

Achievements

Creative Achievements' newsletter for our Ticket To Work Clients

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Working Remotely From Home is Changing the Lives of Some of our Clients with Physical Limitations

Here's some good news - the share of the American workforce that worked from home actually tripled from 2019 - 2021, during Covid. That's good news because there are many persons with disabilities that benefit from this flexibility.

Currently, we have a handful of TTW clients that are working full-time from their homes.

One person, K.J., is working for a healthcare company and providing excellent customer service. She had a background in customer service, but that didn't immediately get her the job. She applied 5 times, and finally got an interview. She had to work a 6-week stint in the city of Fort Worth, without an absence before she could set up in her own home. KJ has now worked continuously for over two



years. Here are some of her main take-aways and pointers for working remotely. **First**, for persons like KJ that deal with an autoimmune disease, working from home has been a tremendous blessing. She can save her energy, and not worry as much about hair, makeup, and what she's wearing. **Second**, she is saving gas and time with no commute, and of course wear and tear on her car. **Third**, KJ warns that working from home would not be a great fit for everyone with a disability. She says that she doesn't need to get out of her

house. She's at a point in her life, that as a mom with grown children, she has family and friends. She doesn't have the need to socialize and meet new people on a job. **Fourth**, KJ also points out that her supervisor is tremendous. If she is not feeling well, they have made some exceptions in her workday, to allow for this. She knows that every employer might not have been so accommodating.

Another client had a job working in a mid-sized company. That job was very stressful and was not

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Working Remotely, Continued

working well on many levels. Similar to KJ, this client has physical issues and Dr's appointments and could benefit from a few reasonable accommodations. She is now also working from home for a logistics company. So far, so good. She appreciates working for a management team that consistently treats her well.

Another TTW client sought out working from home from the beginning. Her job is health care related, and she's been at it over 6 months. Despite enjoying remote work, she's not sold on her current employer. But, this is a great start.

Finally, another client we've assisted is self-employed. She has chronic fatigue syndrome, which set in before she graduated college. She pushed herself to work some social service jobs, before having to quit and get on disability. Through her human service work, and through volunteering her expertise during the pandemic, she's turned that into a career. Our client is just shy of fearless, even though she constantly has to monitor her body, energy, and set-backs. She is in the middle of getting off SSDI benefits. Each of these clients has specific needs, and each navigates their own way. It has been worth the effort. **Working remotely is working!!!**



TICKET to Work

Important Overpayment Updates:

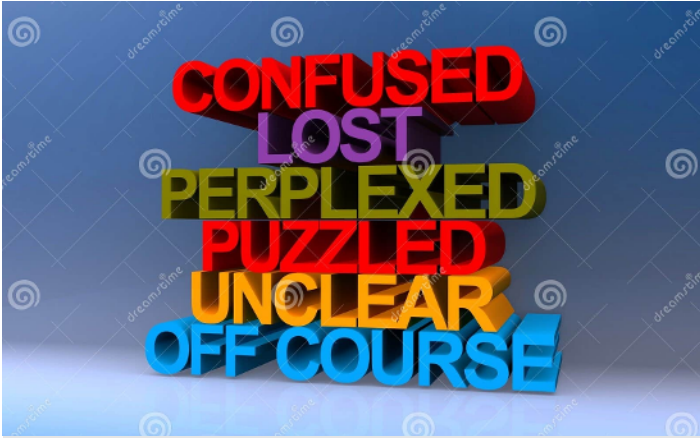
For persons on SSI, the maximum amount that Social Security can take out of a monthly check for an over-payment is \$94.30, which is 10% of the max amount a person can receive (in 2024).

For persons that qualify for a Medicare Savings Plan, the maximum amount that Social Security can take on an over-payment is \$10.00 per month.

For persons on SSDI that must negotiate a pay-back plan, there used to be a 36 month or 3-year maximum period. However, the rules recently changed, and now persons have 5 years, or 60 months in which to pay this back. This change has been extremely helpful.

Overall, Social Security offices that we work with have been extremely slow stopping payments, even when we have done everything possible to get them the information they need. Please continue to help us by reporting your income through the various methods available.

If you have any questions at all, please call the Creative Achievements office at: (817)238-7802 and we will work with you. Clearing up issues at the local level can be very challenging. We're here to help.



Question: I've been in the TTW program for a couple of years, and I'm very happy and stable with my job. Thanks for that, but why do I need to stay in contact?

Answer: That's a great question, and we have some great feedback and answers.

1) The TTW program is unlike any vocational rehab program in our nation. It is built on long-term success, and employment networks don't make any money till we take the chance and help clients hit specific benchmarks. Many of our clients haven't worked in over 10 years., and half of our new clients drop out before making progress.

2) Participation in the TTW program is free. At any time within the roughly 5 year time-frame, we can help you if you lose a job, or want/need to change careers. We can also help you manage your Social Security benefits, which can be challenging, because we have benefits planners on our staff. If you need to reapply for benefits, or get back on benefits, such as utilizing the Extended Period of Eligibility, then we will work with you to do that. It helps to have a friend, when dealing with Social Security.

3) In order to continue with this nationwide program, (which started small in 1999) we have to show success. Most of the clients with all of the employment networks in the US must reduce their dependency on Social Security. They must feel comfortable going off of SSDI, CDB, and SSI benefits, by getting help with job leads, networking, and maximizing their work incentives while maintaining their all-important healthcare. As you know, that is not easy. And, success is measured over the long haul., not just a few months, like the vocational rehab standards. Our funders need to see that many of these successes are permanent. Vocational Rehab groups in every state often close cases after 3 months of a client being on the job. We're here for the long term, and we have a better long-term track record than vocational rehabilitation, due to our set-up. So, please complete the program, even when you're on cruise control ! It helps us continue this gratifying work. We are only paid when a client has an outcome, not for the number of hours we spend with them. We are helping to change lives, one at a time.

Creative Achievements is a private, 501-C3 non-profit organization dedicated to community employment for persons with a variety of disabilities and barriers to employment entry. Together, we have placed hundreds of persons in individualized job settings, ranging from 5-50 hours, based on the needs of our job seekers and employers. We are passionate, skilled, and serious about employment.

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