



### NEW YORK – How to Inspire Ticket Holders

**The Challenge:** As an American Job Center (AJC) that serves as a Workforce Employment Network (EN), how do we inspire Ticket Holders to pursue work? They often fear losing Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and most importantly, related health benefits.

**The Strategy:** Discovering the Ticket Holder's "Dreams" is key to inspiring them while at the same time acknowledging their fears of poverty and loss of benefits. This dual approach will lead to developing a REAL PLAN for self-sufficiency that makes Ticket Holder dreams a reality. [Workforce ENs in New York](#) have experienced success under SSA's Ticket to Work (TTW) Program with the following key strategies.

#### Key Strategies:

- Active listening is key!! Let people share their story!!!
- Empathize with their losses due to accident or disease.
- Acknowledge how hard it was to be approved for SSDI/SSI benefits and their real world fear of losing the vital healthcare and financial support these benefits provide.
- Get beyond the "I need more money" reason.
- Begin the discovery of what the Ticket Holder "dreams" for their life might be – you may share your own story!
- What does the Ticket Holder miss most about not working? Responses are often the same as your own reasons for working and include:
  - I want to buy a car, a house, pay down bills...
  - I want to go on vacation, buy things for my kids, and provide for my family...
  - I want to be around adults, get off benefits, and have work friends...
  - I want to share my skills and talents – and not waste my life...
  - I want a retirement I can enjoy – and not worry about paying the bills...

**The Plan:** So how do we help make the Ticket Holder's dreams become a reality? This is primarily through a detailed planning process that includes financial planning:

- Develop a unique Individual Work Plan (IWP) to achieve the goal.
- Identify steps to the goal and revisit as time progresses – it is rarely a straight line to achievement!!
- Engage partners and resources where possible. Who needs to do "what", "where", and "when"
- Identify financial status and needs – important to do BEFORE getting the job!
  - Utilize [Customer Goal and Financial Situation Assessment Tool](#).
  - Consider [Plan to Achieve Self Support \(PASS\) Plan](#).
  - Establish a saving account.
  - Share [Earned Income Tax Credit \(EITC\)](#) and [MyFreeTaxes](#) following employment.
  - Establish a detailed spending plan.
- Guide Ticket Holders in transitioning off benefits, interpreting notices, and reporting work status and wages correctly to SSA.

**Case Study:** Janet, a Ticket Holder, sought workforce assistance at American Job Center (AJC) following 6 ½ years on SSDI and losing child support payments of \$350. The strategic approach identified her dream and long-term goal of owning a photography business. To meet more immediate employment goals, the AJC provided job search assistance, resume writing, on-line job searches, and upgraded computer skills training. Janet achieved employment as an evening hospital transporter with a continued long-term goal for a home photography studio. Her budgeting process included savings and set-aside of funds for her photography business and pay-down of bills. In the first year Janet purchased a car. More recently, Janet has purchased a home, does professional photography, and authored a children's book called "Feather's" with her own photos that will be published soon.

**System/Workforce/WIOA Outcomes:** Ticket Holder successful employment achieves multiple positive outcomes in addition to the personal achievements:

- Ticket Holder no longer requiring support via benefits now contributes as a tax-payer and consumer to tax revenues in multiple ways, including with contributions to Medicare and Medicaid.
- Employers benefit from hard-working, resilient, motivated employees who are experienced problem-solvers and may receive tax benefits under the [Work Opportunity Tax Credit, and potentially for the Workers \(with disabilities\) Employment Tax Credit](#).
- Milestone and Outcome Payments from TTW help future job seekers by covering costs of Disability Resource Coordinator positions in the AJC/Workforce EN and can provide funds to support future TTW job seekers accessing the AJC/Workforce EN.
- Employment outcome, job retention, and average wage performance measures through the Ticket to Work program are aligned with similar measures through WIOA.

**Key Career Pathway Elements:** Cross Agency Partnerships (with SSA); Identify Funding Needs and Sources (TTW Resources); and Align Policies and Programs (WIOA and TTW).

**Additional Resources on this Topic:**

- [New York DEI Best Practice – How to Inspire Ticket Holders](#) -- Strategies on how to inspire Ticket Holders using a unique approach to engage customers that has led to recruitment success as a result.
- [DEI Workforce EN Community of Practice](#) – Support to DEI projects who are operating Workforce ENs through the dynamic exchange of ideas, providing access to seasoned DRCs and other DEI project staff from across the country that have achieved success operating Workforce ENs.
- [Resources for Employment Network Operations in the Workforce System](#) – Information and resources on becoming an Employment Network under SSA's Ticket to Work Program.
- [Ticket to Work Program](#) Overview.