



# Employment Networks:

## Selecting the Right One for Your Needs

Do you receive Social Security benefits such as Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and want to be employed? You can receive employment services under the Ticket to Work program.[1] **If you decide to participate, you need to first call the Ticket to Work Help Line at 1-866-968-7842 / 1-866-833-2967 (TTY) to see if you are eligible. The Ticket Program is voluntary.**

Once you are eligible for a “Ticket,” you can choose from a variety of providers who offer employment services. You have the option of using your ticket to obtain services from a provider known as an employment network or from the state vocational rehabilitation agency.

## Employment Networks (EN)

Employment Networks, or ENs, are public or private organizations that are paid by the Social Security Administration (SSA). ENs can be a single entity, a group of agencies, or an association of organizations that combine their resources to serve Ticket holders.

When you pick an EN of your choice and assign the EN your Ticket, the EN takes responsibility for coordinating or delivering services to you to obtain employment, vocational rehabilitation or any other support services required to achieve an employment goal.

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[1] P.L. 106-170 (The Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 was signed into law to increase the options for individuals with disabilities who wish to return to work.)

You can visit <https://choosework.ssa.gov/findhelp/> to search for local or virtual service providers that offer specific services, such as benefits counseling or self-employment help; or those that serve particular disabilities or speak a certain language.

You and the EN must work together to first create an Individual Work Plan (IWP). This plan will outline the services you need to reach your employment goal. The plan must be agreed to by you and the EN and it must be signed before services can be provided by the EN under the Ticket program.

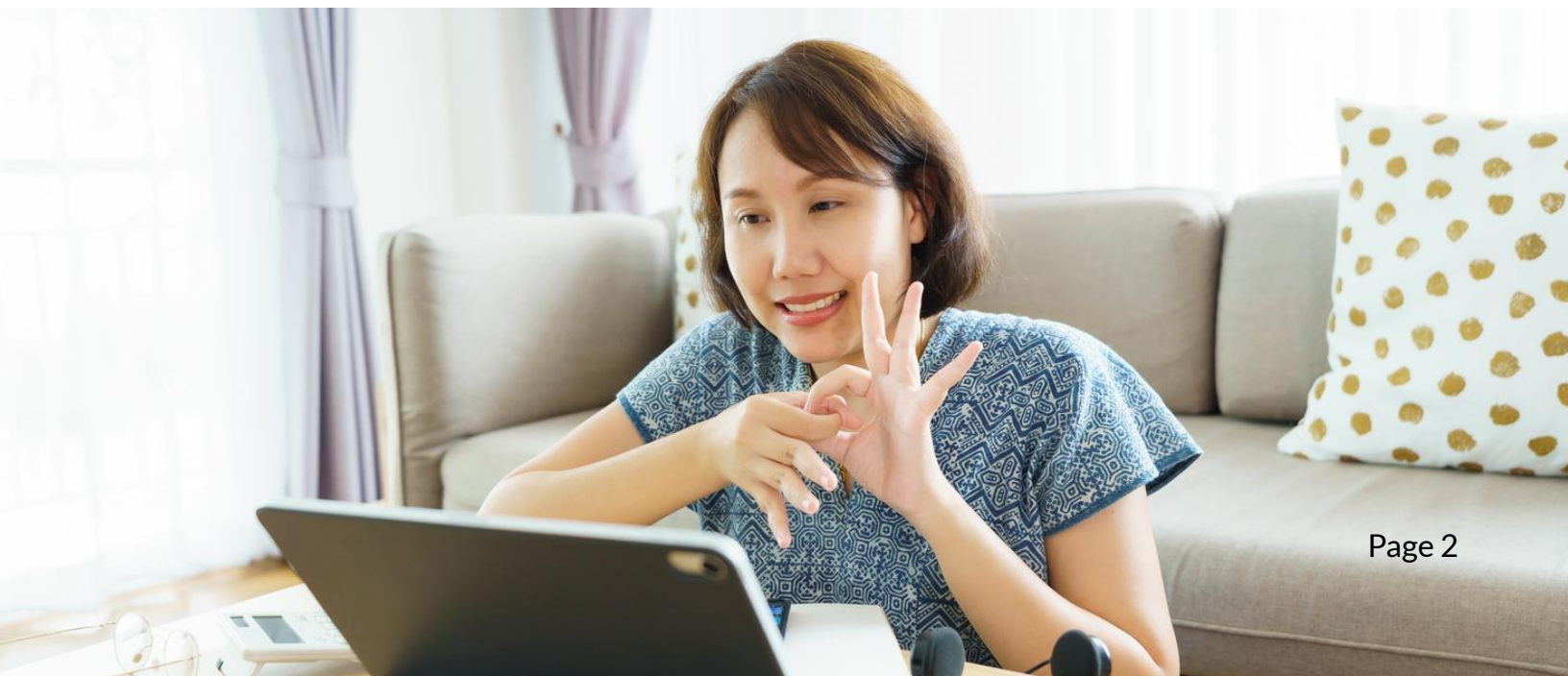
## **What is the American Job Center System?**

The American Job Center (AJC) system is a partnership of organizations that provides vocational assistance to job seekers. AJCs are operated by local Employment Service offices, community colleges, community-based organizations, and government agencies. AJCs offer training referrals, career counseling, job listings, and similar employment-related services. Customers can visit a center in-person or connect to the center's information online or through kiosk remote access.

The American Job Centers system is coordinated by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA). You can find a center by calling ETA's toll-free help line at 1-877-US-2JOBS (TTY: 1-877-889-5267) or by visiting <https://www.careeronestop.org/localhelp/americanjobcenters/find-american-job-centers.aspx>.

## **What is PA CareerLink?**

PA CareerLink is a partner of the American Job Center system, providing reemployment and training services to improve employability of Pennsylvania residents. In addition to its expansive job search portal, PA CareerLink offers courses and workshops on resume preparation, interview preparation, and job search assistance. PA CareerLink's website links you to free community resources that can help you overcome barriers to employment. You can find a CareerLink location or visit the job portal at <https://www.pacareerlink.pa.gov/jponline/>.



## What is OVR?

The Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, or OVR, is the state vocational rehabilitation agency. OVR provides free vocational rehabilitation services to help persons with disabilities prepare for, obtain, or maintain employment. OVR provides services on an individualized basis to eligible persons with disabilities, both directly and through a network of approved vendors. OVR does not require you to be a Social Security beneficiary to receive services. The Ticket Program only allows you to work with one EN at a time. This includes working with OVR. Once OVR closes your case, you can contact a different EN for employment services.

Contact your local OVR District Office to see if you're eligible for services. The OVR Office Directory at <https://www.dli.pa.gov/Individuals/Disability-Services/ovr/Pages/OVR-Office-Directory.aspx> contains contact information for all 21 District Offices staffed with trained, professional Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors which serve Pennsylvania in all 67 counties.

## Ask These Questions When Selecting the Right EN for You:



- ✔ What types of services does the EN provide? Do they offer benefits counseling?
- ✔ Will they meet virtually or in-person? Do they provide services and support virtually?
- ✔ Does the EN understand your career goals, as well as the supports and accommodations you may need to achieve your goals?
- ✔ Has the staff worked with other people who have similar employment needs?
- ✔ Can the EN provide references from other clients?

## Who can I speak with about disputes with an EN?

You can call Disability Rights Pennsylvania at 800-692-7443 (voice) or 877-375-7139 (TTY) for help. Our email address is: [intake@disabilityrightspa.org](mailto: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, TTY: 877-375-7139 or [intake@disabilityrightspa.org](mailto:intake@disabilityrightspa.org).

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