**All EN Call**

**Effective Practices**

**3 – 4 p.m. EST**

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Operator: Ladies and gentlemen thank you for standing by and welcome to the All Employment network conference call. Participants are in a "listen-only" mode. Afterwards we will conduct a question and answer session. At that time if you have a question press star followed by the number one on your telephone. If you need to reach an operator press star zero. This is recorded Thursday October 1, 2015. I will now like to turn the conference over to Michelle Laisure. Please go ahead.

Michelle Laisure: Thank you operator and welcome everyone to our October call. We have a full agenda today and a presentation later on in our call. As you can see and hopefully you will be able to see our agenda has slightly changed in that we will be hearing first from our commissioner rob with the ticket program manager transition update. Then Rob will move right into marketing summit recap. Followed by e-pay, ticket portal. We're going to do a brief recap on lessons learned, virtual job fair update from bass and a presentation from Pennsylvania. Very well orchestrated with several key speakers on that. We're really excited to hear from them under our effective practice webinar series. So without further ado I would like to turn it over to Rob. Thank you.

Rob Pfaff: Thank you Michelle and good afternoon everybody. I have a couple of announcements and introductory comments to share with you. First of all as many of you are aware we were in the process of re-competing our contracts for the ticket program manager. That process has concluded and after conducting a competitive solicitation process we recently awarded within the last several days a new five year contract to MAXIMUS to continue to serve as the Ticket Program Manager for the Ticket to Work Program. As you're aware we've had two program managers during the last five years. Our beneficiary access and support services what we refer to as the bass contract and that handled the marketing side of our program and the other contract was known as the operation support manager which handled service provider side. And the operational aspects. Under the new contract these two aspects of the program will both be handled by single ticket program manager and by consolidating the two operational sides of the program we expect to achieve improved coordination of beneficiary and EN program operations and to realize certain operational and cost sufficiencies. ENs, VRs and beneficiaries should not experience any adverse impacts as we transition to TPM operations over the next several months while maximus assumes all program manager functions under the TPM. Bass will remain on board to make sure the transition of their services goes smoothly. And so with that in mind I wanted to transition briefly just to summarize our activities in reference to our EN site visits that we've been busy conducting during the month of September. Actually to be more accurate on that I believe we started those visits in July and they've concluded this month. As you're aware the federal government passed a continuing resolution late yesterday so we're funded under the continuing resolution into almost mid-December and as a result at that funding level we won't be able to conduct any sort of site visits during that process or during that phase.

 Our staff conducted multiple visits and some of you on the phone more likely than not received visits by our team. We want to thank all the EN sites that we visited for taking the time out of their routine to help us walk through some of the important aspects of the important work that's being done every day. It's been a very productive process. We've gained a lot out of this to say the very least. We've learned a lot. We've tried to provide assistance where needed as well and it was -- it was a good give and take for both sides. And so we look forward and hope to have more of those visits once we get a funding mechanism in place for fiscal year 2016. We'll keep you updated on that as information filters down to us. The other thing that I wanted to mention to everybody is give you an update in regards to the second marketing summit that we held in New Orleans, Louisiana. This occurred during the NENA conference in New Orleans and that was in august.
We were able to work with NENA to obtain some time on the agenda to hold the conference during or the summit I should say the last day of the conference and that consisted of two aspects of that marketing summit. The first aspect was we were to take advantage of the cooperation and support from the Dallas region who sent their area work incentive coordinators and that was the area work or AWICs for the region were able to attend and they made a very nice presentation talking about the important services that they provide to ENs and beneficiaries and the way they serve as a conduit to the field office representatives for all issues, ticket to work related. The emphasis is building the relationships and the partnerships with the AWICs and the Social Security personnel as well as the other stakeholders in the ticket to work program to beneficiaries to the ENs and make sure they're getting the right information they need to participate in the ticket to work program. The second part of that presentation consisted of a presentation by three ENs.
We had an EN panel, marketing panel and the focus on that presentation was those ENs that did not use our marketing cd and how they were able to direct business to their employment networks and again the focus there was also discussing the methods used to build relationships with employer, with stakeholders group, with the beneficiaries themselves to funnel the traffic into the employment network and successfully place them in the work. So it was a very productive session. We've been working with a limited budget here so we've been trying to take advantage of opportunities to get ENs together in one location where possible at little cost and as conveniently as possible and with less disruption as possible but the overall feedback from these efforts has been very good and I continue to ask that if you feel these sessions are beneficial and you would like for us to continue holding these summits again understanding our current fiscal constraints but moving forward later in 2016 please let us know and we'll certainly make the case with our executive management to try to coordinate marketing activities and get with you in person to discuss marketing strategies. With that in mind I made an announcement at the summit as well. I want to turn it over to mark here a little bit but I ask that mark give us a little bit of an update as far as the marketing proof of concept that we are developing right now. So I’ll kick it over to Mark.

Mark Green: Okay. There's a couple of things. For those of you who were not able to hear my presentation in New Orleans at the NENA conference Desiree and Katie are asking what are you talking about. A quick UCP date first because that's ongoing.
It's continuing at pace. The providers that are participating in [indiscernable] sent out well over 5,000dpqi with processing time of just over three days which is remarkable considering glitches and summer vacations and things like that. We've moved strongly into using the secure messaging. We're looking at the other venues in that regard and as we discussed previously going to consider the possibility of further [indiscernable] instead of dedicating staff and other duties here. That will take some time. Maybe six to nine months as we get approval and look at our options during that time. We will continue. We're not going to cut off something that's working until we have a replacement ready. I will talk about the wage reporting proof of concept also for which we don't have final approval but we're optimistic about that. I don't know if I’ve addressed that in previous calls.
Essentially it's designed to address one of the problems we've had with the ticket program since the very beginning which is ENs submitting proof of earnings and maximus puts information into the share process and because of work pressure the field office not getting to that work. It's not a high priority generated by that. The idea behind the proof of concept is to allow maximus to enter into the e-work system.
It generates work reports and
receipts. Those are high priority for this field. They will work those reports a lot quicker. We don't have final management approval for that.
We're optimistic about it.
Again that will take time but those of you that have been through this process see this has tremendous proceed tension for making payments to ENs quicker and really more importantly to reduce over payments. This addresses the issue [indiscernable] the last ten months now first changes to the beneficiary cd then the termination of beneficiary cd. Swap earning in the same environment there are the same concerns about spending large amounts of PIDI. We have a way of measuring whether that information is at rest on your pc so we are thinking of another -- yet another proof of concept which would -- this is really high level discussion -- allow a small amount of -- number of ENs to receive relatively small amount of information, really low level risk and we would test it over months using data that we're going to ask those ENs we invite to participate in proof of concepts to send to us to see if it makes a difference and if it's worth while pursuing. More information on that last one particularly to come soon.

Michelle Laisure: So thank you Mark. And I want to make a correction. I stand corrected. The NENA conference was in August but I’ve traveled so much in September it's all starting to blend in together. I’m sorry.
Anyway the NENA conference was in September as was the marketing summit held there at the same time. At one other point I want to make before I kick it back to Michelle and relative to the transition under the new ticket program manager contract I want to thank all of the folks that helped us put this into place and that's the folks on our team. I want to thank the folks for all the work that they've done to help us during the course of the contract, the previous contract that was in place. They're a wonderful team to work with and I want to thank them for all their efforts relative to that transition and we look forward to working with the great folks at maximus moving forward.

Mark Green: I think you also saw we have plans [indiscernable] virtual job fair that we've been talking about for a number of months. I want to mention Laura who is working at home [indiscernable] really big step forward for the agency and the program.

Michelle Laisure: Yes and thanks Mark. And that's correct. I want to thank everybody. That was a very complex and difficult governmental process to put that thing into place so a lot of folks worked hard there. I also mentioned while I was in -- at the NENA conference we were going to add new staff. We're in the process of doing that and they happen to be sitting in front of me right now. I want to ask them to say hello and give them your name. I’m sorry I’m putting you on the spot but I figure why not?

Chandra: Hello I’m Chandra.

Shane: Hi. Shane.

Rob Pfaff: We are glad to have them with us. We will -- we have plenty of work to go around. We look forward to having you work with us and it's great to be able to add some good folks to the team.
So thank you and welcome aboard.
With that I’m going to kick it back to Michelle. Thank you very much.

Michelle Laisure: Thank you Rob and thank you for those wonderful complements and we definitely look forward to working with you and your staff over the next five years.
The next item on the agenda is the update on e-pay and I believe Desiree and Debbra were going to make some comments on that.

Desiree Fitzgerald: Thanks Michelle. Hello everyone. I’m really happy to bring you the first e-pay report. We began processing e-pay as you know on august 10th and we completed it on September 22. If there's anyone who doesn't know what e-pay is that's the process where SSA initiates payments to employment networks and State VR agencies once earnings show up in our records and also when the other
qualifications are met. So we began that process on august 10th and happy to let you know that we made 17028 payments under the first e-pay file and that was the dollar amount was 9.24 million. We did this on behalf of 3956 individuals that you helped successfully pursue their work goals and those payments were made to 409 ENs.
So I hope those numbers speak for themselves. We have a lot more ENs that are being paid under the new e-pay. Under previous e-pays we were only paying certain state agencies and ENs that applied and were accepted for e-pay in the past.
But the e-pay is available to everyone, all agencies working under the ticket payment systems and it's something that you don't have to request. So we're really glad that we're in a position to do this. So any payments that you receive since august 10th that you didn't request would have been the result of e-pay. And i would like to publicly thank Debbra Tennessee and the managers and staff under the payment process at maximus for all their hard work on this. They made this a pretty smooth operation from the payment perspective. And so we worked on that. There was a six week time frame basically looking at those dates and we did have a little bit of a delay with central office. So they spent approximately five weeks and they kept all of the payments coming in through the portal and manual processes flowing as well. So i really like to give kudos to them for that great work. We recently ran a new e-pay file. This is the second e-pay file. The first was august 10 and here we are getting to the second e-pay file at this point. Folks are analyzing that file and we hope to have it to them by the end of the week. I’m looking at Katie.
But i know she's analyzing it and getting it ready to turn it over to Debbra. So we're probably even though this is now October this is in essence a September file and we would hope to run another file before October is over. And the significance of that is that we are relying on quarterly data and we did get a quarterly file that came in showing the last quarter. So mid-October that will be on our record and we'll be able to run a file mid to late October that will yield some additional results. So the file that we're running now may be small then we expect the next file would be larger because we have more fresh data on the system. But we will continue to do this and continue to look and hear from you concerning whether you're getting payments that you think you should get or not. In terms of -- if you aren't getting payments we will always say please continue to take advantage of the payment processes that are in place. If you have evidentiary information and you're in the portal that's the best way to conduct business today. If you have evidentiary information and you're not in the portal you still have information about how to request using paper form and fax, et cetera. So continue to request payments because you may get them sooner if you rely on evidence as opposed to not. So I’m seeing in the chat room Linda your question on how often will e-pay run. E-pay it looks now like we will be between a four and six week schedule. So i think the processing of it we will still honor current time frames for payment processes when things come to the portal and all that but the e-pay file itself will probably be a four to six week process. We can't guarantee a four week process.
E-pay -- when we were doing this through the system where maximus was doing it we were only able to pass along a certain amount of information. But the current e-pay look back essentially started this ticket payment system in 2008 when we reregulated. So it gives us data going back and that's why i think we found so many payments in that first file because it did look back for all those quarters, everything that we had since 2008. I would like to say one other thing because there was some of you -- a subset of you who were receiving the universal auto pay and i want to just reiterate for the folks who were receiving payments that way you were getting payments in advance of the earnings showing up in our records. So that's the reason you wouldn't receive payments right away under e-pay on behalf of those particular individuals because you've already gotten payments in advance on those individuals.
But the good thing about this e-pay is it also takes into consideration milestone payments. So there are other individuals that may not have left but you will get payments on and hopefully the numbers will balance out depending on what your expectation was and how you were planning on your income. So i did want to put a reminder out there about that. But for many of you this is an entirely new process. But if you need to communicate with us concerning this transition if you're in within system and now you're in the other and if there's anything that's not clear just let us know. Michelle I’m done now.

Michelle Laisure: Thank you Desiree for the update. Do you want to move right into you and Katie enter the ticket portal?

Desiree Fitzgerald: Just Katie.

Katie Streibinger: Hust me. Hi everyone this is Katie. I just want to give you a couple updates on the ticket portal. The first I want to review training. There is a new ticket portal user guide out in the six year training site and that's dated September 12. So if you do not have the September 12 version please go out and download that. You should have gotten a gov delivery message this week. We have updated the module on that site to include all the screens and the new functionality that has been put in place pretty much since that module went up in April so that is also available in there for you to walk through the self-paced training. We encourage you to use both of those resources on that secure site and we will be scheduling orientation for new users coming up soon this month so we will be announcing that soon once we get the dates locked down. Those are three resources we have for you for training at this time. As for access we did add a little bit of new information in the portal for you. If you log in recently you'll notice when you have -- when you log in the affirmation screen does tell you the last time your security awareness was completed and the last time your employment is verified. Both of these factors are important for allowing you to get into the portal. If your security awareness training was more than a year ago, a day after a year ago you cannot get back in and you will not get a message saying you can't get back you just will not be able to get back in. So if you see that message and date it should be coming up about two weeks before that security awareness training expires. If you get that message you do need to contact EN service and give them the new security training form and we'll get you updated so you continue to be in the portal. Same with the employment. The employment verification has to happen every six months. If you see that date is coming up please do contact -- once again if you get that alert popping up make sure you contact EN service. We're trying to do things on our part but if you get that alert that's a ticking clock letting you know you need to take care of those items because you will not be able to get in the portal if those lapse. We have an issue it's a little sporadic.
Sometimes when you do a ticket assignment you may get an error.
We are looking into it. We are investigating the issue. We do not have a fix for that yet but we will fix it within the November 7 release. That's on a Saturday. So please bear with us as we try to figure out what's going on with that.
Please if you're trying to assign a ticket hold on to that and you can try it again once we get the fix in. And I want to continue to say there's a moratorium on TPR. We are not doing any new selections at this time. The ticket portal does have the most updated TPR status for all of your beneficiaries so what you are looking at is current but we will give you an update before we do selections and training how it will work with the new portal. So to let you know it's upcoming but there's currently a moratorium and you should not see that at this time in the portal. And I’ll give it back to Michelle.

Michelle Laisure: Thank you Katie. We have a question that we know you can respond to. An individual has been trying to fax for some time. Can you give us a synopsis of the question?

Keitra Davis: Okay. Katie it looks like the fax number has been busy and at that point I guess we can check that or we can have them send an email to you or us at the systems helpdesk. I don't think it was the first we hear of it but under normal circumstances i believe correct me if I’m wrong if there's issues of that nature they can send an email to the ticket to work TTW system at SSA or to us here at EN systems helpdesk and we will forward that over to SSA. Is that correct?

Katie Streibinger: Pease have them contact the EN systems helpdesk if there's any issue with the fax. Usually the first thing i try to do is send a fax myself because it could be the local fax machine.
A lot of people use voice over IP which can have some blips.
But do forward your concerns. I have not heard about any problems. The fax server we are using -- the faxes do not actually go to the fax machine.
We're using the fax line that bar code when you use it it makes the fax disappear and go into our system and not actually print out on a fax machine. But if you did not use that cover sheet your fax will spit out for the Denver field office and I’m pretty sure theirs is up and running. But do let us know if you encounter any issues to that EN systems box and we will look into it.

Michelle Laisure: Thank you Katie for that and given the time on the clock we're going to go ahead and move on to our effective practice presentation. We have several presenters on the call that have agreed to present on their coordination and their collaboration around partnership plus. So our next call we will definitely give you high points on things to remember in working on the ticket portal so we'll come back to that next month.
In the meantime I’m going to turn it over to Ana our senior account specialist who will be presenting our presenters this afternoon. Thank you.

Ana Morales: Thank you Michelle. Good afternoon everyone. I’m Ana and I am a senior accounts manager with the ticket program.
Today's effective program presentation [indiscernable] strategic collaboratives ongoing relationship between the employment networks and the Pennsylvania office of vocational rehabilitation agency. We are thrilled to have seasoned speakers from the State VR agency and representatives from the three employment networks. Without further delay let's begin the presentation.
Slide two is a list of all our speakers i will introduce shortly. The objective for today's presentation are to share the current statistics from the statewide ticket to work activity, discuss the Pennsylvania agreement in the state and describe the working relationships that are happening in Pennsylvania. Some statistic particulars they are as of august 31 because obviously it's October 1 and we don't have the complete data for September.
But those are the eligibility of ticket holders in the state.
The tickets in use with the VR agency as well as assigned to employment networks. There are 19 approved employment networks in Pennsylvania and 63 percent are also VR vendors. The number of dollar [indiscernable] is 284 and eight of them have been in the fiscal year 2015. And this map is just a graph of the location and the coverage of their employment networks in the state. So now it's an honor to introduce our first two speakers. Dana began her 22 year tenure with the office of rehabilitation where she has served for ten years as a VR counselor in the New York and Pittsburgh area.
Specializing in rehabilitation and caseloads. Dana represents on the governor's panel, the transition statewide leadership team and the developmental disability council. Wendy began her career with ovr as a sessionist and facilitator of the transition grant awarded to ovr by the rehabilitation services administration. She is the VR specialist in charge of the ticket to work program and also the cost reimbursement program. Dana and Wendy. Thank you for joining us today.

Dana: Thanks Ana. This is Dana.
And I’m going to provide you a little bit of a historical perspective about Pennsylvania ovr's involvement in the ticket to work program and the development of the partnership plus agreement. We are a traditional cost reimbursement state only and then I’m proud to say that this past year ovr received $7.6 million in cost reimbursement from the social security administration for closed cases that had reached SGA. We have always been a traditional cost reimbursement state. We have never operated as an EN simply because of the number of cases that we're working with and the complexity of the tracking system that we hadn't anticipated with cost reimbursement or I should say with EN payments. So we have always operated as a cost reimbursement state. We have worked closely with the social security administration and maximus for the development of a partnership plus agreement.
Wendy's predecessor in her position patty had worked closely with Sally and Nate when partnership plus was first introduced and had worked with us and the stakeholder work group including some of the vendors on the call today to develop our actual agreement.
And so we were provided with a lot of support from our partner employment networks as well as maximus in developing the agreement itself and then once we had the agreement developed we received a lot of support from maximus and social security again in really marketing that to existing employment networks as well as other community partners and agencies that might be interested in becoming employment networks and partnering with ovr. So we -- Anne I believe you joined us here in Pennsylvania and we did a couple of advanced one in Philadelphia, I believe one in Pittsburgh and possibly one here in the central part of the state to educate employment networks as well as other community rehab providers and agencies about partnership plus. And so as a result of that we received some interest and I believe some of our centers for independent living here in Pennsylvania became employment networks as a result of that. We also did staff training related to partnership plus to make our staff aware of the benefits of handing off their ticket once their VR case was closed to an employment network, the ongoing protection from continuing disability reviews, the medical continuing disability reviews that would be available. And so we have implemented a system of notifying our customers of their opportunity to use the partnership plus model to their benefit in terms of assigning a ticket to an employment network.
We do have agreements with eight different employment networks. We would love to have more agreements in place so that our customers have more choice. But at this point this is what we have and we don't really have necessarily the resources to go out and engage more ENs in the development of specific agreements at this time simply because Wendy who is now our only social security and ticket to work specialist here in central office at one point we had two folks fulfilling those roles and now we have Wendy. So that's not to say that we won't expand it in the future. So I’m going to let Wendy tell you a little bit about what we do with regard to actual case processing with the partnership plus program.

Wendy: Thanks Dana. I will share about some of the opportunities that are voc rehab counselors have to notify the VR consumers about partnership plus. One opportunity they have to tell them a little bit more about it is at the time of application for services. Another chance they have to share about partnership plus is during the development of their IPE the individualized plan for employment. They also have a chance to discuss partnership plus throughout the whole job development process and also at the time of their case closure with voc rehab and that can be done both verbally and in writing. We have an enclosure that we send out with the case closure information.

Dana: And this is Dana again and I guess I just wanted to add that, you know, with the implementation of the work force innovation and opportunity and clearly a greater emphasis on our responsibility as the designated state unit to inform our customers at key points of their opportunities to receive benefits planning assistance.
We are exploring how we can make those services more readily available to our customers. I’m sure that -- and obviously that would then lead to I would expect a greater utilization of the partnership plus program in terms of benefits planning and maintaining benefits during a period of job stabilization. So we don't necessarily expect that we'll see a direct impact on partnership plus as a result but we expect to see a more indirect impact. Ana I don't know if you want -- I want to make sure we covered everything that you wanted us to cover.

Ana Morales: Yes you did. Thank you very much. Thank you Wendy and Dana for that. Our next speaker is Jennifer from goodwill key stone area.
She began in 1996 as an employment specialist. Along with managing and providing direct services to veterans with service connected disabilities Jennifer is also the ticket to work program manager. She has completed the community work incentive coordinator certifications and recently was the veteran employment workshop trainer for the U.S. chamber of commerce in Philadelphia. Thank you Jennifer.

Jennifer: Thank you Ana and good afternoon from goodwill. We provide employment services and supports in 22 counties. We're also a vendor of the office of rehabilitation for over 30 years. Next slide. Just to give you background information about our ticket to work program goodwill key stone gives service nova scotia 22 counts. We've been an employment network since 2003 but in 2009 a staff was dedicated to undertake the program as program manager.
Since 2003 goodwill key stone area has had 488 ticket to work, 230 tickets have been assigned over the years and currently goodwill key stone area that is 73 active assigned to the Employment Network. We have placed 154 individuals in employment and again we have been a vendor of the office of vocation and rehabilitation for over 30 years and a provider in an cooperative agreement with social security since 2001. Next slide, please. Actually then one more slide. There we go. Now to talk about the hand off. Partnership plus allows a beneficiary to receive ovr service toss meet his or her service needs and after the ovr case is closed successfully assign his or her ticket to an employment network to receive ongoing support services, job retention services and or career advancement supports. We work with both the ovr counselors and the beneficiaries themselves to assess whether or not partnership plus would be a good fit for their individual needs.
Since ovr and the en services must be provided sequentially and not concurrently it is important to maintain ongoing communication about the needs and goals of the individual beneficiary when providing service toss a beneficiary under an ovr contract. However it is just as important to maintain communication with the ticket to work and partnership plus points of contact at each district office should a beneficiary want to assign the ticket to an employment network as a partnership plus when the beneficiary was perhaps not receiving services from the en as a local ovr. Another thing we do is educate the staff and how to provide continued long term supports for beneficiaries and it's definitely key.
There's a management tool to proactively identify anyone that may be a partnership plus candidate. Furthermore we use the post employment support check list with anyone who receives support services. This is a check list that is completed on a monthly basis with the individuals to identify any potential barrier to maintaining and retaining employment and provide supports and services to overcome that barrier. Finally through our ticket to work outreach and relationship building with case managers and support coordinators we inform them about ticket to work and partnership plus so that they in turn are aware of this invaluable resource for continued employment support.
Next slide. Finally outreach.
We have always license active in the group. Before the termination of the ticket to work beneficiary cd we used that in the marketing plan to conduct targeted outreach for a subset of beneficiaries. Most recently an ad was utilized for 30 days to assess its effectiveness for the ticket to work program as well. Outreach has and continues to take place in contacting local agencies such as Pennsylvania career link, colleges, family forums and other service providers that may benefit and how these programs can provide long term employment support and services to the individuals that they work with.
Recently in accordance with them outreach has taken place for the youth in transition as well as the veteran population in our 22 Pennsylvania service area.
Thanks Ana.

Ana Morales: Thank you Jennifer. Our next speaker is Angelina Bush who has been with the services for the last eight years and her primary role is to manage benefits counseling and oversee the ticket to work program. She's a community work intensive coordinator and certified employment board professional.
Angelina.

Angelina Bush: Thanks Ana. Good afternoon everyone. So just to give you some background information about community integrated services, we call ourselves cis and we are a private nonprofit agency providing employment services in 1991. We m maintain our services and keep people employed. We provide work incentive counseling and we have certificate fight coordinators on staff to answer questions about SSA benefits. We assist individuals in Philadelphia, the surrounding counties and the entire state of Delaware. The agency has a whole provides services for 700 individuals who are working or looking for employment. Cis has been an employment network since 2009 and we've seen substantial growth in our ticket program over the past three years. Cis has also recently became a administrator employment network just this past year a few months ago. Can we move to the next slide. Cis is a VR vendor and we've been since 2014. We do contracts with VR for situational assessments and for job find and job coaching. Cis officially signed up for partnership plus in April of 2013. The decision to do so was simple for us because we are already working with VR and already have the relationship with the beneficiary. At cis we work hard to maintain the relationship with the beneficiary and the VR counselor especially at the time that VR is stepping out of the picture.
This really proves to ensure the beneficiary receives continued employment support as VR is stepping out. Our partnership plus has been really beneficial for everyone involved which is the beneficiary, VR and our agency. Can we move to the next slide? And I just want to share a success story as well. So I’m going to cowl our individual Mary which is not her actual name. Mary came in March 2013 through a VR contract for job coaching. She was concerned about her benefits and how they would be impacted due to her going back to work. She met with a work incentive counselor and made the decision to return to work in a full-time capacity.
In August 2013 she was offered a full-time position as a security officer. She successfully completed her VR contract and as she was getting close to her closure cis began the conversation with her as well as VR to talk about the ticket to work program and how we can continue services. We worked with her in the VR counselor and once the counselor closed the case we worked with Mary to complete and move forward with assigning her ticket. We started collecting our fees and we recently received a reconciliation payment for her as well-meaning she reached outcome 12 payment. Mary has now been working for two years and she continues to do a fantastic job. Thanks Ana.

Ana Morales: That's a wonderful success story. Thank you. Our next speakers are from AHEDD. John Miller who is the vice president. John oversees community employment services for over 3,000 individuals with disabilities throughout Pennsylvania. John has served as the project director for the SSA work incentive planning and assistance program as well as work incentive counseling projects for transition age youth through a foundation and trust. Since 2001 he has been certified as a community work incentive coordinator. Lori is joining john in the presentation and she's a program specialist at AHEDD In this role she provides a team of seven field offices, oversees the quality aspect of the program and service the organization. She has completed course work to become a specialist through the national institute of corrections and she's also a certified community work incentive coordinator. John and Lori.

Lori: Thank you Ana. I’ll go ahead and get started if that's okay, John. This is Lori. Thank you. A little bit about AHEDD. It's been in business, in the business of providing employment services to people with disabilities in the business community throughout Pennsylvania for 38 years. Some other dates that are of importance there like some of the other agencies on the call we are a vendor with the Pennsylvania office of voc rehab as of 1984 and actually since 2001 we have been -- we've served as an employment network in the ticket to work and also served under cooperative agreements with social security to provide work incentive planning and assistance in the western part of the state including Pittsburgh and the surrounding areas. And i think that is a picture of our central office on a day when it's not raining. So that's a good thing. If you can go to the next slide, please. In general to talk about our ticket to work services i mentioned we've been involved with the ticket to work since 2001 but as of July of 2015 we've had -- we have 401 active cases. So we're working with 401 beneficiaries but this number really has been nurtured over time as internally we've had to grow the internal message or the culture to embrace the ticket to work. It's had some challenges along the way and i guess the current challenge that we have is that the population that we serve doesn't necessarily mirror the larger offices that we cover such as Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. We see smaller numbers in those areas.

 So I’m not exactly sure why or have the answer to that except it might come back to that internal message and the buy in from our staff. But those are area we're looking to increase our business. And then I guess of importance or highlight that I want to point out of those 401 people, 43 percent were working and earning enough to allow our agency to qualify for payments so they were working and earning that significant wage but 19 percent earned enough that they either suspended or terminated their benefits then we were able to receive an outcome payment. So those are numbers that we look at very closely and are proud of that.
It's about 76 people i guess, the 19 percent. So next slide, please. As far as the impact of partnership plus and what we've been able to glean over the years as of January 2015 you can see down the first column it gives an indication of those that we're serving that were connected with Pennsylvania ovr and that were successful versus unsuccessful or involved with another state VR and no prior involvement and I think what I want to point out here is that the 29 percent that reached an outcome was the highest among the categories listed that was the pa, ovr and they had a successful relationship there.
So that's a pretty high number for the group, those 89 people.
So we're pretty proud of that as well. I think it's a positive result between, you know, a relationship between the vr and the en. Next slide, please.
Finally for service continuation we have a table there that shows, you know, services over a period of three years and again I think the bottom line with this is that it's a great opportunity for former VR customers to get ongoing support from an EN over a period of time versus, you know, not being referred to the EN afterwards.
So that says a little bit about that relationship and what we're able to do with partnership plus. And I think the next slide that might be John.

John Miller: Okay. Slide 25 Ana. It sounds like everybody on our call this afternoon is certified as community work incentive coordinators so I won't beat this to death for people who already know this information.
But if we think back to year 2001 if we were serving a customer who happened to be getting social security benefits you might think how did we explore the subtle or profound nuances of how going to work affected that person's benefits and i think for many of us starting with our own agency is we didn't do a very good job.
We mostly winged it and hoped that the person was going to be better off. So some of this is -- there was no method.
There was no service out there to help us do that exploration.
Some organizations might have felt it wasn't our job. I once talked to somebody at state government who -- about this particular matter and the person said well this isn't our problem. It's social security's problem. And i guess we might all agree that's probably not the best way to look at this.
And now nearly 15 years, 14 years later there's a credible national statewide network available to provide work incentive counseling. Some provides still don't use the service. They're still going the method of making sure their clients don't make too much money and really eu8d like to put in a plug that, you know, for all intensive purposes this service works and we really need to use this service in a proactive manner rather than waiting till there's issues, waiting until beneficiaries experience over payments. So we should be trying to do a better job of introducing work incentive counseling early in the stream. Ideally soon after the it or during the partnership plus transition. A couple cases, next slide there Anne, 26. Just Lori and I talked about this. Two people off the top of other head.
Megan was a college graduate, successful VR closure and as you can see there a few months later she got laid off and got an over payment. Megan's not a partnership plus case. We met her kind of through her mother through a series of events. But it's reflected in this case a lot of things happen after a 90 day closure. Ovr made a sizable investment in a rehabilitation and the connection that we were able to make kind of after the fact allowed ovr to recoup these funds but now this individual is working and her cash benefits have been terminated so outrageous success story.
Camron on the other hand is an exemplary partnership plus case.
He already -- there's already an existing relationship between the EN in this case AHEDD with ovr and the customer, the hand off was logical and seamless.
It doesn't always work that way but in this particular case it did. And looking at the numbers that Anne showed earlier it looks like we still have a lot of work to do in our state and possibly in yours as well. Just to do a rough count it looked like 370 of over 15,000 cases have bubbled into a partnership plus agreement. So we might ask ourselves, you know, what vr customer might be a good partnership plus candidate. I think we tend to profile and as a result we tend to screen people out. Lori was alluding to that earlier about our own agency culture. We still tend to look at t ticket to work customers as if they're unique.
So perhaps we should be looking at the message that each of us give to customers that we expect everyone to aspire to their highest level of independence including the economic self-sufficiency and in doing so maybe we can see those numbers increase. Ana back to you.

Ana Morales: Thank you very much John and Lori, well all the presenters.
I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge all of our speakers for their participation. I want to thank them for their tireless efforts in expanding the ticket to work program in the state of Pennsylvania. Together we're totally making an impact for our ticket holders and thank you again for your energy and enthusiasm. Anybody at SSA have particular questions for our presenters?

Rob Pfaff: I just want to thank you all for your time and for a great presentation. Thank you very much.

Ana Morales: Thank you Rob. And because of the time we are going to move right now to Michelle but we're going to open up for questions in a little bit. Michelle.

Michelle Laisure: I just want to let all of our callers know that our call has been extended to 4:30 so no one will be dropped off or there won't be anyone hanging up on the call. We do have one additional update that we definitely would like to share with you and that's the virtual job fair update from BASS.

Jamie: Thank you so much and I’ll try to keep this brief so we can get to questions. But we just wanted to share that we're super excited that the first virtual job fair will be taking place next month in November. The event will take place over two days. The afternoon of November 18 and the morning of November 19. This way hopefully individuals in all time zones will be able to participate and it helps to reduce the burden a little bit on our recruiters who will be participating. We're right now working on reaching out to federal contractors to recruit them to participate and as soon as we have the details on who is participating in what jobs they'll have open we'll share that with all the employment networks and VRs. And just as a reminder to be eligible to participate the job candidates have to be social security disability beneficiaries who have assigned their tickets. So hopefully that's individuals working with you all. They are our candidates for these fairs.
We'll be looking to you to help recruit the candidates to participate, sharing information about the fares then helping them also with the registration and collection of consent forms they have to sign consent to disclose their information to social security to be allowed to participate. So we'll have more information via email and also a call next week, next Thursday on November 8 or I’m sorry October 8 at 3:00 p.m. eastern time and during that call we'll share a little more information about the process for registering beneficiaries, how you can participate in the event then also leave a lot of time for questions. If you have questions before that call next week you can also email vjf@choosework.net and we will get back to you as quickly as we can.

Michelle Laisure: Thank you Jamie and I guess I will say you can go to the ticket website and view the ticket to work virtual job fair gov delivery message released on September 30. So you will have the conference call number and id number. Again that is as Jamie said we'll be hosting a teleconference on Thursday, October 8 at 3:00 p.m. and again all that information is posted on the ticket website.
And we look for all of you to participate. It's a wonderful opportunity for our beneficiaries. Now we're opening the -- operator we would like to open the lines to receive questions but while we're doing that Desiree and Katie we have several questions on our chat line regarding e-pay and we want to go back to those questions.

Robert Pfaff: Michelle we want to let some callers get questions through because we do have a record of the questions in the chat line.

Susan Webb: Hi. Desiree, I actually have several questions and I’m going to make it quick. Desiree you were talking about the e-pay what's going on with that and I just want to make sure U still understand this. The august payments that we got most of those were old QBER payments that should have been paid to us long ago but I appreciate that they were but still none of those payments were what we would have gotten under auto pay. And I understand, you know, you're using quarterly data. So I need to understand clearly what's going to happen with this in terms of our cash flow. You're going to run e-pay every four to six weeks and use quarterly data. What it sounds like to me from what I know about the state reporting and such is that what's going to happen is that we will actually get quite a few payments in one month but then we won't get a lot of payments until three months later and in any case to track these we're going to be looking at upwards of six months by the time the information is reconciled. That may change because I know you're doing some monitoring right now that you probably won't be doing long term. But could you --Ii mean that's what I’m sensing and I just seem like, man that's going to be hard to not only track but, you know, to fund.

Debbra Tennessee: Desiree this is Debbra.

Desiree Fitzgerald: Go ahead Debbra.

Debbra Tennessee: Okay let me explain what's happening with e-pay. I think you're -- when you talk about the payment you're talking about the payments you were getting on the universal auto pay. And Desiree did reference that when she gave an overview of what was happening with e-pay. You were getting payments in advance.
There were no earnings posted for those payments that you were used to getting every month.
Those were what we call current containment. For example we're in October and October we were making payments to those on UAP, the September payments. We have no earnings posted that early in the month. So you were getting your payments prematurely. Now we did that for a while for several years. But also several years ago we were doing something called an annual validation review where after a year or so we would go and check to see if those earnings were posted. What happened with that is there were a number of ENs who were over paid because those earnings never were posted in the social security system.
Since we discontinued the use of the QBER we are actually making payments without submitting those payments but we are first making sure that earnings are posted. So you're getting a delayed payment but it's more accurate payment because we're
making sure those earnings are paid. You're absolutely correct in saying there will be some delays because those quarterly earnings may be six months behind. And unless you submit earnings on a regular basis and Desiree did mention that you can continue to send in evidentiary earnings. You can do that if you have it. If not you will have to wait until the earnings are posted to social security's records. So with the e-pay process there should be a decrease in over payments.

Susan Webb: Well there's a decrease in over payments and i understand all that but would you answer me question directly? Can we expect for our cash flow that we will see a big month of payments and two months of small payments then another month of big payments because of the quarterly cyclical way in which the state data is made available. Is that correct?

Debbra Tennessee: Yes.

Susan Webb: Thank you. That was that question.

Debbra Tennessee: I’ll also add as long as it's in our records, you know, and our places other quarterly sources we would be able to use those too. We do have a few other sources. But for -- by and large the data that we receive from the state is the largest, you know, source that we would normally get on an ongoing basis. We don't get monthly basis on an ongoing basis on the next frequent reporting would be quarterly.
So you're right. But we really don't have a way of predicting what information is going to be in our records. All we know is that once it hits the records we will pay you.

Susan Webb: Okay. Thank you for that answer. One other thing, I don't know what happened you mentioned an email blast that went out yesterday. I know I did not get it. I don't know how many other ENs might not have gotten that but I did not.
And then rob your presentation I wonder if you could just – I know you want to get more questions in here but I know -- I would like you to tell us more about what did you learn from those site visits you did. You said you got great information, it was very helpful but I’m just curious having been one of those that were visited -- I’m curious as to what you felt specifically you found with ENs and that you learned.

Mark: Susan this is mark and we had everybody in the agency going everywhere to make these site visits and we had not had a chance to come back and bring the final reports and have discussions about that. So we really just have anecdotal information. In the next couple of weeks the ENs we visited we will get the reports and be able to report on this more the next time.

Rob Pfaff: And also i can add i mean every site and every visit there was a unique interaction and in some instances we took back things that we identified as action items and my traveling partner is in the room right now. In other instances we made suggestions at the site as to recommendations. We referred people in some instances to available tools that we have to remind folks as far as for example the website and the tools that are available to talk about work incentives. Each en has strengths and weaknesses to some extent and areas where there are different business models. We're on-site to try to make sure things such as personally identifiable information is being kept and maintained appropriately but we're also checking the other aspects of the bpa terms and conditions just to make sure that, you know, paper work is being done and maintained correctly and just to basically find out where we can provide some additional guidance on issues where they may be experiencing problems. I mean, you know, as mark indicated we will sit down as a team -- i mean this is a work in progress for us. We'll sit down as a team and take a look at the process and find out where we can strengthen it internally.
We will summarize our findings and brief our executives and i think at some point we'll share some of our findings in terms of aggregate kind of things that we were able to identify. I remember specifically one en actually gave me a copy of a charge from a local social security office for bpqi. So -- you know, i collected a copy of that and that's something i take back as an action item to talk to my folks internally to see what we can do. And what kind of service are they getting from their local awic and things of that nature. So we're working on things. This is a way for us to really get into the foundational program and the things we can do to help strengthen it.

Susan Webb: Thanks for that. That explains it a little bit more as to what you found. And i hope that when you do compile your report that you guys will give those to us because that will be helpful to all ens to see those things.
>> sure.
>> okay. And then you introduced two new staff. Can you tell us what they will be doing. They gave their name but we don't know what they are going to be doing.
>> mark?
>> they're working on [indiscernable] we're lucky to have them.
>> so they're providing technical support for ens?
>> right.
>> okay. Great thank you.
That's it. That's all my questions.

Operator: Your next question is from Eugenia.

Eugenia Cox: My question is for the partnership plus people from Pennsylvania. One is who makes the determination as to what is an appropriate hand off candidate or are the eight ENs that sign the agreement have an agreement to take all closed successfully closed social security recipients?

Dana: This is Dana. Basically we provide information about partnership plus, the benefits of it. We direct them to the list of ens that have partnership plus agreements with us and we direct it to those ens. There is nothing that says that they have to take it. I mean we can't force any of our ens to take a partnership plus agreement. So I mean by the very nature they have been successfully closed with VR. They're employed so... We very strongly feel that we can't direct a customer to one EN over another through the agreement.

Eugenia Cox: Yeah. I guess my question is what is the percentage of the people that the ENs are actually taking? Because I know we close a lot of people that are not at the levels that ENs would want them to be. So even if you're directing them, you know, it's not a sure bet that anybody's going to take them because of the levels that they're at.

>> right.
>> any ideas as to how many people are being -- the successful closures of people on closed successfully -- are taken by these employment networks?
>> i can only assume that based upon the information that was provided we don't track that information. So i can't say for certain how many vr cases actually contact the ens with whom we have partnership plus agreements to say whether or not they've turned anybody away. I can say that when we close a case our staff are instructed to insert an enclosure that goes out with the closure letter that informs folks about partnership plus and their opportunity to be protected from continuing disability review by assigning their ticket to an en. But again we don't -- that's completely voluntary on their part.
>> yeah i just don't -- we get calls from people saying nobody will take my ticket. So i guess -- do you tell the beneficiaries at the beginning that they may not be a able to participate. It isn't a sure bet i guess is what I’m saying.
>> right and wendy and i were looking at each other and we really haven't received any calls from customers. That's not to say that maybe it hasn't happened at a local level. But we haven't received any calls on a statewide basis that ens are unwilling to accept it. I would i guess defer to our partners on the call as to whether or not they are selective in terms of the cases that they accept.
>> this is jennifer from goodwill. Hi. I guessfor us one of the things we do when we're -- you mentioned about being a good fit. One of the things that we do is when we're speaking with someone we're trying to make sure that their goal is to come off their benefits eventually, become independent self sufficient which is the goal of the ticket to work program. So if someone is telling us that they -- they do not want to come off the benefits and that's not a goal that's what i was referring to as far as being a good fit.
Even if someone is working with ovr and they close them out as successful after the 90 days if individuals goal is not to move towards, you know, self sufficiency and eventually come off their benefits and i say that eventually meaning that can be a very long term supportive process. But if that's not their goal then they wouldn't be a good fit for our ticket workto program.
>> okay. So how they close whether it be half time or whatever isn't a determining factor then?
>> for us our factor would be as an en our factor would be if their goal was to again come off -- become independent and self sufficient. So if that's their goal and even if they're not sure if they're able to do it if they're willing to try then we're willing to try. For us it's the individuals that are not -- know for a matter of fact they're not wanting to come off benefits and become independent and self sufficient. There's nothing set in stone in terms of that day it has to be successful. We're willing to try. We're willing to provide any support they need to help them reach that goal.

Lori: And this is Lori from AHEDD if I could just add. You know, sometimes when individuals say well I don't want to get off my benefits and i don't want to work over a certain amount they might not be educated to even know, you know, what that means or, hey, even if your cash suspends for a period of time if something happens it doesn't work out, you know, depending on what program they're getting then you could -- that cash could turn back on. I think there's an education that goes along with it and frankly we don't turn a whole lot of people away. If they come to us and they meet the criteria, you know, we're going to assess and give the ticket to work questionnaire, the application but we're going to promote that we believe in you and you just never know even if you're working part-time it doesn't necessarily mean that you're not going to make significant wages. And I guess that's where I was talking about the struggle that's been our internal struggle as well even getting our staff to buy into that message that, you know, just because maybe the person is working part-time or they're not sure doesn't mean that we can't engage them in the ticket to work because you could be missing out on a lot of people.

Michelle Laisure: And that's an excellent point. Thank you. And thank you to all the speakers. The dialogue is exactly what partnership plus is truly all about. That you have to look at the beneficiary needs, understanding where they're at then moving it forward. We have all the contact information on the powerpoint. In fact Ana just reminded me we need to let everyone know on the call that the full powerpoint and contact information will be posted on our website. Again the conversation that just occurred is exactly what takes place in making those strong hand offs, knowing where beneficiaries are and working with them to reach their potential. I know that we're close to 4:30. Let's see if we can get one more call in.

Operator: Your next question comes from Paula.

Paula: Hi there. Thanks for an informative -- hi thanks for an informative presentation. A couple of questions. Number one was on e-pay. It seems to me that our evidentiary payments has slowed down also and I’m wondering if that's going to be a permanent thing or is it just because i e-pay just started off.

Debbra Tennessee: Hi this is Debbra. When we received our e-pay file we made it our priority. So we again gave priority to processing that file because we had such a large number of claims listed there.
So in between processing when we had a delay or slow down we did take up -- go back to processing claims that came in through the portal. Now we did keep an eye on those to make sure that we did meet our goal contractual goal of processing them within 30 days. So you may have gotten them a few days later then what you would normally see since we started the ticket portal because most of those payments were processed in just a few days. But yes there was a delay in what you're normally seeing payments because we did make e-pay our priority.

Paula: Okay. And I had one other little question. Is there any updates on the website database, when that's going to be fixed?

Michelle Laisure: Can we get a clarification on that question?

Paula: Well we have old information on the database and …

Unknown: Are you talking about your directory information?

Paula: Yeah the directory.

Unknown: Did you get the blast we sent out yesterday?

Paula: No. I guess the email server has changed so i didn't get those.

Unknown: Okay. So we have corrected everything to the best of our ability as of 9:00 this morning.
If you go in like right now and you see the information is still not correct please contact en services at SSA.gov and let them know exactly what's wrong and exactly what needs to be fixed and we'll fix that for you.

Paula: Great thank you so much. I sure appreciate it.

Michelle Laisure: And thank you everyone for joining us on the call today.
That actually concludes a very lively and informative October 1 call. We wish you to have a wonderful month and we'll talk to you in November. Thank you

Operator: Ladies and gentlemen that does conclude today's webinar.
You may now disconnect. Please hold your lines presenters.