

PASS TIMES

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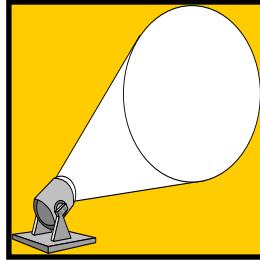
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SPOTLIGHT- WORK INCENTIVE NETWORK (WIN)



Susan Gingrich, Public Affairs Specialist, Area VI

The mission of the WIN is "to empower persons with disabilities who are recipients of Social Security and/or SSI disability benefits to gain economic independence through a partnership with public and private representatives dedicated to assisting them". A WIN has operated in the New York Region (New York State, New Jersey, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands) since 1999.

Since January 2002, however, WIN activities have centered on establishing local WINs that will provide a vehicle for Social Security District Managers and their Work Incentive Liaisons to disseminate information to disability advocates in their local service area. Many district offices already have hosted inaugural meetings and plans are in the works for various activities. In Western and Central New York, WIN meetings have featured guest speakers from the PASS Cadre and local BPAO representatives. E-mail distribution lists compiled at the meetings will provide quick and easy two-way communication.

The Syracuse area conducted a WIN meeting in February with representatives from various community agencies to explain the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999. Attendees included Robert Stanton, District Manager, David Hutt of Legal Services on Central New York, Constance Angelini of the Resource Center for Independent Living, and John Barbuto of ARISE. Carol Bryant, District Manager of the Auburn District Office, Ed Christen, District Manager of the Oswego District Office and Loretta Fretwell, Assistant District Manager of the Syracuse Office also participated. Syracuse WIN members would like to meet regularly with different agencies rotating host duties.

In March, the Rochester office hosted a very successful inaugural meeting for Rochester Area Work Incentive Network (RAWIN) members. Rochester District Manager MaryLou Rotoli and Greece District Manager Thomas Ragonese, assisted by Rochester TEs Lynette Leone and Pam Tichenor, presented information on the Ticket to Work provisions of TWWIIA along with local BPAO representatives who explained their role in the Ticket process. As a result of this meeting seven additional members were signed up, and several presentations on Ticket or other Social Security/SSI issues were requested. Plans are already underway for a second RAWIN meeting in June, which will feature a presentation from the PASS cadre.

At the Niagara Falls-Amherst WIN, discussion about the next step of the WIN centered around enlarging the WIN coverage area although many preferred the more intimate networking possibilities at the local WIN. A suggestion was made to hold occasional meetings that, in this case, would encompass the greater Buffalo area.

As you can see, the most exciting aspect of these new local WINs is that each one will evolve to meet the needs of its service area. All will feature involvement of the local Social Security manager and the office's Work Incentive Liaison but the WIN members will determine the frequency of meetings. For example, in more dispersed areas, email communication may be most efficient while regular meetings may be just the ticket for larger metropolitan areas.

For more information on the regional WIN, go to <http://www.ssa.gov/ny/WIN>. This web site is being updated to provide a smorgasbord of hyperlinks to other sites providing information on SSA work incentives.

Success!



Aleissia Perdue

I was shot in the chest in 1987 at the age of 27. I was hospitalized for 2 years recovering from my injuries. I was depressed and started drinking and doing drugs

I was going to counseling and Rochester Rehab for physical therapy. I started to go to church and accepted the Lord in my heart. I decided that I wanted to work in 1999. I got tired of sitting home waiting for a check. I wanted to be a role model to my grandchildren. I wanted more money, I wanted to become independent. I contacted VESID when I decided I wanted to go to work. There is so much in life to do.

I started work with a placement through VESID at Outsource Enterprises. I needed a car to have access to better employment. I worked on my resume with the help of VESID and received driver training. Rochester Rehab Services arranged for me to get a car that was donated. I got the car and with the help of the PASS program got it on the road. I went out and got my current job where I make \$7.90/hour working 24-40 hours a week. I really like my job. I want to go to school to figure out what I want to do but for now I am working. Work keeps me going and makes me feel good inside. My job doesn't have good insurance so I still need and use Medicaid but get no money from SSI but that is fine with me.

Aleissia Perdue has been employed as a line worker at CPI in Rochester, New York for almost a year now. She likes the job and is considering getting her GED so she can increase her opportunity to get better paying positions. Ms. Perdue is also very active in her Church and spends time every week volunteering at a local nursing home visiting residents.

Aleissia has agreed to allow us to use her story to show how network support and Social Security work incentives help persons with disabilities enter/re-enter the work force. Ms. Perdue received assistance from the Rochester Rehab Al-Segal Center, VESID, and Social Security's Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS) program.

Congratulations Aleissia! We wish you continued success in your endeavors.

DID YOU KNOW?

An individual can get help drafting and completing a PASS from many agencies as part of the Benefits Planning, Assistance, and Outreach (BPAO) program.

The Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 authorized the Social Security Administration (SSA) to award cooperative agreements in every State and US Territory in order to provide all SSA disability beneficiaries (including transition-to-work aged youth) with access to benefits planning and assistance services. The goal of the Benefits Planning, Assistance, and Outreach (BPAO) program is to better enable SSA's beneficiaries with disabilities to make informed choices about work. One of the services provided under the BPAO agreements is assistance with Plans for Achieving Self-Support (PASS).

To find the nearest BPAO Service Provider:

<http://www.ssa.gov/work/ServiceProviders/statebystate.html>

or contact your servicing PASS Cadre. (See page 1 for information on contacting the PASS Cadres).



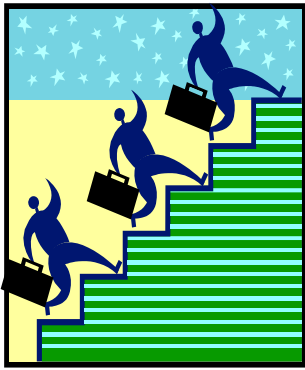
I would like to try to work but...

- ❖ I need my medical coverage. What will happen to my Medicare/Medicaid if I go to work?
- ❖ What will happen to my checks? What if they stop and then I can't keep working? Will I have to file for benefits all over again?
- ❖ If I try to work will Social Security review my medical condition and tell me that I am no longer disabled because I am working?
- ❖ I can't do the type of work I did before. What can I do now? Where do I go for help?

These are the most common fears persons with disabilities face when they consider trying to work. They are the fears that work incentives are designed to alleviate and the fears we should all help to dispel when interviewing persons with disabilities. It is very important that we provide our consumers with accurate information so they can make sound decisions. There are work incentives to help alleviate each "fear" shown above. Explanations of the work incentives for SSDI and SSI can be found in the [2002 Red Book on Employment Support](#).

<http://www.ssa.gov/work/ResourcesToolkit/redbook.htm>

GOOD PASS / BAD PASS



MILESTONES

A PASS must show “milestones,” ----- the **interval steps** an individual plans to take in order to achieve their occupational goal.

Part III of the SSA-545, “Your Plan,” advises the individual to “List the steps, in sequence”, and “Be as specific as possible”.

This part of the PASS application is very important in the initial evaluation of the PASS, and in monitoring an ongoing PASS. Detailed steps showing a logical progression toward the work goal indicate the individual has given the plan some thought and knows what course of action is needed to achieve his/her goal. This section should also show at what point the items required to achieve the goal are needed. In addition, they can be used as progress review points.

The first step, for example, can indicate what prompted the individual to decide on the chosen occupational goal (vocational evaluation, discussions with job coach or guidance counselor). The first step can vary a great deal, but should always show when the individual began to pursue their occupational goal, or the first step the individual needs to take toward achieving the goal.

The last step should *always* reflect achievement of the occupational goal.

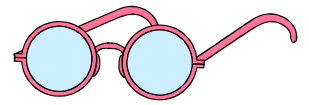
The steps between the begin date and achievement of the occupational goal should show exactly what the individual needs to do and what items are needed in order to achieve the goal. Items that need to be purchased at specific points should be shown with the coinciding milestone.

Example: A PASS is written with the occupational goal of Practical Nurse. VESID is paying for nursing school, books, test & license. A PASS was written to help pay for uniforms, shoes, and a car. The milestones for a PASS with an occupational goal to be a practical nurse might look something like this:

Milestone (Step)	Begin	Complete
Complete VESID vocational evaluation-	12/99	03/00

Apply for admission to nursing school -	03/00	03/00
Complete PASS application and apply for financial aid-	03/00	03/00
Receive acceptance, register for classes, purchase uniforms and shoes for hospital training rounds	05/00	06/00
Attend nursing school -	09/00	06/02
Complete resume, purchase car and more uniforms, and begin applying for nursing jobs-	03/02	contg
Receive nursing school diploma – begin working as registered nurse	06/02	06/02

At a Glance...



The Trial Work Period (TWP)

The TWP provisions allow people who get Social Security disability benefits as a worker, widow or child beneficiary, an opportunity to test his or her ability to work in 9 service months (not necessarily consecutive) without the threat of immediate loss of benefits. During these 9 months they will receive their SSDI benefits regardless of how high their earnings might be so long as they continue to have a disabling impairment. Not until after 9 months of services will the work be considered in determining whether disability benefits should stop or continue.

Earnings at these levels indicate Trial Work Months:

For Year	Earnings indicate a TWP service month if more than:	Self-Employment earnings/ activity indicates a TWP service month if more than:
1998	\$200	\$200 or 40 hours
1999	\$200	\$200 or 40 hours
2000	\$200	\$200 or 40 hours
2001	\$530	\$530 or 80 hours
2002	\$560	\$560 or 80 hours

For more information on the Trial Work Period see:
<http://www.ssa.gov/work/ResourcesToolkit/redbook.html#TWP>