

Ticket Talk



Podcast Transcript

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Ticket Talk Podcast: Schedule A Job Opportunities

Opening: You are listening to the Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work podcast series. Get answers to your questions, access information and resources, and receive expert advice on Work Incentives and the Ticket to Work program.

INTRODUCTION

Interviewer: Social Security wants you to succeed and become financially independent. The journey is not easy, but with help from the Ticket to Work program, Work Incentives and other federal programs and resources, you can find options for work that may fit your situation. One option for employment is working for the federal government through a program called the Schedule A Hiring Authority for people with disabilities; often simply called Schedule A. Schedule A is an opportunity, not a guarantee of employment, and a person's application and resume must demonstrate their ability to do the job they're applying for. The number of employees with disabilities working in the federal government is the highest it has been in more than 30 years, and the number continues to increase.

Today we're speaking with Billy Wright, a veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps who was paralyzed in a car accident after his time in the military. Billy received help transitioning to the civilian workforce through his state vocational rehabilitation (VR) agency. The services Billy received from his VR helped him land a Schedule A position in the federal government. Today, he serves as the National Program Manager for the Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Billy has turned his challenges into lessons that may help people with disabilities advance their own position. Billy, we're honored to have you. Thank you for joining us.

Ticket Talk



Billy: Thank you.

Interviewer: Let's start with a little more background on your story. Billy, can you tell me what Schedule A is?

Billy: Yes. Schedule A is a special hiring authority that the federal government uses to hire a person with a disability without actually going through the competitive process or competing for a position and basically that's what it is. You have to have a letter from your voc rehab counselor, a doctor, a licensed physician, a licensed rehabilitation professional or any organization that provides benefits for persons of disabilities. With that letter, it just states that you have a disability and you are able to work. And that will go to the hiring managers and the HR professionals for each government agency that will go along with your application. And, it's normally, after two years in working with Schedule A, you can be converted into a permanent employee.

Interviewer: Who is eligible for Schedule A?

Billy: You know anyone that has a disability, a severe disability. Normally with the Schedule A letters, they come from either your doctor or licensed professional rehab counselors or any organization that provides benefits for persons with disabilities.

Interviewer: When you started to look for employment after the accident, how did you first learn about Schedule A?

Billy: Well actually, I learned from my counselor. You know, you go through the process and you get assigned to a social worker and a voc rehab counselor. And a lot of us back then and even probably now. If you're a college student and you're receiving services from a student disability services or if you are in a high school and you're receiving some type of special needs or you have a voc rehab counselor, you know, definitely you are eligible for Schedule A. And in applying for jobs, my counselor knew to tag the Schedule A letter with my applications when I was applying for positions at the federal government.

Ticket Talk



Interviewer: Where could someone find more information about Schedule A and working for the Federal government?

Billy: Well, great resources, the Ticket to Work resources, the www.choosework.net. They have a lot of information and resources for jobs seekers with disabilities or you can go to the SSA site and find it there, as well. It's a very good resource that I've used over the years.

Interviewer: Billy, thank you for speaking with us today. We really appreciate you sharing your advice with our listeners.

Billy: Thank you.

Interviewer: The transition to employment can be challenging, but can also be rewarding. Social Security's Ticket to Work and Work Incentives are here to help you on your path to employment. For more information about Ticket to Work or help locating a service provider, visit www.choosework.net or call the Ticket to Work helpline at 1-866-968-7842 for voice or 1-866-833-2967 for TTY.