

EN Essentials

2023 Round-up: Request for Application (RFA) Changes November 14, 2023

Below are the frequently asked questions (FAQ) related to Services and Supports that were captured during the EN Essentials RFA training.

Question: Can the Discussion Summary section be added to the IWP template available online?

Answer: Updating the IWP form requires OMB approval. We have documented the request and will take this feedback back to OMB. (This was response Erin provided in chat.)

Question: Can two-way communication be initiated by either the Ticketholder or the EN?

Answer: Communication between the EN and Ticketholder can be initiated by either party. However, it is only considered two-way when the other party responds to the conversation.

Question: If the Ticketholder is working, is the contact requirement quarterly? And since two-way communication is required, does the EN unassign the Ticket if there is failed contact up to three times in a month?

Answer: Follow-up with the Ticketholder is not based on employment vs non-employment. It is determined by the Milestone payment phase. Two-way communication for Ticketholders is required monthly, beginning with Ticket assignment through the Phase 1 Milestone period. Quarterly two-way communication is required once the Ticketholder reaches the Phase 2 Milestone period through Ticket unassignment. When unable to maintain the required contact, ENs shall make three attempts to regain two-way communication in a one-month period for Ticketholders that have not reached Phase 1 Milestone and within a three-month period for Tickets in the Phase 2 Milestone period through Ticket unassignment.

Question: Are ENs expected to keep and maintain every communication attempt and contact with Ticketholders, not just case note documentation?

Answer: “Based on the RFA, the EN shall document the method of the two-way communication, key issues discussed and include enough information so that the third-party reviewers (such as TPM and SSA) know what was discussed, what transpired, and what steps the Ticketholder and EN are taking to reach the Ticketholder’s goals. Where possible, the EN shall save any evidence available of the communication and provide this evidence during Program Integrity’s review if requested.”

Question: The (Initial) Job Acquisition Phase includes Phase 1 Milestone. In this phase, the Ticketholder is employed. Can you explain why the contact requirement is different for an employed Ticketholder in Phase 1 vs. Phase 2?

Answer: A Ticketholder returning to work, possibly after an extended period of unemployment, faces many challenges and it is important to the Ticketholder's continued success to meet monthly. For example, the Ticketholder may find they need accommodations or additional services not previously discussed or they may feel anxious about returning work and their ability to maintain the job.

Question: Is the Statement of Understanding the same as the Discussion Summary that is added on page nine of Form 1370 that summarizes the conversation and states the goals and services provided?

Answer: The Statement of Understanding is pre-printed on page 9 of the SSA 1370 IWP form and is different from the Discussion Summary that can be added to #15 of the Terms & Conditions.

If your EN Organization is not using Form 1370, a similar Statement of Understanding should be included.

Question: For Ticketholders who have had to keep working part time or scale back hours due to disability, but are still open to working full time, how should we handle that? Can we keep them assigned or do we need to unassign?

Answer: The expectation is that Ticketholders are continuing to work toward self-sufficiency and may be subject to a Timely Progress Review (TPR). ENs shall meet with Ticketholders who are not meeting their goals to determine the next steps as outlined in the RFA.

Question: Is it one year from the date of the IWP to determine that the customer is not meeting the goals and need to be revised? Is there a timeframe?

Answer: The timeframe for determining amendment of the IWP should be based on the short- and long-term SMART goals. The goals should be clear and include the time for the Ticketholder to meet their goals. Monthly two-way communication with the Ticketholder will also guide the need to revise goals.

Question: Once we unassign a Ticketholder because of loss of contact, what is the process of reassigning the Ticket if the Ticketholder contacts the EN?

Answer: An unassigned Ticketholder who desires to re-assign their Ticket is considered a new beneficiary requesting to assign their Ticket to the EN. The EN and Ticketholder shall meet to discuss goals and services. A new IWP is created and signed by the Ticketholder and EN. The Ticket assignment is the most recent signature date on the IWP.

Question: The original email sent out by the Ticket Program providing the new COS requirements stated that during the ongoing contact phase the EN needed to make three contact attempts during a three-month period. This presentation stated it's now three separate attempts during a one-month period. When did this change occur?

Answer: Per the RFA, when the EN is unable to establish two-way communication, the EN shall make three contact attempts during a one-month period, beginning with Ticket assignment through Phase 1 Milestone. When the Ticketholder moves to Phase 2 Milestone, three contact attempts during a three-month period is required through unassignment.

Question: If you are required to "unassign" a Ticketholder after placement because you are unable to reach them, does the EN continue to get paid?

Answer: Once a Ticket is unassigned by the EN, SSA will cease Ticket payments to the EN effective the month prior to the month of unassignment.

Question: Can you clarify the logistics of random reviews during the Services and Supports process? Per the GovDelivery message: "TPM has extended the original date for random reviews to confirm compliance. TPM will begin incorporating random reviews to ensure adherence to this guidance into our current Service and Support reviews beginning January 2024".

Answer: The annual Services and Supports review is a random sampling of the EN's active Ticketholders. Beginning January 2024, TPM will confirm compliance to the RFA on all the randomly selected Ticketholders.

Question: Is there a limit to how many files can be requested during random reviews? Currently, the annual review is 10%.

Answer: The annual Services and Supports review includes a review of 10% of the EN's active Ticketholders with a minimum of five and maximum of 25 Ticketholders reviewed. Special circumstances may warrant additional files over the 10%.

Question: Are Job Coaches considered a contact?

Answer: Two-way communication can occur between the Ticketholder and a Job Coach, providing the Job Coach has cleared suitability.

Question: How long should Ticketholder files be maintained before they can be destroyed?

Answer: Per the RFA, all files for active Ticketholders are to be securely maintained. Files for unassigned Ticketholders are to be securely maintained for three years after the unassignment date.