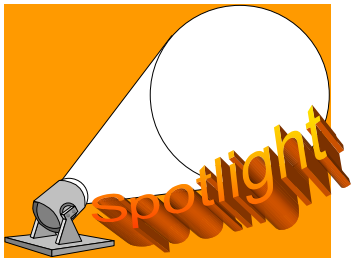




PASS TIMES



VESID

Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities

The Mission of (VESID), the **Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities** is to promote educational equity and excellence for students with disabilities while ensuring that they receive the rights and protection to which they are entitled; assure appropriate continuity between the child and adult services systems; and provide the highest quality vocational rehabilitation and independent living services to all eligible persons as quickly as those services are required to enable them to work and live independent, self-directed lives.

Services Provided by VESID

❖ **Services to Children with Disabilities**

VESID administers 15 Early Childhood Direction Centers that help families with children with disabilities, birth to age five, find programs and services for their disabled child. VESID also oversees special education services for students in public and private schools. This provides a continuum of services that is able to eliminate anxiety and duplication thereby benefiting both the individual and society.

❖ **Vocational Rehabilitation Services**

VESID starts with the presumption that all persons with disabilities can benefit from vocational rehabilitation services and should have opportunities to work in jobs integrated within their communities. Counselors guide individuals through service programs they need to reach their employment goals. Services may include vocational assessment, vocational counseling, assistance with transition from school to the world of work, job training and placement, job follow-up, and other services to support the individual's employment objectives. VESID ensures that both the individual and the employer are satisfied with the placement and will intervene if problems occur once an individual is placed in a job. In providing these services, VESID works with the business community, as well as an extensive vocational rehabilitation provider system, other agencies, labor organizations, and schools.

❖ **Independent Living Services**

In addition, VESID administers 38 Independent Living Centers across New York State. Independent Living Centers are private, community-based, consumer managed, nonresidential organizations that assist individuals with disabilities to live more independently in their communities.

For more information about VESID programs and how to contact the VESID Office closest to you:

Telephone: 1-800-222-JOBS or visit VESID online at

New York State residents: <http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/>



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> **New rates for 2003**

> **New website launched**

If you have any questions about Plans for Achieving Self-Support (PASS), please contact us:

Cheektowaga PASS Cadre--
(Northern New York State)

2875 Union Road, Suite 75
Cheektowaga NY 14227-9926

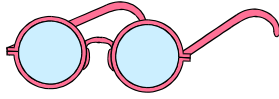
Phone: 1-800-510-5680 Fax: (716) 681-6243

New York City PASS Cadre--
(New York City, Southern New York State, New Jersey)

PO Box 1826, Church St. Station
New York, NY 10008-0612

Phone: 1-800-551-9583 Fax: (212)264-5717

...at a glance



PASS: Occupational Goal

The first part of the Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS) application solicits information about the applicant's "Work Goal". Each PASS must specify and clearly describe a single occupational goal (Elementary School Teacher, Social Worker, Auto Mechanic). The remainder of the PASS application all builds on the selected occupational goal. The occupational goal must be the earliest point on the person's chosen career path that would generate earnings sufficient to pay for the following:

- living expenses that the person has at the outset of the PASS;
- all out-of-pocket medical expenses (including health insurance premiums) not subject to reimbursement; and
- all work-related expenses, including any outstanding PASS expenses.

The work goal should be expected to increase the individual's prospect for self-support. A person's increased prospect for self-support is measured in terms of higher earnings potential upon completion of the PASS. Higher earnings potential may exist even if the person is working in the same job. The individual may use the PASS to increase the number of work hours or reduce excludable work expenses (e.g., decrease job coach costs) and, thus, increase countable income for SSI purposes.

Vocational Evaluation Goal

A PASS may be approved with the goal of "VR evaluation" in order to help the person select a specific work goal. Until a specific goal is chosen, the PASS would only cover the costs associated with having a public or private vocational rehabilitation (VR) agency or professional perform a diagnostic study or evaluation. Once the evaluation has been completed, a complete PASS application must then be submitted based on the chosen occupational goal.

Achievement of the Occupational Goal

An employment goal is achieved when the individual is actually employed and the person's earnings are sufficient to cover the individual's living, uncovered-medical, and work-related expenses that existed before the PASS (or increased during the PASS due to circumstances beyond the individual's control). At this point, the PASS stops.

Reference: POMS SI 00870.006

TICKET TO HIRE

A FREE NATIONAL REFERRAL SERVICE FOR EMPLOYERS



TICKET TO HIRE is a **free** national referral service to assist employers in hiring motivated, qualified workers with disabilities from the Social Security Administration's [Ticket to Work Program](#). **TICKET TO HIRE** links employers to Employment Networks in their community that have job-ready candidates.

How TICKET TO HIRE Works:

- An Employer Contacts **TICKET TO HIRE** and provides information on a job vacancy(s).
- **TICKET TO HIRE's** State-of-the-art database searches and identifies Employment Networks (EN) and State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies (SVRA) servicing the employers' local area.
- **TICKET TO HIRE** then contacts ENs and SVRAs to determine which organizations have a qualified candidate(s) for the position(s).
- **TICKET TO HIRE** provides the employer with a referral list containing the organization contact information and number of qualified candidate(s) they have for the job.
- The employer's identity is not given to any organization and follow-up action is totally under the control of the employer.

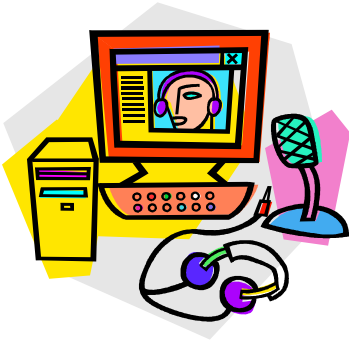
Information for Employment Networks and State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies:

- **Enroll with TICKET TO HIRE** - Enrolling will ensure that your job-ready beneficiaries with disabilities are considered for job postings in your service area.
- **Enrollment is free and easy** - It only takes a couple of minutes to complete a simple one-page application.
- **Employment Networks and State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies** - Contact **us** at **1-866-TTW-HIRE**, or **1-866-889-4473** (V/TTY), Monday through Friday, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Eastern Time, or e-mail tickettohire@acs-inc.com to enroll.

TICKET TO HIRE is not a job resume bank and it does not provide service directly to Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income beneficiaries. They must be receiving service from an Employment Network or State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, and be referred by the organization providing the services.

TICKET TO HIRE is sponsored by the **Social Security Administration** with additional support from the **U.S. Department of Labor**. For more information: <http://www.ssa.gov/work/Ticket/TicketHire.html>

PASS Success Story



"I had a stroke as a child that resulted in a seizure disorder and learning disability. I am slower in performing tasks. I entered college thinking my disability would not be a problem. As I worked toward my goal of becoming a graphic artist I found that I needed extra help. I got help at school. They provided tutoring, assistance with writing, grammar and counseling services. I also received some financial assistance and

job placement services through VESID (NY State's Vocational Rehabilitation Agency). I graduated and I worked but due to my disability I could not keep up with the demands of the jobs and did not make enough to support myself. On benefits again and unemployed from 1995 until 1999 I decided to see if I could update my skills and reenter the job market. I went to my local community college while there I ran into a friend who was in charge of the computer science division. He knew I did web design and he suggested I apply. I did and was hired as a part-time adjunct professor; I needed a computer and some supplies to make it work. I contacted and received assistance through Sandie Combs, Advocate from Northern Regional Center for Independent Living (NRILC) she provided peer support, advocacy services and pass writing services. I submitted a PASS. After working it was then that I realized what I was capable of doing and decided to pursue a career as a permanent fulltime instructor. My employer told me I would need to get a Master's Degree to be considered for a fulltime placement. Once I decided what I wanted to do I submitted another PASS. VESID provided a vocational evaluation, counseling and funding for some of the items and services I needed such as some of the cost of tuition, fees, and supplies. PASS also helped by allowing me to save for tuition, room while away at school and funds for job search as I approached the end of my plan not covered by VESID or other financial aid.

I started school in the spring 2001, I graduated with Honors in May 2002. After an extensive job search, resumes and interviews, I was hired in my current position as an Assistant Academic Web Developer/Instructional Technologist. My earnings are such that I am no longer expecting to be eligible for SSDI or SSI." - KM

PASS Specialist notes: *KM's earnings as an adjunct instructor and workshop provider did not generate income at the SGA level. As documented by vocational software, Department of Labor statistics, and VESID support, the additional education approved under KM's second plan was necessary in order for her to become self-supporting in her chosen occupational goal. Karen followed her plan and has recently begun her career as an Assistant Academic Web Developer/Instructional Technologist at a private college in the Finger Lakes region. The position provides the health insurance she needs and a salary sufficient to replace her housing subsidy, food stamps, and cash benefits from SSA. KM cites changes in the work incentives, especially the increase in SGA levels and the extension of Medicare, as important to her willingness to pursue her goal.*

Leslie Thompson, PASS Specialist
Cheektowaga NY PASS Cadre

*Congratulations to KM for reaching her goal--
and best wishes for continued success!*

PASS Specialists here to stay!!!

In 1996, SSA introduced the "PASS Specialist" position as a "temporary" solution to some of the problems with the PASS program.

PASS Cadres were established throughout the country to centralize the workload. The main focus of work within the Cadre is twofold. The PASS Cadres:

- Develop, process, and make the final decisions on all Plans for Achieving Self-Support (PASS) and also closely monitor all on-going PASSes.
- Provide training, guidance, and technical assistance on disability work incentive issues for SSA field office personnel **and** for organizations and agencies outside of SSA as well.

PASS Specialists receive in depth training on the PASS program and other work incentives and on vocational rehabilitation issues. Providing training, disseminating information and establishing good working relationships with agencies, organizations and groups outside of SSA is a large portion of our job. We take pride in our work and in what we have accomplished in the last few years and we are very pleased to announce that the PASS Specialist position is now a "permanent" position within SSA.

New York State PASS Specialists

Cheektowaga NY

Leslie Thompson
Carol Wingate
Diana Winter
Christine Mandiak

New York City

Andrea Moore
Alba Jimenez
Marilyn Reiss
Audalicia "Lisa" Jorge



TICKET TO WORK PHASE 2...

During the first phase of the Ticket to Work Program, which began in February 2002, tickets were distributed in the following States:

Arizona, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Massachusetts, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, Vermont, Wisconsin.

During the **second phase** of the Program which will begin in November 2002, tickets will be distributed the following States:

Alaska, Arkansas, Connecticut, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia, and in the District of Columbia.

On **Friday, November 15**, Tickets were mailed to eligible persons in phase two States whose social security numbers have a terminal digit of "1." This represents 10% of the total number of eligibles. The mailing schedule for the remaining 90% of eligibles has not yet been determined, but Tickets are not expected to be mailed in December. Ticket packages include a "Good News" letter, a pamphlet (SSA Pub. No. 05-10061 "The Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program"), and a Ticket to Work.

During the third phase, SSA will distribute tickets in the following States:

Alabama, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, Washington, West Virginia and Wyoming, as well as in American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Implementation of this phase should take place in 2003.

Hot News!!!

Changes effective January 2003

Social Security Disability Thresholds:

Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA)	2002	2003
Non-Blind	\$ 780/mo.	\$ 800/mo.
Blind	\$1,300/mo.	\$1,330/mo.
Trial Work Period (TWP)	\$ 560/mo.	\$ 570/mo.

SSI Student Exclusion:

Monthly limit	\$1,320	\$1,340
Annual limit	\$5,340	\$5,410

SSI Federal Payment Standard:

Individual	\$545/mo.	\$552/mo.
Couple	\$817/mo.	\$829/mo.

SSI Resources Limits:

Individual	\$2,000	\$2,000
Couple	\$3,000	\$3,000



DisabilityInfo.gov

In support of President Bush's New Freedom Initiative, a comprehensive on-line resource, specifically designed for people with disabilities has recently been launched to provide people with disabilities with information they need to know quickly.

This site contains information and access to disability-related information and programs available across the government on numerous subjects, including employment, education, transportation, civil rights, housing, health, income support, technology, and community life.

Here's one-stop access to information for individuals with disabilities, employers, and service providers from many Government agencies, all in one convenient place!

<http://www.disabilityinfo.gov/>