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Operator: Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for standing by and welcome to the monthly All EN conference call. During the presentation all participants will be in listen only mode. Afterwards we will conduct a question and answer social. You may press 1 followed by 4 to register for an audio question. If you need to reach the operator, simply press zero. As a reminder this call is being recorded today Thursday, June 5, 2014.

Felix Stump: I am the deputy project director with the Ticket to Work program and we have some other colleagues of mine, colleagues with Social Security on the line and we have actually quite a number of topics that we're going to go through before we open the lines for any of your questions. So we do have a chat function available. There was an email that went out with a link if you do not have it you can simply go to Gatherplace.net, click to join and enter 7821333 as the code and get in there. Any questions that come up in the chat, if we think that it would benefit, we will pull those into the phone call question and answer session as well.   
So without further ado, I will turn it over to Gary Rowell with the Office of Research Demonstration and Employment Support.

Gary Rowell: Hello, this is Gary Rowell and last time that we talked, I talked about a new Employment Network service branch model that we were going to be going with and I had promised to give you some greater details this time. I still am not prepared to give the extent of the detail that I want to give you. I will promise one more time that it will be the next time. However, we are actually starting to make some calls. I think we've even done that today. They are going to, we're trying to get some additional information with regard to the business model type as a follow-up to the APORs and we're going to be asking some questions about that. But sometime by the end of this month we are going to be actually assigning an individual from Social Security to be assigned to an EN and will be contacting all ENs again with that information.

So I apologize for the slight delay, but we are getting it underway and we will be giving you more detailed information very shortly. So with that, Felix, I'll turn it back over to you.

Felix Stump: Thank you very much Gary and I apologize to the listeners but we're going to go a little bit out of sequence in order to accommodate for all the speakers' schedules. So I'm going to jump down to the preparation for the launch of the new EN Portal and call on Katie Striebinger.

Katie Striebinger: Hi, my name is Katie Striebinger. Last month you got a heads up and I want to go over some information you might have heard before and give you a little bit more.   
The first thing that we want to stress is that the current Portal does not connect to any SSA system right now, which is why a lot of things that you see are not in real life. They are on file, it gets transferred from you to MAXIMSU and then from MAXIMUS to SSA and then back to MAXIMUS. The new Portal is going to connect to SSA and our system and everything we use from contracts, ticket assignment and payment, everything you do in the new portal will be real-time.

Some of the features you are going to see is you will be able to do EN management functions like be able to see all the information we have about your en, you will be able to see that in a PDF you will be able to click on that and automatically know if information we have about your en is automatically provided to us.

Functions like ticket assignment, you will be able to upload ticket assignment files directly to the portal and you will get a quick response back whether or not something is assignable and the information you get back will be up to date, that minute. When you ask if a ticket is assignable you will get back the correct response as if you assigned it that day, whether or not it would be assignable. You will also be able to upload ticket assignment and unassignment file and download a marketing file which you currently get on a CD you will be able to download a list of tickets formally assigned to your EN from this list you can do payments, ticket assignment history and use history and assist with…for payments you will be able to see a list of all pending payments, payments we have made and denials with explanations. You will be able to request a payment using the portal and fax earnings evidence.

Now, with the new Portal and because it's going to be an SSA Portal, there are going to be new security requirements that you are going to have to build. The first is you are going to have to register to access your own personal social security records on line using my ssa.gov you will need to have a secure internet browser. We are going to give you a list of browsers that work for the portal and when time is closer we will give you a test site you can see to make sure your browser is compatible. Very shortly you will get a blast from MAXIMUS asking which browsers you are using. I'll go through the list really quickly but browsers that will work are something like Firefox, the latest Chrome version, Internet Explorer and if you have XP you have to use Firefox. If you don't have something that matches this list you need to let us know so we can work with you and get everyone on the new portal. That's all I have for now and I'll have more updates for you on the next EN call.

Felix Stump: Thanks very much Katie, now we'll move on to Desiree Fitzgerald.

Desiree Fitzgerald: Good afternoon, I just have one reminder at this time, and it involves the incorrect payment notice. The notice that you receive when there's an adjustment to payments. We've had some instances where beneficiaries have contacted us and have contacted Janice Ellis so it seems that notice is sometimes being shared with beneficiaries and we'd like to ask you not to share that notice with beneficiaries. It is a notice about your payment and it involves us and you and she's not an appropriate contact for them. So if you need a contact for some reason or if you need to refer a beneficiary to SSA and you are not sure how to do so, you can contact MAXIMUS and they will work with us to figure out who would be the right contact. But the incorrect payment notice, the contact information on that notice, the person and the phone number is not something that would be helpful to beneficiaries so we just wanted to mention that.   
That's it.

Felix Stump: Thanks, Desiree. And while we have you there's a question that came in from one of our ENs before this call that I thought I would maybe address to you at this point, which is that there was a question about what an en's responsibilities are when they have a beneficiary that's assigned with them and they have a Ticket Holder that's kind of working a job I guess under the table or is working and isn't reporting the income but the en finds out about that. Do they have the duty or any kind of obligation to report this to SSA or in fact do they have any confidence with the ticket holder that they ought to be protecting? What's their role in that situation?

Desiree Fitzgerald: Okay, yes, SSA has instructions on how to handle situations where there is suspicion of fraud but for the safety of the beneficiary we wouldn't want to label it in any way in particular. We would expect the en to report that to us as part of their responsibility of an employment network helping beneficiaries to return to work and beneficiaries are expected to report their earnings to the agency, so it would be within the purview of the en to just report knowledge that this person may be working or may have undocumented work. And then SSA will refer to our operational components and it will go through the process. If it's a suspicion of fraud case they would involve the OIG, but I would say if you are aware this is happening it would interfere with your ability to receive payment, even if they have a job that is causing you to get some payment. It's not, it may not be the highest payment that they could be receiving if all their work were documented. They may be working at trial work level earnings and it could be SGA earnings if all their work was documented so it could even be a conflict for you as an employment network but at any rate, yes, it would be perfectly within the realm of your contract responsibilities to let us know that someone may be working in that capacity. 

Felix Stump: Thank you very much.

And now I'm going to jump back up to near the top of the agenda and go to Sallie Rhodes for kind of a quick recap of what we discussed in case you missed it on the community of practice call about section 503 that took place yesterday.

Sallie Rhodes: Thank you, Felix.

Good afternoon, everyone, I want to do a quick update on OSM's most recent activities to take effect of the new 503 rules. Yesterday, as Felix mentioned, we conducted the fourth 503 Community of Practice forum and we'd like to thank Kevin Nickerson for an excellent presentation and facilitated presentation on using American job centers that are available to all job seekers, including those with disabilities, and those resources include but are not limited to workshops, training funds available based on eligibility, a state exchange that employers with job seekers, and labor. Kevin also provided tips on how to establish relationships with AJCs, the business service representatives often involved in planning events such as job fairs and seminars on things like section 503 for federal contractors. You even might consider offering to do something like providing a workshop as one of these events as a way of initiating a partnership with the AJC and as a means of getting the word out on the ticket to work program and the services en's offer. There was some significant discussion about the fact that federal contractors are not getting a lot of information about the ticket program and en's as a resource for referrals. Kevin acknowledged some of these business service representatives may not be aware of the ticket program and you might want to be armed with a 5-minute elevator speech about the ticket program and how ENs are uniquely situated to provide employment support. You might also want to consider set up appointments to take a of your Ticket Holders to an AJC  
Kevin also announced the hot off the press news that DOL is in the process of announcing a fifth round of DEI grants. He talked briefly about the national labor exchange and how ENs might use this information in working with beneficiaries. Kevin also discussed the system for awards management or SAM because it is where you have to register your organization to receive federal funding.

As a result, SAM has information on all the organizations that receive federal funding. So if you wanted to visit sam.gov, Kevin talked about the importance of checking the active [inaudible] check box so you can limit your search to current federal contractors and using the advance search function so you can narrow your search for specific things like state, city, type of entity. And SAM is at httpf://www.sam.gov.   
During the presentation Kevin posted a number of questions to get participants not gauged in the call involved in the presentation. He asked if ticket holders were registering with local AJCs and that raised a number of questions how to register people and get their information into the data base, how this data base is used by and whether there are any statistics on how successful these data bases are at getting [inaudible] into the work force.   
Kevin offered a number of suggestions on how to establish partnerships with AJCs that are ENs and noted the importance of understanding the history of the America Job Center and of creating a shared vision of an alliance that draws upon the collective skills and resources of both the AJC and the EN.

He talked about the fact that sometimes creating a shared vision could be done best through developing a written agreement that spells out a process for making referrals between the two organizations, as well as any expectations regarding revenue sharing and the timing of ticket assignments and unassignments. Needless to say, this list led to an exchange of ideas about ways to split ticket payments when partnering with an AJC that's an EN for example, Adelante in New Mexico has an agreement to alternate ticket assignments when referring and working with shared customers.   
Felix was asked at that point to determine the OSM's process for determining split payments when two en's are working with the same beneficiary at different points in time. I think the big take away in this discussion was there's lots of approaches to partnering with an AJC and sharing revenue. ENs were strongly encouraged to work together -- pews me, that's my dog -- to work together to develop a partnership and focus first and foremost on meeting the needs of beneficiaries seeking assistance under the ticket program. And I want to stress that. If everyone focuses on the needs of the beneficiary everything else falls into place and works out well.   
I encourage you to visit the web site to access the PowerPoint from yesterday's presentation, the audio recording and the transcript from the call. All this information will be posted once it's available, probably early next week. It will be in the information center, click on 503, readiness page and the cop page will come up. I also encourage you to join us next month for the 503 forum scheduled for July 9 from 3:00 to 4.30pm we have now extended these forums to 90 minutes because these discussions have been so great. The topic will be effective ways for en's to realize 503 opportunities. This forum will feature a conversational format for the audience and en's talking for 15 to 20 minutes on effective topics, the first being on self-disclosure part 2. At this time en peers will discuss strategies on ways to approach self-identification and reasonable accommodation conversation with beneficiaries, talking both about the rules for section 503 and the ADA, and this will also include information on how to ensure that informed choice for beneficiaries is available when they are deciding when and if to disclose a disability.   
The second topic that's been identified for July is en capacity building part 2, which will address how to successfully use online resume' posting job match sites and strategies for locating and sharing information on qualified ticket holders who are available to fill job openings.   
Third topic has been identified but we haven't gotten confirmation from all the presenters so I'm not going to talk about that now. I encourage you to be looking for the announcement that will come out early in July and one final thing I want to know is that we have just posted three new 503 resources to the ticket to work web site today. The first is a users’ guide for locating federal contractors on USA spending. It briefly explains what usaspending.gov is and what type of information is housed there. It provides step by step instruction on how to use this web site to locate information on federal contractors and again you will find this when you visit the information center and you click on the section 503, so it's right there on the landing page.   
The second resource is the community of practice self-identification questions and responses. We had so many questions coming in through the chat during the first cop, which was in April, that we couldn't answer them all during the call and we created a document and the third resource is called tips on discussing section 503 with federal contractors. This kind of provides some ideas on what you might include in a 5-minute elevator speech if a federal contractor is not familiar with recent changes on 503 and also they need a little information on what the major provisions of 503 are and who it applies to and also includes key messages you might want to use when contacting federal contractors about hiring ticket holders.   
That's it for this month's update on 503. We continue to move forward, identifying and create resources and come up with topics to discuss and we encourage you to participate in the 503 cop's. Back to you, Felix.

Felix Stump: Thanks, Sallie. So I will just go over a couple of reminder points and updates and then we can go into the q and a portion.

As an update on the EN profile and customer satisfaction surveys, (inaudible) choose work TTW web site that primarily Ticket Holders use along with profiles and some of your responses from your APOR. That has been updated so you should be able to go there and see those updates and also the customer satisfaction survey that is being conducted by our colleagues with the beneficiary access and support services contract is still going. The survey itself closes on June 24th. So far they've gotten just over 6600 responses, which is a good response rate for this point in the process, but there's still plenty more room for them to get beneficiary feedback, so what we're asking you to do is to remind your clients to, if they have not already, go to that survey link and complete that survey. There will be a third and final wave of mailers sent out next Monday, the 9th, to those beneficiaries that hadn't responded yet encouraging them to do so before they close on the 24th. Results of those surveys should be available at the end of summer sometime in mid to late august.   
Along with the topic of information on the directory, some time ago, meaning years, there was a feature on the en directory where if, at the en's choosing, you could include a small paragraph or really one or two sentences maybe of text that would appear beside your en name on the directory and the purpose of that was to help distinguish yourself or provide additional information to beneficiaries that would help them in making a choice on who to contact ear who to work with as their employment network. And the social security agency has decided to bring that feature back and there is not yet an implementation date, but look forward to sometime in the near future receiving some communication about this text field. We're going to solicit your responses or suggest or submissions, I guess, really, for text that you would want to have appear near your name.   
There will be some kind of rules and parameters set forth by the social security administration. Those have not yet been defined but when they are we will let you know. We hope that will be a way to further assist the beneficiaries in making that decision of who to contact for service. So the goal of this text field will be the same as the goal including that survey information and all the services and support you offer. It's an effort to try to give the beneficiary the information they need in a manner that's not overwhelming so that they can make a decision about to which organization to reach out when they are looking for services, so stay tuned for more information about that.   
I did want to give a brief update on the certification of service. There will be coming soon there will be a formal announcement that you will receive, but we have been working with our colleagues at social security about the requirements to submit the certification of service statement. Nothing, I'll say first, is going to change about your requirement to complete the certification of service statement at the certain points in the life of the ticket. Those points are the Phase 1 Milestone 4, Phase 2 Milestone 11, Outcome 11 and Outcome 22 payments. Right now the requirement is that you submit the certification of service statement with your payment request for each of those 4 types of payments.   
The change coming up is we are no longer going to require you to submit the certification of service after that first point at which you submit the document. I will say that begin so it's a little more clear. Nothing will be changing with fizz 1 milestone 4, you will still be required to complete and submit the certification of services statement with your payment request.   
What will change is for the next 3 instances when that form is required to be completed, we will not ask you to submit it with the payment request itself, instead keep it on file and have it available when we want to go back and look at them. So at outcome 11 and outcome 22 you will need to still complete that certification of service statement, but instead of sending it in to us, keep it on file and testimony simplify the payment process, allow the request to be processed more quickly and hopefully you will receive payment in a more timely fashion.   
Finally, just a couple reminders of some upcoming events. We have next month's all en call will feature a partnership plus panel where we'll have representatives from the work force agency, a VR agency and employment networks that have worked together collaboratively so they will be able to talk about that process. Coming up sooner, next Tuesday, June 10th, ticket training's topic for that will be essential tools for en success so please dial in and participate if you are available.

Operator: Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, if you would like to register for a question, please press the 1 followed by the 4 on your telephone. You will hear a 3-tone prompt to acknowledge your request. If your question has been answered and you would like to withdraw, simply press 1 and 3. You may also submit by using the chat feature.   
Our first audio question is from the line of Susan Webb. When you were talking about the update of Certification of Services I didn't hear you say anything about the signature requirements.

ORDES: I know. And I read and considered and considering changes to the signature process, but we can talk about that separately.

Susan: But I mean you are not requiring other than the first one, right? 

OSM: No, it's not required specifically for anyone. You are required to certify or make an attempt -- you know all the rules there. 

OSM: Considering that we don't actually require you to have a web signature, didn't seem like a change that we had to make. 

Susan: But you were required to make the attempt and if you could show the attempt, but the problem is the attempts are sometimes made. I thought the update was going to be we would still be required to request the signatures, document when we couldn't get it, but only on the first one. The others we didn't need a signature at all or even attempt to get a signature. Is that not correct?

OSM: That is not correct. We're going to have a fuller discussion of this in a separate call. You will be receiving an announcement from MAXIMUS on what we decided before that. We'll have a separate conversation about it on the next call.

Susan: Okay. Well, you're going to send something out to all ENs anyway and when do you anticipate that being sent out to all ENs?

OSM: I'm not sure.

OSM: Soon. We hope in the next couple weeks, hopefully before the ensuing months. I wanted to make this announcement about not needing to submit it because the idea was not that that is a, the exact solution everyone was looking for from the en community, but at least it was a relief from having to attach this process to the payment request process after that first submission. But as mark said, we'll send that, let us send out our written statement and with that clarification and then have an off-line discussion but that's potentially -- that will help us to maybe in the next all en call be able to take whatever it is we can gather from you off-line and incorporate that for their clarification or reminder. 

ORDES: Anybody else after you receive this from MAXIMUS, if you want to get in touch with me directly to discuss this, happy to do that.

Caller: Well, you know we have a whole committee on that with Pam Walker heading it, so I'm sure there will be more on that.   
My second question is on the state of section surveys, so they are out there, but you also talked about -- it does show a satisfaction rating for 2013. So if it does show that on an individual EN’s profile, does that mean that 2013 rating is final?

ORDES: I'm surprised to hear that is final. No, nothing is final on the survey. Nobody should have a 2013 rating. Do you have one?

Caller: Yeah, and I looked at everybody else's and they are all there. 

ORDES: Okay, I'll look at that as soon as I get out of here. 

John Flaherty: I was looking at the list of the rounds the DEI has gone through and I live in a state that has not gone through that yet. Do we know what states are going to be included in the fifth round?

Sallie Rhodes: This is Sallie, I can chime in on this one. They are just now putting the announcement together to put it out so it hasn't been issued yet. 

Felix Stump: The announcement Sallie is referring to is not an announcement where it will be, but an announcement for calls for applications. 

Operator: Mr. Stump, we have no further audio questions at this time, sir. 

Felix Stump: Okay, well, is there anything that any of our speakers want to cover or touch on again? Thank you particularly Susan and John for your questions and thanks, of course, to everyone at Social Security and to Sallie for speaking on today's call. I hope everyone has a good afternoon and we will talk to you next month.