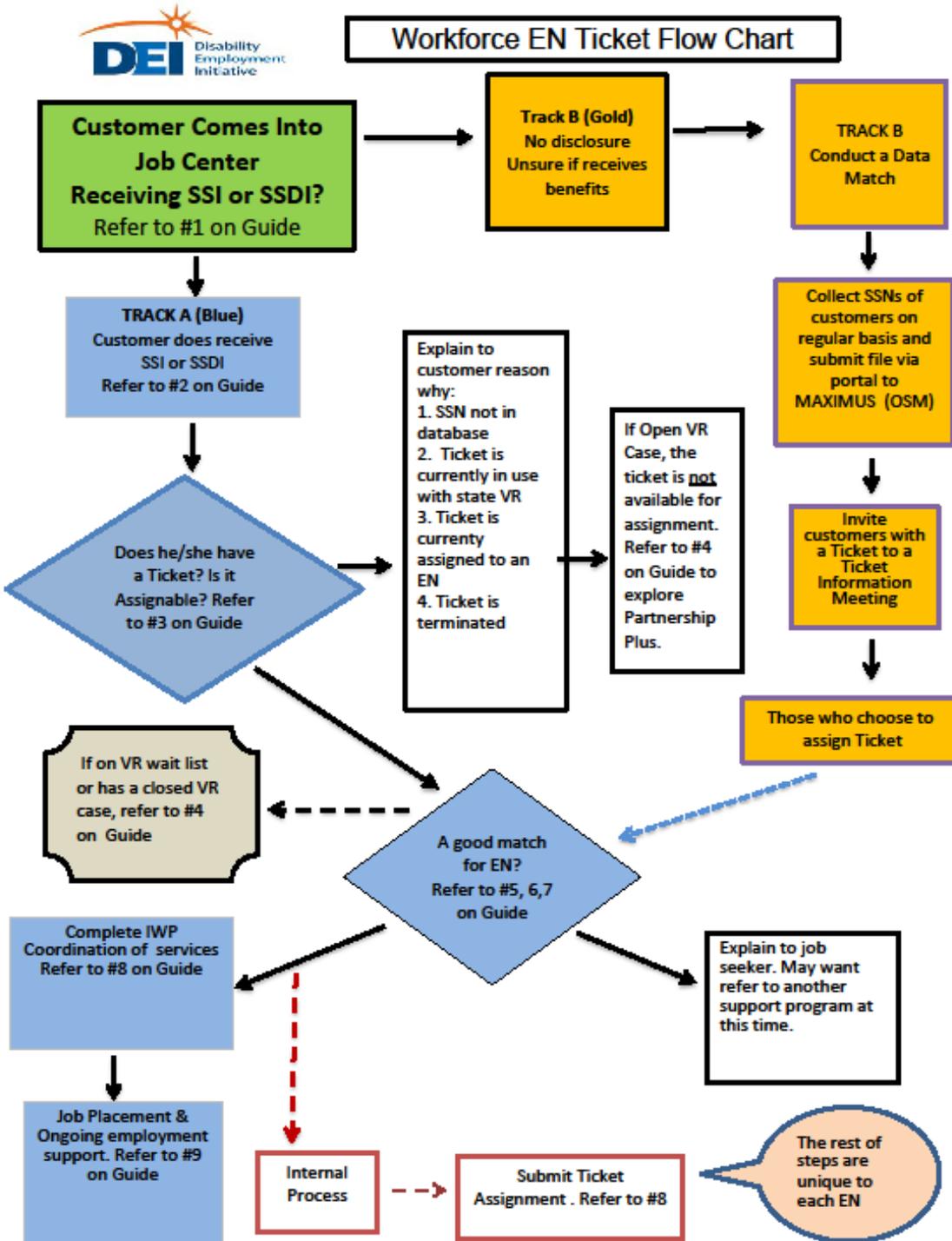
1. Explain the Ticket to Work provisions summarized above to the Ticket Holder. The Ticket Holder and EN Representative should sign the Ticket Assignment Agreement.
2. Create an IEP or ISS if one has not already been created, or update the existing IEP/ISS with the educational and vocational goals and steps to achieve those goals and obtain employment at Trial Work Level and ultimately Substantial Gainful Activity level. Every IEP/ISS for a Ticket Holder should also include benefits planning.
3. Retain the IEP/ISS and Ticket Assignment Agreement at the local site and provide the Ticket Holder with a copy. Social Security may request copies of the IEP/ISS for audit purposes.
4. Notify DEED (Lynn Douma at Lynn.Douma@state.mn.us or 651-259-7536) of the name, Social Security Number, and Ticket assignment date (the later of the date the IEP/ISS or Ticket

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Assignment Agreement was signed). If the communication is done through e-mail, the local site must use a secure transmission option to protect this private data.

5. DEED will communicate with the local site contact once the Ticket assignment is made.

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Ticket Assessment Guide



This guide complements the Ticket Customer Flow Chart, and is designed to assist ENs in determining appropriate Ticket assignments.

#	Question	Response	Action	Response	Action
1	Does customer receive SSI or SSDI federal cash benefits?	YES	Go to step 2.	Unsure	EN can conduct a Data Match with OSM to identify customers who do not disclose and who may have a Ticket.
2	Is customer interested in pursuing employment that will lead to earnings greater than the Trial Work Level (TWL)? Note: You may need to break this down by expected hourly wage, and hours/week with your customer, in order to determine whether TWL earnings is expected.	YES	Great, should this Ticket holder obtain employment above the TWL, you may be eligible for Phase 1 Milestone payments. Go to step 3.	NO	It is unlikely this customer would yield payments to you as an EN, based on their current employment goal of earning less than the TWL. You may want to make a referral to another employment support program at this time.
3	Check if the customer has a Ticket available for assignment. This is done through MAXIMUS (OSM) using either the secure provider portal or by calling the interactive voice line at 1-866-949-3687. Note: Be prepared to supply your EN name, DUNS #, and Ticket holder's SSN when using phone verification.	YES	Great, you're ready to consider working with this Ticket holder. Note: If the information states the customer had a successfully closed VR case, remember that NO Phase 1 Milestone payments available, however, all of Phase 2 and Outcome payments are available. If no VR involvement, ALL EN payments may be available. Go to step 5.	NO	The Ticket is not available to be assigned. It may be assigned to another EN or "in use" by state VR. Ticket holders have the right to choose where to assign their Ticket. At times, there might be a closed case with VR but the state VR still has the Ticket "in use". Contact your state VR Ticket Liaison for assistance. In this matter to get the Ticket unassigned. If there is an open VR case, go to step 4.
4	Does the Ticket holder have an open case with State VR at this time? You may need to contact your State VR Ticket Liaison. You can find a list chart on the DEI website entitled "DEI State VR Contacts", or call your Maximus Point of Contact for more information. Was the Ticket holder closed from State VR, successfully placed in employment? (closed successfully means they were placed, and stabilized for 90 days)	YES	This Ticket is "In-Use" with State VR. A Ticket can be assigned after State VR closes the case, to provide long-term supports through Partnership Plus (PP), assuming their goal is SGA level employment. SGA level employment after a successful VR closure is important, since remaining payments would include Phase 2 Milestones and Outcome payments, which both require a minimum of SGA level employment. Go to step 5.	NO	If the Ticket holder is on a waiting list with state VR, then there is not an "open" case yet and the EN can assign the Ticket. Go to step 5.
5	Can you provide the services your Ticket holder needs to successfully return to work based on their vocational goals, education, and work experience?	YES	Initial assessment indicates the Ticket holder can benefit from the services we have to offer through our EN. Go to step 6.	NO	Ticket holder has training needs beyond the capability of the EN to provide, or requires supports the EN does not offer. In this case, you should refer Ticket holder to State VR, or appropriate employment support services for assistance.
6	Is Ticket holder interested in pursuing employment that will result in earnings above the Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) level of \$1,040/month (non-blind), or \$1,740/month (blind) rate for 2013? Assess work readiness, training needs, and vocational goals (i.e. Career Counseling) Is your Ticket holder Job Search Ready?	YES	Great, this Ticket holder has the potential to yield your EN Phase 2 Milestones and Outcome payments. Continue on to step 7.	NO	If this Ticket holder is not interested, or able to return to SGA level employment, you may achieve Phase 1 payments on this case, however, no other payments will be available until SGA level employment is achieved. It is possible that this Ticket holder needs Career Development Services, or may need more guidance about available SGA Work Incentives, in order to have the confidence to move forward with gainful employment. Go to step 7.
7	Has Ticket holder received SSA disability benefits planning services from a certified benefits planner?	YES	Excellent! This Ticket holder is informed, and can make a good decision about moving forward with employment. Go to step 8.	NO	In order to help Ticket holders make an informed choice about the return to work, Ticket holders should receive benefits planning services prior to Ticket assignment so they are aware of the impact of working on SSA disability benefits. Preferably each site should consider developing internal expertise or research a fee for service option. At minimum refer Ticket holders to Beneficiary Access & Support Services (BASS). Go to step 8.

	<p>Examining Previous Work History: Has Ticket holder worked in the last 18 months? Note: This is based on information reported by the Ticket holder. The number of months a Ticket holder has worked in the last 18 months over TWL earnings, can impact available Phase 1 Milestone Payments.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Complete the 18 Month Prior Earnings Tool to help you determine what Phase 1 Milestones are available to your EN. Note: This does not need to be submitted with IWP. Go to Question 8.</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>You do not need to complete the 18 Month Prior Earnings Tool. If you determined that no Phase 1 Milestones were impacted by services delivered from State VR, then this Ticket has Phase 1 Milestone payments available. Go to Question 8.</p>
8	<p>You are ready to develop an IWP with your Ticket holder, and are likely to succeed as an EN by working with this individual. Now you can coordinate services with internal staff, and/or other programs and services in order to help your Ticket holder achieve the outlined employment goal in the IWP. Resource Coordination, such as through an Integrated Resource Team (IRT) may be useful for some Ticket holders.</p>	<p>Individual Work Plan</p>	<p>You can use an approved IWP template or an IEP that has been developed with this Ticket holder. Once a Ticket is assigned go to Step 9.</p>	<p>Business Operations</p>	<p>The EN needs to assign the Ticket with MAXMUS (CGM). This can be done using the secured provider portal or faxing the IWP. The EN should contact their Account Specialist at MAXMUS for details on submitting a Ticket Assignment.</p>
9	<p>As the Ticket holder is supported in his/her objectives in seeking employment, job placement will the ultimate outcome followed by maintaining employment. Just as job searching entails a variety of individual services, ongoing employment supports can include a wide variety of services. SSA will conduct periodic review of goals throughout the Ticket process to certify services are being provided (Certification of Services) at identified payment points (Phase 1 Milestone 4, Phase 2 Milestone 11, Outcome 11 and Outcome 22). For more information contact your Account Specialist at MAXMUS (CGM).</p>				
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**CONSENT TO RELEASE PRIVATE DATA MAINTAINED BY
MINNESOTA WORKFORCE CENTER SYSTEM TO SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION/MAXIMUS**

The Minnesota WorkForce Center System is asking for your consent (permission) to let us release data that we keep about you to the agencies listed on this form to check your eligibility for the Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work program. The data cannot be released without your consent. This form tells you what data we have been asked to release and what will happen (consequences) if you give your consent.

You have the right to look at all the data listed on this form and have copies of the data. We encourage you to look at the data *before* you decide whether to give your consent. If you want to look at the data or have copies, you must make a data request by contacting: **[insert the name and contact information for the Local Disability Resource Coordinator/Ticket to Work Coordinator.]**

You have the right to choose the data we release. You have the right to choose which entities receive data from us and the specific data each entity receives. If you choose not to let us release this data, we will not be able to determine your eligibility for the Ticket to Work program but it will not affect your eligibility for any other services.

If you give us your consent, we can release the data for one year from the date of your signature. You have the right to stop your consent (revoke or take back your permission) any time before this one year period ends. If you want to stop your consent, you must write to **[insert the name and contact information for the Local Disability Resource Coordinator/Ticket to Work Coordinator]** and clearly say that you want to stop all or part of your consent. We cannot stop the release of data that we already have released because you gave your consent.

Important: If you have a question about anything on this form, please talk to **[insert name of local data compliance official and how to contact that person]** before you sign it.

- [1] I give my permission for the Minnesota WorkForce Center System to release data about _____ in the way(s) described on this form;
- [2] I agree to let the Minnesota WorkForce Center System release these specific data or type(s) of data: Social Security Number, name;
- [3] I agree to let Minnesota WorkForce Center System release these data to the Social Security Administration and/or Maximus (administrator of the Ticket to Work program);
- [4] I understand that, if these data are released to these entities, the result(s) will be to determine my eligibility for participation in the Ticket to Work program.

[5] Signature of data subject _____ Date signed _____

[6] Signature of parent or guardian _____ Date signed _____

[7] Signature of person explaining this form _____ Date signed _____

Timely Progress Guidelines During Each 12-month Progress Review Period

- 1st-12 months** (after 12 months of ticket use)
- **Complete 3 months of work at Trial Work Level (TWL), OR**
 - Complete a GED or high school diploma, **OR**
 - Complete 60% of a full-time course load for an academic year in a college or technical/trade/vocational training program, **OR**
 - Complete a combination of this work and education requirement
- 2nd-12 months** (13-24 months of ticket use)
- **Complete 6 months of work at Trial Work Level (TWL), OR**
 - Complete 75% of a full-time course load for an academic year in a college or technical/trade/vocational training program, **OR**
 - Complete a combination of this work and education requirement
- 3rd-12 months** (25-36 months of ticket use)
- **Complete 9 months or work at Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) level, OR**
 - Complete an additional full-time academic year of study, **OR**
 - Complete a 2-year or 4-year college program, **OR**
 - Complete a 2-year technical/trade/vocational training program, **OR**
 - Complete a combination of this work and education requirement
- 4th-12 months** (37-48 months of ticket use)
- **Complete 9 months of work at Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) level, OR**
 - Complete an additional academic year of full-time study, **OR**
 - Complete a combination of this work and education requirement
- 5th-12 months** (49-60 months of ticket use)
- **Complete 6 months of work at Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) level with no SSDI and/or SSI cash benefits in months worked, OR**
 - Complete an additional academic year of full-time study, **OR**
 - Complete a 4-year degree program
- 6th-12 months** (61-72 months of ticket use)
- **Complete 6 months of work at Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) level with no SSDI and/ or SSI cash benefits in months worked, OR**
 - Complete a 4-year degree program
- 7th-12 months** (73-84 months of ticket use)
- **Complete 6 months of work at Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) level with no SSDI and/or SSI cash benefits in months worked**

Ticket Assignment Agreement

Employment Network (EN) Name: Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development	Ticket Holder Name:
EN Service Provider Name and Address:	Social Security Number:
<p>Statement of Understanding:</p> <p>I choose to participate in the Ticket to Work program with the Employment Network (EN) named above. I understand that the EN will provide me with employment support to find and keep a job, increase my earnings or run my own business. If possible, I plan to increase my earnings to support myself. I understand that I can change this plan with the EN from time to time to meet my current needs.</p> <p>The following has been explained to me:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. My participation in the Ticket Program is voluntary. I may un-assign the Ticket at any time if I am dissatisfied with the services being provided. 2. The purpose of the Ticket Program is to offer me the supports I need to increase my ability to work, my earnings, and the chance that I will become and stay self-supporting to the extent possible. 3. By agreeing to assign my Ticket and participate in the program, I am agreeing to make a steady effort to achieve these goals. 4. The EN will not charge me for any services provided under my Individual Employment Plan. 5. The EN may un-assign the Ticket at any time if the EN is no longer willing or able to provide services to me. 6. I will be excused from a medical review by the Social Security Administration while participating in the Ticket Program if I make expected levels of progress with work, education or technical training as described in the Timely Progress Review (TPR) guidelines. The TPR guidelines have been explained to me. 7. The EN will protect my personal information, including information about my disability, from those who do not have permission to see it. The EN will keep my personal information files in secure locations and allow access only to those who have permission to see the information. 8. The process for resolving disputes between myself and the EN has been explained to me. 	
Beneficiary Signature:	Date:
Employment Network Representative Signature:	Date: