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## Announcing New Improvements to Ticket to Work Program

The Social Security Administration (SSA) is pleased to announce exciting improvements to the Ticket to Work Program. These changes were published in the Federal Register on May 20, 2008 and will go in to effect on July 21, 2008. [Check out the new regulations](#) (PDF).

The revised regulations incorporate SSA's vision of the future direction of the Ticket to Work Program. SSA issued proposed changes to the Ticket Program in 2005 and 2007 based on lessons learned and issues arising from SSA's experience in implementing the prior rules. Changes to the Ticket to Work Program demonstrate that SSA is listening, learning and responding to both lessons learned and critically important feedback from a variety of stakeholders, including beneficiaries, employers, disability organizations, advocates and service providers.

### At-a-Glance Ticket Changes

- All disability beneficiaries, ages 18 through 64, are now eligible to receive Tickets. Under the previous regulations, any beneficiary categorized as "medical improvement expected" was not eligible to receive a Ticket until a medical Continuing Disability Review (CDR) was conducted and his/her continuing eligibility for disability benefits was determined.
- Employment Networks (ENs) can now earn Milestone payments earlier, more often and at higher rates.
- For the first time, SSA can pay Milestone payments to ENs when beneficiaries have earnings consistent with part-time work.
- Milestone payments will be based on gross earnings, encouraging the use of various beneficiary Work Incentives.
- Total payments available on behalf of beneficiaries under the Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) programs are now almost equal.

SSA will be offering training to those who have a role, or are interested in having a role in implementing the program. This training will cover these and other changes in greater depth.

For more information contact Emily Malsch at [emalsch@cessi.net](mailto:emalsch@cessi.net).

### DID YOU KNOW...?

**Alan Thomas, author of Enlightened Leadership: Best Practice Guidelines and Time Saving Tools for Easily Implementing Learning Organizations**, was recently interviewed on the Chet Curtis Report. In the interview Mr. Thomas provides speculation into why the employment rate of people with disabilities is lower now than it was prior to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). He also provides recommendations on what business and human resources leaders can do to gain a better understanding of the issue.

Mr. Thomas's book is one tool available for businesses to create a means for employees of all levels to grow and thereby expand their business.

[Watch the video.](#)

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**The mission of the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP)** is to ensure that companies doing business with the Federal government comply with their contractual obligations to provide equal employment opportunity and to develop positive programs to recruit, hire, and promote persons with disabilities. [Visit DOL's website](#) for more information.

## Useful Information on Disability Employment Law

The following is excerpted from an article published on Best Syndication in June 2008:

Since the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, federal and state governments have enacted a number of laws that bar an employer from discriminating against employees on almost any grounds, aside from the quality of the employee's work or the nature of his or her personality. Following is an introduction to the law of discrimination in employment.

The best known of employment anti-discrimination laws, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, prohibits an employer with fifteen or more employees from discriminating on the basis of race, national origin, gender, or religion. Under Title VII, it is illegal for an employer to take any of the following actions against an employee based upon his or her race, national origin, gender, or religion:

- Refuse to hire
- Discipline
- Fire
- Deny training
- Fail to promote
- Pay less or demote
- Harass

In addition, it is illegal for an employer to adopt a policy or practice that has a "disparate impact" on a protected class, such as by adopting hiring criteria that tend to screen out women or minority group members, or by instituting a required test for promotion on which a particular class tends to score badly. Such a policy or test, like a specific policy that only men or women can have certain jobs, is legal only if it can be deemed a "bona fide occupational qualification." An example is a strength test that tends to screen out women but is a necessary test for fire fighters who must be able to carry victims down tall ladders.

### *Disability Discrimination*

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act bar discrimination against those who are disabled. The ADA bars discrimination by private employers with more than fifteen employees, and the Rehabilitation Act applies to all government entities and federal contractors.

[Read the full article](#) for more information.

### GIVE US YOUR FEEDBACK

IF YOU HAVE AN EARN SUCCESS STORY, TELL US ABOUT IT. WE WOULD LIKE TO FEATURE YOUR STORY IN THIS NEWSLETTER AND ON OUR WEB SITE.

E-MAIL YOUR STORY TO:  
[EARN@EARNWORKS.COM](mailto:EARN@EARNWORKS.COM)

### EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES

- [DisabilityInfo.gov](#)
- [Office of Disability Employment Policy](#)
- [Ticket to Work](#)
- [Job Accommodation Network](#)
- [National Organization on Disability](#)

### INFORMATION YOU CAN USE

**The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) recently launched *Business Sense***, a new communication initiative with America's small businesses. *Business Sense* provides businesses with critical information and insights into employing people with disabilities. [Visit ODEP's website](#) for more information.

### EARN SUPPORT

EARN is funded by the [U.S. Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy](#).

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