

Introductions and Updates

Rob Pfaff (SSA)

Rob welcomed everyone and expressed appreciation to be back after a 6-month support detail to the U.S. House Social Security Subcommittee. Regarding Social Security staffing updates, there is not yet an SSA Commissioner appointment. Nancy Berryhill continues as Acting Commissioner and Mark Warshawski remains the Deputy Commissioner for the Office of Retirement and Disability Policy. Rob continues as Deputy Associate Commissioner for Employment Support in the Office of Research, Demonstration and Employment Support (ORDES) with Susan Wilschke as Deputy Associate Commissioner on the Research and Demonstration side.

Suitability Update

Presenters Vernon Collins and Rosita Acevedo (SSA)

Vernon Collins, Center for Suitability and Personnel Security (CSPS), shared information on the new electronic process for determining suitability.

In the past, the Employment Network's (EN) point of contact (POC) would fax the e-QIP applicant list to CSPS and then CSPS issues an e-QIP link. Effective immediately, those POCs seeking suitability with the Social Security Administration (SSA) will now email their e-QIP applicant list, OF-306, and the Fair Credit Reporting Act authorization forms directly to dchr.ope.suitability@ssa.gov and copy ENservice@SSA.gov. ENs must password protect all documents with the standard EN encryption pin.

CSPS will review the applicant's investigation history to determine if a new investigation is required. If the applicant needs a new investigation, CSPS will issue the e-QIP link and include fingerprint instructions. (If the applicant already has the proper investigation, CSPS may make a suitability determination at this stage.)

After the applicant completes and releases the e-QIP application online, applicants will schedule electronic fingerprinting with SSA's contract company. SSA's contract company has numerous locations nationwide. It takes only a few minutes to make an appointment and complete fingerprinting. CSPS can then access the prints within 30 minutes. SSA's negotiated rate for electronic fingerprinting is only \$16.50; much less than many local police stations. These electronic prints have a very high accuracy rate for obtaining useable prints with only one transmission.

e-QIP and fingerprinting must be completed within 10 days after being issued the e-QIP link.

The CSPA will review the forms and return them with instructions if anything is incomplete.

The OF 306, Declaration of Federal Employment form, has 7 questions that refer to box 16 for providing a detailed explanation if they answer “yes” to those questions. Applicants should closely follow the question’s instructions for providing all the requested information. Failure to provide the requested information will require a follow-up from CSPA and delay suitability processing. If the applicant answers “yes” to question 13, please advise the applicant that CSPA will follow-up and request proof of a payment plan for delinquent federal tax debt and delinquent student loans. If the applicant doesn’t already have a payment plan in place, they must establish one before CSPA can make a suitability determination.

There are 3 suitability determinations:

1. Suitable: The applicant is allowed to work if found suitable. Upon CSPA’s initial suitability determination, as necessary, CSPA will initiate a request with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to complete a more in-depth background investigation. This investigation can take up to a year to complete. Based on the findings, CSPA may need additional information from the applicant, and, although infrequent, CSPA may need to reverse the initial suitable determination. It is important that the applicant continue to comply with any requests from CSPA or OPM to remain suitable and continue work with SSA.
2. Not Suitable: The applicant is not allowed to work.
3. Pre-screened denied: More information is needed for CSPA to make an initial suitability determination. The applicant must comply with any requests in order to proceed through the suitability process. If the applicant does not reply timely, CSPA may cancel the suitability application for non-compliance.

Rob Pfaff clarified that ORDES does not handle the suitability requests. CSPA handles nationwide suitability for all areas of SSA programs and SSA contractors. CSPA processes thousands of suitability determinations every year. Your adherence to this new process is necessary for timely processing of all suitability applications.

Questions and Answers

Q: Will a document be sent that explains the new process?

A: Yes, information will be sent by email and posted on the website.

Q: What if an EN recently sent in suitability paperwork for an employee?



A: Recent submissions will be handled per the old method. All new submissions will be handled under the new process.

Q: What should ENs do in rural areas where there may not be easy access to e-fingerprinting?

A: The electronic process is highly recommended for efficiency, but if the electronic fingerprint service provider is not available, you may submit hard copy fingerprint cards.

Q: How often must an EN update fingerprints on file?

A: For now, once cleared, ENs do not need to update fingerprints.

Q: Must ENs go to a Social Security office for fingerprinting?

A: ENs do not need to go to a Social Security office. SSA's contract company has numerous locations nationwide, such as UPS stores or other businesses.

Q: After ENs receive the e-QIP application link, do ENs have 10 days to send in the other forms?

A: Yes. ENs have 10 days to complete e-QIP and report for fingerprinting. The timeline is designed to move the process along. e-QIP initiations do time-out. The applicant should contact CSPA's hotline (phone number provided in the e-QIP invite) if they are unable to log into e-QIP.

Promoting Opportunity Demonstration (POD)

John Jones, Kai Filion, Vince Pellegrini, and Drew Counselman (SSA)

SSA provided Information on the POD purpose and status. Social Security is required by Congress to conduct a five-year (2017 to 2021) demonstration to test a benefit offset for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) beneficiaries, including a simplification of work incentives.

Staff from the POD team discussed project activities, including the roles of Abt Associates and Mathematica Policy Research. POD activities include enrollment, implementation, and evaluation of the intervention research design, which includes 2 treatment groups and 1 control group.

ENs learned how they could help the recruitment effort in either all or select counties of 8 states, including Alabama, California, Connecticut, Maryland, Michigan, Nebraska, Texas and Vermont. Recruitment of 15,000 beneficiaries began in January and will continue through December 2018.



To find more information or to request a participant packet for the POD, contact:

- Email: PODEvaluation@mathematica-mpr.com
- Toll Free number: 1-888-771-9188
- Website: www.podssa.org

On Thursday, March 22 at 2-3 p.m., ET. Mathematica will conduct a webinar for more information about POD.

Questions and Answers

Q: Will the beneficiary's POD participation show up on the Benefits Planning Query (BPQY)?

A: Yes.

Effective Practice Presentation: Amy's Success Story – Service Provider Collaboration

Eric Schmidt (MD DORS) and Karyn Stenzler (Full Circle)

Presenters shared how the Maryland Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) and Full Circle Employment Services worked collaboratively with Amy to deliver training and employment support services while Amy's DORS case was open and after her case closure. The presenters discussed the power of partnerships, and how DORS and EN services worked together. Full Circle EN staff continue to provide Amy with benefits counseling and other services to support ongoing successful employment. Both DORS and Full Circle have promoted the Partnership Plus success story to various audiences. Amy's story is available at: <https://choosework.ssa.gov/library/amy-success-story>. ENs can send success stories of beneficiaries who have gone off benefits as a result of work to stories@choosework@ssa.gov.

Ticket Program Outreach

Jayne Pendergraft (TPM)

The Service Provider Outreach Toolkit contains fact sheets, success stories, program branding materials, and other resources. The Toolkit has moved to

<https://yourtickettowork.ssa.gov/related-resources/service-provider-outreach-toolkit.html>

ENs are encouraged to volunteer to write a blog for Choose Work and to present on a



Work Incentive Seminar Event (WISE) webinar. If interested, contact socialmedia@choosework.ssa.gov.

ENs are also encouraged to follow Choose Work for beneficiaries and Ticket to Work for Service Providers on Social Media. There are several opportunities to do so including:

- Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/choosework
- Follow us on Twitter: www.twitter.com/chooseworkssa
- Watch Ticket to Work Videos on YouTube: www.youtube.com/choosework
- Follow us on LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/ticket-to-work
- Like us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/yourtickettowork>
- Follow us on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/tickettowork>

EN Reminders

Cara Caplan (SSA)

Cara provided several reminders:

- The Annual Performance Outcome Report (APOR) was due February 28. ENs with an agreement date in 2017, American Job Center (AJC) Workforce ENs, and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) ENs are exempt from the APOR. After Feb 28, if SSA has not received your APOR, your EN may be limited in its ability to assign Tickets, receive payments, or your contract may be terminated. Email questions to SSAENAPOR@yourtickettowork.ssa.gov with the subject line “APOR Assistance.”
- The annual Security Awareness Training form was also due on February 28. All EN staff should review, sign and keep a copy of the individual form (SSA-222) at their EN location. In addition to signing the individual forms to keep onsite, the EN POC must complete the Addendum form that lists all staff who have completed the SSA-222 individual form and submit it to ENService@ssa.gov by February 28. If your EN only has one contact, send a single SSA-222 form. Include your DUNS in the subject of your email. Send questions to ENService@ssa.gov or contact your SSA Specialist for information.
- Form 1374: Ticket Program Agreement (TPA) Change Form is used to update contacts, locations and all changes to your EN. Submit the form for all EN changes by the Signatory Authority or Program Contact to SSA at ENService@ssa.gov or fax to 410.597.0429.



- Certification of Services (COS) documentation is also a mandatory TPA requirement. Social Security has stopped EN payments and terminated ENs for non-compliance.

Training

Ana Morales (TPM)

Service Provider's Foundation Training is available to all service providers upon request. Training is mandatory for:

- EN key contact(s) responsible on TPA for Ticketholders, payments, and TPA inquiries.
- New employees with these responsibilities that start after TPA award
- New ENs before being activated and allowed to serve beneficiaries

Training must be completed within 60 days. More information is available at <https://yourtickettowork.ssa.gov/web/ttw/service-provider-foundations>.

Concluding Question and Answer period

Final Q & A will be available at <https://yourtickettowork.ssa.gov/web/ttw/events-archive>.

Additional Details

The full transcript and audio from the Quarterly All-EN Call will be available at <https://yourtickettowork.ssa.gov/web/ttw/events-archive>.

