**All Employment Network Call**

**Effective Practices:**

**3 – 4:30 p.m. ET**

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Operator: Ladies and gentlemen thank you for standing by and welcome to the National All EN Call.
During the presentation all participants will be in "listen-only" mode. Afterwards we will conduct a question and answer question. At that time if you have a question please press star followed by the number one on your telephone.
If you need to reach an operator please press star zero. As a reminder this is recorded Thursday, June 4, 2015. I would now like to turn the conference over to Michelle Laisure.
Please go ahead.

Michelle Laisure: Thank you Stephanie and welcome everyone to this
afternoon's EN call. Hopefully you are having better weather than we are. Our agenda has changed a little bit today.
We're moving items at the end of call to the beginning. I'll walk you through that. Just want you to know that our call is scheduled to run till 4:30 to make sure we have ample time to cover our issues, questions and information from our speakers.
So the call today we will start off with the ticket portal update from Desiree Fitzgerald, comments regarding the Marketing Summit from Rob Pfaff, Deputy Associate Commissioner followed with questions and answers regarding any of the comments made from our earlier presenters and then moving into our effective practice series, our first presentation for the year.

 So at this time I would like for you all to look at your gather place if you have it up. We have three slides from Desiree Fitzgerald on an update on the Ticket portal. Desiree.

Desiree Fitzgerald: Michelle, if you don't mind I’m going to give one quick announcement before I get to the ticket portal update and it's related to ePay. In march w we said we were going to offer ePay to all ENs and that means it qualifies you for a payment we will automatically make that payment without you having to request it. We said it will begin this sum certify and we're working towards that goal. It looks like we'll be able to provide this service at the end of July and it will change things for many of you. We think this is a really good move for everyone. It will be a better use of everyone's resources. And that ePay is going to subsume all of the current ePay processes. So it will affect the schedule of payments to people. But the good thing is we will be making payments daily based on information in our records and we will be making payments based on multiple sources of earnings in our records as opposed to just the quarterly wage data that we were using before which gives us the potential for far more hits. But we did want to give you that information. As a matter of fact I should mention that how OSM payment manager Debbra reminded us we should give you as much information as possible because it will affect the schedule you're used to and June will be the last month we'll be following the partial schedule we currently use. So we're going to give you more details about all of this but she wanted you to have that heads up today which is really a good idea.

 Now I'll move on to the Ticket Portal key dates slide. We have a flurry of activity that you would not believe on our site here. We know that we have you all going through a lot to register and enroll and inform us and prepare to use the new tools as well. So we're all getting set. But June and July is going to be an exciting month and we've been waiting for this new tool and we hope that many of you will come on board very early and realize the administrative savings. The forms you fill out today and even the forms that you fill out in the portal this is going to be very much a cleaner and quicker and Katie will point out a little bit about that today.

 But there are some dates and some communications that is you're going to be receiving and some things that are going to be happening. We just -- we would encourage you to make sure you are paying close attention to the GovDelivery messages coming out because they will include all the information that you need to stay informed and to get on board and to keep up with the pack I should say. But on June 8th you're going to be getting communication about what you can expect. So that will be a key message with enough information for you to figure out where you fall in the scheme of things and what your next move needs to be. We know that people are at different stages of thinking about this and we know that some of you have been busy and haven't had time to really play close attention but we are at June and on the 15th of June we will be implementing the new portal and we will be flipping the switch so to speak on all of the folks who are enrolled and who are ready to use the system. If you're not one of those folk that June 8 message is going to still have some information in there for you as well. But that's a date we're looking forward to but we're looking forward to each and every one of you enrolling according to your own schedule and time frame if you don't make that date. The other thing here is that the current portal transactions will not be available on the 16th of June.
You can still go in and do your queries and look at reports and that kind of thing but you will not be able to request a payment or make a ticket assignment or do TPRs through the portal, the current portal as of June 16th. The 17th is the beginning of orientation sessions and those orientation sessions will happen every Wednesday through the end of July. They're repeatable sessions so it's not a commitment that you're making to every week. But they are there and it's the same information will be presented multiple times so you have an opportunity to catch it once or twice or however many times you need to feel comfortable. That day will also be an opportunity we will have all hands on deck folks you deal with, your representatives here. So we'll have a brain trust of people so that we can do our best to answer questions and provide adequate time for Q&A on that day. Also on that slide the June calendar for the
19th through the 21st you see we have downtime on the system.

 Once those of you who get into the system on the 15th there should be an announcement reminding you of it but we wanted to put it on this calendar so that everyone knows that when there is a system release and I’m sure this is the case with the current portal as well that we have to take it down and have time to perform that. In this instance it's 6:00 p.m. on June 19 to 8:00 p.m. on the 21st. So we'll be back in business for the Monday the 22. That systems release will actually include some final pieces of the portal, some key pieces of the portal I should say because that's where the TPR and the batch fall upload is actually what's happening during this system release and we'll give you more information when it will be implemented. A really key date for you also is June 30th because June 30th we will have to say good bye to the current portal forever. We were glad to bring it to you but we will be out of the business of the secure provider portal and we will be fully in the new portal.
And so just keep those June dates in mind and I wanted to point out the hours of operation. There's a little box at the bottom of the slide that gives those hours. We've mentioned them before but I don't think we've put much emphasis on them so we want to make sure that you all are aware that the portal is open seven days a week but there is downtime which is non-negotiate time frame that they use for all of the systems. So those hours are listed there for you. We still think it gives everyone ample time to work late into their night or evening. Well it's night always but if you need to do so. Could we move to the next slide?
Okay the July slide just has two columns of dates and the ticket training Tuesdays you're already familiar with that forum. We will be using that forum to reinforce the big portal function, the ticket assignment, the payment processing and the TPR, the timely process review. So those are July 7, 14 and 21. And when that information is presented it will not just be the portal processes but it will be the manual processes as well for those who are not using the portal. So it will be reaffirming that you understand those processes. Some of you may be using them now. Some of you are not probably using them.

 You may be using the portal and there may be a lapse in time between when you're ready for the new portal versus when we shut down the old portal so we want to make sure everyone is equipped and know how to continue with their daily ticket business. And then on the Wednesday I already mentioned the orientation dates go weekly through the 29th. And just a little reminder at the bottom of that box is those sessions, you know, that's a really good opportunity to get questions answered. So if when you get all the information you need and you're in the portal if you're in the portal in the June and July time frame if you could look -- there's going to be self-paced module training that will be issued to you as a part of welcoming you to the portal and when you get that material if you could review it prior to coming to one of the orientation session that is would put you in a really great position to get your questions answered. So we just want to welcome you all. I know we will be welcoming you all at various points in time but we're looking forward to using this tool because it is the best way to operate under the ticket to work program.

Michelle Laisure: Desiree this is Michelle. We actually have three questions for you on the Ticket Portal. Would you like to take them now?

Desiree Fitzgerald: That's fine.

Michelle Laisure: The first one is notification on the orientation session. The times. And how would that information be going out on the orientation sessions?

Desiree Fitzgerald: The orientation session information is going to be made available to people on the 15th when we implement the portal.
They will be getting information about the orientation. We actually will have MAXIMUS communicate to folks about a new location that they have where they're going to put all the information in a secure web page. And the information about those sessions will be on that page as well.

Michelle Laisure: Okay thank you.

Leslie Barrett: Actually regarding the orientation just a follow up question was do ENs have to attend each orientation session or can they attend one? Is the same information going to be presented on each call?

Desiree Fitzgerald: You can choose to attend one orientation session and that would be fine. This is based on your desire and what you need.
But yeah. We would encourage everyone to attend one. Just so you make sure you see and hear everything that we have planned for you.

Leslie Barrett: We've had a question come in from the chat an individual an EN has had problems getting the extra security with some of their employees. As the address and SSA system isn't listed correctly. Then it says the 800 number asks them to go to the local office and the local office says they can't help because the person is not receiving benefits. And there's been a lot of back and forth so we want to know what would be the best recourse for ENs that come across that issue.

Desiree Fitzgerald: The ENs should contact their EN service rep.

Katie Striebinger: Hi, this is Katie Striebinger. We want to make sure this is in materials you will be getting but the thing about calling the 1-800 number is when you get to the first voice prompt is gives you information about social security and are you calling about this but when it gets to the voice prompt and says please say what option you need you need to say the word helpdesk and the voice response will respond with my social security helpdesk. That way you will know you got to the correct helpdesk. Otherwise you end up going to the main just social security helpdesk and they don't know anything about the page enough to help you so you need the specialized individuals who are there to support the myssa.gov website. When you call the 1-800 number you need to say helpdesk and the voice response will respond to you with my social security helpdesk and it lets you know you have gotten to the right person. If you talk to someone on the phone and they don't know what you're talking about. Like you're talking about the my social security website and they don't know what that is or help you and they try to get you to the field office you need to make sure you are talking to the right helpdesk. Up here on the ticket to work program we can't help you with this. We do not have this access. This is tides to your my social security account so there's nothing we can do to help you. We can only reroll you based on that information. So if you are having problems getting your extra security you need to call the 1-800 number and get to the right person. We are here to listen but there is really nothing we can do because you have to call because it's your personal account and your personal information.

Michelle Laisure: Thank you Katie. And we will research that phone number and add it to the recap document that will go out following the call. Desiree I’ll turn it back over to you. We've answered all the questions so far.

Desiree Fitzgerald: Actually Katie is going to walk through the third slide.

Katie Striebinger: And we did want to reiterate for the orientation sessions we did want you to go to the self-paced module first before the orientation sessions so that you have an idea of the training we already have put together for you and we can base it off that knowledge. So the third slide shows you in I hope an obvious way the difference itself between going forward July 1 what your experience is going to be like if you're enrolled in a ticket portal and if you're not and if you have to use a manual process. I'm just going to walk you through them. The first function check assignability.

 In the portal there is a screen where you can enter the SNN and when you hit the button it tells you if it's assignable. If you are not enrolled in the portal you will have the beneficiary
contact the help line or you are going to for a limited time be able to fax or email the SSN to OSM. I will stress limited time because you do understand you're getting information right now about enrolling and what you need to do and that process does take some time so we're trying not to cut you off without a process so that you can get into the portal. But the turn- around time for getting an assignability for SSN is seven days. So right there you're looking at a big time difference if you're trying to assign a ticket. The second item single ticket assignment. This is the screen in the portal. You enter the SSN, their full name and the date you wish to assign it.
Once you click the submit button if that ticket is assignable and meets all the criteria that ticket is assigned to you and you will know that immediately.
The current portal the ticket assignment has to come to SSA before it's even applied. The second you hit that button that is an actual ticket assignment.
The manual process you're going to have to fax an IWP or IPE and the turnaround time for that is seven days from receipt. The third item batch ticket assignment in the portal you can upload a file. Most files will take less than a minute for you to get the response and find out if your tickets were assigned.
And once again those are applied immediately in the system. If you upload ticket assignments and they process you'll be able to see those tickets are currently assigned to you.
There is no lag time. There is no delay. The manual process for a limited time we're going to allow you to upload -- continue the current process of uploading them to move it. The turnaround time is seven days from receipt. Fourth item creating a payment request. In the portal you will be able to enter the ssn, the claim month and the payment type and with clicking a button you will have created a work case in our system when you hit the submit button. And you will be able to see in the portal that you did create a work case in our system. You will know that minute that it got received by a person that it's in our system and we know about it and we have the same information you do about that payment. And you will know if you enter something correctly or end the status.
The manual process you will have to fax or email a payment request with the completed legible payment request form with the evidence. That form you currently use you must use a payment request form. I do want to stress on the portal we are not requiring you to fill out a form. All you're entering is the ssn, the claim month and payment type. You do not have to fill out a form certifying anything or answering any questions. The manual process you need to continue to use that form. The work case for the manual process is created because it's created by a person. It's downloaded to one system, uploaded to another and prioritized based on the receipt date. The turnaround time for this is three days from the receipt. The next item timely progress reviews. For the portal you will be able to select the beneficiary with a pending TPR and provide assistance. That will be in our system instantly. You will be able to see you helped a beneficiary pass or fail. The beneficiary requests assistance you will have to fax or email the original to OSM and the turnaround time is ten days.
The final item, report. It's in real-time in the portal. You can find out about your current ticket assignments, check on payments, your pending TPRs, everything is in real-time and will be instantly. You will see on the page the time it was refreshed. You know if you can click on one page of let's say your pending payments and come back an hour later and click on it again if something is paid you will not right then and there. It is updated in real-time. The manual process we will not be providing you reports. You will have to keep your own records. And with that I'm giving it back to Michelle.

Michelle Laisure: Thank you Katie. I'm just checking do we have any questions for Katie on that overview? Not at this time?
Thank you. Thank you for that overview and we will have this information for all of our callers on our website following the call today. So thank you for that overview. And I would like to now turn it over for an update on our marketing summit, Rob.

Rob Pfaff: Yes, hi, good afternoon to everyone. I just wanted to give everyone a quick update on the marketing summit. Again this summit will occur June 24th in Dallas, Texas. It will coincide with the Dallas regional area directors and DDS directors meeting which is scheduled simultaneously. The reason we selected Dallas is we were fortunate enough to obtain meeting space that the Dallas region is having. The reason for the marketing summit as a reminder David Weaver indicated in his message to the ENs when he discontinued the release of the marketing cd2 employment networks that we would hold at least one or more marketing summits. The first summit again is June 24th. Subsequent marketing summits we're still working to ascertain when and where they will occur. We do have some things in the works.

 But we also have some budgetary considerations to take into consideration for FY 2016. So the idea of the summit is to gather employment networks, those region ally as well as whoever's able to participate nationally to get ideas and best practices in regards to how we can work together to enhance marketing efforts on behalf of the employment networks. We plan to have all of the stakeholders in the area there to participate and also to present. We will have representatives from our marketing contract there as well as MAXIMUS team as well. We will also have the local AWICs in the Dallas area present and as well as the WIPA and PABSS representatives. So we're looking forward to this. Please what I would like to do is just remind you that you were sent an email from GovDelivery with registration details for this event on May 16th. The same information is available on the Your Ticket to Work website. So if you have questions or would like to get some more information in regards to the marketing summit I would refer you to your ticket to work website. We are still working on the agenda for this event, finalizing that currently. And as soon as we get that finished we will send another GovDelivery email message with the finalized agenda. We encourage your participation. We still have space available. We would appreciate your input. If this is an issue that's of particular concern to you and we are well aware that it is primary concern for many of you we seek and ask that you try to participate.
Unfortunately we are not able to offer video conferencing and this is a technology issue really. So, you know, this will be a live event. We try to encourage you to participate if possible and seek more information on your ticket to work website and that's all I had so I will turn it back over to Michelle.

Michelle Laisure: Thank you Rob. I do have a question that we've received from ENs. Is registration required and or can you just walk in if you live in the Dallas Fort Worth area to the session in May -- I'm sorry in June?

Rob Pfaff: Yes registration is required which is why I referenced the your ticket to work website.
The registration details are on that website. It is important to register because we need to
keep a head count of who is planning to participate. We're also going to provide materials for the summit to those individuals who are p participating. So yes definitely if you're planning to participate please register and reference the your ticket to work website which contains the registration details.

Michelle Laisure: Great thank you for that additional information rob. Two announcements. The All EN Payment Call on June 30th will definitely -- we'll have more information on the ePay process. I know we received a couple questions on the chat line and we're not prepared to go into detail today on a few of your questions concerning ePay.
But please dial in for the June 30th All EN Payment Call and we will address those questions at that time. Also just for you to make note on your calendar the July EN call is moved to July 9, the following week due to the fourth of July. So plan accordingly and we would love to have your participation always for the July call. So now at this time it's my pleasure to present series three of effective practices webinar series. For the benefit of our new callers and ENs on the call we just would like to share with you that the purpose of the effective practice webinar is to provide a platform for peer learning on selected practices that we have identified that are adaptable at your facility from various state agencies throughout the nation. So for the next six months you will hear from these service providers on tested practices, arrangements from VRs to ENs and business models that have resulted in beneficiaries obtaining successful employment leading to self-sufficiency. At this time I would like to hand it off to Melissa working with New Mexico EN. Melissa.

Melissa Stipa: Thank you so much Michelle.
I would like to introduce Adelante. They are located in New Mexico. They are a nonprofit agency that provides individualized support services that include employment, vocational and life skill training, residential services and volunteer opportunities for over 1,000 New Mexico physical and developmental disabilities as well as disabled veterans and elderly. Ken Williams has been the ticket to work program manager for the Adelante development center and he's instrumental in developing the network and becoming a diverse program utilizing partnership plus, EN partnering, virtual job development as well as providing contract job development for the vocational rehabilitation agency. Ken is here today to share some things utilized while developing Adelante's ticket program. Thank you ken for joining us. We look forward to your presentation.

Ken Williams: Thank you very much. Good afternoon to everyone today.
Thank you for having us today and for the introduction Melissa. Today we're going to just cover some ideas on integrating ticket into your current business models and partnering with others. So if we could move to slide three, Melissa. Objectives for today's presentation is to provide some ideas on how to integrate ticket to work into your current business mods he will. Also some ideas on how to market
services to individuals with disabilities and some ideas on how to partner with community agencies. Next slide, please.
So integrating ticket to work.
As Melissa mentioned I've been overseeing Adelante's ticket to work program for about five years since 2010. I would like to share with you some of the approaches that Adelante used when developing their ticket program and I promise not to put you to sleep because I know I'm dating this back to about 2008 but I will move through it rather quickly. So Adelante initially utilized what's considered like an in reach or internal approach through established contracts with Source America.
Adelante runs a federal training facility along with established enterprises in which they can employ individuals with disabilities. Adelante borrow time initially from staff to slowly establish processes for their ticket program and establish a revenue stream.

 Next slide, please. The transitioning to dedicated staff it wasn't long before Adelante recognized the need to add dedicated staff. Borrowing time from staff is a great way to start. However success depends on transitioning to dedicated staff. A dedicated staff person was then hired in 2009 and from 2009 until about mid 2010 this individual focused on the ticket program administrative aspects such as client data tracking, screening, recruitment, retention and billing processes.
Adelante continued to utilize an in reach approach during this time and slowly established an outreach or external process for recruitment and placement of individuals in community based employment. Next slide, please.
Along the way mentoring was really important so Adelante sought out assistance in southern California named a ticket to success. Through this mentoring Adelante gained a better understanding of the billing process and those tracking processes. Another organization that Adelante sought mentoring from was NENA.
It's a nonprofit organization that works with employment networks across the country, provides education to ENs on program, policy and regulations and provides access to the latest information and resources to help ENs become more successful. Next slide, please. So suspension of the program.
In mid-2010 the Ticket to Work program administer being myself was hired. It was to expand the program internally through community based employment and also to explore partnerships with community agencies. I looked at it from this perspective. For Adelante no external recruitment replacement of individuals would result in limited numbers of individuals.
They were able to employ through their own agency and therefore limiting the growth of the program. Next slide, please.
So additional training at this point Adelante sought out again additional training from the same successful ENs in southern California ticket to success.
Although this job the training was focused on the developing of recruitment and screening. And from the expansion of external recruitment along with that training allowed for the hiring of a second full-time staff person in 2012 and that individual is -- was then and is still used today used only for the sole purposes of job development. Next slide, please. So some key components to success. And this is what Adelante found that worked for them or helped them to succeed was a good understanding of the recruitment, screening, individual work plan development and Adelante has a smart acronym. Specific measurable achievable realistic and timely.
The job development process itself providing appropriate job leads, assisting with applications, developing job specific resumes, cover letters, thank you letters, mock interviews, et cetera. The retention, the case management and the career advancement aspects of the program, evidence of earnings in the billing process and as we all are familiar with the administrative components that are associated with the program. Next slide.
Now that Adelante had full dedicated staff they continued to explore ways to increase the external recruiting. One of the ways they did that is they attended a job development training provided by yet another successful EN in southern California human solutions.
This training was focused on documentation, the development of those documents, resumes, cover letters, m keeping them organized and then how the techniques could then be applied to a virtual job developing environment. Next slide. So ways to look at how to recruit ticket holders. External partnerships, community agencies serving beneficiaries. One of those for Adelante was their local American job center. The benefits from this relationship, it creates revenue streams for both agencies, creates an additional pipeline for recruitment for additional resources for both agencies, provides specific services for individuals with disabilities, dedicated staff for the purpose of the ticket program. I wanted to share with you just a quick example of the success that came from partnering with others such as American job center along with division of vocational rehabilitation in this case.
There was an SSDI recipient that was seeking assistance at the American jobs center through their WIA program and paying for a massage therapy certification.
WIA realized they could only pay for a portion of that certification. So knowing this individual was an SSDI recipient they were referred to Adelante for ticket to work. Ticket to work was quick to realize that opening a case with VR, voc rehab would likely help pay the remaining portion of the certification which VR did and we still thank VR to this day.
Once that certification was secured and the case was closed with VR Adelante stepped in as the EN, assigned the ticket and assisted this individual with starting their own business making use of the newly required credential. So creating partners with community agencies can have great advantages to the beneficiaries and to the agencies as well. Next slide, please. So another way that Adelante looked to recruit ticket holders was through programs that Adelante already had in place. One of those being their supportive employment program. Screening to identify those who fit the ticket program with potential to result in a partnership plus handoff. We utilize Ticket to place individuals in employment 90 days closure, we development IWP and submit for ticket assignment under partnership plus. Supplements revenue while creating potential for long term revenue under partnership plus. Supported employment program with now bring in more referrals and most importantly it provides continued -- continuation of services for the beneficiary.

 Next slide, please. So community work incentives coordinator. I'm sure most on the call are familiar with this.
Adelante recognized the value of education and informed choice for their ticket holders. The ticket to work program administrator at that time was me was sent to get training through Virginia Commonwealth University. This provides the ability to educate ticket holders on the advantages of going to work and the availability of special work incentives to support their efforts during this transition.

 Very, very important. Next slide, please. Another valuable community partner was partnership plus. Adelante pursued collaboration with the New Mexico state vocational rehabilitation agency in the development of a partnership plus agreement. What this affords is handoffs and potential to phase two and outcome payments. I would like to make a special note Adelante's partnership plus agreement came about in part due to the screening. Remember I talked about before that we screen individuals in through our supportive employment? That looked like potential for partnership plus. That afforded us the opportunity to create working examples for VR, we facilitated the whole thing but it showed them and reinforced the partnership plus. That was one of the advantages that we took advantage of with screening those individuals through our supportive employment. Next slide, please. So successes.
Today Adelante and partnering American job center are realizing shared revenue in both ticket programs continue to grow. Expansion of service areas in July of 2013 to cover six additional states. We cover now Arizona, Texas, Colorado, Utah, Nevada and California where Adelante now provides virtual job development services in each of these states. The processes that Adelante uses and was trained on was developed and we received that training from human solutions out of California. And Adelante has been afforded a number of partnership plus handoffs through their agreement with their local VR agency. I just wanted to share a success. That success is going to look differently for each agency.
Adelante viewed their ticket to success as maintaining roughly 150 to 170 tickets and having approximately 30 to 40 beneficiaries in job development at any given time. So tickets can be about integrated into existing services to expand those or a stand-alone business approach. Next slide, please.
So in short approaches to consider. Borrowing time initially, slowly transitioning to dedicated staff, internal and external recruitment and placement approaches, diversification through community partners. Next slide, please. So another additional way in which to market to consumers and make services available or known of is to create your own ticket to work website. Adelante created this website a number of years ago.
Maybe three or four years ago.
It's been revised a number of times. You can see it shows the areas that we serve, upcoming event that we post local job events that are taking place.
You can read about success stories. You can visit and read about our experienced team.
Frequently asked questions, et cetera. It's a great marketing tool and it gives a person the ability to digest the information at their own pace which is really beneficial. And I believe that kind of wraps it up for me today. I would like to thank everyone for having us here today and allowing us to share how Adelante developed their ticket to work program and I will hand it back to you Melissa.

Melissa Stipa: Thank you so much Ken for submitting your effective practice and presenting today.
It's always so good to hear how successful ENs integrate ticket into their program and, you know, each EN is very different and can integrate differently.
But I know also that in the past you have offered up your information here and we have that up on the screen now. If anybody on the call would like to reach out to ken he's open to that and ken is just an awesome resource. I've used him in the past for my other employment networks and just a great resource for anybody who would like to reach out to him. So thank you again Ken.

Ken Williams: You're very welcome and thank you for having us again. We greatly appreciate it.

Melissa Stipa: Thank you. And this is Melissa Stipa with the Ticket to Work program and I'll pass it over to Michelle Laisure now.

Michelle Laisure: Thank you ken and thank you Melissa. I'm going to have the operator open it up for questions for our speaker or any questions to any of the speakers. And at this point we do not have any questions coming through the chat line for you ken. So operator, Stephanie would you open up our lines, please?

Mark Green: Michelle I have a question. Thank you for a great presentation. The successful partnership plus programs I'm wondering if you can give us a couple numbers -- the number of beneficiary that VRs referred to over the years. What kind of flow there is and would you say from a paying perspective these are better candidates? You get a higher sense from them? How does it work out for you?

Ken Williams: It's really just supplemental at this point mark. It took us about four years to get the partnership plus agreement in place and we've learned a lot on how to approach VR agencies in which to close the gap and time to establish those relationships and to tell you the truth I mean we've got maybe a half a dozen or so examples of partnership plus. Some of those we've actually created and facilitated those and created the handoff and some we worked with the ticket coordinator for VR during a statewide training to try to ride that coat tail to educate the VR counselors of the advantages of, you know, providing that additional information for continuation of services. It's work in presenting. You know one of the most difficult barriers is that each individual counselor can pretty much, you know, dictate how they c conduct their processes so it takes a lot of time and effort. Now we send out a monthly letter through email to the counselors and do follow ups with them to keep building that rapport and it really just depends on the client that is being filtered through VR. We see it go in cycles. Not always do we find those that are, you know, appropriate for partnership plus because you've got to look at the eclecticness of the audience that VR serves.
It's more typically for the severe disabled individuals opposed to ticket. So we didn't think the numbers were going to be extremely high but again you have to look at, you know, all perspectives, you know, conducting the business and that's what ticket really is and every bit you explore is going to lead to -- it's going to lead to some type of success over the long term.

Mark Green: Okay. I have a follow up. Four years is a long time.
Without giving us the whole thing which I'm sure it was an interesting years to get this going, did you deal with -- well what level of VR were you dealing and did Social Security or MAXIMUS provide support in developing that relationship?

Ken Williams: Social Security and MAXIMUS; they weren't that involved. We were maybe two individuals down from the state head department when we started doing our negotiating with VR. The biggest thing to tell you the truth mark to get by is policy and procedures for VR. We had to become very clever at putting the language in that would actually allow VR to make a referral and not make it look like a direct referral. So you have to be careful with the language because their policies do not, you know, permit them to make a direct referral but we were able to put the language together in such a way even having the ticket holder referring them to VR and having them come back with that written into their plan. So it really came down to educating ourselves and I think that's where the longevity of the problem came or the length of the problem came from is getting it in place in the first place is not having a good understanding of policies and procedures. We didn't know how to position ourselves.
Knowing that and somebody approaching it now I think they would have a much easier time approaching VR knowing how the policies are and helping them write that language in order to facilitate that.

Mark Green: Okay. That's very interesting. I don't want to take everybody's time. I think I might get back in touch with you to discuss this further.

Caralee: Thank you for a terrific presentation today everyone and ken I do have another partnership plus question. In our case, you know, we're a center for independent living and we are a very strong collaborator and vr in fact is our funder. So our collaborative relationship is unique and very important. And so this, you know, is making it challenging understanding, you know, what we can do without stepping on vr's toes. For an example if we have an individual come to us it's not unusual to hear I don't want to work with vr. I've worked with them in the past. I don't want to work with them. How do you sort of know -- I know if they need certain things from vr I need to go to vr first but how do you sort of move those lines in the partnership so you're referring to them, people who they will want to serve first.

Ken Williams: Yeah we've got kind of an interesting environment. We have what's called a ticket partners committee and that wasn't formed by me. It was prior to me coming to Adelante and on the committee they have a representative for disability rights, social security, ENs, voc rehab, all the players that are attached, even commission for the blind is there. All the players are there so we have a very collaborative environment and so we kind of had an advantage in being able to do that even though everybody seemed to be on their own side of the fence they had the ability to come to a table and that's how we were able to start to learn about their policy procedures, what type of clients is most appropriate to send to them and what clients are appropriate to send to us. One thing we wanted to avoid and we did in our language and in our partnership plus agreement. We didn't want to be a doorstep and didn't want them to be a doorstep for us. And so the language is spelled out so intent of the program has to be there for them to make the referral and we need to make sure if we refer somebody to them that they're going to be able to achieve what it is that we're sending them to do. And by having that, you know, creating the transparency I think was the biggest advantage.
And I know that sounds like, you know, well how do I go about doing that but it can come from, you know, just -- you know become a VR vendor which is sounds like you are, create some of those. Screen those individuals that are appropriate for ticket. Don't tell VR what you're doing but after you've succeeded then approach them for the ticket assignment and therefore you're already creating and facilitating the actual environment of partnership plus without them even knowing and it's easier for them to educate them by example.

Caralee: Okay. I appreciate that and just a quick comment, a quick other question. Do you find that at the counselor level where we're actually working with people to try to make these -- get these referrals going, do the counselors have adequate information? That's one of the challenges I'm seeing is maybe an issue is that the counselors don't necessarily know how to connect with us on a partnership level for Ticket beneficiaries.

Ken Williams: You're absolutely correct and that's why it's, you know, important to seek out that ticket coordinator.

Caralee: Yeah.

Ken Williams: If you can build a relationship with that individual then you're going to have some success and again you can force those relationships with those counselors even though they don't need to know you're doing it under partnership plus. But it is a great advantage of having that ticket coordinator and here in this state we were surprised that once we established that relationship with the ticket coordinator they actually provided statewide training after we got our partnership plus agreement in place to all their VR counselors. So really that was kind of a spring board for us to just be able to send out an ongoing letter, we pick up the phone and call them personally. We still bring in clients through our supportive employment and show them those successes. So I don't want to paint a picture as though it is an easy process because it's not by any stretch of the imagination but it is doable to some degree and I truly believe the more you work out the better it's going to get.

Caralee: Thank you.

Michelle Laisure: Thank you Ken. Operator do we have another question?

Operator: There are no further phone questions at this time.

Michelle Laisure: Alright well thank you again ken for presenting our first in our series integrated ticket into the current business model and please give us an intro to our next effective practice partnership model.

Leslie Barrett: Of course Michelle good afternoon everyone this is Leslie and I'm very, very excited to share with you next month's line up for effective practices in Iowa where we will be talking with Iowa department for the blind, Iowa VR and Iowa Workforce development on their partnership plus model in the state of Iowa. It's very exciting and innovative and we couldn't be happy to present it to you live next month. Thank you Michelle.

Michelle Laisure: Thank you Leslie and again that call is scheduled for the following week on Thursday July 9. And that concludes our call today unless there are any other comments from SSA.

Operator: Ladies and gentlemen that concludes the conference call for today. We thank you for your participation and ask you please disconnect your line.

[CALL ENDED]