

My Life: Are There Programs to Help With Work?

When it comes to working, many kidney patients may have a harder time working than they had before kidney disease. Many may ask themselves or the dialysis care team: Can I work? Can I go to school, get training, and/or look for a new career? How can I keep working? The answer is “yes” you can work, go to school, get training to help you keep working or start a new career. How you do so depends upon your overall health and support to help you reach your goals.



This resource will focus on some of the services that help people with work including the Social Security Administration’s (SSA) Ticket to Work program, Employment Networks (ENs), and Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VR). The Ticket to Work program’s goal is to assist people who get Social Security benefits to lessen their need for disability benefits through work. The SSA pays ENs (including VR and Job Centers) to give employment services and support. VR is a state program that helps people to return to work, go to school for job training, or find another career. You can get services from ENs or VR if your goal is to become employed, have a disability that limits your ability to get a job and need services to prepare for, get or keep a job.

What services do VR or EN’s offer?



Testing:

- Of your work, physical and mental health to decide if you can get services
- To understand how your disability affects your ability to work and the services you need



Training:

- to help you gain the knowledge and skills needed to work
- from public or private trade schools or colleges
- on the job training
- job coaching



Services and Support:

- funding
- childcare
- transportation
- interpreters



Vocational Counseling To:

- help you choose your work goal
- help make a plan to reach your goal
- help you adjust to the changes caused by your disability



Therapy Services

- physical and/or mental health treatment to help address barriers to working
- orthotic and prosthetic devices
- assistive technology devices



Job Search and Employment

- help with resumes
- interview skills

What about my Social Security, Medicare, and/or Medicaid benefits?

There are Social Security programs in place to help people to work and keep their benefits until they are earning more than a certain monthly amount based on their disability (Substantial Gainful Activity or SGA). These programs include:

- **Trial Work Period** -Allows people who get Social Security Disability (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) to work 9 calendar months (may be in a row or not) and earn any amount of money and still get benefits.
- **Extend Eligibility Period (EPE)** -After the last month of the Trial Work Period, for 36 months (in a row) you will keep getting cash benefits if you are not working or your work is not earning SGA.
- **Grace Period & Extended Medical Coverage**- the first time Social Security decides your work is SGA, you will get a three-month grace period when you will still get benefits. You can continue to get Medicare as long as you remain medically disabled and may be able to continue getting Medicaid if you need coverage to keep working.

Next Steps

If you are interested in learning more about returning to work, you can:

1. Talk with your clinic social worker about your interest in working, ask about your local office and tips for applying.
2. Contact your state VR office by phone or visit their website as listed below.
Illinois: 1-800-843-6154 or www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=29737
Iowa: 1-800-532-1486 or www.ivrs.iowa.gov
Kansas: 1-866-213-9079 or www.dcf.ks.gov/services/RS/Pages/default.aspx
Missouri: 1-877-222-8963 or dese.mo.gov/adult-learning-rehabilitation-services/vocational-rehabilitation
Nebraska: 1-877-637-3422 or www.vr.nebraska.gov
3. Contact your local Veterans Administration office, call 1-844-698-2311 or visit www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/index.asp.
4. If you have questions, or would like to receive a list of ENs, contact the **Ticket to Work Help Line** at 1-866-968-7842 (V) or 1-866-833-2967 (TTY). To learn more about Ticket to Work and Work Incentives, visit www.socialsecurity.gov/work or choosework.ssa.gov.

My Questions: Ask Your Care Team

- Am I ready and able to work?
- What limitations will I have physically and financially?
- What are the first steps I need to take to start or return to work?



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This material was prepared and distributed by Qsource ESRD Networks, under contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (contract numbers HHSM-500-2016-00010C and HHSM-500-2016-00012C). The contents presented do not necessarily reflect CMS policy. 19.Q-ESRD.05.018

For more information or to file a grievance, please contact

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