

XVI of this chapter that are outstanding on or after such date, see section 210(c) of Pub. L. 108-203, set out as an Effective Date of 2004 Amendment note under section 404 of this title.

§ 1320b-19. The Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program

(a) In general

The Commissioner shall establish a Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program, under which a disabled beneficiary may use a ticket to work and self-sufficiency issued by the Commissioner in accordance with this section to obtain employment services, vocational rehabilitation services, or other support services from an employment network which is of the beneficiary's choice and which is willing to provide such services to such beneficiary.

(b) Ticket system

(1) Distribution of tickets

The Commissioner may issue a ticket to work and self-sufficiency to disabled beneficiaries for participation in the Program.

(2) Assignment of tickets

A disabled beneficiary holding a ticket to work and self-sufficiency may assign the ticket to any employment network of the beneficiary's choice which is serving under the Program and is willing to accept the assignment.

(3) Ticket terms

A ticket issued under paragraph (1) shall consist of a document which evidences the Commissioner's agreement to pay (as provided in paragraph (4)) an employment network, which is serving under the Program and to which such ticket is assigned by the beneficiary, for such employment services, vocational rehabilitation services, and other support services as the employment network may provide to the beneficiary.

(4) Payments to employment networks

The Commissioner shall pay an employment network under the Program in accordance with the outcome payment system under subsection (h)(2) or under the outcome-milestone payment system under subsection (h)(3) (whichever is elected pursuant to subsection (h)(1)). An employment network may not request or receive compensation for such services from the beneficiary.

(c) State participation

(1) In general

Each State agency administering or supervising the administration of the State plan approved under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.) may elect to participate in the Program as an employment network with respect to a disabled beneficiary. If the State agency does elect to participate in the Program, the State agency also shall elect to be paid under the outcome payment system or the outcome-milestone payment system in accordance with subsection (h)(1). With respect to a disabled beneficiary that the State agency does not elect to have participate in the Program, the State agency

shall be paid for services provided to that beneficiary under the system for payment applicable under section 422(d) of this title and subsections (d) and (e) of section 1382d of this title. The Commissioner shall provide for periodic opportunities for exercising such elections.

(2) Effect of participation by State agency

(A) State agencies participating

In any case in which a State agency described in paragraph (1) elects under that paragraph to participate in the Program, the employment services, vocational rehabilitation services, and other support services which, upon assignment of tickets to work and self-sufficiency, are provided to disabled beneficiaries by the State agency acting as an employment network shall be governed by plans for vocational rehabilitation services approved under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.).

(B) State agencies administering maternal and child health services programs

Subparagraph (A) shall not apply with respect to any State agency administering a program under subchapter V of this chapter.

(3) Agreements between State agencies and employment networks

State agencies and employment networks shall enter into agreements regarding the conditions under which services will be provided when an individual is referred by an employment network to a State agency for services. The Commissioner shall establish by regulations the timeframe within which such agreements must be entered into and the mechanisms for dispute resolution between State agencies and employment networks with respect to such agreements.

(d) Responsibilities of the Commissioner

(1) Selection and qualifications of program managers

The Commissioner shall enter into agreements with 1 or more organizations in the private or public sector for service as a program manager to assist the Commissioner in administering the Program. Any such program manager shall be selected by means of a competitive bidding process, from among organizations in the private or public sector with available expertise and experience in the field of vocational rehabilitation or employment services.

(2) Tenure, renewal, and early termination

Each agreement entered into under paragraph (1) shall provide for early termination upon failure to meet performance standards which shall be specified in the agreement and which shall be weighted to take into account any performance in prior terms. Such performance standards shall include—

(A) measures for ease of access by beneficiaries to services; and

(B) measures for determining the extent to which failures in obtaining services for beneficiaries fall within acceptable parameters, as determined by the Commissioner.

(3) Preclusion from direct participation in delivery of services in own service area

Agreements under paragraph (1) shall preclude—

(A) direct participation by a program manager in the delivery of employment services, vocational rehabilitation services, or other support services to beneficiaries in the service area covered by the program manager's agreement; and

(B) the holding by a program manager of a financial interest in an employment network or service provider which provides services in a geographic area covered under the program manager's agreement.

(4) Selection of employment networks

(A) In general

The Commissioner shall select and enter into agreements with employment networks for service under the Program. Such employment networks shall be in addition to State agencies serving as employment networks pursuant to elections under subsection (c).

(B) Alternate participants

In any State where the Program is being implemented, the Commissioner shall enter into an agreement with any alternate participant that is operating under the authority of section 422(d)(2) of this title in the State as of December 17, 1999, and chooses to serve as an employment network under the Program.

(5) Termination of agreements with employment networks

The Commissioner shall terminate agreements with employment networks for inadequate performance, as determined by the Commissioner.

(6) Quality assurance

The Commissioner shall provide for such periodic reviews as are necessary to provide for effective quality assurance in the provision of services by employment networks. The Commissioner shall solicit and consider the views of consumers and the program manager under which the employment networks serve and shall consult with providers of services to develop performance measurements. The Commissioner shall ensure that the results of the periodic reviews are made available to beneficiaries who are prospective service recipients as they select employment networks. The Commissioner shall ensure that the periodic surveys of beneficiaries receiving services under the Program are designed to measure customer service satisfaction.

(7) Dispute resolution

The Commissioner shall provide for a mechanism for resolving disputes between beneficiaries and employment networks, between program managers and employment networks, and between program managers and providers of services. The Commissioner shall afford a party to such a dispute a reasonable opportunity for a full and fair review of the matter in dispute.

(e) Program managers

(1) In general

A program manager shall conduct tasks appropriate to assist the Commissioner in carrying out the Commissioner's duties in administering the Program.

(2) Recruitment of employment networks

A program manager shall recruit, and recommend for selection by the Commissioner, employment networks for service under the Program. The program manager shall carry out such recruitment and provide such recommendations, and shall monitor all employment networks serving in the Program in the geographic area covered under the program manager's agreement, to the extent necessary and appropriate to ensure that adequate choices of services are made available to beneficiaries. Employment networks may serve under the Program only pursuant to an agreement entered into with the Commissioner under the Program incorporating the applicable provisions of this section and regulations thereunder, and the program manager shall provide and maintain assurances to the Commissioner that payment by the Commissioner to employment networks pursuant to this section is warranted based on compliance by such employment networks with the terms of such agreement and this section. The program manager shall not impose numerical limits on the number of employment networks to be recommended pursuant to this paragraph.

(3) Facilitation of access by beneficiaries to employment networks

A program manager shall facilitate access by beneficiaries to employment networks. The program manager shall ensure that each beneficiary is allowed changes in employment networks without being deemed to have rejected services under the Program. When such a change occurs, the program manager shall reassign the ticket based on the choice of the beneficiary. Upon the request of the employment network, the program manager shall make a determination of the allocation of the outcome or milestone-outcome payments based on the services provided by each employment network. The program manager shall establish and maintain lists of employment networks available to beneficiaries and shall make such lists generally available to the public. The program manager shall ensure that all information provided to disabled beneficiaries pursuant to this paragraph is provided in accessible formats.

(4) Ensuring availability of adequate services

The program manager shall ensure that employment services, vocational rehabilitation services, and other support services are provided to beneficiaries throughout the geographic area covered under the program manager's agreement, including rural areas.

(5) Reasonable access to services

The program manager shall take such measures as are necessary to ensure that sufficient employment networks are available and that each beneficiary receiving services under the

Program has reasonable access to employment services, vocational rehabilitation services, and other support services. Services provided under the Program may include case management, work incentives planning, supported employment, career planning, career plan development, vocational assessment, job training, placement, follow-up services, and such other services as may be specified by the Commissioner under the Program. The program manager shall ensure that such services are available in each service area.

(f) Employment networks

(1) Qualifications for employment networks

(A) In general

Each employment network serving under the Program shall consist of an agency or instrumentality of a State (or a political subdivision thereof) or a private entity, that assumes responsibility for the coordination and delivery of services under the Program to individuals assigning to the employment network tickets to work and self-sufficiency issued under subsection (b).

(B) One-stop delivery systems

An employment network serving under the Program may consist of a one-stop delivery system established under section 3151(e) of title 29.

(C) Compliance with selection criteria

No employment network may serve under the Program unless it meets and maintains compliance with both general selection criteria (such as professional and educational qualifications, where applicable) and specific selection criteria (such as substantial expertise and experience in providing relevant employment services and supports).

(D) Single or associated providers allowed

An employment network shall consist of either a single provider of such services or of an association of such providers organized so as to combine their resources into a single entity. An employment network may meet the requirements of subsection (e)(4) by providing services directly, or by entering into agreements with other individuals or entities providing appropriate employment services, vocational rehabilitation services, or other support services.

(2) Requirements relating to provision of services

Each employment network serving under the Program shall be required under the terms of its agreement with the Commissioner to—

(A) serve prescribed service areas; and

(B) take such measures as are necessary to ensure that employment services, vocational rehabilitation services, and other support services provided under the Program by, or under agreements entered into with, the employment network are provided under appropriate individual work plans that meet the requirements of subsection (g).

(3) Annual financial reporting

Each employment network shall meet financial reporting requirements as prescribed by the Commissioner.

(4) Periodic outcomes reporting

Each employment network shall prepare periodic reports, on at least an annual basis, itemizing for the covered period specific outcomes achieved with respect to specific services provided by the employment network. Such reports shall conform to a national model prescribed under this section. Each employment network shall provide a copy of the latest report issued by the employment network pursuant to this paragraph to each beneficiary upon enrollment under the Program for services to be received through such employment network. Upon issuance of each report to each beneficiary, a copy of the report shall be maintained in the files of the employment network. The program manager shall ensure that copies of all such reports issued under this paragraph are made available to the public under reasonable terms.

(g) Individual work plans

(1) Requirements

Each employment network shall—

(A) take such measures as are necessary to ensure that employment services, vocational rehabilitation services, and other support services provided under the Program by, or under agreements entered into with, the employment network are provided under appropriate individual work plans that meet the requirements of subparagraph (C);

(B) develop and implement each such individual work plan, in partnership with each beneficiary receiving such services, in a manner that affords such beneficiary the opportunity to exercise informed choice in selecting an employment goal and specific services needed to achieve that employment goal;

(C) ensure that each individual work plan includes at least—

(i) a statement of the vocational goal developed with the beneficiary, including, as appropriate, goals for earnings and job advancement;

(ii) a statement of the services and supports that have been deemed necessary for the beneficiary to accomplish that goal;

(iii) a statement of any terms and conditions related to the provision of such services and supports; and

(iv) a statement of understanding regarding the beneficiary's rights under the Program (such as the right to retrieve the ticket to work and self-sufficiency if the beneficiary is dissatisfied with the services being provided by the employment network) and remedies available to the individual, including information on the availability of advocacy services and assistance in resolving disputes through the State grant program authorized under section 1320b-21 of this title;

(D) provide a beneficiary the opportunity to amend the individual work plan if a change in circumstances necessitates a change in the plan; and

(E) make each beneficiary's individual work plan available to the beneficiary in, as

appropriate, an accessible format chosen by the beneficiary.

An individual work plan established pursuant to this subsection shall be treated, for purposes of section 51(d)(6)(B)(i) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as an individualized written plan for employment under a State plan for vocational rehabilitation services approved under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 [29 U.S.C. 701 et seq.].

(2) Effective upon written approval

A beneficiary's individual work plan shall take effect upon written approval by the beneficiary or a representative of the beneficiary and a representative of the employment network that, in providing such written approval, acknowledges assignment of the beneficiary's ticket to work and self-sufficiency.

(h) Employment network payment systems

(1) Election of payment system by employment networks

(A) In general

The Program shall provide for payment authorized by the Commissioner to employment networks under either an outcome payment system or an outcome-milestone payment system. Each employment network shall elect which payment system will be utilized by the employment network, and, for such period of time as such election remains in effect, the payment system so elected shall be utilized exclusively in connection with such employment network (except as provided in subparagraph (B)).

(B) No change in method of payment for beneficiaries with tickets already assigned to the employment networks

Any election of a payment system by an employment network that would result in a change in the method of payment to the employment network for services provided to a beneficiary who is receiving services from the employment network at the time of the election shall not be effective with respect to payment for services provided to that beneficiary and the method of payment previously selected shall continue to apply with respect to such services.

(2) Outcome payment system

(A) In general

The outcome payment system shall consist of a payment structure governing employment networks electing such system under paragraph (1)(A) which meets the requirements of this paragraph.

(B) Payments made during outcome payment period

The outcome payment system shall provide for a schedule of payments to an employment network, in connection with each individual who is a beneficiary, for each month, during the individual's outcome payment period, for which benefits (described in paragraphs (3) and (4) of subsection (k)) are not payable to such individual because of work or earnings.

(C) Computation of payments to employment network

The payment schedule of the outcome payment system shall be designed so that—

(i) the payment for each month during the outcome payment period for which benefits (described in paragraphs (3) and (4) of subsection (k)) are not payable is equal to a fixed percentage of the payment calculation base for the calendar year in which such month occurs; and

(ii) such fixed percentage is set at a percentage which does not exceed 40 percent.

(3) Outcome-milestone payment system

(A) In general

The outcome-milestone payment system shall consist of a payment structure governing employment networks electing such system under paragraph (1)(A) which meets the requirements of this paragraph.

(B) Early payments upon attainment of milestones in advance of outcome payment periods

The outcome-milestone payment system shall provide for 1 or more milestones, with respect to beneficiaries receiving services from an employment network under the Program, that are directed toward the goal of permanent employment. Such milestones shall form a part of a payment structure that provides, in addition to payments made during outcome payment periods, payments made prior to outcome payment periods in amounts based on the attainment of such milestones.

(C) Limitation on total payments to employment network

The payment schedule of the outcome milestone payment system shall be designed so that the total of the payments to the employment network with respect to each beneficiary is less than, on a net present value basis (using an interest rate determined by the Commissioner that appropriately reflects the cost of funds faced by providers), the total amount to which payments to the employment network with respect to the beneficiary would be limited if the employment network were paid under the outcome payment system.

(4) Definitions

In this subsection:

(A) Payment calculation base

The term "payment calculation base" means, for any calendar year—

(i) in connection with a title II disability beneficiary, the average disability insurance benefit payable under section 423 of this title for all beneficiaries for months during the preceding calendar year; and

(ii) in connection with a title XVI disability beneficiary (who is not concurrently a title II disability beneficiary), the average payment of supplemental security income benefits based on disability payable under subchapter XVI (excluding State supplementation) for months during

the preceding calendar year to all beneficiaries who have attained 18 years of age but have not attained 65 years of age.

(B) Outcome payment period

The term “outcome payment period” means, in connection with any individual who had assigned a ticket to work and self-sufficiency to an employment network under the Program, a period—

(i) beginning with the first month, ending after the date on which such ticket was assigned to the employment network, for which benefits (described in paragraphs (3) and (4) of subsection (k)) are not payable to such individual by reason of engagement in substantial gainful activity or by reason of earnings from work activity; and

(ii) ending with the 60th month (consecutive or otherwise), ending after such date, for which such benefits are not payable to such individual by reason of engagement in substantial gainful activity or by reason of earnings from work activity.

(5) Periodic review and alterations of prescribed schedules

(A) Percentages and periods

The Commissioner shall periodically review the percentage specified in paragraph (2)(C), the total payments permissible under paragraph (3)(C), and the period of time specified in paragraph (4)(B) to determine whether such percentages, such permissible payments, and such period provide an adequate incentive for employment networks to assist beneficiaries to enter the workforce, while providing for appropriate economies. The Commissioner may alter such percentage, such total permissible payments, or such period of time to the extent that the Commissioner determines, on the basis of the Commissioner’s review under this paragraph, that such an alteration would better provide the incentive and economies described in the preceding sentence.

(B) Number and amounts of milestone payments

The Commissioner shall periodically review the number and amounts of milestone payments established by the Commissioner pursuant to this section to determine whether they provide an adequate incentive for employment networks to assist beneficiaries to enter the workforce, taking into account information provided to the Commissioner by program managers, the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Advisory Panel established by section 101(f) of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999, and other reliable sources. The Commissioner may from time to time alter the number and amounts of milestone payments initially established by the Commissioner pursuant to this section to the extent that the Commissioner determines that such an alteration would allow an adequate incentive for employment networks to assist beneficiaries to enter the workforce. Such alteration shall be based on information pro-

vided to the Commissioner by program managers, the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Advisory Panel established by section 101(f) of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999, or other reliable sources.

(C) Report on the adequacy of incentives

The Commissioner shall submit to the Congress not later than 36 months after December 17, 1999, a report with recommendations for a method or methods to adjust payment rates under subparagraphs (A) and (B), that would ensure adequate incentives for the provision of services by employment networks of—

(i) individuals with a need for ongoing support and services;

(ii) individuals with a need for high-cost accommodations;

(iii) individuals who earn a subminimum wage; and

(iv) individuals who work and receive partial cash benefits.

The Commissioner shall consult with the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Advisory Panel established under section 101(f) of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 during the development and evaluation of the study. The Commissioner shall implement the necessary adjusted payment rates prior to full implementation of the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program.

(i) Suspension of disability reviews

During any period for which an individual is using, as defined by the Commissioner, a ticket to work and self-sufficiency issued under this section, the Commissioner (and any applicable State agency) may not initiate a continuing disability review or other review under section 421 of this title of whether the individual is or is not under a disability or a review under subchapter XVI similar to any such review under section 421 of this title.

(j) Authorizations

(1) Payments to employment networks

(A) Title II disability beneficiaries

There are authorized to be transferred from the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund and the Federal Disability Insurance Trust Fund each fiscal year such sums as may be necessary to make payments to employment networks under this section. Money paid from the Trust Funds under this section with respect to title II disability beneficiaries who are entitled to benefits under section 423 of this title or who are entitled to benefits under section 402(d) of this title on the basis of the wages and self-employment income of such beneficiaries, shall be charged to the Federal Disability Insurance Trust Fund, and all other money paid from the Trust Funds under this section shall be charged to the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund.

(B) Title XVI disability beneficiaries

Amounts authorized to be appropriated to the Social Security Administration under

section 1381 of this title shall include amounts necessary to carry out the provisions of this section with respect to title XVI disability beneficiaries.

(2) Administrative expenses

The costs of administering this section (other than payments to employment networks) shall be paid from amounts made available for the administration of subchapter II and amounts made available for the administration of subchapter XVI, and shall be allocated among such amounts as appropriate.

(k) Definitions

In this section:

(1) Commissioner

The term “Commissioner” means the Commissioner of Social Security.

(2) Disabled beneficiary

The term “disabled beneficiary” means a title II disability beneficiary or a title XVI disability beneficiary.

(3) Title II disability beneficiary

The term “title II disability beneficiary” means an individual entitled to disability insurance benefits under section 423 of this title or to monthly insurance benefits under section 402 of this title based on such individual’s disability (as defined in section 423(d) of this title). An individual is a title II disability beneficiary for each month for which such individual is entitled to such benefits.

(4) Title XVI disability beneficiary

The term “title XVI disability beneficiary” means an individual eligible for supplemental security income benefits under subchapter XVI on the basis of blindness (within the meaning of section 1382c(a)(2) of this title) or disability (within the meaning of section 1382c(a)(3) of this title). An individual is a title XVI disability beneficiary for each month for which such individual is eligible for such benefits.

(5) Supplemental security income benefit

The term “supplemental security income benefit under subchapter XVI” means a cash benefit under section 1382 or 1382h(a) of this title, and does not include a State supplementary payment, administered federally or otherwise.

(l) Regulations

Not later than 1 year after December 17, 1999, the Commissioner shall prescribe such regulations as are necessary to carry out the provisions of this section.

(Aug. 14, 1935, ch. 531, title XI, §1148, as added Pub. L. 106-170, title I, §101(a), Dec. 17, 1999, 113 Stat. 1863; amended Pub. L. 108-203, title IV, §405(a), Mar. 2, 2004, 118 Stat. 526; Pub. L. 113-128, title V, §512(dd)(2), July 22, 2014, 128 Stat. 1718.)

Editorial Notes

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, referred to in subsecs. (c)(1), (2)(A) and (g)(1), is Pub. L. 93-112, Sept. 26, 1973,

87 Stat. 355, as amended, which is classified generally to chapter 16 (§701 et seq.) of Title 29, Labor. Title I of the Act is classified generally to subchapter I (§720 et seq.) of chapter 16 of Title 29. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 701 of Title 29 and Tables.

The Internal Revenue Code of 1986, referred to in subsec. (g)(1), is classified generally to Title 26, Internal Revenue Code.

Section 101(f) of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999, referred to in subsec. (h)(5)(B), (C), is section 101(f) of Pub. L. 106-170, which is set out as a note below.

AMENDMENTS

2014—Subsec. (f)(1)(B). Pub. L. 113-128 substituted “a one-stop delivery system established under section 3151(e) of title 29” for “a one-stop delivery system established under subtitle B of title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C. 2811 et seq.)”.

2004—Subsec. (g)(1). Pub. L. 108-203 inserted concluding provisions.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2014 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 113-128 effective on the first day of the first full program year after July 22, 2014 (July 1, 2015), see section 506 of Pub. L. 113-128, set out as an Effective Date note under section 3101 of Title 29, Labor.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2004 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 108-203, title IV, §405(b), Mar. 2, 2004, 118 Stat. 527, provided that: “The amendment made by subsection (a) [amending this section] shall take effect as if included in section 505 of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 (Public Law 106-170; 113 Stat. 1921).”

EFFECTIVE DATE

Pub. L. 106-170, title I, §101(c), 113 Stat. 1874, provided that: “Subject to subsection (d) [set out as a note below], the amendments made by subsections (a) and (b) [enacting this section and amending sections 421, 422, 425, 1382d, 1383, and 1383b of this title] shall take effect with the first month following 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act [Dec. 17, 1999].”

REGULATIONS

Pub. L. 106-170, title I, §101(e), Dec. 17, 1999, 113 Stat. 1877, provided that:

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commissioner of Social Security shall prescribe such regulations as are necessary to implement the amendments made by this section [enacting this section and amending sections 421, 422, 425, 1382d, 1383, and 1383b of this title].

“(2) SPECIFIC MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED IN REGULATIONS.—The matters which shall be addressed in such regulations shall include—

“(A) the form and manner in which tickets to work and self-sufficiency may be distributed to beneficiaries pursuant to section 1148(b)(1) of the Social Security Act [42 U.S.C. 1320b-19(b)(1)];

“(B) the format and wording of such tickets, which shall incorporate by reference any contractual terms governing service by employment networks under the Program;

“(C) the form and manner in which State agencies may elect participation in the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program pursuant to section 1148(c)(1) of such Act and provision for periodic opportunities for exercising such elections;

“(D) the status of State agencies under section 1148(c)(1) of such Act at the time that State agencies exercise elections under that section;

“(E) the terms of agreements to be entered into with program managers pursuant to section 1148(d) of such Act, including—

“(i) the terms by which program managers are precluded from direct participation in the delivery of services pursuant to section 1148(d)(3) of such Act;

“(ii) standards which must be met by quality assurance measures referred to in paragraph (6) of section 1148(d) of such Act and methods of recruitment of employment networks utilized pursuant to paragraph (2) of section 1148(e) of such Act; and

“(iii) the format under which dispute resolution will operate under section 1148(d)(7) of such Act;

“(F) the terms of agreements to be entered into with employment networks pursuant to section 1148(d)(4) of such Act, including—

“(i) the manner in which service areas are specified pursuant to section 1148(f)(2)(A) of such Act;

“(ii) the general selection criteria and the specific selection criteria which are applicable to employment networks under section 1148(f)(1)(C) of such Act in selecting service providers;

“(iii) specific requirements relating to annual financial reporting by employment networks pursuant to section 1148(f)(3) of such Act; and

“(iv) the national model to which periodic outcomes reporting by employment networks must conform under section 1148(f)(4) of such Act;

“(G) standards which must be met by individual work plans pursuant to section 1148(g) of such Act;

“(H) standards which must be met by payment systems required under section 1148(h) of such Act, including—

“(i) the form and manner in which elections by employment networks of payment systems are to be exercised pursuant to section 1148(h)(1)(A) of such Act;

“(ii) the terms which must be met by an outcome payment system under section 1148(h)(2) of such Act;

“(iii) the terms which must be met by an outcome-milestone payment system under section 1148(h)(3) of such Act;

“(iv) any revision of the percentage specified in paragraph (2)(C) of section 1148(h) of such Act or the period of time specified in paragraph (4)(B) of such section 1148(h) of such Act; and

“(v) annual oversight procedures for such systems; and

“(I) procedures for effective oversight of the Program by the Commissioner of Social Security, including periodic reviews and reporting requirements.”

GAO STUDY REGARDING THE TICKET TO WORK AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM

Pub. L. 108-203, title IV, §406, Mar. 2, 2004, 118 Stat. 527, provided that:

“(a) [sic] GAO REPORT.—Not later than 12 months after the date of enactment of this Act [Mar. 2, 2004], the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit a report to Congress regarding the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program established under section 1148 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1320b-19) that—

“(1) examines the annual and interim reports issued by States, the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Advisory Panel established under section 101(f) of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 [Pub. L. 106-170] (42 U.S.C. 1320b-19 note), and the Commissioner of Social Security regarding such program;

“(2) assesses the effectiveness of the activities carried out under such program; and

“(3) recommends such legislative or administrative changes as the Comptroller General determines are appropriate to improve the effectiveness of such program.”

FINDINGS AND PURPOSES

Pub. L. 106-170, §2, Dec. 17, 1999, 113 Stat. 1862, provided that:

“(a) FINDINGS.—The Congress makes the following findings:

“(1) It is the policy of the United States to provide assistance to individuals with disabilities to lead productive work lives.

“(2) Health care is important to all Americans.

“(3) Health care is particularly important to individuals with disabilities and special health care needs who often cannot afford the insurance available to them through the private market, are uninsurable by the plans available in the private sector, and are at great risk of incurring very high and economically devastating health care costs.

“(4) Americans with significant disabilities often are unable to obtain health care insurance that provides coverage of the services and supports that enable them to live independently and enter or rejoin the workforce. Personal assistance services (such as attendant services, personal assistance with transportation to and from work, reader services, job coaches, and related assistance) remove many of the barriers between significant disability and work. Coverage for such services, as well as for prescription drugs, durable medical equipment, and basic health care are powerful and proven tools for individuals with significant disabilities to obtain and retain employment.

“(5) For individuals with disabilities, the fear of losing health care and related services is one of the greatest barriers keeping the individuals from maximizing their employment, earning potential, and independence.

“(6) Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income beneficiaries risk losing medicare or medicaid coverage that is linked to their cash benefits, a risk that is an equal, or greater, work disincentive than the loss of cash benefits associated with working.

“(7) Individuals with disabilities have greater opportunities for employment than ever before, aided by important public policy initiatives such as the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.), advancements in public understanding of disability, and innovations in assistive technology, medical treatment, and rehabilitation.

“(8) Despite such historic opportunities and the desire of millions of disability recipients to work and support themselves, fewer than one-half of one percent of Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income beneficiaries leave the disability rolls and return to work.

“(9) In addition to the fear of loss of health care coverage, beneficiaries cite financial disincentives to work and earn income and lack of adequate employment training and placement services as barriers to employment.

“(10) Eliminating such barriers to work by creating financial incentives to work and by providing individuals with disabilities real choice in obtaining the services and technology they need to find, enter, and maintain employment can greatly improve their short and long-term financial independence and personal well-being.

“(11) In addition to the enormous advantages such changes promise for individuals with disabilities, redesigning government programs to help individuals with disabilities return to work may result in significant savings and extend the life of the Social Security Disability Insurance Trust Fund.

“(12) If only an additional one-half of one percent of the current Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income recipients were to cease receiving benefits as a result of employment, the savings to the Social Security Trust Funds and to the Treasury in cash assistance would total \$3,500,000,000 over the worklife of such individuals, far exceeding the cost of providing incentives and services needed to assist them in entering work and achieving financial independence to the best of their abilities.

“(b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act [see Tables for classification] are as follows:

“(1) To provide health care and employment preparation and placement services to individuals with disabilities that will enable those individuals to reduce their dependency on cash benefit programs.

“(2) To encourage States to adopt the option of allowing individuals with disabilities to purchase medicare coverage that is necessary to enable such individuals to maintain employment.

“(3) To provide individuals with disabilities the option of maintaining medicare coverage while working.

“(4) To establish a return to work ticket program that will allow individuals with disabilities to seek the services necessary to obtain and retain employment and reduce their dependency on cash benefit programs.”

GRADUATED IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAM

Pub. L. 106-170, title I, §101(d), Dec. 17, 1999, 113 Stat. 1874, provided that:

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act [Dec. 17, 1999], the Commissioner of Social Security shall commence implementation of the amendments made by this section [enacting this section and amending sections 421, 422, 425, 1382d, 1383, and 1383b of this title] (other than paragraphs (1)(C) and (2)(B) of subsection (b) [amending sections 422 and 1382d of this title]) in graduated phases at phase-in sites selected by the Commissioner. Such phase-in sites shall be selected so as to ensure, prior to full implementation of the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program, the development and refinement of referral processes, payment systems, computer linkages, management information systems, and administrative processes necessary to provide for full implementation of such amendments. Subsection (c) [set out as a note above] shall apply with respect to paragraphs (1)(C) and (2)(B) of subsection (b) without regard to this subsection.

“(2) REQUIREMENTS.—Implementation of the Program at each phase-in site shall be carried out on a wide enough scale to permit a thorough evaluation of the alternative methods under consideration, so as to ensure that the most efficacious methods are determined and in place for full implementation of the Program on a timely basis.

“(3) FULL IMPLEMENTATION.—The Commissioner shall ensure that ability to provide tickets and services to individuals under the Program exists in every State as soon as practicable on or after the effective date specified in subsection (c) but not later than 3 years after such date.

“(4) ONGOING EVALUATION OF PROGRAM.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Commissioner shall provide for independent evaluations to assess the effectiveness of the activities carried out under this section [enacting this section, amending sections 421, 422, 425, 1382d, 1383, and 1383b of this title, and enacting provisions set out as notes under this section] and the amendments made thereby. Such evaluations shall address the cost-effectiveness of such activities, as well as the effects of this section and the amendments made thereby on work outcomes for beneficiaries receiving tickets to work and self-sufficiency under the Program.

“(B) CONSULTATION.—Evaluations shall be conducted under this paragraph after receiving relevant advice from experts in the fields of disability, vocational rehabilitation, and program evaluation and individuals using tickets to work and self-sufficiency under the Program and in consultation with the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Advisory Panel established under section 101(f) of this Act [set out as a note below], the Comptroller General of the United States, other agencies of the Federal Government, and private organizations with appropriate expertise.

“(C) METHODOLOGY.—

“(i) IMPLEMENTATION.—The Commissioner, in consultation with the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives

Advisory Panel established under section 101(f) of this Act, shall ensure that plans for evaluations and data collection methods under the Program are appropriately designed to obtain detailed employment information.

“(ii) SPECIFIC MATTERS TO BE ADDRESSED.—Each such evaluation shall address (but is not limited to)—

“(I) the annual cost (including net cost) of the Program and the annual cost (including net cost) that would have been incurred in the absence of the Program;

“(II) the determinants of return to work, including the characteristics of beneficiaries in receipt of tickets under the Program;

“(III) the types of employment services, vocational rehabilitation services, and other support services furnished to beneficiaries in receipt of tickets under the Program who return to work and to those who do not return to work;

“(IV) the duration of employment services, vocational rehabilitation services, and other support services furnished to beneficiaries in receipt of tickets under the Program who return to work and the duration of such services furnished to those who do not return to work and the cost to employment networks of furnishing such services;

“(V) the employment outcomes, including wages, occupations, benefits, and hours worked, of beneficiaries who return to work after receiving tickets under the Program and those who return to work without receiving such tickets;

“(VI) the characteristics of individuals in possession of tickets under the Program who are not accepted for services and, to the extent reasonably determinable, the reasons for which such beneficiaries were not accepted for services;

“(VII) the characteristics of providers whose services are provided within an employment network under the Program;

“(VIII) the extent (if any) to which employment networks display a greater willingness to provide services to beneficiaries with a range of disabilities;

“(IX) the characteristics (including employment outcomes) of those beneficiaries who receive services under the outcome payment system and of those beneficiaries who receive services under the outcome-milestone payment system;

“(X) measures of satisfaction among beneficiaries in receipt of tickets under the Program; and

“(XI) reasons for (including comments solicited from beneficiaries regarding) their choice not to use their tickets or their inability to return to work despite the use of their tickets.

“(D) PERIODIC EVALUATION REPORTS.—Following the close of the third and fifth fiscal years ending after the effective date under subsection (c), and prior to the close of the seventh fiscal year ending after such date, the Commissioner shall transmit to the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate a report containing the Commissioner’s evaluation of the progress of activities conducted under the provisions of this section and the amendments made thereby. Each such report shall set forth the Commissioner’s evaluation of the extent to which the Program has been successful and the Commissioner’s conclusions on whether or how the Program should be modified. Each such report shall include such data, findings, materials, and recommendations as the Commissioner may consider appropriate.

“(5) EXTENT OF STATE’S RIGHT OF FIRST REFUSAL IN ADVANCE OF FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF AMENDMENTS IN SUCH STATE.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—In the case of any State in which the amendments made by subsection (a) [enacting this section] have not been fully implemented pursuant to this subsection, the Commissioner shall determine by regulation the extent to which—

“(i) the requirement under section 222(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 422(a)) for prompt referrals to a State agency; and

“(ii) the authority of the Commissioner under section 222(d)(2) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 422(d)(2)) to provide vocational rehabilitation services in such State by agreement or contract with other public or private agencies, organizations, institutions, or individuals,

shall apply in such State.

“(B) EXISTING AGREEMENTS.—Nothing in subparagraph (A) or the amendments made by subsection (a) [enacting this section] shall be construed to limit, impede, or otherwise affect any agreement entered into pursuant to section 222(d)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 422(d)(2)) before the date of the enactment of this Act [Dec. 17, 1999] with respect to services provided pursuant to such agreement to beneficiaries receiving services under such agreement as of such date, except with respect to services (if any) to be provided after 3 years after the effective date provided in subsection (c).”

TICKET TO WORK AND WORK INCENTIVES ADVISORY
PANEL

Pub. L. 106-170, title I, §101(f), Dec. 17, 1999, 113 Stat. 1878, established the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Advisory Panel to advise the President, Congress, and the Social Security Administration on work incentives programs, planning, and assistance for individuals with disabilities and provided for the Panel's termination 30 days after submission of its final report in December 2007.

§ 1320b-20. Work incentives outreach program

(a) Establishment

(1) In general

The Commissioner, in consultation with the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Advisory Panel established under section 101(f) of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999, shall establish a community-based work incentives planning and assistance program for the purpose of disseminating accurate information to disabled beneficiaries on work incentives programs and issues related to such programs.

(2) Grants, cooperative agreements, contracts, and outreach

Under the program established under this section, the Commissioner shall—

(A) establish a competitive program of grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts to provide benefits planning and assistance, including information on the availability of protection and advocacy services, to disabled beneficiaries, including individuals participating in the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program established under section 1320b-19 of this title, the program established under section 1382h of this title, and other programs that are designed to encourage disabled beneficiaries to work;

(B) conduct directly, or through grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts, ongoing outreach efforts to disabled beneficiaries (and to the families of such beneficiaries) who are potentially eligible to participate in Federal or State work incentive programs that are designed to assist disabled beneficiaries to work, including—

(i) preparing and disseminating information explaining such programs; and

(ii) working in cooperation with other Federal, State, and private agencies and nonprofit organizations that serve disabled beneficiaries, and with agencies and organizations that focus on vocational rehabilitation and work-related training and counseling;

(C) establish a corps of trained, accessible, and responsive work incentives specialists within the Social Security Administration who will specialize in disability work incentives under subchapters II and XVI for the purpose of disseminating accurate information with respect to inquiries and issues relating to work incentives to—

(i) disabled beneficiaries;

(ii) benefit applicants under subchapters II and XVI; and

(iii) individuals or entities awarded grants under subparagraphs¹ (A) or (B); and

(D) provide—

(i) training for work incentives specialists and individuals providing planning assistance described in subparagraph (C); and

(ii) technical assistance to organizations and entities that are designed to encourage disabled beneficiaries to return to work.

(3) Coordination with other programs

The responsibilities of the Commissioner established under this section shall be coordinated with other public and private programs that provide information and assistance regarding rehabilitation services and independent living supports and benefits planning for disabled beneficiaries including the program under section 1382h of this title, the plans for achieving self-support program (PASS), and any other Federal or State work incentives programs that are designed to assist disabled beneficiaries, including educational agencies that provide information and assistance regarding rehabilitation, school-to-work programs, transition services (as defined in, and provided in accordance with, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.)), a one-stop delivery system established under section 3151(e) of title 29, and other services.

(b) Conditions

(1) Selection of entities

(A) Application

An entity shall submit an application for a grant, cooperative agreement, or contract to provide benefits planning and assistance to the Commissioner at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Commissioner may determine is necessary to meet the requirements of this section.

(B) Statewideness

The Commissioner shall ensure that the planning, assistance, and information described in paragraph (2) shall be available on a statewide basis.

¹ So in original. Probably should be “subparagraph”.