**All Employment Network (EN) Payments Call**

**Changes in 2015**

**3 – 4 p.m. ET**

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Operator: Ladies and gentlemen thank you for standing by and welcome to the national Employment Network Payments conference call. During the presentation all participants will be in a "listen-only" mode. Afterwards we will conduct a question and answer session. At that time if you have a question please press the one followed by the four on your telephone. If at any time during the conference you need to reach an operator, press star zero. As a reminder this conference is being recorded, Tuesday, January 27, 2015. I would now like to turn the conference to Janet Cousin. Please go ahead.

Janet Cousin: Thanks Frank and good afternoon and welcome to the Ticket to work monthly EN payments call. If you're a new Employment Network we welcome you and thank you for working with Social Security beneficiaries. Thanks to our returning ENs to join us each month. We hope this call helps you understand the intricacies of the payment processing for the Ticket to Work program. Again my name is Janet Cousin and I'm the supervisor for the payment helpdesk team and I currently host this forum for you.

 Joining me today is Debbra Tennessee and Kathy Dyson. We also have several members of the Office of Ticket Operations and Provider Support including Regina Bowden, the Office Director, Shannon and Natalie Sendldorfer.

 We will use a presentation for today's call. That presentation has been posted on the yourtickettowork.com website on the events page if you need to print it off and again we'll be sharing it via the web. I'm sorry Regina Bowden; I said Baldwin. I apologize for that Regina. Again the presentation is available on our website via the events page and this is an interactive session for you. We do invite you to ask questions at the end of the presentation as Frank mentioned. We do request that when you ask questions do not provide any information regarding your personal cases just to make sure that we are mindful of any confidentiality concerns. You can also ask questions in our chat room. It's being monitored by LaTasha, a communications specialist with our team here.

If we're not able to address all of your questions during the call or via the chat room we will make sure that someone gets back to you after the call.

 Okay? Well happy New Year everyone. Today's presentation is focused on new or changes to existing policies or procedures related to payments processes.

 We will identify key changes that went into effect for the 2015 year and identify what is available to Employment Networks if there's any additional information or assistance that's needed. So our agenda for today we'll address the elimination of the COS as a requirement for payment request and we'll also review what the new earnings amounts are for the 2015 year.
All of the on-line forms related to earnings amount have been updated and we'll review a couple of key forms for you.
We'll also talk through what available resources are here for you going forward. And then again at the end we'll wrap up with a Q & A session. So before discussing the Certification of Services changes effective for 2015 let's look at the prior requirements for the certification of services forms.

 In this six step payment process flow step five references the requirements for including the COS form at specific intervals with the payment request form. The COS was submitted to ensure that ticket holders are receiving the services specified in the individual work plan or IWP addendum. Social security requires ENs to submit this document to make sure that they are providing the services that Ticket Holders need to return to work and become self-sufficient.

 So the form requires with payment requests for Phase 1, Milestone 4; Phase 2, Milestone 11; Outcome 11 and Outcome 22 payments. Even those registered for universal auto pay were required to submit the COS documentation for Outcome 11 and Outcome 22. So effective January 1, 2015, this Certification of Services form is no longer required for payment requests. An announcement was made in December regarding the process change. The information regarding ongoing services will be obtained via other means. So these rules are also applicable for this consumer directive services EN. You no longer have to provide a COS form and must complete section five of the payment request form as noted.

 You do not need to include receipts for expenses with your payment requests; however, you should keep those receipts for audit purposes. This change does not eliminate the requirement to include en services details in section five of the payment request form. So if requesting phase one milestone one through three you still must describe in detail the services provided since the ticket assignment date for phase one milestone one or describe in detail the services provided through the last milestone payment month for milestones two and three. Here we have an image of what the portal shows when you're completing a payment request form through the portal.
It will walk you through those steps of completing section five of the form.

 So let's take a look at what those new earnings rates are for 2015. The first row here you see for Trial Work Level is $780. SGA for nonblind beneficiaries is $1,090 and the SGA for blind beneficiaries is $1,820. Remember these new rates are effective as of January 1 of this year. Any payment requests or other calculations you need to make for 2014 or prior years should be based on the rates for that year. So we've included here the last couple of years and you'll see the differences as the changes have been made annually. Many of the payments tools and presentations that you have come to rely on have been updated as well to reflect these new rates for 2015. The ones listed here and other documents under the resource document section of the information center tab on the yourtickettowork.com website have all been updated. We are working on updating the rest of the training presentations and some of the AIVR documents and Employment Network Payments Checklist so these updates will be completed by the end of the week. A helpful resource I wanted to share with you today and just display that you'll see the table that's included with this tool has also been updated to include 2015 and you see the historical changes for the various years prior to that.
And again instructions on how to use this tool are actually included in the downloadable form in the upper right column there there's instructions on how to utilize this very helpful tool. Here we're also sharing the monthly earnings estimator tool. This is also one that ENs have come to use and rely on, on a pretty regular basis. It's also been updated to reflect the new rates for 2015. Again it's very useful tool and includes detailed instructions right inside the spreadsheet there on the right that walks you through the steps on how to utilize this tool and help estimate monthly earnings. Just want to also remind you that we do provide website resources for service providers. The portal is a very useful resource. It automates many of the operational functions you today and besides uploading payment request forms and viewing the en payment status report as reviewed some additional automated features that the portal have include checking the ticket assignability, assigning an unassigned ticket and uploading forms.

 You can visit the information center through the website as well to obtain additional information and instructions and again all of the forms and training materials are accessible through that link. And lastly just wanted to remind everyone how to reach us by phone and both the payment helpdesk and systems helpdesk team is available through our (866) 949-3687 number and you can also access the Ticket assignability IVR system using that number. For those that continue to fax in documents our fax number is referenced as well. Service providers are strongly encouraged to use the secure provider portal to complete all administrative functions for the program. But again we do have the fax number available if that is needed as well.

 So that really concludes the presentation portion of our call today. It really was just to start the New Year off with a clear understanding of some of these key changes that have taken affect as of this month and make sure you're familiar with what those are and how to obtain additional information if there's any additional questions that you have. So Frank at this time what I would like to do is -- well let me check with LaTasha and see if there are questions posted via the chat room.

LaTasha Durrett: We do have two questions. One coming from Teresa. She says, “Are we to complete a COS for claim months prior to 2015?”

Debbra Tennessee: Hello I'm the manager for the Ticket Operations Department and the answer to that is no. As of January 1, 2015, you do not have to submit an EN COS for any payment request. Social Security made the decision that effective January 1 the EN COS would not be used for any payment requests. So no you do not have to submit any -- the COS no longer for any payment request.

LaTasha Durrett: The second question we have is from Shelley. She says is it possible the earnings estimating be expandable? We got pay stubs and currently enter this into a spreadsheet that performs the same as the estimator. However we can create tabs for clients and enter pay stub info. It would be nice to have the estimator expanded to that level.

Debbra Tennessee: I'm not sure what you mean other than do a continuation.
Are you asking a continuation of earnings be placed there?
Because we don't need you to report earnings that you previously reported. So if the earnings are new that's all you have to report. If that's not what you're talking about could you be more specific?

Janet Cousin: Frank why don't we go ahead and open up the phone lines in the event that there is a follow up question to that question that was posted in the chat.

Operator: Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen if you would like to register a question please press the one followed by the four on your telephone. You will hear a three tone prompt to acknowledge your request. If your question has been answered and you would like to withdraw your registration press the one followed by three. One moment please for the first question.
Our first question comes from Shelley.

Janet Cousin: Hi Shelley.

Shelley: Hi. I'm calling about again the Earnings Estimator and I like the tool. It's really useful but it doesn't expand as we keep the historical information in our spreadsheet we use currently but what I have to do then is go and look at each individual time frame and then determine whether it's SGA level or Trial Work Level to then determine if I can submit a payment request. So looking at the tool, the estimator it does it for us when we enter in the pay stub information. So it would be nice if it was more of an expandable spreadsheet as far as I could put each of my clients on to a tab of their own and have it continually expand down and maybe I can note that a payment request was submitted and keep moving forward from our entries of pay stubs.

Debbra Tennessee: I think that's something that would need to be customized for certain ENs. We tried to create a tool that all ENs could use. We can talk on our architect about that but it sounds like this is something that would just be customized for a limited number of ENs whereas we try to create something, a general tool that everyone could use.

Shelley: Right I would be curious to see if other ENs would feel if something like that would be useful as well. Again it would be expandable. You could have a single spreadsheet that would have -- and it's wishful think.
If it can, it can. If it can't, it can't.

Janet Cousin: Shelley, you're using the multiple work sheet tabs within the single spreadsheet so you have one file with multiple tabs with multiple beneficiary information?

Shelley: Correct. Then as I enter pay stubs whether it's one year or two years or three years it just continually grows and then I break out the sections that state, you know, this would be for this time period and, you know, looking at the pay stub entries and of course we're looking at the SSDI range of beginning of month to end of month whether they're hitting SGA or Trial Work Levels then I can determine from the amounts listed there and that's where it's really nice that the earnings estimator does that.
It's just not expandable for that purpose.

Debbra Tennessee: Right.

Janet cousin: If you would like to send in an email through the EN Payments helpdesk or directly to myself I would be happy to chat with you about your recommendation and we can get that filtered into our architect for consideration.
Okay?

Shelley: That would be great. Janet what is your email address or is it on the PowerPoint?

Janet Cousin: Janetmcousin@maximus.com.

Shelley: Okay, thank you.

Operator: Ladies and gentlemen as a reminder to register a question press the 14 on your telephone.
There are no further questions at this time.

Janet Cousin: thank Thank you. Are there any follow up questions in the chat room that we can review?

LaTasha Durrett: There's one question. Barbara wanted to know if she submitted a COS in January is that a problem or will we ignore it.

Debbra Tennessee: Barbara we will ignore it. No problem at all.

LaTasha Durrett: Then we have one question from Deborah. She asked, “I have an off topic question. Is there an inactive ticket status for non-VR Ticket Holders?

Debbra Tennessee: That is not a Ticket status that's in our major system but that's something unless someone from social security can answer that for us. I'm not sure what the answer to that is and we will have to research it.

 Anyone on the line who can answer that from SSA team? And the question again was is there an inactive ticket status for non VR Ticket Holders?

Regina Bowden: Debbra this is Regina and Desiree is here with me and answers that question.

Desiree Fitzgerald: Inactive status is a status that exists under the Ticket program. So yes the person could put the ticket in inactive status if they didn't think they were going to make timely progress but they would be giving up the right to -- the protection from medical CDR so their name would go back in the pool and they could be potentially be pulled for medical CDR but they can file for 301. But yes they could use inactive status as long as they're Ticket eligible.

Janet Cousin: Thanks for that clarification Desiree. Are there any additional questions in the phone queue frank?

Operator: There are still no questions at this time.

Janet Cousin: How are we looking on the chat?

LaTasha Durrett: There are no more questions.

Janet Cousin: Any additional input for the call today Debbra or SSA team?

Debbra Tennessee: I would like to make a comment and I think our ENs are so knowledgeable now that they're out of questions so great job ENs.

Janet Cousin: Okay well thank you for joining us today. Since we have no additional questions regarding our topic for today I would like to invite all of you to consider other topics that you would be interested in discussing through this forum or having us prepare a presentation on. It is a monthly call that we are here for your benefit to again help educate you and share best practices potentially and provide any clarification on processes and procedures related to payments processes. So again we thank you for joining us today and if you have any follow up questions and those suggestions for future topics please send them to the en payments helpdesk and the next meeting is Tuesday, February 24 at 3:00 p.m. eastern time. Have a great day everyone.

Operator: Ladies and gentlemen that does conclude the conference call for today. We thank you for your participation and ask that you please disconnect your lines. Have a good day everyone.

[Call Ended]