



Collaboration Plus: Connecting the Dots to Provide a Continuum of Services

July 9, 2025

Thank you for joining today's webinar!
We will begin at 1 p.m. ET
You will not hear audio or see captions until we begin.

Collaboration Plus: Connecting the Dots to Provide a Continuum of Services

July 9, 2025

AGENDA

Collaboration Plus: Connecting the Dots to Provide a Continuum of Services

Logistics and Introductions

Partnership Plus Overview

Collaboration Plus: Connecting the Dots

Panel Discussion

Partnership Plus Activity Data

Q & A Session

Logistics

- TPM is recording and capturing the transcript from today's meeting and will make it available on the Your Ticket to Work website at [EN Essentials Learning Events](#).
- Please feel free to ask a question in the MS Teams chat section.
- Closed Captioning is available for participants who join using the MS Teams Application or by using the closed captions link provided in the GovDelivery email announcement for today's call.
 - To turn on Closed Captions in MS Teams, go to the three ellipses at the top of the MS Teams window; click on "More"; scroll down the list to "Language and Speech" then click on "Turn on live captions."
 - When using the link option, paste the link in the browser and it will open a separate window to view closed captions.
- Per the Ticket Program Agreement (Part III, Section 11 subsection I), EN staff are not permitted to record this meeting nor capture the transcript.

Introductions

MODERATOR

Derek Shields, *Senior EN Development and Training Manager,
Ticket Program Manager (TPM)*

SPEAKERS and PANELISTS

Jennifer Radick, *Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist,
Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)*

Karen Price, *Program Manager, AHEDD*

Teresa Rodriguez, *Bureau Chief, Illinois Division of
Rehabilitation Services*

Hannah Schoenberg, *Ticket to Work Manager, RAMP
Employment Services*



Partnership Plus Overview



Partnership Plus Purpose

Making connections to provide a continuum of services:

- State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies (VR) provide more intensive, up-front services to help beneficiaries enter or return to work.
- Employment Networks (EN) provide longer-term supports to help beneficiaries stay at work.



Partnership Plus

Encourages State VR agency and EN collaboration

- Both a State VR agency and an EN can receive payment for serving the same Ticketholder.
 - Services must be **sequential**
 - The Ticket cannot be “In Use” with VR and assigned to the EN at the same time.
- Collaboration can be informal or formal (written agreement).



Ticketholders Win

Ticketholders:

- Receive free continued services to support long-term employment success, which may include:
 - Follow-along services to maintain employment
 - Additional training or career counseling to advance in employment
 - Benefits counseling/support as disability benefits are ending
- Receive continued protection from Medical Continuing Disability Reviews (CDR):
 - The Ticket must be reassigned to an EN within 90 days of VR case closure
- Resource: [Working with an EN after VR Services Have Ended](#)



VR Agencies Win

State VR agencies:

- Receive cost reimbursement for Ticketholders who achieve nine months within a 12-month period of SGA earnings
- Can reduce the number of Ticketholders returning to the VR agency for additional services
- May refer Ticketholders to ENs:
 - When they need less-intensive services
 - When VR is under Order of Selection (Ticketholders are waitlisted)



Employment Networks Win

Employment Networks

- ENs receive Phase 2 Milestone and Outcome payments when a Ticketholder achieves and maintains Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) earnings
- ENs can work with Ticketholders at different points in the employment process:
 - ENs that are VR vendors can work with the Ticketholder while their VR case is open
 - As an EN after VR case closure
 - At the beginning of a Ticketholder's employment process, when their needs are less intensive, VRs may refer Ticketholders to ENs



Formal Relationships

Written Agreements

- Describe details and processes for working together and typically:
 - Require VR agency staff to inform Ticketholders about the Ticket Program and availability of ENs
 - Facilitate the sharing of Ticketholder information between ENs and VRs
 - Outline specific referral procedures
 - Specify how Ticketholders will be provided benefits counseling services
- May require a lengthy legal approval process by the state agency that oversees VR services



Types of Partnership Plus Relationships

Collaboration can occur in various ways:

- EN as a VR vendor relationship:
 - EN acts as a VR vendor to provide services while the Ticketholder's VR case is open.
 - Establishes relationship with Ticketholder.
 - Continues services as an EN after VR case closure.
- “Handshake” referral processes:
 - Informal process documents outline how to work together.
 - Minimizes legal agreement approval process
- Marketing and communication:
 - ENs and VR agencies meet on a regular basis to discuss strategies to work together.
 - EN markets services directly to VR leadership and counselors.



Collaboration Plus: Connecting the Dots



Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)

- Dual Customer Model:
 - People with disabilities who have an impediment to preparing for, attaining, or maintaining employment and independence.
 - Businesses who hire or may want to hire or retain qualified people with disabilities.
- Philosophy of OVR and Ticket to Work and Partnership Plus:
 - Aligns with PA OVR Mission
 - OVR is mostly federally funded with a small state match.
 - An “OVR” in every state and US territory
 - OVR is a Jobs Program for people with disabilities.
 - Competitive, Integrated work

MISSION:
**To assist
Pennsylvanians
with disabilities
to secure and
maintain
employment
and
independence.**

Pennsylvania Collaboration

- Partnership Plus agreement highlights importance of open communication and establishes points of contact for OVR and EN.
 - New agreement in 2024
 - Specifies the conditions under which OVR and the EN will facilitate provision of sequential services under the Partnership Plus service delivery model
 - Signed by 7 PA ENs as well as national and Administrative ENs
 - Promotes connections with Ticketholder at key touch points:
 - Initial Meeting, IPE development, Employment, Case Closure
 - Ticket to Work Flyer
 - Identifying a Partnership Plus candidate
- Continuity of services, continuum of support

GOAL:
Ensure the long-term employment success of Social Security disability beneficiaries who have completed OVR services.

Pennsylvania Initiatives

Connects value of benefits counseling and benefits planning to help Ticketholders make informed decisions:

- Benefits Counseling (WIPA) and Benefits Planning (fee-for-service):
 - Ticket Program Help Line and WIPA
 - Benefits Planning Provider Agreement
 - Benefits Planning Query (BPQY) process
- Establishes the possibility for a continuity of services and continuum of support from VR to EN as some benefits planning service providers are also ENs.

Connecting with other OVR partners to facilitate long-term supports through ENs:

- OVR provider agreements:
 - Supported Employment
 - WEXA (Work Experience for Adults)
 - Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)
- Administrative EN relationships

Illinois

Illinois Department of Human Services

Division of Rehabilitation Services, Bureau of Engagement and Support Services

- **Help is Here:** Our goal is to help our customers find quality employment that pays a living wage and offers a chance for advancement.
- Ticket to Work status in January 2024:
 - Large VR Employment Network
 - Not focused on Cost Reimbursement or working with ENs



Illinois Collaboration

July 2024

First “Meet and Greet” between State VR staff and Illinois ENs

- Bridging the gap between communication and services

December 2024

Researched other states' Partnership Plus implementation to identify ways to:

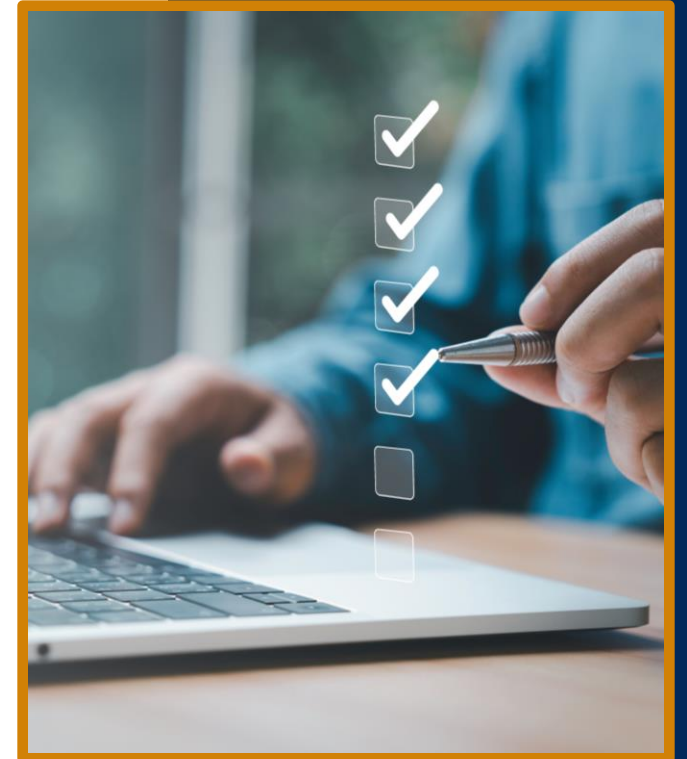
- Collaborate with ENs while ensuring customer choice and informed decision making.
- Engage with ENs early through benefits planning during the VR case process.
- Improve transition to EN support at case closure, enhancing post-employment success.

Illinois Initiatives

July 2025

Rolling out new Cost Reimbursement program:

- Establishes process to conduct Benefits Analyses
- Reduces “fear factor” that work equals immediate loss of Social Security disability benefits
- Enables VR to serve more clients statewide
- Provides a new revenue source for ENs:
 - Inviting ENs to apply to become VR vendors
 - Accepting certification from ENs to partner with VR as vendors to provide Benefit Specialist work for reimbursement



Panel Discussion



Partnership Plus Activity Data



Partnership Plus Activity Data

- Reviewed 11 years of Partnership Plus activity data:
 - 2013 – 2024
- Analyzed numbers of Tickets transitioning from State VR agencies to ENs within 90 days of case closure:
 - 5,584 Tickets transitioned from VR to 434 ENs.
- Identified 15 states and 15 ENs with highest frequency.
 - Identified common characteristics of the 15 VR agencies and 15 ENs



State VR Agency Characteristics

- Identified the 15 states with the highest percentage of Tickets assigned to ENs within 90 days after VR case closure.
- Characteristics:
 - 12 of 15 (80%) have or have had a written Partnership Plus agreement.
 - 10 of 15 (67%) purchase benefits counseling services from vendors, including ENs.
 - 7 of 15 host regular Partnership Collaboration meetings.



EN Characteristics

- Identified 15 organizations with highest percentage of Tickets assigned within 90 days of VR case closure
 - EN size ranges from small to large (15 – 2214 Ticket assignments)
- Organizational characteristics:
 - 13 of 15 (86%) have:
 - Vendor contracts with their State VR agency
 - Certified benefits counseling staff
 - Multiple sources of funding
 - High outcome payment percentages (70%-94%)
 - 4 of 15 are either Administrative ENs (AEN) or have both a Traditional and AEN model.



Questions



Questions

- Please feel free to ask a question in the MS Teams chat section.
- If joining via phone and you wish to ask a question:
 - Press *5 to raise your hand and we will unmute your phone.
 - Press *6 to speak.
- If joining via MS Teams and you wish to ask a question aloud:
 - Raise your hand and we will unmute your mic.
 - Please state your first name, EN name, and ask your question.
- Please limit questions to one per participant.

You may send additional questions or comments to:
ENOperations@ssa.gov.



Resources

- ✓ Partnership Plus flow chart for service providers:

[How Partnership Plus Works](#)

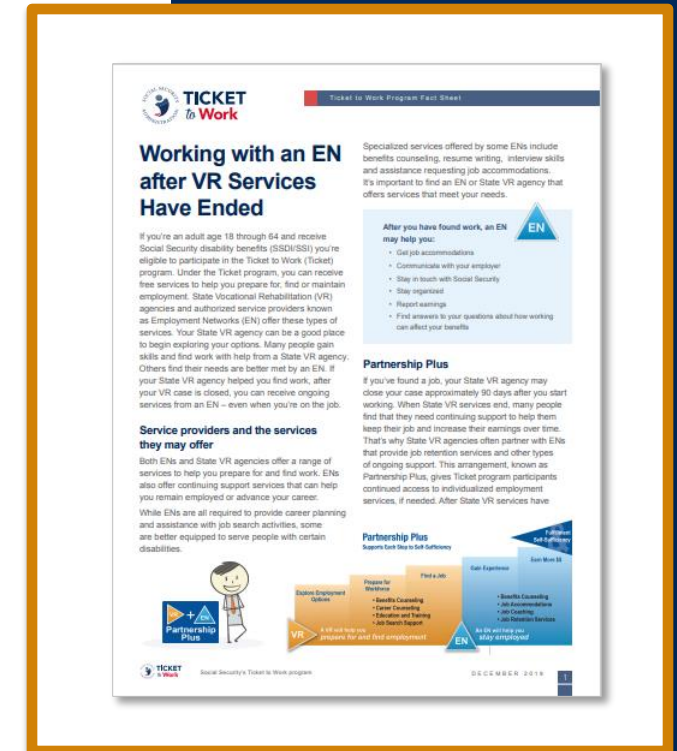
- ✓ Factsheet for Ticketholders:

[Working with an EN after VR Services Have Ended](#)

- ✓ EN Foundations training module:

[MODULE 9: Partnership Plus Collaboration](#)

Discover the basics of the Partnership Plus process, roles of key stakeholders, benefits of participating in Partnership Plus, and how to position your EN to partner with a State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agency.



Thank You

Jennifer Radick, *Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist, Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation*

Karen Price, *Program Manager, AHEDD*

Teresa Rodriguez, *Bureau Chief, Illinois Division of Rehabilitation Services*

Hannah Schoenberg, *Ticket to Work Manager, Ramp Employment Services*



UPCOMING EVENTS

July 23: WISE Webinar

August 5: All EN Payments Call

August 27: WISE Webinar

September 16: All EN Call

[2025 Calendar of Events](#)

Send an email to the EN Development and Training Department at ENOperations@ssa.gov with feedback, recommendations or ideas for future EN Essentials events.