

Social Security Welcome to Existing and New ENs

Cara Caplan, Branch Chief, Office of Employment Support (SSA)

Dr. Caplan welcomed everyone to the call and greeted new Employment Networks (ENs):

- Venture Linx – OH
- Mariela Communications - CA
- Workforce Escarosa - FL
- Deaf Employment and Advocacy Firm - TX
- Ticket to Success LLC - OH

Payment Reminders

Katie Striebinger, Payments and Systems Support Branch Chief (SSA)

EN Payments Call

Social Security scheduled the next quarterly All EN Payments Call for Tuesday, April 25. If you haven't received a reminder, contact the EN Payments Help Desk at enpaymentshelpdesk@yourtickettowork.ssa.gov. This call covers EN payment basics, reminders, and best practices. It also provides guidance on the upcoming e-pay process.

E-pay Process

E-pay is an automatic payment process for eligible ENs that includes processing Phase 1 Milestone 4, all Phase 2 Milestones, and all Outcome payments for currently assigned Ticketholders without the EN taking any action. ENs must not request payments that rely on the "Earnings Already Proven" message in the Portal for specific payment types (Phase 1 Milestone 4, all Phase 2 Milestones, and all Outcomes). This can cause duplication of effort and slow down payments during the E-pay process. For Phase 1 Milestone 1, Milestone 2 and Milestone 3, please go ahead and request those payments.

EN Updates and Reminders

Cara Caplan, Branch Chief, Office of Employment Support (SSA)

Approved Cloud Storage and Process for EN Approval

Any cloud storage service utilized by an EN must have Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program (FedRAMP) approval. Access more information on FedRAMP services and requirements at: <https://marketplace.fedramp.gov/#!/products?sort=productName>.

ENs must send verification of the service they have and intend to use to SSA for approval. This can be a screenshot, but it must include the subscribed licenses and cloud configuration settings. ENs should not store anything in the cloud until and unless they receive approval from

SSA in writing. ENs will need to submit cloud storage service verification annually as part of their Service and Supports Review.

Annual Security Awareness Certification and Annual Performance Outcome Report (APOR) Updates

The last day to submit both requirements was February 27. For the ENs that did not comply in a timely manner for this TPA requirement, SSA sent reminders and Cure Notices, and as a result terminated 14 ENs for non-compliance.

APOR updates included the following:

- Work from home request; status - in progress.
- Partnership Plus agreements; status – completed: Partnership Plus badges added to the website and ENs notified of approval or denial.
- Proof of Workforce entity status; status – completed: Workforce badge added to the website and ENs notified of approval or denial.
- Benefits counseling certifications – completed: Benefits Counseling badge added to the website and ENs notified of approval or denial.

Note: In 2023, we will collect these four items during APOR and the annual Service and Supports (S&S) Reviews. Next year, we will only collect these items through the annual S&S Review.

Annual Services and Supports Reviews

To ensure that Ticketholders are receiving the services and supports needed for success and that the ENs are meeting the requirements of the TPA, SSA directed TPM to provide a more robust annual S&S Review. Some examples of what TPM includes in the annual S&S Review are:

- Confirms that ENs are meeting the Ticket assignment and payment requirements.
- Ensures suitability of staff working with the Ticketholder.
- Compares previous and current S&S Review results for improvement or identifies continued patterns of non-compliance. We must ensure all IWPs are specific to each individual Ticketholder.

Based on the EN's compliance to the requirements as outlined in the TPA, Part III, Section 4, the EN receives an overall rating of:

- Compliant – Indicates the EN satisfactorily met the requirements, with no or minimal issues.
- Needs Improvement – Indicates the EN did not consistently apply the requirements.
- Non-Compliant – Indicates the EN did not meet the requirements.

Following a Non-Compliant rating of the annual S&S Review:

- Program Integrity will schedule a Technical Assistance Session (TAS) with the EN to



discuss the areas needing improvement and required next steps. All main key contacts listed on the TPA as well as all suitable staff creating Individual Work Plans (IWP) must attend the TAS. Program Integrity will review the EN again in six months. SSA will place the EN on ePay suspension until, at a minimum, the EN passes the six-month S&S Review.

Personally Identifiable Information (PII) Reminder – Mandatory Bimonthly Training Attendance

ENs must complete mandatory training as part of the first-time PII violation. Since March, the mandatory training is a live session with the EN Development and Training Team. Attendance is mandatory for the violator, Signatory Authority, Suitability Point of Contact (POC), Program Contact, Ticketholder POC, and Payments POC. SSA highly advise to forward the invitation to all other EN staff to help avoid future violations and further consequences.

TPM will offer the training twice a month, via MS Teams. TPM will post the calendar in advance and invite ENs to a specific session. All mandatory EN employees will need to attend the training as a team on the assigned date. If a main POC fails to attend, all members of the EN must attend a new session or the EN may receive a cure notice.

Ticket Portal Reminders

Social Security sent a GovDelivery message on March 21 to all ENs addressing the changes to the Ticket Portal and the training curriculum. SSA limits Portal access to individuals who have a business need and plan to access the Portal regularly for each EN. SSA makes protecting its information systems a top priority. The Ticket Portal (Portal) uses the highest level of security available to the agency and allows service providers to do business safely and securely with SSA.

We learned that Service Provider Foundations Training included all EN employees. As a result, there are Portal users who have no business need to access the Ticket Portal. To correct this, SSA will begin reducing the number of staff authorized to access the Portal to active users who have a business need.

As of April 1, 2023, SSA removed Portal access for individuals who have not accessed the Portal in the last 180 days. SSA is currently in the process of removing over 250 users. As a reminder, Ticket Portal users must access the Portal at least once every 90 days or your account will become inactive. After 90 additional days of inactivity (180 days total), SSA will remove the user from the Portal without notifying the EN. Any user removed must go back through training before reinstatement into the Portal.

It's critical that each EN verifies the Portal users for their organizations, instead of continuing business as usual. The GovDelivery message explains how to do that in the Ticket Portal.

SSA also indicated that mandatory Service Provider Foundations Training (SPFT) for main



points of contact through the Learning Management System, Bridge, will continue. All other EN staff may access training through the Your Ticket to Work website, and we will provide the link in the chat section.

SSA and TPM will do a mandatory tri-annual employment verification.

Updated Ticket Program Agreement (TPA) Change Form

At the end of March, SSA updated the TPA change form to capture important changes to optimize the SSA database and to capture necessary information such as corporate status categories, underserved populations specifically targeted, type of organization, clarified information whether a main POC has left the EN or just moved into a different position, and to capture Ticket Portal users who should be designated by the Signatory Authority or the Program contact as an EN's business need. EN Service needs to receive one form per user to either add or remove them from the system.

All changes, including adding someone new to the Portal or when any personnel is added or leaves your organization, must be done through the [TPAChangeForm \(ssa.gov\)](https://ssa.gov/TPAChangeForm). An EN must send in a TPA change form for all personnel and business changes. Your TPA requires you to send in any personnel changes within one business day for an employee and three business days for a main point of contact, many ENs are not abiding by this and, as a reminder, this is a violation of your TPA.

We will not accept changes to your agreement in the body of an email. When sending any email make sure you put your State, the acronym PID and the PID number with no spaces (PID123456789), as well as the EN name in the subject line of the email and any subject you want to put. Make sure you do not write the PID with dashes like an SSN. When this information is not in the subject line, it slows down the process.

We have sent out several GovDelivery messages including contact requirements for ENs. These changes are all reflected in the most current RFA, [The Work Site - Request for Application \(RFA\) \(ssa.gov\)](https://ssa.gov/TheWorkSite-RequestforApplication(RFA)).

Note: We also added the capability of electronically signing the form and recommend not to complete the form online. Instead, download the form to your computer to avoid technical difficulties. When submitting the form, please complete only the sections that you need to update. Also, please include your PID and EN name in the subject line of each email and submit all changes in the TPA change form instead of the body of an email.

When corresponding with EN Service or SSA you do not need to cc the Training and Activation Analyst, formerly known as your Account Managers, to avoid confusion and miscommunication. Most general questions should go to ENService@ssa.gov.

Training Curriculum Learner Pathways

Ana Morales, EN Development and Training Manager (TPM)

TPM updated and implemented training curriculum learner pathways on April 1 in the Bridge Learning Management System. ENs must submit the TPA Change Form to initiate training sessions for main Point of Contacts and Signatory Authorities involved in the day-to-day operations of an EN, as well as Ticket Portal Users.

The Signatory Authority or Program Contact must designate the Ticket Portal User via the TPA Change Form, based on the business needs of the EN. As a reminder, per Portal User – Section Four (page 8), submit one TPA Change Form per Portal User.

Learner Pathway – Ticket Portal User

Ms. Morales explained a visual of the pathway that EN orientation follows. EN Orientation is a live session with the Training and Activation Analyst, followed by three phases of training with varying numbers of modules, learning checks and checkpoints. We moved the checkpoints for suitability and Ticket Portal access to the end of the learner pathway.

Upon completion of training, learners will receive a certificate of graduation and can start operations within the EN. TPM is in the process of updating the learner pathways for all main point of contacts, Program Contact, Ticketholder, Suitability, and Payments Contacts.

Additional resources are always available on the website, and supplemental training sessions on various topics will be offered soon.

Note: To clarify, the SPFT is mandatory training for new ENs or new point of contacts at existing ENs (Program, Ticketholder, Payments, Suitability contacts, and Ticket Portal Users). Per the TPA, ENs must complete the SPFT within 60 days of new EN award or a new POC assignment.

Communications and Outreach Updates

Derek Shields, Sr. EN Development and Training Manager (TPM)

Derek provided an overview of the Ticket to Work (Ticket) Program's outreach efforts. The Ticket Program's Outreach Team works diligently to promote the Ticket Program to eligible beneficiaries through a variety of different avenues including:

WISE Webinars

Online events designed to explain the Ticket Program and Work Incentives through accessible learning opportunities.

- Held on the fourth Wednesday of each month.
- Average monthly attendance ranges from 400-600, depending on topic.



- Next WISE topic: "How Will Work Affect My Medicaid or Medicare Benefits" on April 26, 3:00-4:30 PM Eastern Time.
- TPM sends sample social media posts for ENs to share every month via GovDelivery.
- Upcoming Webinars:
 - May: Ticket to Work for America's Veterans
 - June: Ticket to Work for People with Mental Illness
 - July: Reasonable Accommodations in the Path to Employment

Visit the [WISE web page](#) for more information, register for the next WISE webinar, and access WISE On Demand recordings.

Choose Work Social Media

TPM schedules daily social media posts (Facebook and Twitter) to promote and highlight:

- Blog posts
- Ticket Program resources and fact sheets
- Work Incentive Seminar Event (WISE) webinars
- Success stories
- Important Social Security updates
- Relevant information from other federal agencies

Fact Sheets

Ticket to Work fact sheets provide information about the Program and other Work Incentives. This month, we encourage you to share [What is Social Security's Ticket to Work Program?](#) with Ticketholders interested in learning more about the program.

Success Stories

Success stories feature individuals who have achieved financial independence with the help of the Ticket Program. Stepping stone stories feature individuals who have made a major step on the path to financial independence but have not yet eliminated their reliance on benefits.

Jessica's Story

Born with cerebral palsy, Jessica experienced stigma throughout her life. Her success story highlights the challenges she faced during her early education and the limitations others imposed on her. With the help of the Ticket to Work program, Jessica overcame these obstacles and achieved financial independence. Here is a link to review all of [Jessica's Success Story](#)

How Can You Share Success Stories?

- Promote success stories on social media.
- Become familiar with the stories and if you have a Ticketholder with a similar background, share with them.
- [Success Stories](#) are available online.
- For sample social media posts, contact socialmedia@choosework.ssa.gov.

Stay in Touch

- Like us on [Facebook](#)
- Follow us on [Twitter](#)
- Watch Ticket to Work Videos on [YouTube](#)
- Subscribe to [GovDelivery](#) updates
- Subscribe to [Choose Work! Blog](#) updates
- Email socialmedia@choosework.ssa.gov

Questions/Answers

A question-and-answer period followed, which is part of the call recording and transcript.

Next Quarterly All EN Call

The next All EN Call is on Tuesday, August 22, 2023, at 1:00 p.m. ET.