



PA Advisory Committee on Employment

Dear Young Adult:

The PA Department of Public Welfare and other organizations in Pennsylvania are helping people with disabilities become employed.

Get help finding a job. For individuals 18 years and older, the Social Security Administration (SSA) has created the Ticket to Work. Under this program, beneficiaries can request services from approved "Employment Networks" in order to go to work and earn as much income as possible. The Ticket to Work is voluntary: individuals can consider this option if they are interested in becoming employed. A list of providers in PA is enclosed in this newsletter. Otherwise, call (866) 968-7842 about the Ticket to Work or see www.yourtickettowork.com.

You can work and receive SSA benefits. As a basic observation, if someone receives Supplemental Security Income (SSI), every \$1 of earned income will result in a reduction of less than \$0.50 for SSI. For example, if someone receives \$637 in SSI and goes to work earning \$700 per month, they will have a reduced SSI payment of \$361 but a combined monthly income of \$1,061 (SSI and earnings). This is much more income by working than just receiving SSI each month. For Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), the beneficiary has many years of eligibility, including a Trial Work Period, to find out if they have the ability to work independent of cash benefits. It is important to know which SSA benefit someone receives because work affects these benefit programs in different ways.

Do you need affordable health insurance?

Many beneficiaries are interested in working, but are often fearful and/or misinformed about options regarding their benefits, including health insurance (i.e. Medicaid or Medicare). Changes have been made to permit beneficiaries to keep these health insurance programs after going to work. For example, the PA Department of Public Welfare offers an excellent option called Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities (MAWD). For individuals who can work and no longer need SSI cash benefits, they can qualify for MAWD and have savings up to \$10,000. Call (800) 6927462 or the local County Assistance Office about MAWD.

Learn more about these options. The Work Incentive Planning Assistance (WIPA) features Work Incentive Coordinators who can explain these incentives for individuals who are working or planning on going to work in the future. To speak with a Coordinator in the following regions:

- Southeast PA, (800) 692-7443, ext 309 or (800) 380-9682, ext 407
- Southwest PA: (866) 302-4333, ext 1;
- Northwest PA: (866) 627-8610
- Central & Northeast PA, (866) 541-7005.

Thanks for your interest and we wish you the best in your career!

*For further information, contact John Miller
Medicaid Infrastructure Grant,
(866) 902-4333 ext 118*



A Specialized Human Resource Organization

Meeting the employment needs of people with disabilities and the business community



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Family Savings Account

The Pennsylvania Family Savings Account (FSA) is administered by the PA Department of Community & Economic Development. Under this "individualized development account" program, qualifying individuals can receive \$1 for every \$1 of savings, matching up to \$1,000 of a person's own savings per year or up to \$2,000 over a 36 month period.

Primary eligibility is based on persons who live in households with low to moderate incomes whose earned income for the preceding 12 months at the time of enrollment is not more than 200% of the official poverty standard set by the Federal Office of Management and Budget or 80% of the area median income, whichever is greater. There is also an asset limit of \$10,000 which excludes a vehicle and a house. Savers must agree to save an amount that averages \$10/week/\$40 a month, on a monthly basis, up to \$2,000. Contribution period is at least 12 months to a maximum of 36 months. Savers must declare and save towards the purchase of an FSA approved goal and must attend at least four (4) basic financial management classes. There are a number of approved savings goals which are essential, including: purchase of first home, home repair or improvement, post secondary education or training, micro business enterprise, and purchase of a vehicle for transportation to school and/or work.

The Family Savings Account program is coordinated locally by 51 approved agencies. To find the agency in your area, contact the Department at (717) 787-1984 or go to www.newpa.com search "family savings account."

Earned Income Tax Credit

If you worked in 2008, had children living with you and earned less than \$38,000, you should qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). The EITC reduces tax and provides additional income for workers. The EITC is a "refundable" tax credit: if a worker's income tax liability is less than the amount of the credit, the worker receives the remaining amount of the credit as a refund. For example, an individual who had annual earnings of \$10,000 with one child, would likely receive a refund of federal taxes PLUS a rebate of over \$2,853 (CY 2007).

While many persons eligible for the EITC apply for a lump sum, individuals with one qualifying child and projected earnings less than \$33,241 (CY 2007) can apply for an Advanced Earned Income Credit (EIC)— essentially a boost to their regular paycheck. Furthermore, the Advanced EIC does not count as monthly income for public assistance programs (e.g. SSI, food stamps, Medicaid). An employee who files a "W-5" (IRS Earned Income Credit Advance Payment Certificate) must be given advanced payments through his or her employer.