

# Presenting Your Best Self to Employers



**TICKET**  
*to* **Work**

**WISE**  
Work Incentive Seminar Event

MAY 28, 2025

**Live Webinar Will Begin at 3 p.m. ET**

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# WELCOME

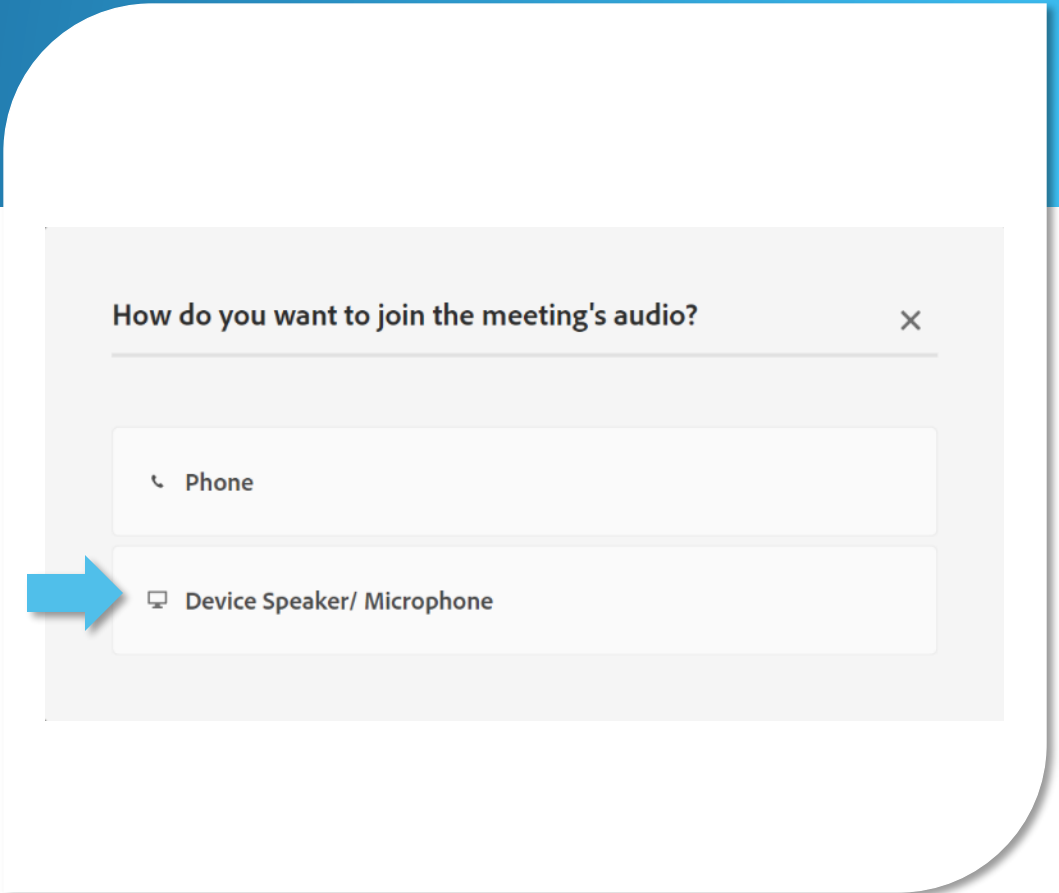
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# WELCOME

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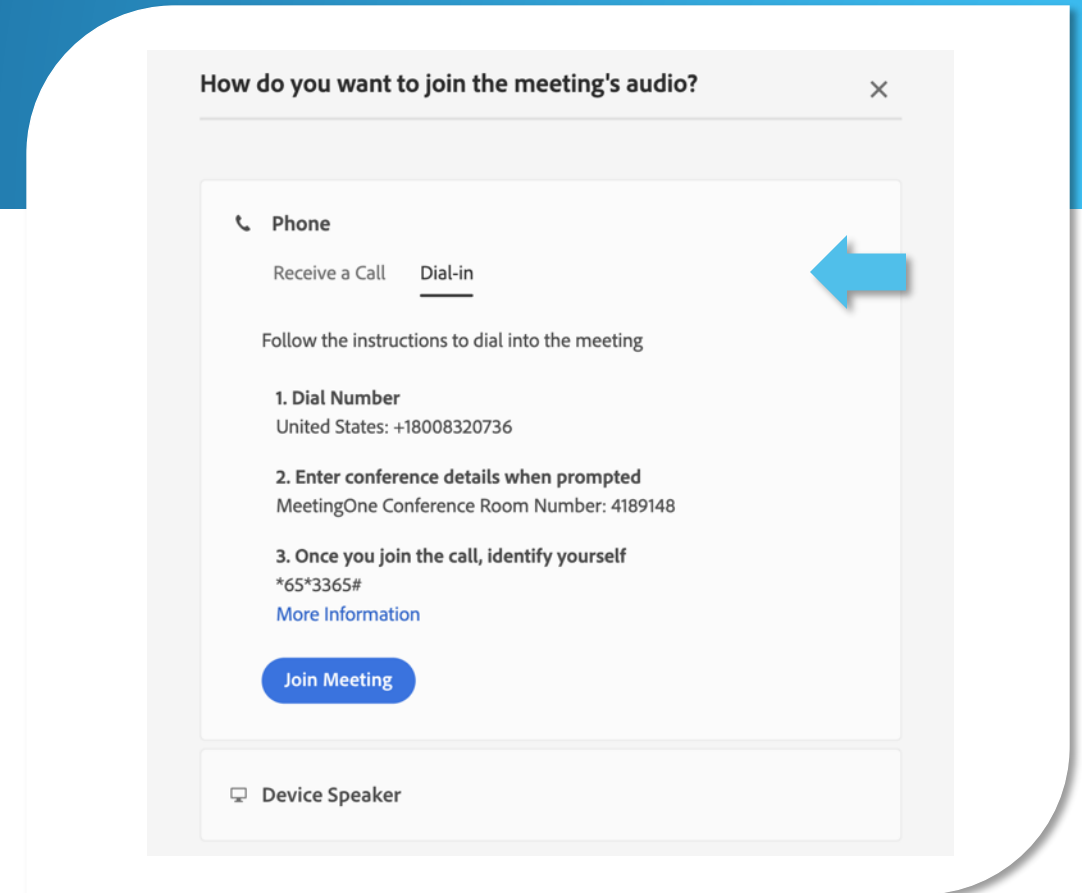
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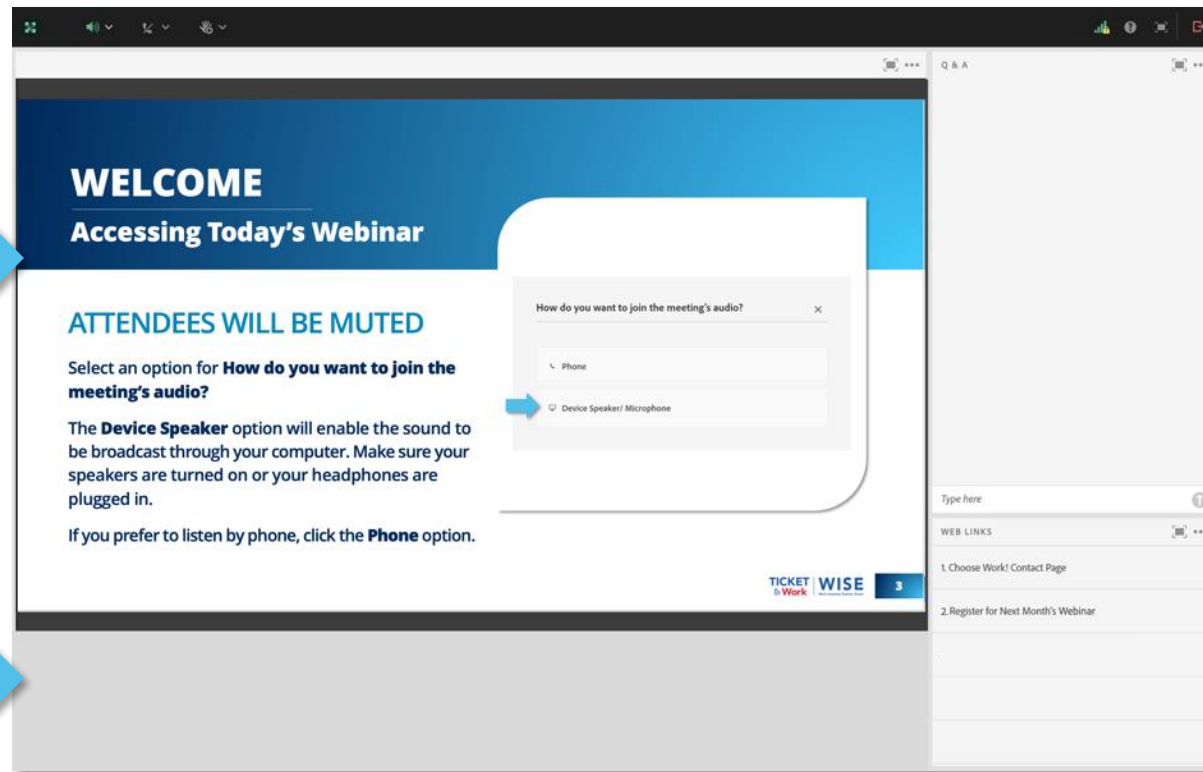
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# WELCOME

## Adobe Connect Platform

PRESENTATION POD



Q&A POD



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# WELCOME

## Real-Time Captioning

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If you're fluent in ASL and would like support during today's webinar, use our [ASL User Guide](#) that provides instructions to connect with an interpreter through the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Video Relay Service (VRS).

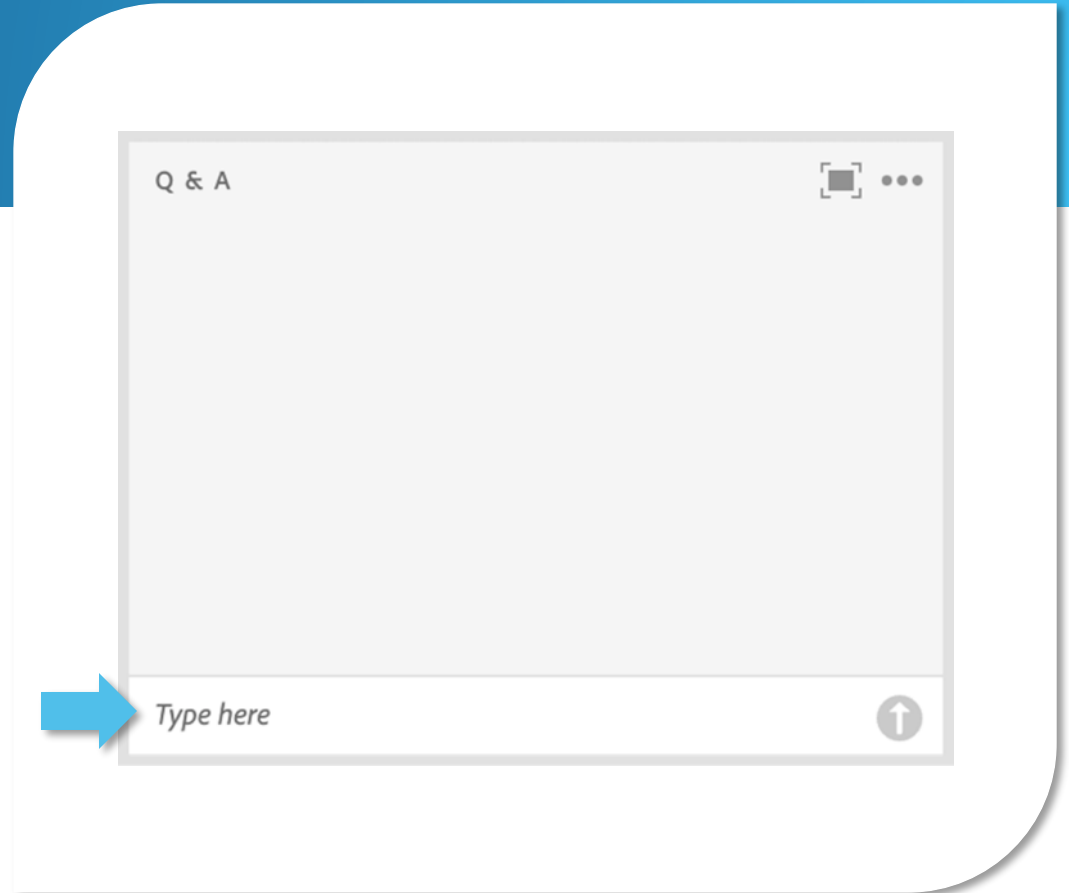


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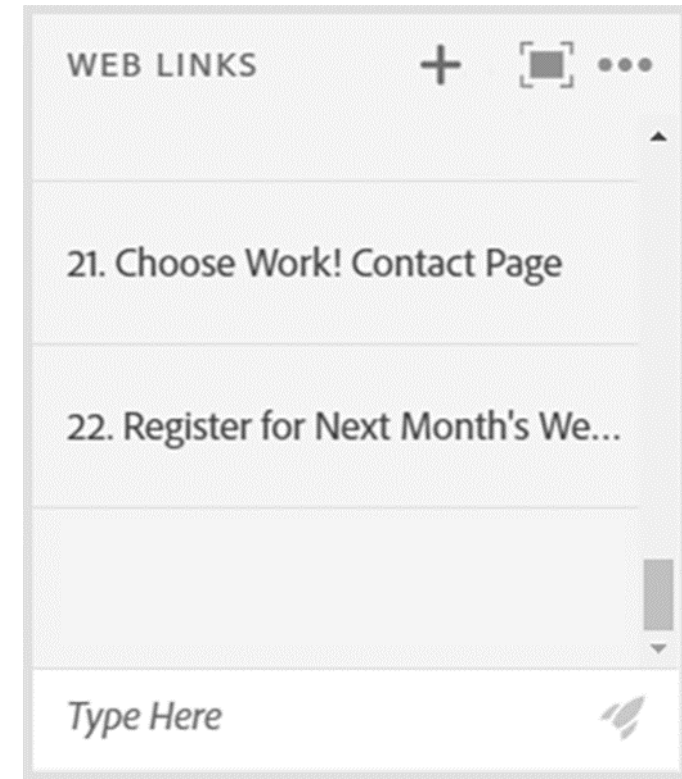


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# WELCOME

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# WELCOME

## Presenters



**Moderator**

**Raymond A. Cebula, III, J.D.**

Cornell University



**Presenter**

**Derek Shields**

Ticket Program Manager

# Webinar Overview

Today, we'll discuss these topics:

What is Social Security's Ticket to Work Program?

Creating application materials

Preparing for an interview

Who can help you present your best self to employers?



# **What is Social Security's Ticket to Work Program?**

# Social Security Disability Programs



**Social Security  
Disability  
Insurance  
(SSDI)**



**Supplemental  
Security  
Income  
(SSI)**



# What Is the Ticket to Work Program?

## The Ticket to Work Program

- Is a free and voluntary Social Security program
- Offers career development for people ages 18 through 64 who receive Social Security disability benefits and want to work



# How Can the Ticket Program Help?

The Ticket to Work Program connects you with free employment services to help you:

- Decide if work, including self-employment, is right for you
- Prepare for work
- Find a paid work opportunity
- Succeed at work

## Learn More:

[What is Social Security's Ticket to Work Program?](#)

[Self-Guided Tutorial](#)



# Ticket to Work Help Line

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The Ticket to Work Program offers a toll-free Help Line to answer your questions and support you on your journey to financial independence.

**Call the Ticket to Work Help Line**

Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 8 p.m. ET

**1-866-968-7842**

**1-866-833-2967 (TTY)**





# **Creating Application Materials**

# Resumes

A resume:

- Is typically a one-page document that summarizes your work experience, skills, education, and volunteer experience
- Showcases your qualifications to a potential employer
- Is the first impression employers will have of you
- Can highlight your career goals and show employers that your goals are aligned with the company's mission
- Allows interviewers to ask questions tailored to you and your experience, allowing for a more effective interview process

# What to Include on a Resume

- Contact information
- Work history
- Education
- Certifications
- Tasks, results, or goals met in each job position
- Volunteer work
- Useful job-related skills
- Awards, honors, and work-related achievements





# Tips for Writing a Resume

- Make your contact information stand out
  - Use a large clear font
  - Use a professional email address
- Tailor your resume for specific jobs
  - Compare your resume to the job listing and use some of the keywords in your resume.
- List information in order of importance
  - People read from top to bottom, so make sure to include the most important information at the top of your resume.
- Make your resume [applicant tracking system \(ATS\)](#) friendly for each job you apply for.

# Cover Letters

- A cover letter helps you introduce yourself and persuades an employer to look at your application further.
- Some applications require a cover letter. Even if a job posting says it's optional, you should still send one.
- It can highlight specific skills you have that are relevant to the job and explain why you are interested in that job.



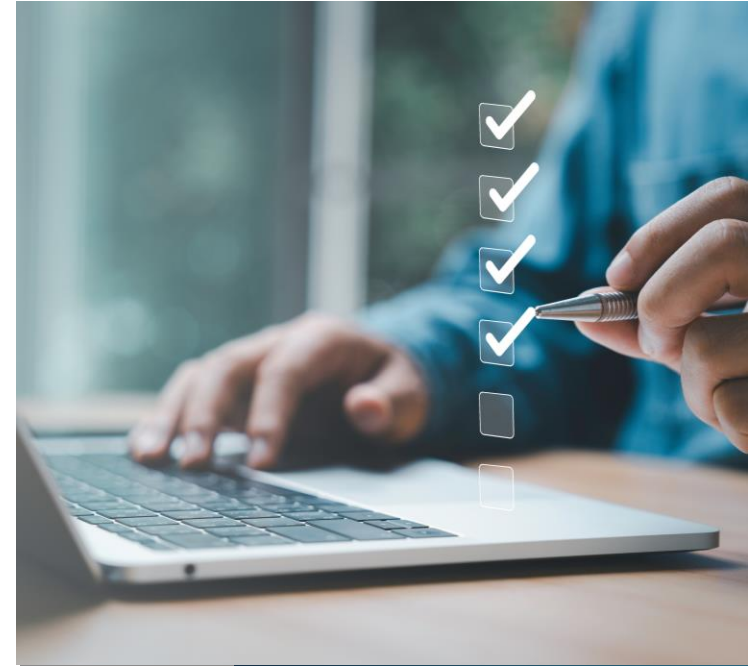
# Tips for Writing a Cover Letter

- Research the company you are applying to so you can include how your skillset aligns with the company's values.
- Personalize your cover letter for each job.
- Address the hiring manager directly (if name is on job description. If not, write "to the hiring manager").
- Emphasize your skills and experience and how they align with the position.



# What to Include in a Cover Letter

- Your contact information
- Recipient's information
- Introduction of yourself
- Body paragraphs that explain your knowledge, skillset, and abilities
- What makes you uniquely qualified for the position
- Any accomplishments you'd like to highlight
- Closing statement
  - Ex: I look forward to hearing from you.



# Portfolios

- A portfolio is a sample of your previous work that showcases your skillset to potential employers.
- A portfolio doesn't need to include every past project you worked on. It should include the projects that align the best with the job you're applying for.
  - If you apply for a job where your main role will be website design, you should include previous websites you've designed.
  - If you apply for a job where your main role will be photography, you should include your best examples of photographs you've taken.
- Not every job requires a portfolio.

# Tips for Creating a Portfolio

- Determine the best representations of your previous work
- Develop sections to separate items into common groups
  - Publications
  - Websites
  - Artwork
- Include a statement outlining your goals
- Request and maintain current testimonials and references
- Emphasize awards and other achievements
- Include ways to connect and follow via email or social networks



# Reviewing Your Application Materials

- Check your materials for errors
  - Ask your service provider, family member, or friend to review your materials.
- Revisit and revise your materials
  - As you complete new projects and gain skills and experience, be sure to add them to your materials.



**Q&A**





# **Preparing for an Interview**

# Research the Company

Researching the company shows your interest in the position.

- Many interview questions are specific to the company where you're applying. Doing research about the company can help you better answer these types of questions:
  - What do you know about our company?
  - Why do you want to work for our company?
  - What can you bring to this company?

# Practice Answering Questions

- Practicing answering questions can lead to increased confidence in an interview.
- Practice a mix of general questions and role-specific questions.
  - Research common interview questions for the job you are interviewing for.
- Practice with your service provider, friend, or family member.



# Prepare Questions to Ask

- At the end of the interview, the interviewer will likely ask if you have any questions for them. Always have at least one question ready.
- Consider these questions:
  - What is a typical day or week like for someone in this position?
  - What is the most important thing someone would need to accomplish in the first 3-6 months in this position?
  - What's your favorite part about working for this business?
  - What are the next steps in the hiring process?



# Dress for the Job

- Dressing appropriately for an interview is important. It shows the interviewer you are professional and creates a positive first impression.
- Dressing appropriately can look different for different types of jobs.
  - If you're applying for an office job, a suit or blazer may be necessary.
  - If you're applying for a welding job, an appropriate outfit may consist of clothing that will accommodate protective gear and allow you to demonstrate your welding skills.
- No matter what type of job you're applying for, make sure your clothes are clean and wrinkle free.



# Be Mindful of Time

- Arrive at your interview a few minutes early.
- Make sure to allow extra time to get to your interview in case there are delays on the way.
- Be respectful of the interviewer's time.
  - Give the interviewer your full attention
  - Turn off your phone
- Follow up with the interviewer to thank them for their time.
  - Demonstrate your understanding of the position and job readiness
  - Refer to your updated portfolio or recent achievements

# Walter's Success Story

- Walter was born with a developmental disability and had to work hard to acquire skills that came naturally to his peers.
- Walter received Supplemental Security Income.
- Walter dreamed of living independently, so he set a goal to find work and earn an income.
- Walter began working with an Employment Network to help him develop the skills he needed to reach his goals.



# Walter's Success Story Continued

- Walter created an Individual Work Plan with his career counselor. In this plan, he identified short-term and long-term goals.
- He set a goal to improve his soft skills including professionalism, proper dress, timeliness, ability to follow directions, and communication.
- After working on these skills, Walter was able to take on more hours and gain new responsibilities.
- With his earnings from work, Walter became the first person in his family to own a home.



[Walter's Success Story](#)



**Who Can Help You  
Present Your Best Self  
to Employers?**

# Who Can Help You?

As you think about returning to work and possibly changing careers you may have questions and need support.

- Connecting with a **Ticket Program service provider** can help you develop achievable goals and establish steps to find and maintain employment in your new career.
- Ticket Program service providers can even help you identify the type of career you might enjoy and any transferable skills you may have.

# Ticket Program Service Providers

Through the Ticket Program, you'll have access to a variety of Ticket Program service providers, including:



Employment  
Networks  
(EN)



State Vocational  
Rehabilitation  
(VR) Agencies



# Employment Network (EN)

An **EN** is a private or public organization that has an agreement with Social Security to provide free employment support services to people who are eligible for the Ticket Program.

Many state public workforce systems, such as American Job Centers, are **Workforce ENs**.



# How Can Working With an EN Help You?

Services and supports are designed to help you on the path to financial independence through work and may include helping you to:

- Identify your work goals
- Write and review your resume
- Create a portfolio
- Prepare for interviews
- Request reasonable accommodations
- Receive benefits counseling



# State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Agency

A **State VR agency** provides a wide variety of services to help people with disabilities return to work, enter new lines of work or enter the workforce for the first time. A State VR agency may offer benefits counseling and may also be able to help you with:

- Vocational rehabilitation
- Training and education



Some states have separate VR agencies that serve individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

# How Can Working With a VR Help You?


## VR agencies:

- Usually work with individuals who need more significant services.
- In some states, this includes intensive training, education, and rehabilitation.
- They may also provide career counseling and job placement assistance as well as counseling about how earnings from work may affect Social Security disability benefits.





# How Do You Find a Service Provider?

 For a list of service providers, call the Ticket to Work Help Line at **1-866-968-7842** or **1-866-833-2967 (TTY)**, Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 8 p.m. ET

 To find a service provider online, visit the [Find Help page](#). Search by:

- ✓ ZIP code
- ✓ Services offered
- ✓ Disability type
- ✓ Languages spoken
- ✓ Provider type  
(EN, Workforce EN or VR)



**Q&A**



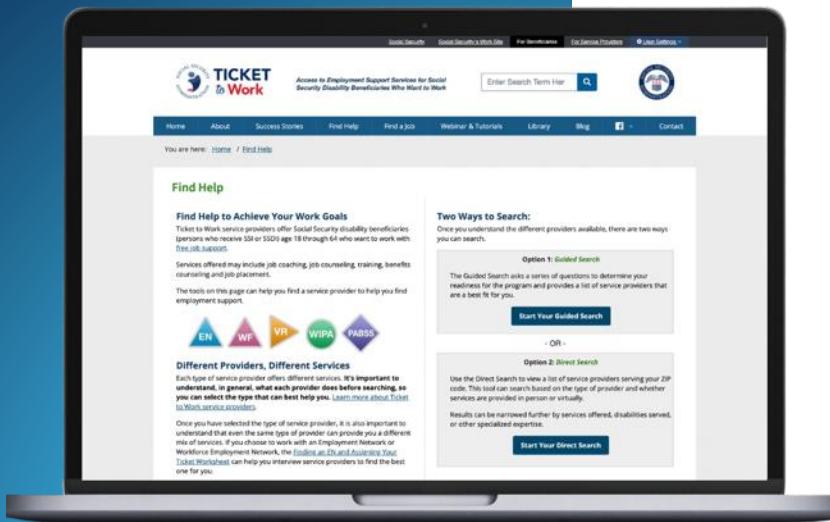
# How To Get Started

**Social Security's Ticket to Work Program has resources ready to help you get started!**

**Call the Ticket to Work Help Line**  
**1-866-968-7842**  
**1-866-833-2967 (TTY)**

**Visit Our Website**  
**[choosework.ssa.gov](https://choosework.ssa.gov)**

**Use the Find Help Tool**  
**[choosework.ssa.gov/findhelp](https://choosework.ssa.gov/findhelp)**





# How To Connect

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**Visit the [Choose Work! Contact page](#)** to find us on social media and subscribe to blog and email updates.



**Opt-in to receive text messages** by texting TICKET to 1-571-489-5292. Standard messaging rates may apply. You may opt-out at any time.



**Email us at** [TicketToWork@ssa.gov](mailto:TicketToWork@ssa.gov).

**TICKET**  
*to* **Work**

**WISE**

Work Incentive Seminar Event

# Join Us for Our Next WISE Webinar!

What is Ticket to Work?

**June 25, 2025**

3 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. ET

**REGISTER ONLINE**

or call **1-866-968-7842** or  
**1-866-833-2967 (TTY)**