

Ticket Talk



Podcast Transcript

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Ticket Talk Podcast: What You Need to Know about Work-From-Home 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 for your situation.

For example, we hear from many beneficiaries with a strong interest in work-from-home job options. Today we are speaking with Lisa Seeley, a Ticket to Work Success Story participant whose agoraphobia, or fear of public places, prevented her from working. She now works from home at a national Employment Network called Employment Options and is financially independent. Lisa, we are excited to have you. Thank you for joining us.

Lisa: Thank you so much for having me.

Interviewer: So tell us a little about your experience with Ticket to Work, and how it helped you find your current position?

Lisa: Well, Ticket to Work is a wonderful program to help those who are on SSI or SSDI get back into the workforce again. How I did it was you contact Social Security and request an Employment Network list. And then what you do is you go through the list

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and there are many different Employment Networks that have different roles and different services. You choose the one that would best fit your needs.

Interviewer: When you were going through these lists, how could you tell what particular Employment Network would fit your needs the best?

Lisa: Well for myself I knew I needed an Employment Network that would specialize in work from home placement. My disability is agoraphobia and it was difficult and challenging for me to go out in public so, I knew I needed an Employment Network that would specialize in work from home placement. Each Employment Network has a briefing on the services that they provide and areas that they are able to help you with.

Interviewer: So you were able to look at that list and down select to Employment Networks that offered work from home options, is that how that worked?

Lisa: That's exactly how that goes. You read each Employment Network's information section and I suggest that you go through a couple and interview them. Just like how someone would interview for a job, you want to make sure they would be the best Employment Network for your goals and needs.

Interviewer: What kind of work-from-home jobs are available for people with disabilities? And how much experience do you need for a work-from-home job?

Lisa: Our work-from-home positions here at Employment Options are specialized customer service-based with opportunities to specialize in tech support, chat, billing and coding. There are also information technology positions, nursing, case management, concierge openings, sales, reservations and the list goes on and on. Work from home is becoming more popular and many companies are opening up opportunities to be able to work from home.

Interviewer: Sounds like a wide range of possible job options. Do you have to have experience in these particular areas or do Employment Networks help you learn some of the skills required for these jobs?

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Lisa: Employment Networks don't necessarily provide training. Each company has different requirements. But you do need some sort of experience within that field to qualify.

Interviewer: What tips do you have to share with Social Security disability beneficiaries who want to work from home? Where do you recommend they start?

Lisa: The first thing I would do is I would go to the website, www.choosework.net. There you can get a lot of information about the Ticket to Work program, and there is where you can also get a listing of Employment Networks and their contact information in order to look them over, get more information about them and choose the best one that would fit your needs.

Interviewer: Do you ever encounter any challenges when you are working from home?

Lisa: Work-from-home is not for everybody. Some people have trouble being disciplined. You really have to be motivated to work from home. You're not going to have a supervisor looking over your shoulder making sure you are on time and doing your task as needed. You really have to be able to separate your work life from your personal life as well. It is a great idea to make a home office section within your home so you have your computer, your phone and everything set up in your work area so you are able to close that door and shut out your personal life from your work life. A lot of people who do work from home have families and children and things like that. For myself I'm in that boat, and when my door is closed, my kids know and my husband knows that we have to be quiet because Mommy's at work. Some people working from home become isolated and they need to have more social interaction. I found myself being in that same boat as well, I would work from home all day but then I would go out with my girlfriends or I go out to the gym and work out. I need to make sure I am able to get out and socially interact with adults because when you're working from home you're by yourself. So that can be a challenge for some people too; people feel they are by themselves and have cabin fever.

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Interviewer: I think that is all great advice: setting up the home office, having clear rules of engagement for family members and making sure you interact with people outside of that as well. I think those are fantastic tips for folks who are looking for work from home jobs.

Lisa: It's a wonderful opportunity, especially for those who deal with different disabilities. Some people can't perform anywhere else but their home environment. It is really a wonderful opportunity to be in your own environment, to feel comfortable both physically and mentally and feel productive. That was my main thing when I was looking for work from home options 12 years ago. When I started my Ticket to Work journey I needed to make sure that I was working in my home environment. And I found an Employment Network and here I am 12 years later working for one. The sky is the limit really, being on the Ticket to Work program, starting off as a customer service rep or what not but there is always room for advancement and becoming financially independent was my ultimate goal. I'm so happy and proud to say that I finally met that. I couldn't have done it without the Ticket to Work program.

CLOSING

Interviewer: That's really great to hear. Congratulations, Lisa, and thank you for speaking with us today. We appreciate you sharing your advice with our listeners.

Lisa: Any time, thank you so much for having me.

Interviewer: The transition to employment can be challenging for anyone, 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.socialsecurity.gov/work or call the Ticket to Work Helpline at 1-866-968-7842 for voice or 1-866-833-2967 for TTY.