

Making Life Better

Ticket To Work Helps People Regain Independence

(NAPSA)—Millions of Americans get Social Security disability benefits yet want to work. They may be glad to know about a federal program that can help them enter the workforce while maintaining access to benefits. Thanks to Social Security's Ticket to Work program, free employment support services help people prepare for work, find jobs or progress in their careers.

Many of these people are concerned about what employment would mean for their Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits. There's no need to worry. Social Security Work Incentives make it easier for adults with disabilities to explore work while continuing to receive benefits. Some of these incentives make it possible for people to test their ability to work without immediately losing Medicare or Medicaid coverage. Others let people whose disability interferes with employment start receiving benefits again without needing to submit a new application under certain conditions. Because everyone's situation is different, job seekers are encouraged to talk with a professional Benefits Counselor. These are trained experts who help people make informed decisions about employment. To find one, call the Ticket to Work Help Line at 1 (866) 968-7842 or 1 (866) 833-2967 (TTY).

For example, the Ticket program helped Brenda recover the control she lost when, in 1996, she found herself in the psychiatric unit of a hospital. Brenda had experienced psychosis—a frightening symptom of an illness that causes people to lose touch with reality. The symptoms recurred, interfering with her ability to maintain steady work. Still, Brenda studied human services in col-



Brenda was able to resume her work helping others after being hospitalized for psychosis thanks to a special government program.

lege and after many years, found effective treatment.

She wanted to return to work, so when information about Ticket to Work came in the mail, Brenda connected with a provider who offered the support she needed. With career counseling, résumé help, job leads and a lot of encouragement, Brenda landed a job as a Community Rehabilitation worker. She applies her human service skills to helping vulnerable populations engage in the community and has recovered her sense of purpose.

"This work is not just about making money," she reflects. "It's a healthy [work] environment and I'm thriving in it. When you have the kind of support that allows you to focus on succeeding, you discover what you can do."

Ticket to Work helped Brenda find her path to a better future. It may help you find yours. To learn more, call the Ticket to Work Help Line or visit <https://choosework.ssa.gov>.