

## Introductions and Updates

### Robert Pfaff (SSA)

Rob welcomed everyone to the call and provided the following updates:

#### Social Security Changes

The White House announced on April 13 that Andrew M. Saul of New York was nominated as the Social Security Commissioner for the remainder of the current term until January 19, 2019, and for 6 more years until January 19, 2025. Andrew is currently the Social Security Commissioner for Westchester County, N.Y. Rob provided additional background detail that demonstrated Andrew's extensive experience with Social Security.

David Fabian Black of South Dakota was chosen as Deputy Administrator for the Social Security Administration and will serve the remainder of the current term through January 19, 2019. Currently, David is a White House advisor and also a Lt. Colonel in the US Army Reserve.

Both nominations will be sent to the Senate for appointment confirmation.

#### CSAVR Conference

Rob, other Social Security staff, and Ticket Program Manager (TPM) staff participated in the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) Conference on April 11 in Bethesda, Md. SSA staff provided a cost reimbursement training and supported an information session for VR leadership on Partnership Plus benefits. Partnership Plus is beneficial to all parties, including Employment Networks (EN), VR agencies and beneficiaries. The EN and VR agency work out an arrangement to provide a continuum of services. The beneficiary gets intensive upfront VR services and the EN works with the individual for employment follow-along. It is the best of both worlds for both programs.

#### Staff Changes

Three SSA managers, with a combined experience of more than 100 years, recently retired from the Office of Research, Demonstration and Employment Support (ORDES): Mark Green, Carol Cohen and Desiree Fitzgerald. SSA is fortunate to bring on new leadership talent.

- Jennelle Bratcher is the new Office of Ticket Operation and Provider Support (OTOPS) Deputy Office Director. Jennelle is very excited about her new role with responsibility for cost reimbursement and EN payments. She has been with SSA for 14 years and was previously a Senior Policy Analyst.
- Patrice McLean is the new Office of Beneficiary Outreach and Employment Support (OBOES) Branch Chief. Patrice is pleased to serve as the Branch Chief and noted that many ENs are already familiar with her from the proof of concepts (POC), site visits, and prior EN calls. While she will stay involved in the POC initiatives, the new contacts are:

- Carol Dempsey for the Benefits Planning Query (BPQY) POC. Contact: [ORDES.BPQY.POC@ssa.gov](mailto:ORDES.BPQY.POC@ssa.gov)
- Melanie Porter for the wage reporting POC. Contact: [ORDES.wagereporting.poc@ssa.gov](mailto:ORDES.wagereporting.poc@ssa.gov)
- Terry Lesko for the Marketing POC. Contact: [Marketing.support.poc@ssa.gov](mailto:Marketing.support.poc@ssa.gov)

## Timely Progress Reviews (TPR)

### Elissa Ness (SSA)

Elissa Ness announced that SSA restarted TPRs on March 17 by sending 100 selection letters nationally. The Boston region had the most letters sent to the State VR agency as well as some ENs. Among the VR and ENs, 25 beneficiaries, most from the Boston region, passed TPR based on earnings documented in the SSA administrative data base. To date, there are 33 TPR passes, 27 TPR failures and 60+ pending. Final TPR failures will result in the loss of beneficiary Continuing Disability Review protection.

The Portal is not currently open for TPR service provider access. ENs will receive training on Portal access for TPR prior to it being opened. There is no TPR opt-out for service providers. If ENs do not respond to TPR requests, MAXIMUS will be adjudicating as long as the beneficiary returned the 1375 form, which is part of the selection letter. General TPR training is available.

SSA has been validating the Internet Ticket Operations Provider Support System (iTOPPS), which is the basis for TPR selection and adjudication. One hundred additional TPR selection letters will be released very soon. Contact [TPRhelpdesk@yourtickettowor.ssa.gov](mailto:TPRhelpdesk@yourtickettowor.ssa.gov) for questions.

## Ticket Program Outreach

### Jayme Pendergraft (TPM)

#### New Resources

A new work plan FAQ resource is available at <https://choosework.ssa.gov/Assets/uploads/files/FAQ-Planning-Employment-Goals.pdf>.

A video summarizing 6 business success stories in 2017 is available at <https://choosework.ssa.gov/library/2017-ticket-to-work-successes-a-year-in-review>.

#### Volunteer Opportunities

ENs are encouraged to volunteer to engage in Work Incentive Seminar Events (WISE) webinars on a wide range of topics. To volunteer as a speaker or help promote the webinars, contact Jayme by e-mail at: [JaymeLPendergraft@maximus.com](mailto:JaymeLPendergraft@maximus.com).



Consider working with TPM to create a success story which can be featured through social media and WISE webinars. Arielle Dorros from MAXIMUS may be in contact with your EN to identify success stories.

### **Social Media**

ENs are encouraged to use Ticket program social media platforms including Facebook and Twitter accounts to share information.

- Social Media channels for beneficiaries include Facebook: @ChooseWork! and Twitter: @chooseworkSSA.
- The beneficiary social media site is where to find beneficiary-focused content including beneficiary success stories, upcoming WISE events, the Meet Ben video and links to other organizations and federal agencies.
- Service provider social media is at Facebook: @yourtickettowork and Twitter: @tickettowork.
- The service provider social media site provides useful information such as EN training materials and articles.

The following are ways to begin using our content to build contact with your audiences:

1. ENs are sent at least one social media message each month. These often highlight WISE events or new success stories and resources. Our social media distributions also include a new blog 2 times per week to help spread the word to EN audiences.
2. To share info from our Facebook to yours, log in to Facebook and navigate to ChooseWork! Hit the share button and write your own lead to your audience, or simply share it to your Facebook page.
3. To share a post on Twitter, log into Twitter at chooseworkSSA and retweet or like the twitter post. The heart icon is used for a like and the 2 arrows in a circle will retweet the post to your audience.

The new EN Service Provider Foundations course has 2 EN marketing modules. The first is an EN marketing overview and the second contains program-specific resources. ENs can sign up for either training by contacting [ENoperations@yourtickettowork@ssa.gov](mailto:ENoperations@yourtickettowork@ssa.gov).

### **Lorie Adler, Employment Options**

Lori shared information about how their EN uses social media for online marketing to grow their brand, promote national job fairs and webinars, and reach new clients.



Facebook is used to support clients and to connect with new partners. Ticket program social media posts are liked, shared and retweeted via their social media outlets. In addition to Facebook, other social media used include YouTube, Twitter and Pinterest. Most social media applications are free.

Employment Options launched a special Twitter project this year to post and share positive stories about clients and how the Ticket program is changing lives. The Twitter hashtag is #TTWhelpedme. Lori encouraged other ENs to join this effort and also use this hashtag for posting and accessing positive stories and quotes from clients. If any ENs are interested in the hashtag initiative, contact Lori by e-mail: [ladler@myemploymentoptions.com](mailto:ladler@myemploymentoptions.com).

## Portal Updates

### Katie Striebinger (SSA)

If ENs notice an erroneous Ticket unassignment or termination on the Portal, contact [programintegrity@yourtickettowork@ssa.gov](mailto:programintegrity@yourtickettowork@ssa.gov). You can identify the error and submit error documentation to the inbox.

An email blast went out on April 12 to active Ticket Portal users regarding the Ticket Portal User Guide. To request a copy of the Ticket Portal User Guide, or if you have questions about the Ticket Portal, e-mail the provider support Help Line at [ensystemshelp@yourtickettowork.ssa.gov](mailto:ensystemshelp@yourtickettowork.ssa.gov), or call the main number at 1-866-949-3687.

## EN Updates

### Cara Caplan (SSA)

#### Site Visits

SSA is starting EN annual site visits the week of May 27 and will continue through September. Cara thanked those who responded to the site visit notifications. New this year, TPM staff will accompany SSA staff on the visits.

## Policy Updates

SSA will offer training on recent policy changes related to EN services and supports on June 14 at 3 p.m. The following topics will be covered: (1) acceptable contact methods; (2) an overview of the services and supports review; (3) the purposes and processes; and (4) an overview of the updated results and follow-up actions effective starting in June.

During the initial service phase (pre-employment and Phase 1 Milestones), ENs should contact the Ticketholder a minimum of once per month. During the ongoing service phase (employed



Phase 2 Milestones and Outcomes), ENs should contact the Ticketholder a minimum of quarterly for the entirety of the Ticket assignment.

If ENs are unable to contact Ticketholders, the EN should send a certified or first-class letter to the Ticketholder saying they are having trouble making contact. SSA prefers a certified letter, but does not mandate it. If they are in the initial service phase, ENs must send the letter after 3 months of no contact. If the Ticketholder is in the ongoing support phase, a letter should be sent after 2 quarters of no contact. TPM has posted sample language that may be used for the letter. Responses as well as lack of a response should be recorded in case notes and copies of letters sent should be in the case file. The case notes will be used during the services and supports review to ensure the EN is actively contacting and attempting to contact the Ticketholder.

### **System for Award Management (SAM) Registration**

There have been recent changes to SAM. ENs must renew their SAM registration on a yearly basis to continue to be paid. Not registering and not updating your SAM registration could also lead to termination.

SAM requirements now proactively address fraudulent activity. SAM now requires an original, signed, notarized letter identifying the EN Administrator associated with the DUNS number before a new SAM.gov entity registration will be activated, or an existing one is updated or renewed. All ENs should monitor their email for notifications from SAM.gov regarding their registration and necessary renewals/updates.

### **Security**

SSA is being given more guidance on Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and security matters. Contractors make SSA more vulnerable. The Ticket program has one of the largest contractor contingencies in the agency and must be proactive to ensure compliance. This is not new -- every EN has signed off on PII and security in the Ticket Program Agreement (TPA).

The TPA states that SSA routinely does not consider a person's private residence a secure area or duty station. ENs wishing to establish a secure area or duty station in a private residence must submit a written request to SSA at [enservice@ssa.gov](mailto:enservice@ssa.gov). The request must be a detailed description of the actions taken by the EN to ensure security, and the EN must receive SSA's written approval prior to establishing the secure area or duty station to conduct EN business.

If ENs are discovered with a private residence office and don't have written permission, sanctions may be taken. Please contact [enservice@ssa.gov](mailto:enservice@ssa.gov) with questions.



## Concluding Question and Answer period

### One question from the discussion is being clarified:

If ENs submit earnings to TPM via the Ticket Portal, do beneficiaries still need to submit their earnings to their local Social Security office?

***ENs should always encourage beneficiaries to submit earnings to their local Social Security offices*** because this is still the beneficiary's responsibility, even if they submit those earnings to the EN. If ENs receive copies of earnings documentation from beneficiaries, ENs can also submit this information to MAXIMUS.

If the EN is submitting a payment request and has earnings documentation:

- Submit payment request via the Ticket Portal
- Print out fax cover sheet after entering the claim in the Portal
- Fax earnings documentation along with cover sheet to the number listed on the cover sheet.

If the EN is submitting earnings documentation and no payment request submitted:

- Using the EN's Business fax coversheet (that contains the DUNS numbers, SSN and name of beneficiary), fax earnings documentation to MAXIMUS 703-893-4020 (Manual Submissions).

## 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>.

