



QUARTERLY ALL VR CALL RECAP

APRIL 14, 2026

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- Announcements
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Announcements

Jocelyn Greenidge, Sr. Program Director/Moderator (TPM)

Jocelyn Greenidge served as the moderator for the Quarterly All VR Call. The announcements covered the VR Client Earnings Report (VRCER) Distribution Frequency Poll, created to capture VR input regarding the VRCER file frequency, and a reminder about the new SSA Suitability Office email address, as well as a reminder to compress files when sending them to SSA's Suitability Office.



Ticket to Work Evaluation

Seth Hartig (SSA)

Seth provided an overview of the upcoming Ticket to Work evaluation activities, including a survey for VR agencies and beneficiary interviews, which are supported by contractor Mathematica and colleague Ellie Stinnett. Participants were informed about survey invitations, incentives, and how to encourage client participation.

- **Survey Distribution and Participation:** SSA will send a survey to each VR agency in the coming weeks to gather feedback on the Ticket to Work Program. The program contact at each agency will receive the survey invitation by mail and email from TTWevaluation@mathematica-mpr.com. Agencies are advised to add this email to their safe sender list or check spam folders to ensure receipt.
- **Survey Incentives and Decline Option:** Each provider completing the survey will be offered a \$40 gift card, with the option to decline if organizational rules prohibit accepting incentives. Mailing addresses for the gift card will be collected at the end of the survey.
- **Beneficiary Interviews and Encouragement:** SSA will conduct interviews with beneficiaries to learn about their experiences. VR agencies are encouraged to support clients who are invited to participate, and gift cards will also be provided to interviewees.
- **Contact Information for Questions:** Questions about the evaluation activities can be directed via email message to Seth Hartig (Seth.Hartig@ssa.gov) or Ellie Stinnett (Eleanor.Stinnett@ssa.gov).

Ticket Portal Enrollment

Alexis Thomas (SSA)

Alexis clarified the steps for VR staff to gain access to the Ticket Portal, emphasizing the need for suitability clearance, creation of a *my* Social Security account with advanced security, and formal SSA authorization, with support available via the VR Help Desk.

- **Suitability Clearance Requirement:** VR staff must first obtain suitability clearance before accessing the Ticket Portal.



- **My Social Security Account Setup:** After receiving suitability clearance, staff must create a *my* Social Security account with advanced security, preferably using a personal email address for access to personal Social Security information.
- **SSA Authorization and Enrollment:** Once suitability clearance is received, staff must contact the VR Help Desk to be enrolled as a new user. The suitability letter alone does not grant Ticket Portal access; SSA must verify the advanced security account and will provide a welcome letter with the Portal link.
- **Portal Link Distribution Policy:** VR staff must not to share the Ticket Portal link with unauthorized agency staff, as SSA manages user enrollment and distribution of the Portal link.

Ticket Portal Updates: Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

Katie Seymore (SSA)

Katie provided a detailed walkthrough of submitting Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) claims in the Ticket Portal, including documentation requirements, claim types, file upload options, and recent Portal updates, with guidance on timely filing and eligibility criteria.

- **Pre-ETS Claim Eligibility and Documentation:** Pre-ETS costs are eligible for reimbursement if services were provided to disabled youth ages 16 or 17 under a service agreement. Required documentation includes the service agreement, Form SSA-199, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504, an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) and amendments, as well as proof of payment, all to be submitted within 24 hours of claim creation.
- **Claim Submission Methods:** Claims can be submitted individually through the Portal screens or in bulk via VR claim file upload. The Portal now includes a Pre-ETS claim type and a mandatory service agreement date field.
- **Portal Functionality and User Guide:** The Ticket Portal user guide, distributed upon enrollment, remains unchanged since 2017. Sample XMLs for file uploads are available in the guide.
- **Faxing Documentation and Cover Sheets:** Supporting documents must be faxed using the Portal's 'fax additional information' feature, with separate cover sheets for each document type to facilitate processing. The Portal tracks fax status and receipt dates.



- **Timely Filing and Age Criteria:** Pre-ETS claims must follow the same timely filing rules as SGA-based claims, and services must have started when the client was 16 or 17. Claims submitted outside these parameters will be denied.

Reconsideration Policy Change

Renee Clarke (SSA)

Renee announced updates to SSA's reconsideration policy effective May 1, 2026, allowing VR agencies up to two reconsideration requests per denied claim, with distinct filing timelines for earnings and non-earnings related denials, and clarified acceptable earnings documentation.

- **New Reconsideration Limits:** Starting May 1, 2026, VR agencies may submit up to two reconsideration requests per denied claim for all initial claims received on or after May 1st, with the expectation that requests are based on high-quality data.
- **Timely Filing Restrictions:** For non-earnings related denials, agencies have 90 calendar days from the initial denial decision date to file reconsiderations. For earnings-related denials, the VR agencies have 365 calendar days from the initial denial decision date to file a reconsideration, reflecting the potential for SSA earnings data updates.
- **Earnings-Related Denial Criteria:** No changes were made to what constitutes an earnings-related denial, and these are listed in the policy guidance.
- **Acceptable Earnings Documentation:** Claims must include proof of earnings for nine out of 12 continuous months at or above SGA level. Acceptable documentation includes (but is not limited to) the Work Number, pay stubs, employer prepared earnings statements with FICA withholdings, SSA VRCER reports, and quarterly Office of Child Support Services National Directory of New Hire Data.
- **Policy Effective Date Clarification:** The new reconsideration policy will take effect May 1st, and notices will be updated to reflect the new timelines.



Untimely Filing Denials

Jocelyn Greenidge, Sr. Program Director/Moderator (TPM)

Jocelyn explained the main reasons for untimely filing denials, for initial claims and reconsiderations, and provided specific steps for VR agencies to avoid such denials by adhering to filing deadlines based on attainment of SGA and the denial decision date.

- **Initial Claim Untimely Filing:** Denial code 620 is issued when an initial claim is filed more than one year from the ninth month of SGA. Agencies should review earnings on the VR Client Earnings Report (VRCER) and ensure claims are filed within the one-year window.
- **Reconsideration Filing Deadlines:** Denial code 620 is also issued when a reconsideration claim is filed late. For earnings-related denials, reconsideration claims must be filed within 365 calendar days from the decision date. For non-earnings related denials, the deadline is 90 calendar days for initial claims submitted on or after May 1st, and 60 calendar days for initial claims submitted before May 1st. VR agencies should take note of the decision date on the notice of determination and file reconsideration requests within the specified timeframe to prevent untimely filing denials.

VR Reminders

Raquel Donaldson (SSA)

Raquel provided reminders for VR agencies contacting the VR Help Desk, including the importance of including Provider IDs (PIDs) for all inquiries as well as the importance of providing a signed IPE and error codes for Ticket assignment issues. She also welcomed Dennis McNerney as a new contact for New Jersey Blind VR.

- **Provider ID Requirement:** Agencies should include their PID (previously known as the DUNS number) in all help desk inquiries; if unknown, the help desk can provide it upon request.
- **Ticket Assignment Assistance:** When requesting help with Ticket assignment via the Portal, agencies must include a signed IPE and any relevant error codes, as VRs are expected to assign their own Tickets unless errors occur.
- **New Contact Introduction:** Dennis McNerney was introduced as the new contact for New Jersey Blind VR. Raquel encouraged agencies to support and assist newcomers.



Question and Answer Session

File Compression Clarification: Jocelyn clarified that 'compress' refers to zipping files before sending them to the suitability office. VRs may email VR.Helpdesk@ssa.gov for help with suitability.

Alternative Submission Methods for suitability documentation: A VR reported issues with state security policies blocking zipped files and requested information on alternative submission options, such as fax, due to restrictions on sending zipped or encrypted files. Jocelyn agreed to investigate and follow up, asking the VR to email the VR Help Desk with details. Update: VRs may email VR.Helpdesk@ssa.gov for help with suitability.

Earnings Documentation and 590 Denials: A VR discussed receiving frequent 590 denials due to missing earnings evidence and Candice Whaley explained SSA's requirements for wage documentation, advising on best practices for submitting claims and reconsiderations.

SSA Wage Documentation Policy: SSA requires documentation of earnings for nine out of 12 months for claim approval. If SSA records do not show sufficient earnings, claims are denied with code 590 unless additional documentation is provided.

Best Practices for Claim Submission: Candice advised VRs to submit both the VRCER report and any available wage documentation, especially for out-of-state employment, to proactively avoid 590 denials. If denied, agencies should submit a reconsideration request to the VR Help Desk.

Provider Handbook and Ticket Program Manager Contact: A VR inquired about the availability of a more current VR Provider Handbook and the status of the Ticket Program Manager contract. SSA confirmed that the most recent publication is the 2020 Handbook and a new TPM contract period has not started.

Upcoming WISE Event

Jocelyn Greenidge, Sr. Program Director/Moderator (TPM)

Jocelyn announced the next Work Incentives Seminar Event (WISE) titled "Debunking Myths About Disability Benefits and Work", taking place on April 22 from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. ET, with further details to be shared via GovDelivery messages.



Closing

Jocelyn Greenidge, Sr. Program Director/Moderator (TPM)

Jocelyn invited participants to submit topics for the next Quarterly All VR Call by emailing the VR Help Desk at VR.Helpdesk@ssa.gov. The date for the next call will be announced.