

EN Essentials

Transcript: Taking a Deeper Dive into Payments
March 13, 2024

Derek Shields: Welcome to today's EN Essentials session entitled Taking a Deeper Dive into Payments. My name is Derek Shields, and I'll be serving as today's moderator. If this is your first EN Essentials session, welcome.

These sessions are designed for Employment Networks to focus on performance and compliance with the EN Ticket Program policies. The learning events build upon our initial EN foundations core content and feature new resources, best practice strategies, and other helpful information.

Before we begin with today's presentation, I'd like to review our agenda and also cover a few housekeeping items. Next slide, please.

Alright, with this slide, we have our agenda. As I mentioned, I'm going to cover the logistics and introductions that will help us look at this deeper dive into the Payments area. We're going to build off of the first payment session that we had last month entitled Payments Refresher. Perhaps some of you attended that.

We'll start out today after logistics with content covering payment denials. This is going to allow for a deeper dive into that area and have a Q and A session directly after payment denials. Then we'll dive more deeply into Ticket unassignment and payment reminders and follow that up with the second Q and A session. Before we close today, I'll provide a few resources and provide some updates on our coming events around the Ticket to Work Program, All Calls and our next Essentials, along with our next WISE webinar. Okay, next slide, please.

Alright, here's some housekeeping items. TPM is recording and capturing the transcript from today's meeting, and we'll make it available on the Your Ticket to Work website at our EN Essentials learning events page. If you didn't catch the first session on Payments Refresher, you can access that and other EN essentials content there.

Per the Ticket Program Agreement, as a reminder under Part 3, Section 11, Subsection I, EN staff are not permitted to record this meeting nor capture a transcript. Please keep that in mind.

Next, feel free to ask questions. Of course we have different ways for you to do that. We have the MS Teams chat that's available for posting questions. We do ask for all attendees to reframe from answering questions in the chat that are being posed by our attendees for either SSA or TPM response. You can send additional questions or comments to us through email, of course. Or if these are highly customized to your EN situation, you can reach us at any point at ENoperations@yourtickettowork.ssa.gov. Our EN operations team will forward the request to the appropriate person for response.

Next, and importantly, closed captioning is available during this event for participants who join using the MS Teams application, you can access that through a specific way. You can go to the three ellipses at the top of the MS Teams' window, click on more, scroll down the list to language and speech and then click on turn on live captions. If you prefer, you can use the link option that's been posted in chat. It was also provided in the GovDelivery email announcement. Using that, that's a cut and paste to a separate browser window that you can open up and view closed captions in their entirety. So you have closed captioning options. We encourage you to use those, and I'll be back for our Q and A sections for some reminders about how to ask questions both in chat but also using your audio and/or video.

Okay, with that, let's go to the next slide, please. As I mentioned, my name is Derek Shields. I'm serving as the moderator. I'm with the Ticket Program Manager team, and I serve as the Senior EN Development and Training Manager. It's my pleasure and privilege today to welcome back Nicole Black also with the Ticket Program Manager team. Nicole serves as the Payments Manager. She joined us last month, and we welcome her back for Taking a Deeper Dive into Payments with us today. I'll be back with you and Nicole in a little bit for our first Q and A but now over to Nicole.

Nicole Black: Thank you, Derek. Next slide, please.

Alright, so as Derek stated, we will have two Q and A sessions. In this first section that we are going to address is regarding payment denials. Next slide, please.

Alright, payment denials. TPM processes payment requests using all available information to determine if an EN is eligible for a payment. And this information comes from the supporting documentation and Social Security's database, as well as including additional forms. When TPM denies a payment request, the staff will assign a payment

denial reason. And each denial will then appear in the Ticket Portal under “List Payments Already Made to Me.” And to view those denial reasons, when you select “Include Denials Using the Reference Number or the Work Case Number” associated with that specific payment request, the denial reason is associated with the payment denial code in the Ticket Portal.

Next slide, please. There is a resource available that covers the payment denial reasons. And to view this Payment Denial Reasons resource, it is located on the Resources page in the Your Ticket to Work website. This document does include tips for avoiding payment denials, as well as listing all of the payment denial reasons with the corresponding payment denial codes as you can see with the example shown here on the screen. Next slide, please.

Okay, so we're going to give you some tips to hopefully avoid payment denials. So the first tip is Ticket assignment. First and foremost, make sure that the beneficiary's Ticket is actually assigned to your Employment Network during the applicable claim period and claim month. Next slide, please.

Tip number two, First Available Claim Month. You want to confirm that the first claim submitted is the month after Ticket assignment date. that means if you assign a Ticket in January, your first claim month cannot be a date in January. It would have to be February, which is the month following the Ticket assignment date. The Ticket assignment date is the date SSA receives the beneficiary's individual Work Plan or IWP that is applicable to new ENs.

And then there are some additional circumstances that would require an EN to send those IWPs directly to SSA. Or the Ticket is assigned when the EN submits for the Ticket assignment using the electronic Ticket assignment process or TAR. Next slide, please.

Tip number three, Prior VR Services. Now with this one, you want to check the Ticket Portal to determine if the beneficiary has a previous history of working with the state VR agency after January of 2002 and whether their VR case was closed successfully. If the prior VR services were provided under the VR Cost Reimbursement program and the case was closed successfully within 18 months prior to the Ticket assignment date, in those circumstances, Phase 1 Milestones will not be available to the EN.

If the beneficiary's prior VR services were provided under the Ticket Program and the beneficiary did not have any record of a successful case closure within 18 months prior to the Ticket assignment date, Phase 1 Milestone payments may be available to the EN.



Please note that Phase 1 Milestones are not available if the VR received a cost reimbursement payment. Next slide, please.

Okay, the 18-Month Look back Tool. This is tip four. Earnings with the 18-Month Look back Tool are to take a look at Trial Work Level earnings during this period because it may impact the availability of some or all of your Phase 1 Milestones for that specific Ticketholder. Earnings can appear at any time in SSA's database. This typically just takes a few months; however, it can sometimes take several years to show up. Unfortunately, the late postings of earnings may cause EN overpayments. The 18 month, or the look back period is for earnings in the 18 months prior to the Ticket assignment date of the first EN. Make note of that.

The look back period is for months between the date of disability onset and the beneficiary's Ticket assignment date. This period could possibly be less than 18 months.

So when you are speaking to your Ticketholders, when you're doing your initial intake, and you are trying to determine that date of disability onset, that could get a little tricky. So what that means is, just because someone had a disability and they were diagnosed with that disability — let's just say January of 2020, Social Security may not have agreed with or approved that disability until January of 2021. So the date of disability onset must coincide with when Social Security has approved this Ticketholder for their disability benefits. Next slide, please.

Tip number four, Tips to Avoid Payment Denials. I'm sorry, number five, Documenting Earnings. This is something that's very important when you're sending in your proof of earnings. You want to check available sources of information on earnings to document the beneficiary's earnings during the claim period or month for which you're seeking payment. Some of the things that you want to make sure that are present when you're using pay stubs is the employer's name. You want the pay period beginning and the pay period ending date. You also want the date that the Ticketholder was paid as well as to make sure that there are applicable Social Security and Medicare or FICA taxes removed. Next slide, please.

Now we are going to transition into the payment denial reasons. Next slide.

We are going to go over all of these in detail, but the first one will be Code 2, the Beneficiary is Receiving Federal Cash Benefits. Code 15, No Response to Request for Documentation. Code 30, Payments Must be Made in Order. Code 40, Request Received More Than 24 Months After the Claim Month. Code 43, Incorrect Phase One Claim Month Requested by EN. Next slide, please.

The first one is payment denial Code 2, The Beneficiary is Still Receiving Federal Cash Benefits. Code 2 indicates that the EN has submitted a claim for an Outcome payment, and the beneficiary is still receiving a federal cash benefit. To receive Outcome payments, a beneficiary must be in a suspense or nonpayment status due to work and earnings. A best practice is for ENs to encourage wage reporting to your Ticketholders, and a resource to assist you with this is Preventing and Managing Overpayments. A sample of that documentation is shown here on the screen for you, and the EN should have the beneficiary contact their local Social Security field office if the EN knows that the beneficiary should not be receiving a federal cash benefit. Next slide, please.

Payment denial Code 15, No Response to Request for Documentation. Code 15 indicates that an EN failed to respond to a request to submit additional information or documentation. ENs must respond to a case and diary status within nine business days, or that request will be denied. It's important to make sure that you will have your payment contact updated. You should regularly check pending payments in the Ticket Portal for the view all pending payments from E screen. A "Y" will appear in the Diaries column if the case in question requires additional information. To circle back to my comment about making sure that your payment contact is updated, the reason is if additional information is needed, we will send you an email. So, after you submit a payment request, you want to monitor your email for any response from TPM and respond to that immediately.

In those situations where we send an outreach email because we are not able to read the paycheck stubs that were submitted for proof of earnings, you can always mail that clear documentation into us so that we can read those pay stubs and that they are legible. Next slide, please.

Payment denial Code 30, Payments Must be Made in Order. Code 30 indicates that the EN submitted a request for a Phase 2 Milestone payment before all available milestone payments were processed to completion. So before a Phase 2 Milestone can be requested, all Phase 1 Milestones must be addressed. And what that means is that they either have to be paid or denied. So a tip here is to keep track of each payment request and payment received for each beneficiary via the Ticket Portal. The Ticket Portal is available seven days a week in real time. Next slide, please.

Payment denial Code 40, Request Received More Than 24 Months After Claim Month. Code 40 indicates that an EN submitted a payment request for a claim month that was outside the 24-month timeframe. An EN shall request a payment no later than 24 months following the month the Ticketholder's work and earnings meet the criteria for

SSA's payment. SSA will not accept payment requests for periods outside of this 24-month window. Next slide, please.

Payment denial code 43, Incorrect Phase 1 Claim Month Requested by the Employment Network. Code 43 indicates that a Phase 1 Milestone payment was requested but the attainment month was not correct based on the SSA earnings record or the earnings that were provided. So, if an EN submits an attainment month within the 24 months of when the earnings were made, but there is an earlier attainment month available in SSA database, that case will be denied, but the correct attainment month will be provided in the denial comment for you. When that happens, the EN must submit a new payment request with the correct attainment month that was provided to them. Next slide, please.

Alright, we're going to pause for questions. I'll hand it back over to Derek. You're on mute, Derek.

Derek Shields: Oh, thank you, Nicole. I appreciate you going through the five tips. I think a lot of times we can hear about these, but to have your review and specific advice with each of those is really helpful. And then on the flip side of that, the codes and the reason for denial, they connect in many places, so those are great.

We do have some activity in chat, as you could imagine, with some questions and some answers being provided by Jalin. Before we go to our next set of questions that will come in, let me just review how to participate in our questions. Of course you can use MS Teams chat as some of you have been doing. We also have a couple of other ways to do this. I want to remind everyone – we ask you to refrain from answering questions that are posed to TPM or SSA. Let those folks answer the questions from the participants. please. You may also ask the question over a telephone, a two-step process. We have this on the screen. Press star five to raise your hand, and we will unmute your phone. Then we need you to press star six to speak. Again, that's a two-step process via telephone.

For participants or on the Team's app, you can ask the questions by using the raise your hand feature. When we do that, we'll identify you and ask you to then identify yourself by name and your EN name. Please do limit your questions, one per participant, so we can get to each individual. You may send additional questions or comments, as I mentioned earlier, to ENoperations@yourtickettowork.SSA.gov. So let's start out by checking in with some raised hands. Katherine, it looks like somebody has a raised hand. Can you help calling that individual, please?

Katherine: Hi, Derek, thank you. Tiffany, you are unmuted. You may ask your question after you unmute.

Tiffany Litton: My name is Tiffany Litton. I work for Community Services Project at Louisville, Kentucky, and I do have a question. So I have received two different answers from the helpdesk and from the last EN Call, and I want to verify before I receive a denial. I have received a consumer Ticket to Work beneficiary, and she had a successful closure with Vocational Rehab. So we are not entitled to the Phase 1 payments, and I understand that.

The question I have is I was told on the last All EN Call to not bill for her and wait for the next ePay because she is over SGA to receive Phase 2 Milestone payments, or Phase 2 payments. But when I called the helpdesk to speak about somebody else, and I verified that information, the lady at the helpdesk told me to go ahead and bill Phase 1 Milestone 1 to get the ball started rolling. So, do I bill Phase 1 Milestone 1 even though it's going to be denied, or do I wait for ePay to get Phase 2?

Nicole Black: Hi Tiffany, thank you for your question. And I remember this, which is almost scary that I remember it.

Tiffany Litton: Yes. Well, it wasn't too long ago.

Nicole Black: Okay, thank you for making me feel better. So, you actually were given the correct information each time. So, we wanted you to wait to see if it got picked up in ePay and it didn't. So, with that, now go ahead and bill for your Phase 1 Milestone 1. It will be denied. That will address your Phase 1s at that point, and then you'll be able to, I see Kim came off mute.

Kim: I was just going to add something. Go ahead, because you may add it.

Nicole Black: And then you'll go ahead and be able to request your Phase 2 Milestones where applicable.

Tiffany Litton: Awesome.

Nicole Black: Go ahead, Miss Kim.

Kim: Okay, I just want to add that just remember that on the ePay file, payments that are paid are Phase 1 Milestone 4, Phase 2s and Outcomes. So, if you have not received a payment at all for a particular Ticketholder, that Ticketholder will not be on

the ePay file. You have to have Phase 1 Milestones 1-3 addressed. So that, like you said, even though you know it's going to be denied, we still have to process that payment. So, you want to make sure, again, that your Phase 1 Milestones 1-3 have been addressed, paid or denied before that SSN will be placed on ePay. So I just wanted to let everybody know that as well. That was it, Nicole.

Nicole Black: No, stay there, okay.

Katherine: Very acute, Nicole. Thank you, Tiffany.

Tiffany Litton: Thank you all.

Katherine: Derek, we have another raised hand. We have Casey. Casey, you are unmuted. Just click your microphone to unmute and ask your question.

Casey: Hi everyone, this is Casey from Allsup Employment Services in Belleville, Illinois. I was referring back to slide number 16 where it said if the EN knows that the beneficiary should be out of pay status that we should contact Social Security. Do we need to have supporting documentation as far as like an 821 showing that the beneficiary is working and earning SGA and they should be out of pay status? Is that something that we need to provide, or does it need to be like a conference call with Social Security, with the beneficiary on the line saying hey, I'm making SGA, please stop my payments? So just kind of wondering about that if there needs to be any documentation or conference call or something like that.

Nicole Black: Hi, Casey. Thank you for your question. I'm actually going to defer to Kim or Katie for that question because it does specifically deal with the interactions with the field office.

Kim: Hi, Casey. Yeah, Nicole is right. That is something that's outside of our wheelhouse. I would recommend that yes, you have the Ticketholder contact their field office and just let them know. And then at that point, you know, the field office can let the Ticketholder know what he or she may need. Or they should have their records, right. They have their information. So, it could just be a matter of once the Ticketholder contacts the field office, that could be the trigger that they need to go in and update their benefits if an update is needed. But yeah, like Nicole said, it depends on the field office. But that would be definitely your first step is to have the Ticketholder contact their local field office.

Casey: Okay, so you don't recommend like a conference call with them, like with us on the line and them on the line and then Social Security?

Kim: I think that would be maybe between you and your Ticketholder, where the Ticketholder is comfortable enough and you're helping the Ticketholder, so I'm not against it, right. And then you could just support your Ticketholder in that call, I think would be fine. But that would be something I think that you would discuss with your Ticketholder and take the next step.

Katherine: Thank you, Casey.

Nicole Black: Thanks, Casey.

Katherine: We have one more with a raised hand. We have Kim. Kim, your mic is unmuted. You can ask your question. You need to click your microphone up top to unmute. And while we're trying, let me see.

Derek Shields: Katherine, why don't you go ahead and take the next question from a raised hand, and then we'll switch over to cover a few and chat.

Katherine: Sounds good, Derek. Tina. Tina, you are unmuted. You need to click your microphone up top to unmute and ask your question please. Tina, just click your microphone up top. Your microphone is active. You need to unmute. And ask your question please.

Derek Shields: Alright, this is Derek. As your moderator, I'm going to flip over to some questions that have come through chat. We'll work on getting Tina unmuted and asking her question. And if you have, I see that we also have another raised hand. We'll be back to you in a moment on those.

In the meantime, Brittany, it looks like we've had a few questions come in through chat. Can you bring one of those up for Nicole or one of other panelists please?

Brittany: Sure Derek, I have a question from Kim. How reliable is the Trial Work Month used listed on the BPQY? Is there a good way for clients to keep track of their Trial Work Period in SGA?

Nicole Black: Hi, Kim. Thank you for your question. And that is one that I need to defer to Social Security as it relates to answer your question about the BPQY specifically. Katie, Renee.

Katie: This is Katie from Social Security. The best answer I can give is that when we adjudicate the payment requests that come to us, we use all the information at that time in SSA systems to make the decision. So you know, you can use all the best information that you have on hand to request your EN payments, but it is always going to be what does the technician have in front of them when they adjudicate the payment. That ends up being the final decision.

All we can say at this point is, you know, if you're in there and it looks like it should be a valid month for payment, go ahead and submit it, and we will evaluate it and you'll get the decision from us.

Derek Shields: Thank you, Katie. Appreciate that. Brittany, back to you for another question coming from chat.

Brittany: Sure. I have a question from Karen. For denial Code 27, benefits are terminated but not due to work. What are reasons why benefits might be terminated, especially since they shouldn't be getting a medical review under Ticket to Work. What can we do to collect payments when getting this denial code?

Nicole Black: Thank you, Brittany, did you say that came from Karen?

Brittany: Yes.

Nicole Black: Hi, Karen. Thank you for your question. When you get denial Code 27, there are multiple reasons that could cause a Ticketholder's status to be, to cause you to be denied, and they are still receiving payments and they should not be. The best recourse there is to have that Ticketholder contact the local field office to get more information as to why they have that specific status. And then hopefully they'll communicate that to you. Or as Kim suggested earlier, if the Ticketholder is comfortable, you can have a joint call with them so that you can find out what's going on and take a deeper dive into their specific situation in order to then find out what steps need to be taken so that you can resume payments. Did that help?

Derek Shields: Thanks. We could get a response to that in chat if that was helpful there. In the meantime, yeah, so Karen has said yes. Thank you. Nice work, Nicole. I'm going to come back to you with a question that's in chat from Tina. Tina was trying to unmute earlier and wasn't able to, but she's dropped it in chat. Wanted to confirm that with self-employment submitting payments outside of the 24 months, since we need to wait for them to file taxes, then payment submission needs to be done manually.

Nicole Black: Hi Tina, I want to make sure I got your question going. I'm going to look at my screen right now to make sure I'm reading it.

Derek Shields: It's up in chat, yeah.

Nicole Black: Kim, I need you to come off mute just in case I miss a point of this. So with the self-employed Ticketholders. and it's outside of 24 months. As you know, you are at the mercy of them filing their income taxes and you are at the mercy of the data being uploaded into the system for us to be able to see the true income. So, with that, my recommendation is if you feel as if that Ticketholder has reached SGA earnings or Trial Work Level, depending on where you are in the continuum, go ahead and submit that payment request.

Yes, it will be denied, but that is the only way that we can track that you are in fact working with the Ticketholder and requesting said payment. As far as payments being done manually, they don't necessarily need to be done manually unless you're unable to access that Ticketholder in the Portal because the preferred method is to request the payment submissions through the Portal. I believe that captures everything.

Derek Shields: Thanks, Nicole. Appreciate that. Let's move next to Katherine. A couple more raised hands. Katherine, over to you.

Katherine: Hi. Thanks, Derek. Mary Lynn, you are unmuted. Just click your microphone to unmute and ask your question please.

Mary Lynn: Well, thank you. Can you hear me okay?

Nicole Black: I can hear you, Mary Lynn.

Mary Lynn: Okay. Hello. I don't know if we're allowed to have two questions, but I'll start with one and see what you guys say about the second one. I was wondering in regard to the denial that you have the wrong attainment month. Usually in that message it will say a month that's suggested as the correct attainment month. I was wondering if there's been any change in how that's been written. Because in the past when there was a suggested attainment month, you know, should be blah blah, it seemed like that was pretty much an affirmation that we've been requested that we got payment.

So recently, I've noticed a change where it will say attainment month might be November, but it's been explained to me that that really is not indicating that there is

evidence in your system if all it's doing is adding X amount of months to the previous Phase 1 payment. So, has there been a change of interpretation how you're writing that message?

Nicole Black: Hi, Mary Lynn. Thank you for your questions. I want to make sure I got this right. When you have recently been receiving denials that are indicating previous attainment month, you've been informed that that may or may not be the correct attainment month. It could just be a situation where additional months are added on based on what phase milestone you're at. Is that correct?

Mary Lynn: Right, I think if I gave you an example. Like Phase 1 Milestone 1 might have been January of 2023, let's say. And we've gotten that it's the wrong attainment month. I can't remember if the language says should or could but say two months later. So, what's been done is you take when your last payment was paid it's just adding for Phase 1 Milestone 2, two more months to get, you know, three collectively. But I was told that that does not necessarily mean those suggested months have been evidence of trial work. And in the past, I believed they were. I just didn't know if there was a recent change or you guys have interpreted that differently.

Nicole Black: Okay, thank you for that clarification. So, it should be you're giving the attainment month based on earnings that are in the system that are available us to see to know what that attainment month should be. So, what I would say, Mary Lynn, is if you could send the specific example or Work Case Number that you can send to the payment helpdesk to my attention, and I can look into it to see what's going on?

Mary Lynn: Sure. That would be great. I have a few of them. Yeah, because it seems like something's changed.

Nicole Black: Okay, yeah, send them over to me and we can research it for you.

Alexis: Hi Nicole, this is Alexis. Can I chime in?

Nicole Black: Yes. Hey Alexis.

Alexis: Mary Lynn, are you referring to the denial of incorrect Phase 1 claim month requested by EN, or are you referring to the denial of earnings do not meet Phase 1 Milestone criteria?

Mary Lynn: I'm referring to the wrong attainment month as [inaudible].

Alexis: Incorrect Phase 1 claim month?

Mary Lynn: Right.

Alexis: If you get a month in there, that should be a proper claim month to request, like usually that means you requested let's say 10/20/23, but your claim month we can see that it should be available earlier at let's say August 2023. So, the date and the month provided in there should be the proper claim month that you should be requesting your milestone payment. So, like Nicole said, if you have some instances where it doesn't seem to be accurate, please give her examples so they can be reviewed.

Mary Lynn: Yeah, I'll do that. I think that would be easier than getting into more of the weeds.

Nicole Black: Thanks, Mary Lynn.

Mary Lynn: Can I ask one more or comment on one other thing?

Nicole Black: Okay.

Derek Shields: Mary Lynn, if you can make it quick, please, because we've got a lot more questions, we've got to get back to the content. Go ahead.

Mary Lynn: I'll pass. That's fine.

Derek Shields: Okay, come back for the second Q and A, please. Appreciate that. Thanks, Mary Lynn.

This is Derek again with one comment. Some of your questions are a little specific. Jalin has posted to please direct all case specific questions to our helpdesk. The telephone number is there. It's also ENpaymentshelpdesk@yourtickettowork.ssa.gov. We appreciate case specific questions going there, so those could be handled with the unique instances. Let's go back to Brittany one more time for another question from chat. And then we do want your questions.

We're going to have to proceed back to the content, and we'll have a second Q and A. Brittany, one more question from you please.

Brittany: Sure. One question I have is from Darcy. What if the EN submits for Phase 1 Milestone 1, but the EN is paid Outcome level for the next few months. The beneficiary

then discovers that working enough to be over SGA is no longer an option. This person will be closed from the EN, however, there will be, would there be any reconciliation payment for the EN?

Nicole Black: Thank you, Brittany. Hi, Darcy. Thank you for your question. I am going to restate it, and if I get it wrong, please indicate in the chat. So you have a Ticketholder who you received to Phase 1 payment and then you started to receive Outcome payments. The Ticketholder then decided working at SGA or above was not going to work for them long term. And you're wanting to know how you can go back and recoup Phase 1 and/or Phase 2s through reconciliation? Brittany, does that sound about right?

Brittany: Yes.

Nicole Black: Okay. So, to answer your question, once you start to receive Outcome payments, all Phase 1 and Phase 2 stop, and the only way to get those through reconciliation is for that Ticketholder to stay employed at or above SGA, and you receive 12 Outcome payments. And then after the 12th payment, then you would automatically be in a situation where your cases will be looked at for the reconciliation period for the remaining Phase 1 and Phase 2 payments. Did that help?

Derek Shields: See if Darcy can drop a response into chat. Yes, thank you.

Nicole Black: Perfect. Alright, thank you, Darcy.

Derek Shields: Thanks so much, Nicole. We appreciate you answering the questions regarding the denials. We do need to move forward now to your content on Ticket on assignment and payment reminders. If we can proceed to the next slide, I'll pass this back to Nicole, and we'll be back together for the second Q and A. So, keep those questions in mind. Nicole back to you, please.

Nicole Black: Thank you, Derek. Alright, so now we're going to discuss the world of Ticket unassignments. Next slide, please.

So, Ticket unassignments. They happen by either the EN or the Ticketholder. So in certain circumstances, an EN may be eligible for payment after a Ticket is unassigned. But it is determined by who the requester is if it's the Employment Network or the Ticketholder. Next slide, please.

So, if an EN unassigns the Ticket. An EN may unassign a Ticket at any time. This happens if the EN is no longer providing services or ongoing employment support to the

Ticketholder. As a reminder, ongoing support or the availability of ongoing support is a requirement for continued payment.

So, an EN is not eligible for future payments, including potential split payments, for subsequent work and earnings achieved by the Ticketholder if the EN unassigned that Ticket. SSA will cease payments to the EN effective the month prior to the month of the Ticket unassignment. Next slide, please. Now, if the Ticketholder unassigns the Ticket. A Ticketholder has the right to unassign their Ticket at any time, and the EN may be eligible for up to 12 payments within an 18-month period starting with the month the Ticket is unassigned. To do this, the Ticketholder's earnings must have otherwise qualified for the EN to receive payment. These payments are subject to SSA's evaluation of the EN's service contributions. And this does not apply if the Ticketholder reassigns that Ticket prior to completion of the 12-claim month period. Next slide, please.

So, what you need to request a payment after Ticket unassignment. The EN should send the following information for all payment requests submitted for claim months after Ticket unassignment. And this would include evidence of work and earnings and a Certification of Services form or the COS form. If an EN does not have evidence of work and earnings but the Ticket Portal indicates the earnings have already been proven, the EN may submit the claim with the completed COS form. Next slide, please.

Split payments. If a Ticketholder has unassigned their Ticket and assigns their Ticket to a new Employment Network after previously working with another EN, the previous EN may be eligible for a split payment. Remember, this does not apply if the previous EN unassigned that Ticket. To qualify for a split payment, the prior EN must have requested at least one payment during the 12-month period prior to assignment of the Ticket to the new EN. A best practice is when you realize that your Ticketholder has enough earnings for you to request a payment, I recommend you request your payment right away. I would not wait and do them in batches at 6 or 12 months. Next slide, please.

The reason I say so is, or mention that, is because if you have not requested that payment, you will not be eligible for a split payment. You have to have at least one split, one payment requested. So TPM, when we find this, we will send a notification to both ENs that a possible split payment exists. And this would include Form SSA 1401. So, an EN can use the SSA 1401 Form to document how they agree to split the payments. If the ENs disagree with the terms, TPM determines how to split the payment. And then if either EN disagrees with TPM determination, they can appeal the split payment determination to SSA. Next slide, please.

Some friendly reminders. Next slide.

First and foremost, before we get into the Payments at a Glance. An EN's almost best friend is going to be that Ticket Portal Users Guide. As soon as you are approved, I can't remember which learning check it is that you have to get through before you can request the Ticket Portal Users Guide, I strongly recommend you request that. And you're able to request it at ensystemshelp@yourtickettowork.com, and that email is going to be dropped in the chat for you.

Another resource that you should always have out and handy whenever you're requesting payment is the Payments at a Glance. It just kind of keeps everything in order for you, especially with those Phase 1s, so that you can see what months are associated with which milestone. This document is updated annually and shows payment rates for the Outcome and the Milestone Outcome payment methods. ENs can locate the Payments at a Glance at the Your Ticket to Work website under Resource Documents and Payment Resources. Next slide, please.

The next resource is the 18-Month Look Back Tool. I've mentioned this before that it's an Excel document that you really should only enter the data that you have. If you enter the data that you have, it is very helpful in making a preliminary determination as to what you may be eligible for. Keep in mind that the Payments team or our payment technicians will do their own 18-month look back for each and every Phase 1 case that they are looking at. So, it is based on the information we have at that time in the system. But it is a good resource for, that you can have a good idea of what your starting point will be. And it is based solely on prior earnings. You locate the 18- Month Look Back Tool at the Your Ticket to Work website under Resource Documents and then Tools for Success. Next slide, please.

The Proof of Relationship forms. ENs must provide proof of relationship with the Ticketholder when submitting for Phase 1 Milestones 1 through 3. Proof of relationship can be established by submitting pay stubs or completing a Proof of Relationship form. ENs can locate the Proof of Relationship form at the Your Ticket to Work website under Forms and then Payments. Next slide, please.

Now you're ready to submit a payment. So, items to have ready when you are preparing to submit a payment would be of course your Ticket Portal credentials. Any of these handy dandy payment resources for your reference that we have mentioned, your proof of relationship for your Phase 1 Milestones 1 through 3, evidence of earnings with the pay stubs. Make sure that they have the information listed on them that I mentioned earlier. You can also have an employer prepared earnings statement, which must be

signed by the Ticketholder's employer in order to be valid. Or a Work Number report. Next slide, please.

So there's two ways to get paid. Well, there's more than two, but these are two best ways to get paid. First and foremost, the gold standard is the Ticket Portal. You can view pending and process payment requests. You can see that this is the fastest and the most recommended way to manage your payments. And these payment requests are processed within 30 calendar days of receipt. The second way that's another best practice or best way to get paid is through ePay. SSA processes ePay payments quarterly. EPay payments include Phase 1 Milestone 4, Phase 2 Milestones and Outcomes. EPay is processed in SSN order, not provider ID order, so ENs may not see all payments processed at the same time. Next slide, please.

A good way to track your payments and see what's going on is by monitoring them through the Portal. So before submitting a new payment request, review some key screens in the Portal. That would be the list SSA beneficiaries currently assigned to me. View Ticket payments already made to me and view all pending Ticket payments for me. This will help you to verify that payment requests are being made in order. Next slide, please.

So now you've submitted your payments, you've made sure they're in order, and you want to track that payment. So to track the status of submitted payments, you can use the Portal. Again, it is the best practice, the preferred method because it does provide you information in real time. You can reach out to the EN payments helpdesk. They can assist you for tracking payments older than 30 days from when they were submitted. You can also send an email using the work case number. Make sure there's no PII in the request. And you can send that request via email to ENpayments_helpdesk@yourtickettowork.ssa.gov. Or you can give the payments helpdesk a call at 866-949-3687. Friendly reminder that you need to allow five business days for response from the Payments helpdesk. Next slide, please.

Alright, we are now ready for part two of questions. Handing it back over to Derek.

Derek Shields: Nicole, thanks a lot for going through unassignment and these great reminders and resources that you went through for everybody. We do have some hands up. Before we get to that first question, I'm going to just mention something.

Jalin put this in the chat. It was if you want to request the Ticket Portal User Guide, you can certainly do so. But you need to send in an email, and that email address is ensystemshelp@yourtickettowork.ssa.gov. We got a dot com in there from our



presenter, and I just wanted to clarify that that email address is not dot com, it's SSA dot gov. So use the email address and chat, and we'll be good to go with those requests. Katherine, let's go over to raised hands, if we could get a participant's question for Nicole, please.

Katherine: Absolutely. Derek. Janine, you are unmuted. Please click your microphone up top to allow your mic and please ask your question.

Janine: Hey. Hi, Nicole. Hey, I have a question. When I have a Ticketholder that I assigned in November and then in December he had earned SGA, and I had submitted a Phase 1 Milestone payment. And it was denied, and it went straight into Outcome because his earnings were high enough to put his SSI benefits in zero pay status. Does that mean that we lose all of the Phase 1 Milestone payments because he did go into zero pay status? How did that actually transaction take place?

Nicole Black: Hi, Janine. So, I can't tell you specifically what made that happen because everybody's case is different as you know. But what I can say is with this Ticketholder, since he went immediately to Outcomes, once you receive that 12th Outcome payment, then your Phase 1 and Phase 2s, if applicable to you, will be picked up at the reconciliation process at that time.

Janine: Okay, so he has to remain in the zero-pay status for that length of time in order to get the reconciliation payment.

Nicole Black: Yes, ma'am.

Janine: Okay. Alright, well, that's good to know. Thank you so much for your help.

Nicole Black: You're welcome, Janine.

Katherine: Thank you, Janine. Derek, we have another. Genia, you are unmuted. Click your microphone and ask your question. Hi, Genia. Your microphone is active. Just click your microphone to unmute, and you can ask your question. Okay, while we're waiting on Genia, we'll go to the next caller.

We have Diane. Diane, your mic is active. Go ahead and unmute and ask your question.

Diane: Hi everyone, this is Diane from Inroads to Opportunities in Roselle, New Jersey. Can you hear me?



Nicole Black: Hi, Diane. Yes.

Diane: Hi, thank you. So in regard to slide number 26 where the Ticketholder unassigns themselves and then the EN can get paid 12 out of 18 months. I had a Ticketholder, now this is going back to 2019, who, unbeknownst to me, unassigned herself. And maybe she didn't mean to because she continued to call me for services, help with applications and whatnot. And then not knowing that she had unassigned herself, I was making payment requests, all of which were denied. So I'm wondering if this 12 allowable or potentially allowable payments within an 18-month period is new.

Nicole Black: Okay, so. The answer to your question is no, it's not new. This is the process for split payments. But it does sound like your situation is a bit unique. And what I would recommend is send the information or send this question to the Payments helpdesk so we can take a look at it.

Diane: Okay, very good.

Nicole Black: And here comes Kim. Thank you so much.

Kim: I just want to make sure because yeah, just make sure I understand. I'm going to do like Nicole does. Make sure I understand. So, this is a Ticket that was unassigned by the Ticketholder, but the Ticketholder wasn't aware that she unassigned Ticket, neither were you.

In that case, like Nicole answered the first part of the question, right, this is not a new policy. And that, you know, the time limit, of course, in this case has expired, right. So unfortunately, that's one of the things that, you know, you're not going to receive payments because it's outside of that window because the clock starts from the unassigned month. So, the only thing that we can advise is that's why it's so important to make sure you guys are using the resources available in the Portal, right. Looking at Tickets assigned, knowing the Tickets that you have assigned. And if you notice that Jane is unassigned, that will kind of help. But for this particular case, yeah, because it's outside of that window, and that's why your case is being denied because the Ticket was unassigned and they do have, you know, 12 payments within that eight, possible 12 payments within that 18 months. That time has since passed. So unfortunately, you would not be able to get paid for that Ticketholder. But again, just making sure, you know, we don't want to see it happen again, so making sure that you're checking the Portal Tickets assigned, Tickets formerly assigned just so you would be aware.

Diane: Oh, I didn't just request the Ticket payments. I requested the Ticket payments in like 2020, and she unassigned her Ticket in August of 2019 but kept, you know, calling me. We were in touch with one another and I had no idea she had unassigned herself. But when she finally did provide me with all her pay stubs, I went ahead and made those payment requests. And it was well within the 24 months at that time so. The 18 months is just moot at this point.

Kim: Right. So, like I said, then it would also depend on what the case was denied for. So, for your knowledge and learning, if you just wanted to reach out to the helpdesk to see what those denial reasons were, or you may know. Just so you know, just for future knowledge so you're aware. So, thanks for the clarification. I thought it was outside of that.

Diane: Alright. No worries. Thanks, ladies.

Nicole Black: Alright. Thank you.

Katie: This is Katie. I did want to add on, please do email the helpdesk with your information and we can take a look at it.

Derek Shields: Thank you, Katie. We're coming up on the hour. I'm going to go over to Brittany to see if we can get a question or two from chat that hasn't been answered about unassignments. Brittany.

Brittany: Sure. I have a question from Darcy. Why is the EN not notified if a Ticketholder is unassigned by the beneficiary or by SSA?

Nicole Black: Hi, Darcy. Well, I don't know why they're not notified. I think that's a policy. And you know, just based on the size of the Ticket to Work Program and the way Tickets are assigned and unassigned so rapidly, it would be very hard to make that notification. But the recommendation is to regularly pull your Ticketholders assigned to me that you can locate in the Portal. And you can do a reconciliation yourself just to make sure that people are still on your rolls. I hope that was helpful.

Derek Shields: Thanks, Nicole. Brittany, one more question.

Brittany: Yes, I have a question from Mary Lynn. It's a long one, Nicole.

Nicole Black: Okay, I'm focused. Let's do it.

Brittany: Okay. We had a couple of cases where we were paid the Phase 1 payments, but then many months after we were paid, we were notified of an EN overpayment due to successful VR closure. The successful VR closure was not posted on the beneficiary record in the Ticket Portal at time of assignment, at time of payment request, nor when the payment was allowed and paid out. Would SSA consider reviewing this policy and require a timeframe in which VR requests for Cost Reimbursement. It does not, so that it does not impact the EN's payments already approved and paid by SSA to the EN.

Nicole Black: Thank you, Mary Lynn. Thank you, Brittany. This is a question for Katie because it deals with policy.

Katie: Sure. Well, I mean, this is our policy, right. We would be paying two entities for the same service, which is why Phase 1 Milestones are not available if there's a Cost Reimbursement payment. So right, if we go and find out that there has been a Cost Reimbursement payment, those payments are no longer available. So, we would be paying twice for the same service. So that's why it's the policy. We can definitely take back, you know, reconsidering our policy. But that's the policy in place at this time.

Nicole Black: Thank you, Katie.

Derek Shields: Thanks for the question, Mary Lynn, and thanks for jumping on again, Katie. And in a couple of cases we've had some questions where the response has been placed in chat by Jalin. Thanks, Jalin, for helping us out today with your excellent chat responses. If you do have a question that isn't getting answered and it's specific, then please reach out to the help desk at their 800 number or at ENpaymentshelpdesk@yourtickettowork.ssa.gov.

We haven't been able to get to every question, and we are running out of time.

And at this time we are approaching the hour. So, if we could proceed to our next slide, I would like to acknowledge and thank Nicole Black as our Payments Manager and presenter today, along with Kim and Katie for their assistance in answering the questions. There were a couple of comments that called out this Essential session as very helpful and useful, and we appreciate that feedback. And thank you, Nicole, for being with us today. As Nicole mentioned and Tammy was placing in chat, we have some resources that are available.

For the forms, go under the Resources section of the Your Ticket to Work website to access the Proof of Relationship, the Certification of Services and the Split Payment Request form. Under the Documents section of the Resources are, you can access

those tools, the EN Payments Checklist, Payments at a Glance, and the 18-Month Look Back Tool, along with that document we posted, Payment Denial Reasons under the Ticket Program. And then of course, the Preventing and Managing Overpayments fact sheet that was also shared in chat. So thank you for experiencing this deeper dive of today on payments. If we could go to the final slide, please.

A few words about our upcoming events. On March 19, next week, we have the quarterly All EN Call. Please join us for those updates from the Social Security representatives and some remarks from our TPM team.

Next on March 27th, our next WISE will occur. It's how will work affect my Medicare and Medicaid. This is a very popular session, and we encourage you to share this information with Ticketholders and your team members.

April 10, the next EN Essentials is scheduled: At Your Service. Who to Contact on the Ticket Program Manager Team. Looking at the types of services and how to reach us for those specific activities.

May 7 will be the next All EN payments call. Please prepare and put that on your calendar.

Speaking of calendars, all 2024 TPM and SSA calendar events are on the website under the Calendar of Events section. If you want to get those on your calendar, check it out. And if you have questions that haven't been answered or if you have feedback or comments, we encourage you to reach out to the EN Development and Training department at ENoperations@yourtickettowork.ssa.gov. We appreciate your feedback, recommendations and ideas which we noticed in chat today for future Essentials events. We appreciate those and we appreciate you joining us today. This concludes this EN Essentials training. Thank you.