



PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY FOR BENEFICIARIES of SOCIAL SECURITY (PABSS)

The Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS) program in Pennsylvania is tasked with assisting Social Security beneficiaries with return-to-work issues and employment barriers. It also supports the state's "Employment First" initiative, in that employment in the general workforce should be competitive and integrated for all people, regardless of disability. It should also be the first and preferred outcome of publicly-funded programs for Pennsylvanians with disabilities in areas such as education, employment, training, and long-term services and supports.

You Are Eligible for PABSS Services If:

You are a Pennsylvanian with a disability who receives Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits, and

1. You need information about how working or increasing your work-related earnings will affect your benefits, or
2. You are having trouble getting the vocational rehabilitation or other employment-related services and supports you need in order to work including concerns you may have with your employer about reasonable accommodations, or

3. You are experiencing a barrier to employment. Barriers to employment may also include accommodation at the workplace, need for assistive, technology, transportation issues, health related issues, and discrimination.

If You Are Eligible For Our Assistance, PABSS Can:

- Provide information about the programs, services and supports available to help you work;
- Provide information about the numerous work incentives that may be helpful in your efforts to get meaningful work;
- Refer you to professionals who can explain how working or increasing your work-related earnings will affect your benefits and help you plan for the future;
- Assist you if you encounter problems in getting the services and supports you need to gain or continue work;
- Advocate on your behalf to resolve any conflicts you may have with service providers or employers as you seek to gain or continue work;
- Identify and correct systemic barriers that impede access to vocational and rehabilitation services; and barriers to employment and support services necessary to facilitate entry or reentry to the workplace.

What Is PABSS?

Protection & Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS) was established under the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act (WIPA) of 1999 (Public Law 106-170). The express purposes of the Act are:

- to provide health care and employment preparation and placement services to individuals with disabilities;

- to encourage States to expand Medicaid availability to workers with disabilities;
- to expand Medicare availability to workers with disabilities; and
- to obtain necessary services and supports to obtain and retain employment and reduce dependency on cash benefits.

PABSS, which is funded by a grant from the Social Security Administration (SSA), seeks to protect the rights of SSDI and SSI beneficiaries who wish to gain or continue work. PABSS is part of Disability Rights Pennsylvania, a statewide non-profit organization that has been advocating on behalf of individuals with disabilities since 1977. The services are free to all eligible individuals.

For More Information About The Ticket To Work:

The Social Security Administration has information about the Ticket on their website at www.ssa.gov/work. Staff can be contacted at 800-772-1213 or 800-325-0778 (TTY).

MAXIMUS has information about the Ticket on their website at www.yourtickettowork.com. Staff can be contacted at 866-968-7842 or 866-833-2967 (TTY).

If you would like more information about the impact of earned income on SSA cash benefits and related health care and about work incentives, the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) Project can provide free advice. In Pennsylvania, there are three organizations that provide these services by region:

Western Pennsylvania -

AHEDD

Voice: 1-866-902-4333, ext. 62001

Fax: 412-357-5994

Web Address: ssaworkincentives@ahedd.org

Service Counties: Armstrong, Allegheny, Bedford, Beaver, Blair, Butler, Cambria, Cameron, Clarion, Clearfield, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Fayette, Forest, Greene, Huntingdon, Indiana, Jefferson, Lawrence, McKean, Mercer, Somerset, Venango, Warren, Washington, Westmoreland.

Central & Northeastern Pennsylvania

Goodwill Keystone Area

Voice: 1-888-960-WORK (9675)

Fax: 717-689-4890

Web Address: benefitscounseling@yourgoodwill.org

Service Counties: Adams, Berks, Bradford, Carbon, Centre, Clinton, Columbia, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lancaster, Lackawanna, Lebanon, Lehigh, Luzerne, Lycoming, Monroe, Mifflin, Montour, Northumberland, Perry, Pike, Potter, Schuylkill, Snyder, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga, Union, Wayne, Wyoming and York.

Southeastern Pennsylvania

Disability Rights Pennsylvania

Work Incentives Planning Assistance Program

Voice: 800-692-7443, Ext. 309

Email: Phyllis Hilley, phillee@disabilityrightspa.org; Tyra Virden, tvirden@disabilityrightspa.org; Norma Realpe, nrealpe@disabilityrightspa.org.

Service Counties: Chester, Bucks, Delaware, Montgomery, Northampton, and Philadelphia

Do you receive SSDI or SSI benefits, have trouble returning to work or continuing employment, and need legal or advocacy assistance? We may be able to help you!

Contact Information

If you need more information or need help, please contact Disability Rights Pennsylvania (DRP) at 800-692-7443 (voice) or 877-375-7139 (TDD). The email address is: intake@disabilityrightspa.org.

The mission of Disability Rights Pennsylvania is to advance, protect, and advocate for the human, civil, and legal rights of Pennsylvanians with disabilities. Due to our limited resources, Disability Rights Pennsylvania cannot provide individual services to every person with advocacy and legal issues. Disability Rights Pennsylvania prioritizes cases that have the potential to result in widespread, systemic changes to benefit persons with disabilities. While we cannot provide assistance to everyone, we do seek to provide every individual with information and referral options.

IMPORTANT: This publication is for general informational purposes only. This publication is not intended, nor should be construed, to create an attorney-client relationship between Disability Rights Pennsylvania and any person. Nothing in this publication should be considered to be legal advice.

PLEASE NOTE: For information in alternative formats or a language other than English, contact Disability Rights Pennsylvania at 800-692-7443, Ext. 400, TDD: 877-375-7139 or intake@disabilityrightspa.org.

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