

## Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act (TWWIIA) of 1999

Juan worked as a kitchen helper at a restaurant, with dreams of becoming a chef. One night, while walking home from work, he was struck by a hit and run driver and had both legs amputated in the crash. After recovering and completing rehabilitation, including adjustment to prostheses, Juan was determined to return to work but needed assistance to prepare for a new career.

See page 3 to learn how WIOA and TWWIIA helped Juan obtain his goal of returning to work.

### What is the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA)?

- WIOA is a federal law that expands opportunities for job seekers so that they can obtain or retain employment.
- ***People with disabilities are designated as a vulnerable population under WIOA and are eligible for all services under this law. This fact is important because data show that people with disabilities are employed at about half the rate of people without disabilities.***
- WIOA helps people get access to employment, education, training, and support services (e.g., pre-employment transition services, advice, guidance and assistance with career planning, job searching, placement, etc.).
- Through the department of Labor, WIOA authorizes programs for specific vulnerable populations including Job Corps, YouthBuild, Indian and Native Americans, and Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker programs.
- Through the Department of Education, WIOA supports adult education and family literacy programs as well as State Vocational Rehabilitation Services programs that assist eligible people with disabilities to obtain employment

### What is the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 (TWWIIA)?

- TWWIIA is a federal law that reduces barriers to work for people with disabilities receiving Social Security Administration (SSA) benefits such as Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI).
- TWWIIA's Ticket to work program is intended to (1) increase choice and control in accessing rehabilitation and vocational services, (2) extend Medicare and Medicaid benefits when individuals return or prepare for work and (3) make it easier to get SSDI and SSI benefits reinstated if employment is not successful.
- TWWIIA allows states to expand Medicaid coverage to people with disabilities who work and allows states to provide Medicaid to people with incomes above 250% of the Federal Poverty Level if they buy-in to the Medicaid program. This option is important because Medicaid covers certain services that are not available from typical health insurance programs or Medicare, such as personal assistance services.

The Ticket to Work program is offered to all SSDI and SSI recipients who are not working due to a disability. The program is voluntary and provides important safeguards for exploring employment, such as a 9-month trial work period where people can work and earn a substantial wage while maintaining Social Security Disability payments.



*Photo courtesy of Mitch Mitchell via Healthy Community Living, [healthycommunityliving.com](http://healthycommunityliving.com)*

## Why are WIOA and TWWIIA important to me?

- People with disabilities are more likely to be discriminated against when seeking and maintaining employment than are people without disabilities. WIOA expands opportunities for people with disabilities so that they can obtain employment, education, training, and support services.
- WIOA promotes competitive employment versus jobs paying substandard wages for workers with disabilities by regulating the payment of subminimum wages and requiring services to help workers with disabilities find competitive employment.
- TWWIIA provides a way for people with disabilities receiving Social Security benefits to retain health coverage through Medicaid while maintaining employment and increasing earnings.
- TWWIIA allows participants to choose an Employment Network (EN) at no cost through use of a “Ticket.” The EN can provide several employment-related services, even after vocational rehabilitation (VR) services end. These services include help communicating with your employer; reporting earnings to Social Security; and understanding how working affects SS benefits. Note that some ENs are better equipped to serve people with certain disabilities, so choosing the right EN is important.
- TWWIIA may eliminate the need to undergo the Social Security Administration Continuing Disability Review (CDR) process, if participants are making timely progress toward an employment goal under Ticket to Work.

## How Can I Use WIOA and TWWIIA and to make my life better?

- **Educate** – Learn about your rights to services to help you gain competitive employment in the community. Locate your local American Jobs Center (AJC) and contact it to start services. Understand your rights under WIOA and TWWIIA.
- **Advocate** – Involve yourself with the services or request these services if you cannot find a job, lose a job, are about to lose a job, or are earning a sub-minimum wage. You are your own best advocate and can ask for these services at any time.
- **Influence** – Use your knowledge of WIOA and TWWIIA to help other people in your community. Do not be afraid to speak up or attend any public meetings or board meetings where employment for people with disabilities is discussed.



**National Disability Rights Network:** These disability rights agencies are located in every state and provide legal representation and other advocacy services for specific issues at no cost to all people with disabilities.

<http://www.ndrn.org/ndrn-member-agencies.html>

**American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) Career Center:** This online Career Center is a tool for jobseekers with disabilities to search for employment opportunities, including summer internships, as well as a place for employers to post jobs and connect with potential employees with disabilities. <http://jobs.aapd.com/>

**Social Security Administration Ticket to Work Program:** This site provides details of this employment program for Social Security beneficiaries: <https://yourtickettowork.ssa.gov/about/index.html>

**Ticket to Work Program Fact Sheet:** This site provides many helpful fact sheets on the Ticket to Work Program: [https://yourtickettowork.ssa.gov/resources/factsheets.html#ssa\\_ttw](https://yourtickettowork.ssa.gov/resources/factsheets.html#ssa_ttw)



**NOTE:** While the WIOA and TWWIA apply to people with all types of disabilities, the RTC/PICL focuses mainly on the community participation and barriers thereto of people who have mobility-related disabilities.

This fact sheet offers general information, not legal advice. The application of the law to individual circumstances can vary. For legal advice, you should consult an attorney.

The RTC/PICL is a partnership of the University of Kansas Research and Training Center on Independent Living and The University of Montana Research and Training Center on Disability in Rural Communities.

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