

FACT SHEET

MEDIATION AND ALTERNATE DISPUTE RESOLUTION SERVICES PILOT FOR THE TICKET TO WORK PROGRAM

The Social Security Administration (SSA) has awarded a contract to **Peninsula Mediation Center of Hampton, Virginia**, to provide mediation and/or alternate dispute resolution services on a pilot basis to certain beneficiaries and Employment Networks (ENs) participating in the Ticket to Work Program. Such services will be available to beneficiaries and ENs with signed Individual Work Plans. The mediation pilot is being implemented in three Phase 1 Ticket States—**Arizona, Florida, and Illinois**.

Goals of this Pilot

SSA's goals in offering mediation services are to promote the efficient, cost-effective and non-adversarial resolution of disputes, as well as to increase the likelihood that the relationship between the beneficiary and the EN will be preserved once a Ticket has been assigned. SSA believes that preserving this relationship will allow more beneficiaries to reach their employment goals and decrease their dependency on cash benefits. Even where the parties, after mediation, decide to terminate their relationship, SSA hopes that through this pilot the parties will be encouraged to continue their participation in the Ticket to Work Program.

During the life of the pilot the results will be analyzed and assessed at six-month intervals to determine the program's effectiveness.

How the Current Dispute Resolution Process Works

The Ticket to Work Program currently provides a three-step process for resolving disputes between beneficiaries and ENs.

1. Each EN participating in the Ticket to Work program must have an internal grievance procedure that will serve as the first step in the dispute resolution process.

2. If this does not result in a solution, either the beneficiary or the EN can ask for a resolution from the Program Manager (PM), **MAXIMUS**.
3. If either party is not satisfied with the resolution proposed by the PM, either party may request a decision from SSA. SSA's decision regarding the dispute will be final.

At any point in this process the beneficiary or the EN may terminate its relationship with the other. In most cases, the beneficiary then would be able to assign the Ticket to another EN or to the State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency.

A beneficiary can use **Protection & Advocacy (P&A)** services at any time during the dispute resolution process.

How to Access Mediation Services

Under this pilot program, **MAXIMUS** will advise both the beneficiary and the EN of the availability of mediation at the point either party wishes to elevate their dispute to the second step in the dispute resolution process, as described above.

- Either the EN or the beneficiary may request the services of a mediator through **MAXIMUS**, but the decision to bring in a mediator **must be mutual**.
- Mediation services, once implemented, are not binding on either party, and either party may withdraw from mediation at any time.
- All **P&A** services available to the beneficiary for the current dispute resolution process will be available for the mediation process as well.

Functions of the Mediation Contractor

The mediation contractor will provide non-adversarial mediation and alternate dispute resolution services to help the disputing parties clarify the issues between them and guide the process towards a mutually agreeable solution. These services will be offered **at no cost** to either the beneficiary or the EN.

Once notified by **MAXIMUS**, the mediation contractor will take the following steps:

- Provide a mediator and related personnel, equipment, materials and supplies necessary for conducting mediation.
- Contact both parties to the dispute in writing within 5 working days following referral by **MAXIMUS**.
- Make arrangements for the date, time, and location of the mediation session. The mediation session may be conducted in person or by telephone if agreeable to both parties. **MAXIMUS**, working with SSA's regional office staff, will assist the mediation contractor by securing appropriate Government space to hold any face-to-face mediation sessions as needed.
- Reach final outcome for all mediation activities within 30 calendar days following initial notification by **MAXIMUS**.
- Advise the disputing parties, along with **MAXIMUS**, of any determination that the parties are at impasse and that further mediation would not be productive.

Questions regarding the mediation pilot and the supporting mediation services contract should be directed to **MAXIMUS** on the following numbers:

Toll Free Number 866-YOUR TICKET (866-968-7842)
TDD Number 866-TDD 2 WORK (866-833-2967)

Resource: Ticket to work website