**All Employment Network Call**

**3 – 4:30 p.m. EDT**

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Michelle Laisure: Welcome everyone to our July EN conference call.
I am substituting for Felix Stump, so again thank you for joining us and we have a full agenda today. In fact, we will continue the call till 4:30 to make sure that we do have an opportunity to cover all of the topics on the agenda.

At this time I am going to hand it off to Gary Rauch, who is the director of the Office of Beneficiary Outreach and Employment Support and he is going to speak to the roles and responsibilities of the Employment Network service staff, the suitability process, and a brief update on the Ticket Portal. Gary?

 Gary Rauch: Thank you, Michelle, and welcome, everyone. I wanted to mention that I had spoken, I think, at a past meeting about a change in a model of how we're going to try to answer services to ENs and the hallmark of this Employment Network Service Branch (ENSB), is that each EN will have an SSA EN Specialist assigned to that particular EN to assist with any services needed in order that the EN can perform effectively and better serve our beneficiaries. Starting July 21, 2014, a week from Monday, EN specialists will begin making calls to ENs assigned to them. They will be introducing themselves, establishing a point of contact within the EN for future calls, and exchanging some useful information to enable us to provide better service including the SSA EN specialist's phone number.
There has been an EN service inquiry protocol document on the MAXIMUS web site which actually we took down yesterday for updating purposes. It will be back up shortly. We'll let you know.

Okay, if we could have anybody not speaking mute their line? Thank you.
So with this EN-VR service inquiry protocol document, it did list various components, for example, MAXIMUS contacts, SSA contacts, for various questions or problems, for example payment issues, assignments, IWPs and so on. Those resources will still be the first level of contact for those specific issues.
ENSB specialists will be available for any other questions or issues or if for some reason those resources have not been able to fully address the en's concerns. All new ENs will be assigned to an ENSB specialist and then once the BPA has been issued will assist the en in obtaining suitability applicable staff and then handing them off to MAXIMUS for training. MAXIMUS is still going to be fully involved in various areas of service, including initial and on-going training for ENs.

The EN specialists at SSA will periodically call their contact at the EN to update information, determine training or other needs, ensure that all staff accessing PII satisfy suitability requirements and any other issues pertinent to that EN we hope that satisfy the level of service with this business model and to keep SSA directly involved in the process of serving our beneficiaries.

Any other details, we can handle some questions if you have them but detailed specific information will be shared with you when you start receiving the calls from the en specialist setting up that relationship.
I also wanted to speak briefly, very briefly, about the suitability process for ENs. I think there had been some confusion about whether or not the signatory authority is always required to have gone through suitability.
The defining characteristic of whether you meet suitability is whether you have access to personally identifiable information on SSA, so if the signatory authority is not involved at that level they would not need it, but any staff that does have access to PII does have to go through the suitability process.
Any questions on any of these issues before I turn this over to Desiree Fitzgerald?

Michelle Laisure: Yes, we have two questions on the chat line. Leslie, want to go ahead and read those?

Leslie Barrett: Oh, yes, thank you, Michelle. Our first question is will ENs be expecting a call from their en specialist at SSA?

Gary Rauch: Yes, we will be calling. We're going to start this process, this business model, on Monday, July the 21, but we don't have an enormous staff and we have 700 ENs so we'll be getting to everyone but you can expect to hear from us as soon as possible.

Leslie Barrett: Okay, great. And then our second question is will the SSA specialist be someone in the region that's applicable to the employment network? So if an EN is located in Florida, will the EN specialist be in Florida?

Gary Rauch: No, the EN specialists will all be in SSA headquarters in Baltimore. But again our goal is to provide information and services that would be useful to the ENs so we can certainly work with them to try to obtain information or whatever that they might need.

Leslie Barrett: Okay, great.

Caller: How accessible will the SSA specialist be for ENs to communicate with?

Gary Rauch: Let me answer two ways. We do want them to be very accessible, but we do have certain protocols set up with regard to special issues, payment issues, that type of thing, and we do, we would like the EN, if it's on a specific issue like that, to follow that protocol because those people that are listed on that protocol would be the most likely individuals to be able to quickly answer those questions.
On the other hand if they have any problems or any other issues or they can't get the information they need or they still have some questions beyond that, the SSA specialist will be accessible to their call it.

Patrick Kehn: Good afternoon, thank you for your time. My question relates to what you had said about the services that the EN specialist will provide. I get the feeling they're going to call first and want to know that you are in accordance with everything and make sure everything is all set at your en, but beyond that what will they be providing that MAXIMUS is not providing now?

Gary Rauch: Well, I'm not sure I want to say what they are not providing now, but we're trying to structure this in a way that we can get you additional services that you might need. We want to discuss your performance as an EN and how you are doing and ask questions about what you might need from us or from MAXIMUS that might enable you to be even more successful at serving our beneficiaries. So it's going to be a conversation back and forth so that we can try to see what your particular needs might be and what we can do to facilitate getting whatever you need.

Patrick Kehn: Can you provide an example of any services or anything that you feel a beneficiary should inquiry about when they speak with their EN specialist?

Gary Rauch: Not a beneficiary, you mean an EN.

Patrick Kehn: Excuse me, EN specialist, yes.

Gary Rauch: There may be some particular clarification on some aspect of the process, there may be some clarification of something in the BPA, there could be some additional training that might be helpful and useful, could be any of those things. It could be some guidance with regard to the en's web site. I mean I can't think of any more examples at the moment but we'll have to see how this runs and see what we get.

 Patrick Kehn: Okay, thank you.

Michelle Laisure: Are there any other questions, operator, at any time?

 Operator: Okay, we're going to turn it back over to you, Gary.

Gary Rauch: One other thing I wanted to say is that we will be preparing and sending out a blast with regard to this process from our associate commissioner sometime next week.

Desiree Fitzgerald: Hi, everyone. We want to continue to give you gradual information about the new EN Portal. The new EN Portal is coming in January but it's not too soon to start getting you familiar with the portal and some of the things that it will do. As we mentioned in the past, you are going to be connected to the same system that we use to process your contracts, ticket assignments and payments and it's going to allow you to process your portal transactions in real time. But today I wanted to focus primarily on how you will notify us of your ticket assignments and unassignments and how you would check ticket assignability through the portal.
Concerning the ticket assignments and unassignments, you will be able to upload all of your ticket assignments in one transaction. You could possibly get the results of your request in as little as a minute, so that will be something that will allow us to provide a little better service there. If the ticket assignment is accepted by the system, the ticket is going to take effect immediately because you are connected to that system, so we won't have the overnight and the transfers so that will be a good thing for us.
You will be able to go through the list of tickets that are currently assigned to you right away and you will be able to see that the ticket assignment is on your list.
When it comes to ticket assignability you will be able to upload a check of SSNs to check assignability and there won't be a limit to the number you can upload or limit to the size of the upload.
We've mentioned before there will be new security requirements for the Portal. You will have to register for your my social security online account and as we get closer we will be giving more information about that, but you will need to have a secure internet browser and again as we're closer we will be giving you a test page to make sure that your browser works with our security. The versions that meet federal standards, we shared this before, but it bears repeating and MAXIMUS will be sharing information with you on this topic as well. One is Foxfire version 24 or later, and we recommend version 27 of Foxfire. Chrome version 30 or later. Microsoft internet explorer version 8 or later, but we recommend version 11. And then if you are using Windows XP you must use Chrome or Foxfire or you can use opera version 17 or later. And as we said, we will send you a test page at some point to make sure that the browser works with our security.
But that's what we wanted to share at this point and we'll continue to give you additional information about the Portal.

Michelle Laisure: Thank you, Desiree. We do have one question that they are asking how they can participate in any testing and would you like to speak to that?

Desiree Fitzgerald: Yes, we are in the course of doing that right now, figuring out how we can get a good cross-section of folks to test. We're going to do the testing in stages. We're going to start small and we're going to add people. We do have a limited number of people who can participate in the pilot but MAXIMUS will be sending out information about that and that will be getting geared up. Communications will be coming out on that in short order but we will start small so initially there will just be a handful and a maximum number of people, I think we were somewhere around 25 to 30, so the pilot does have to stay small. But it has to follow on the heels of our system release too so we need another systems release before we are able to do that but we're going to be doing the pilot in September.

Michelle Laisure: Alright, thank you, Desiree. And operator do you have any questions in the queue for Desiree?

Operator: As a reminder, ladies and gentlemen, to register for a question please press the 1 followed by the 4. We do have a question from the line of Odell Tiller. Please go ahead.

Odell Tiller: Thank you. II wanted to ask a question. How long after submitting a suitability background does it take to get the confirmation?

Michelle Laisure: We have no idea. We are actually finding out information like that in preparation for some additional suitability clearances for users of the portal, but I'm not sure what that time frame would be right now.

Odell Tiller: Okay, thank you.

Michelle Laisure: But we will have a coordinated effort to the extent that we can to make sure the folks who use the Portal can get to the Portal, but as I mentioned we're going to be going into the portal, the new Portal, in January so we'll try to make sure you have plenty of lead time. There's no reason, if you know who your portal users are going to be, that you can't start suitability clearance now. If folks who don't already have the clearance, you don't have to wait, you can do that at any point and right now there would be plenty of lead time. Desiree, we do have a chat question. And then we'll let you go.

Desiree Fitzgerald: Okay, great.

Leslie Barrett: We actually have a couple. If somebody has security clearance from SSA now, will it remain applicable for using iTOPSS?

Desiree Fitzgerald: It certainly will. They would have to keep their annual activities up to date with whatever is required by the contract but, yes, that suitability clearance works, continues.

Leslie Barrett: And there's one more question. Can someone who is blind or with a visual impairment access and perform transactions on the EN Portal, will it be accessible?

Desiree Fitzgerald: Absolutely, yes.

Michelle Laisure: Okay, great, thank you, Leslie. Desiree, it's back to you.

Desiree Fitzgerald: I'm actually done.

Gary Rauch: This is Gary. I have one other thing. I noticed on the chat there was a question about whether the ENs - back to the EN specialist, the SSA specialist would be taking the place of the account manager at MAXIMUS. I wouldn't go quite that far at first. We'll try going after the services here so at this point when I was talking about the particular protocol that is on there for specific issues like payment and so on. But they could contact the SSA specialist for any other thing that comes up and we'll address a little bit later the exact role of the MAXIMUS specialist.

Michelle Laisure: Thank you Gary, and thank you for the update, Desiree. And are we ready - I just want to check in with you, are there any other comments either one of you want to make before our presentation?

Gary Rauch: No.

Desiree Fitzgerald: I don't believe so, thanks.

Michelle Laisure: Thank you. At this time we're going to move into our presentation and during our May VR Call we had a presentation provided to us on the California collaboration that's in place now that has been very successful with Partnership Plus handouts. Orderlies believe it was at great value to the ENs that call in to this call to hear how successful their communication and referral process, as well as the success they have had with their beneficiaries around partnership plus. So we are pleased to bring this presentation to you and at this time I'm going to turn it over to Karen Davidson, who is the senior account manager and actually located in California. Karen?

Karen Davidson: Thank you Michelle. Everyone, so glad you could join the call. I'm going to be the facilitator for this presentation; we have several speakers that are going to come on. Our presenters today in addition today, Angela Medina from the Department of Rehabilitation; Michelle Gabaldon with process services; David Mehr with State of California DEI employment -- the California Disability Employment Initiative.

I wanted to give you kind of a snapshot of what California -- wait, first of all I want to tell you about the objectives of our presentation today. We're going to share current statistics, partnership handouts, statewide activity, we're going to discuss the California partnership plus agreement and related activities in the state and we will describe to you effective practices of case rehabilitation vendors, vendor employment networks, Workforce and WIPA projects.
Now I'm going to give you a snapshot of what California looks like as a whole as far as statistics. California has 1.9 million roughly eligible ticket holders in the state, 20,848 are in use with VR, 4,544 are assigned to ENs, there's 65 ENs in California, 43 percent of those are VR vendors and 18 percent are Workforce agencies. California currently of the assigned Ticket Holders, currently assigned, 447 of them had prior VR successful closure, which is a 16 percent increase in the last 12 months.
This is a map of California. It's a mapping project that we did a few months ago where we tried to, where we identified the existing employment networks in California and the existing VR vendors and the circles in green are the en's that serve that county that are not VR vendors and the circles in yellow are the en's that serve the county that are also VR vendors, they are both an EN and a VR vendor and the blue circles that serve that county that are not employment networks and we did this to determine where the underserved areas might be to see if we needed more employment networks to serve ticket holders. Just kind of gives a nice snap shot of what the state looks like today.

Operator: May we have someone please mute their lines? Thank you.
Karen.

Karen Davidson: Okay, our first speaker is Abygail Medina. Abby and her staff are responsible for statewide coordination of programs including policy development of her section is the lead in the implementation monitoring and overseeing of the department relating to social security programs, the ticket to work and work incentives improvement act, work incentives training and fiscal oversight department of rehab cost reimbursement.
Abby in turn is going to introduce to you a couple other speakers that are going to be taking part in her presentation, so Abby.

Abygail Medina: Hi, Karen, thank you so much and hi, everyone, this is Abby medina and I just want to first thank you guys for inviting us to the all en call. This is actually our first time presenting at the all en call. We've done state-wide en calls in collaboration with Karen and Sallie Rhodes in the past but that has been quite a while.
Just to give you a brief statistic on the department of rehabilitation and the consumers that we serve, we serve approximately 120,000 consumers annually and roughly a third of those are SSI-SSDI beneficiaries or SSDI consumers and in roughly a quarter, over a quarter of those are individuals with mental health disabilities. So as you can see we have about 30, 35,000 SSI-SSDI consumers in California and the total Ticket Holders in California, as Karen stated, is about 1.9 million. So there are really a lot of beneficiaries to go around.
Brian (inaudible) statewide coordinator for Social Security programs and he was in my section and he will be talking and presenting to you about our ticket to work and en agreement and also share with you our pilot that we have started in January to increase partnership handoffs. So at this time I'd like to turn you over to Brian.

Brian Connors: Thank you, Abby. Hello, everyone. As you may know, a State VR agency can choose to use either the cost reimbursement system or the milestone payment system. The California Department of Rehabilitation has chosen to use the cost reimbursement system.

Now, currently the Department of Rehabilitation has 34 EN agreements and the EN agreement specifies conditions under which the en and the department of rehabilitation will facilitate the sequential services under the ticket to work partnership service delivery model and also establish the referral process between the employment network and the department of rehabilitation.

Now, under the Partnership Plus Model, an SSI or SSDI recipient can access services from a VR agency or Employment Network. The key thing here is that they must be done sequentially, not concurrently.
Now, the department of rehabilitation currently has processes in place to promote the ticket to work program. For example, on our internet and intranet we offer a ticket to work beneficiary fact sheet as well as a work incentive information fact sheet.
Now, in the referral process between an employment network and the department of rehabilitation, the employment network should provide to the department a referral form and if applicable a signed release form.
Now, the important thing is when this referral is place the EN should make sure that the ticket is no longer assigned to the Employment Network. Now, the ticket is placed in use with a department of rehabilitation once the ticket has been approved. Now, in the process, the referral process between the department of rehabilitation and the employment network, central office staff monitored a consumer's case so the case is near to closure they can work closely with a counselor to the referral process or employment network. So the council will refer that consumer back to the using a dr343b referral form. And if you'd like a copy of this form, you can contact me at Brian.Connors@cor.ca.gov.

Now, once the case is closed, the beneficiary can assign their ticket to any employment network for benefits planning, job retention, career advancement or other support services. Now, this ticket to work referral process is communicated to the consumer through our ticket to work beneficiary fact sheet, the ticket to work statement on the IPE, and on the case closure to the consumer.
Some of department of rehabilitation's ticket to work outreach activities include collaboration with our department of rehabilitation vendors and our independent living centers as well as our participation in our statewide EN calls.
Now I'd like to tell you about our work incentive planning pilot. This two-year pilot began on January 13, 2014, and it is taking place in three of our 14 districts. The department has invested personally by hiring nine work incentive planners and they provide financial literacy and benefits planning to our SSI and SSDI consumers. The goals of this pilot are to increase the number of employment outcomes among our SSI and SSDI consumers, to increase earnings above SGA for our SSI and SSDI beneficiaries and increase cost reimbursement associated with our SSI and SSDI consumers.
Strategies to accomplish these goals include our on-going collaboration with our work incentive planning and assistance grantees and also making sure that our work incentive planners play a key role in the partnership plus handoff to our employment networks.
Now, we recognize that this hasn't been happening as well as we have liked in the past and therefore -- and this is primarily due to the workload, heavy workload of our counselors. If this pilot is successful the work incentive planners will continue to play a key role in the handoff of the partnership plus ticket to the employment network.
So now I'd like to turn it back over to Abby.

Abygail Medina: Thank you, Brian. Now I'm going to bring you over to Lana who is one of the specialists who has been asked to speak on section 503.

Lana: Thank you. Hi, DOR is working with a team approach using our employment coordinators as conduits for the information for the federal contractors. Their ability to assist them with the OFCCP 503 compliance. We're also working with the OFCCP to present at their regional meetings with both compliance staff and the businesses to increase the partnerships we have here at DOR.

DOR is currently the first state as a nation to embrace the talent acquisition portal, otherwise known as tap, which is an online program that matches candidates with disabilities with employers. We have already placed in this system over 600 consumers' profiles registered and are in the process of registering businesses to use as a tap recruiting tool. This is OFCCP’s compliance with our business partners so they will have the reporting data necessary to fulfill those contracts.
Back to Abby.

Abby: Karen?

Karen Davidson: Okay, thank you very much, department of rehab, you've always been very supportive of Ticket to Work, I've known Abby since 2004 and have done lots of things over the years.
At this point I'd like to introduce our next speaker, tom Heinz, with east bay renovations. Tom is the founder and executive director of east bay innovations, a nonprofit organization serving approximately 400 people with disabilities throughout alameda county. He has been involved as an employment services provider since 1986. He has masters in rehabilitation administration from the university of San Francisco.
Tom, it's all yours.

Tom Heinz: Hi, everybody thanks for giving us the opportunity to speak to you today. It's really an honor and a pleasure.
East bay Innovations, EBI, really started in still most of what we do is supportive employment services to folks with intellectual disabilities. You know as in many states in California in 2008-2009 we had fairly significant budget cuts and funding reductions and in response to the tight funding for employment services we explored and decided to start as an EN for the purpose initially of drawing down additional funds to support our supported employment. Because at the time we started to have a fair amount of consumers that we served earning over SGA just as an overview we provide job supporting through a supportive placement model I think we're up to 110 consumers throughout the county. We work with about 60 to 70 different employers. Our average hourly rate wage for the people we serve is $11.73 an hour and the average hours that people work that we serve is 24.

It took us a few years to sort of figure out how to be an EN and how the system works. We felt confident enough after a couple of years that we would try and broaden the operation to serve all people who were social security disability beneficiaries. Actually kind of integral to that decision to expand our en operation was talking to Karen, who gave us some good advice, and then also we've gotten great advice from Susan Webb in the phoenix area too so we really learned from people who had been doing it a while successfully.

Still, with supported employment as we broadened our en operation we had continued success in placing people eligible for supported employment services in jobs at jobs above SGA, specifically we tend to target health care sectors and public sector jobs and behind that initiative is the discovery of the project search job training model. Back in 2007 we heard about project search, which is a job training model that comes out of Cincinnati children's hospital. And we heard about it on sort of a field trip up to the state of Washington to visit with King County folks. They had just started a project search initiative in a couple of hospitals up there and so we wrote a grant and brought the founder of project search, Erin Riley, out to work with us and in 2008 we started a project search training program at Children's Hospital in Oakland and in 2009 we started a project search program with the Alameda County administrative offices in downtown Oakland.
We also had a project search program with Kaiser HR Services Center and now we operate a small project search program with Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory, which is a federal contractor.
Anyway the project search model for those who don't know about it and many of you probably do, but it originated as a job training model for people with developmental disabilities and it uses time limited internships that are involved in the host employment site. So, for example, at children's hospital in Oakland we have 12 interns and three job coaches and the interns do three internships during their year in the program. It's a time limited program of a year. And they rotate through three departments in the hospital.
The internships are usually unpaid, although at Lawrence Berkeley lab they are paid, they are paid at a pretty good rate of $14 an hour, which was a big deal for us to get a host employer to do paid internships.
But what the value, if you could go to the next slide, the value of project search is that it really gets at -- well, just to be honest, when we go out and talk to employers who have never hired folks with intellectual disabilities what we sense is a fear of failure that they don't know what the potential value could be of hiring somebody and they are scared of, you know, what if it's not a failure. So the internship model provided by project search allows employers in a low risk setting to see the work that people can do and it really works to break down those fears.
The other thing is that it allows employers to see the value of good job coaching services. It allows the employment services agency to really understand the employer's operation and to offer up ideas once that trust is built for new training methods or systems that are relevant to people with developmental disabilities but also relevant for everybody, kind of a universal design approach to training.
Anyway, we have had a lot of success in placing people who graduated project search within the host employment sites we have 11 people who have been hired by children's hospital. We have had 10 people hired by the county of alameda. We have had 3 out of our 4 interns will be hired at Lawrence Berkeley lab into permanent positions. And the type of jobs that people are getting out of project search is not the jobs that we used to see that would be typical for people with developmental disabilities.
For example, it's not uncommon at the county for people we serve to be placed in a clerk position that pays over $20 an hour, same thing in health care setting. Often times those are unionized positions, often times they are full-time, often times they have retirement. So they are really good living wage jobs.
Statistics for both affinity, which serves the broad all disability social security disability beneficiaries and our supported employment operations -- I didn't do my homework, Karen, on this. I really apologize; I didn't see I was supposed to update these until the last minute. But we're up over 80 ticket assignments where we have over 20, just over 20, ticket holders currently working, and we have, we think, about 14 or 15 ticket holders that are employed full-time.
Oh, that's it. Well, thank you, thank you very much.

Karen Davidson: Great, thank you very much, Tom. This is Karen Davidson again. I just want to say I've been so impressed with what they have done in such a short period of time, just the last few years, and by branching out and forming a separate ticket to work program called affinity for the non-supported employment population so that's really great. And by the way, tom's agency has one of the highest numbers of partnership plus successful handoffs in the state so congratulations, Tom.
I want to ask David Mayer with the DEI state of California if you would like to go next since we're running short on time and I know you have other commitments.

David Mayer: No, that's fine, go ahead.

Karen Davidson: Okay, Dave, thank you. In that case our next speaker from cross roads diversified services is Dee Gabaldon Cross Roads relies on a diversified effort to accomplish their goals. Dee has been with Cross Roads since 1994, she has experienced all facets of employment services. Currently Dee manages their WIPA program, their ticket to work program, and they are also an American Jobs Center and they operate a WIPA funded training center as well and they also specialize in mental health. So they wear lots of hats and they've got a lot of neat programs going on. So, Dee, it's all yours.

Dee Gabaldon: Thank you, Karen, and good afternoon everyone.
Cross Roads Diversified Services has two divisions. One division, this is our Source America Services, niche for Ability One contractor providing facility maintenance services for all the federal buildings in Sacramento, Social Security regional office in Richmond, across the bay from San Francisco, Alameda Coast Guard and then we also have some federal contracts in Texas.
As you probably know, 75 percent of the direct labor hour of our labor force has to be provided by individuals with severe -- significant disabilities and these are high wage prevailing wage positions. In California our employees are paid $14.89 per hour. Many of our employees come originally from the department of rehabilitation, whether from our case services contract with the department of rehabilitation or other programs in the area. The jobs are well sought after; pay full-time and we have had employees with us for many years.
And we have used this pool of employees successfully to use the ticket to provide post-employment support, help VR employees not only with traditional benefits counseling for a WIPA project for those who live in our catchment area, our ticket to work coordinator is being certified by VCU, Virginia Commonwealth University which Social Security uses and they partnered for their training so the coordinator can provides benefits counseling, which is the no. 1 request, and also general employment supports, job coaching, development of natural support, quality of life, financial stability services. So for those clients that come from the department of rehabilitation we have been successful in both California and Texas and their cases close with the department and those employees who feel they need continued support to be successful in their job. We have had a very good relationship with Abby, her department and her counterpart in Texas to ensure those employees tend to stay in their jobs and get the services they need to maintain their long-term employment.
The division I work for is our work force development and there are many, many ways we coordinate with the department of rehabilitation. Our traditional supported employment program for people with mental health disabilities in Sacramento County, we use the ticket to help individuals stay in their job posts, closure with the department of rehabilitation, our support employment program is competitive wage and all our placements are in the community. Many of our clients feel that they need, they want to continue having some support. They are going through difficult times to ensure successful long-term employment and some of our clients just want to call us and say, hey, doing a great job, things are going well. They want to communicate their successes, which are the ones we like, everyone likes to hear that. If it's a promotion, if it's got an award, whatever, it is important to the client.
Also we can continue providing long-term benefits counseling through the WIPA program for the clients who are receiving benefits so they don't quit when they get a scary letter that's understandable from Social Security. Too many people have quit employment or thought about quitting because of something they don't understand.
We also operate the cross road training center in Sacramento County through the American Jobs Center model providing the traditional one stop services. We also provide work readiness skills, GED preparation, on the job training contracts with employers and job placement services so this is a conduit also to the ticket to work program. Some of the clients that come into the training center are using department of rehabilitation and have access to both rehab services and training center services so we coordinate referrals to the department of rehabilitation and then upon closure with the department of rehabilitation they are back to us for again post-employment support.
We're fortunate we have Abby in our area and a strong partnership plus program, but many avenues to ensure our clients get jobs and job closure with rehabilitation. Thank you, Karen.

Karen Davidson: Thank you, Dee, thank you very much.
So next, patiently waiting has been David Mayer, program advisor for the California Disability Initiative. Mr. Mayer has 14 years of program management providing services to California residents. He continuously demonstrates strong analytical skills in the area of program development and implementation as well as finance and budget. As the California disability initiative project advisor for the past two years he has been a primary driving force in developing the project into one of the premiere national models. He received a B.S degree in gerontology. David, take it away.

David: Thank you very much, Karen, and thank you to all the speakers on the webinar. The DEI is a DOL sponsored program. It's currently in its fourth round of funding. There are 25 states awarded so far and a little over $80 million given out.
California was awarded funding in 2011, which was round 2 of 11. 10 local work force investment areas participated and 5 were chosen randomly by the department of labor to be pilot sites. The pilot sites that are currently just ending up the program are golden sierra, the City of Los Angeles, Verdugo, which is down in Los Angeles County, the city of Glendale and San Francisco, and those three are urban or semi suburban sites. As much July 1st, the sites have assigned a total of 155 tickets and thank you for updating that.

Each pilot was required to choose at least two of five delivery components. Our partnerships were required to use collaboration and all 5 areas chose integrated resource teams, four chose asset development, literacy, financial literacy, 3 chose blending and branding of funds and resources and two chose customized and two self-employment. All pilots were successful in developing positive practices in all components except customized employment was something that was elusive just because starting from scratch with all the other needs of the program didn't get around to really giving them what they needed to help them out with those.
Primary benefit of the DEI program has been the development of the relationship between the DEI pilot areas and their local voc rehab offices. The new model for the department of rehab for California added a new component to their service delivery, the main benefit has been that an added layer of communication between the VR and DEI pilot has allowed the work force disability resource coordinators or DRC's, as they are called, and the VR employment coordinators to assist the VR counselors in Workforce case managers in areas of partnership building and resource sharing, thus giving them more time to work directly with the consumer. Four of the pilots signed partnership plus agreements. The only pilot not to sign an agreement was the city of Los Angeles. Los Angeles did not see a benefit to them by signing the partnership plus agreement but instead formed a solid partnership with the DOR regional administrators in that area. This allowed the v of r councilors and coordinators to open up incredible lines of communication with the local America's Job Centers and the regional disability coordinators. Today they have monthly meetings to discuss the partnerships and discuss successful partnerships and resource sharing. None of the four areas that signed up for (inaudible) have allowed them to work successfully in a more informal fashion. Madeira has councilors on site two days a week, the VR coordinator is in constant communication with the voc rehab person who sits in the next cubicle.
They are working on developing that also. Of course state Workforce or EDD, which is Employment Development Department out here in California, and the DOR partner on a multitude of programs which aids the ability for us to provide services to both youth and adult programs. We work very closely on the youth leadership forum which I believe a lot of states do have now and we continue to work on several committees and commissions that continue to foster a better environment for people with disabilities in work force services. And that's about it for me.

Karen Davidson: Thank you, Dave.
David's done a wonderful job with the DEI project the last couple of years and he's been really great to work with. Just to give you an idea how close the state development department is with the department of rehab, they are right across the street from each other. So they really do a lot of things that effectively together and it's been really great to have that collaboration.
So, in summary, what you have learned today, you have received some statistical information on ticket to work and hand off activity in California, you've heard what the California Department of Rehabilitation is doing to promote partnership statewide, you've learned how successful en's are working together with the department of rehabilitation to increase handoffs and the financial independence of ticket holders. So your take away is to think about what you will do with the knowledge and skills you have learned today. I know on the chat there's been a lot of references to one of the documents that were mentioned and I hope that you will contact Brian Connors if you want more information on that. Thank you very much to the speakers today, thank you for doing it again.
The last couple of slides, by the way, are contact information for all of the speakers and if somebody can please tell the audience where they can find this presentation on our web site then I will turn it over to you, Michelle.

Michelle Laisure: Thank you, Karen. And again thank you, the presentation again was excellent, very informative, and we hope the en's that had the opportunity to tune in today actually walked away with some new snippets of working collaboratively together. The PowerPoint will be included with the en minutes then it will be posted not only on our web site under the effective practice series and you will be able to locate it by the name of the ticket today. So again thank all of you that took time to call in as well as participate in our presentation.
I want to give a shout out to our next effective practice webinar which will be presented to us by the employment resources inc. Out of Madison, Wisconsin, and their presentation will focus on overpayments. So please tune in to hear their presentation next month, the August presentation.
At this time I'd like to turn the call over to Charlene who will speak to the Office of Federal Compliance Programs survey profile, an update on that. Charlene.

Charlene Dwyer: Thank you, Michelle. Let me just say, and I'm sure I'm speaking for everyone who is in the listener audience today, how very impressed I am with what I heard from the California panel. Kudos on everything you are doing and especially on your strong partnership.
I heard Abby medina talk about California VR agencies targeted Section 503 efforts to connect job seekers with federal contractors looking for talent to hire into their organization. I think many of you already know the social security administration, the office of research demonstration and employment report has also been focusing on employment networks in connecting your job ready candidates with federal contractor employers. For several months now SSA has been coordinating enrollment in the department of labor disability in veteran's community resource directory. This directory is managed and maintained by the department of labor by their office of federal contract compliance program, OFCCP it was developed to include governmental and non-governmental not for profit organizations as federal contractor resources to assist federal contractors in recruitment in hiring of qualified applicants with disabilities as well as veterans. And if you listened in to yesterday's community of practice call you heard a testimonial from an EN in Colorado about the fact that they are getting calls as a result from federal contractors looking for job applicants as a result of being listed in that directory.
Now, again, to be eligible for the directory and to be eligible for referral by SSA, an employment network must be a not for profit or governmental employment network with a minimum of 5 currently assigned tickets and some level of payment activity in fiscal year 2014. 124 en's, after completing the directory profile, were referred by social security and are currently in the directory. (inaudible) were sent an email requesting information for inclusion in the directory. If you are among the en's to receive this invitation, we encourage you to finish it as soon as possible but no later than Friday, July 25.
Now I'm going to turn it over to Sallie Rhodes who would like to provide you some highlights from yesterday's Section 503 Community of Practice national webinar. Sallie.

Sallie Rhodes: Thank you, Charlene, and good afternoon, everyone.
As Charlene mentioned awesome conducted its fourth Section 503 Community of Practice yesterday. This forum provided an opportunity for peer to peer discussion to dig deeper into issues that were discussed during two prior 503 forums. The first half was part 2 of the presentation relating to voluntary self-disclosure of a disability to an employer or prospective employer and the second half provided extra ideas on en capacity building to meet federal contractor and subcontractor needs. I'm thrilled to say there were 109 lines so these CoPs are growing each time we conduct them. Just as a reminder the PowerPoints and related materials from all the prior cop forums are archived on the ticket to work web site. The web site used to be on the dedicated 503 page, but a couple weeks ago we created a new events archive page in the events center so you can now access it by clicking on the events section then click on the 503 community of practice. The April 2 cop was Part 1 of voluntary self-identification and the May 7th one was part 1 of capacity building and sharing. Information from yesterday's cop will be posted here in this events archive probably early next week, as soon as we receive the audio recording.
With regard to yesterday's cop, the three representatives who served as discussion facilitators were Susan Webb, director of Able Employment; Kate Kingry and Judy Sanderson, director of vocational services at Granite State Independent Living Center in New Hampshire. The discussion centered around three different things, how to prepare their customers during both the application and hiring process, how and why inquiries about disabilities disclosure and self-identification can be made by an employer during the job application, interview and hiring processes and how Ticket Holders are responding to the pre and post-hire self-identification inquiries. It was noted for affirmative action practices of Section 503, voluntary prehire inquiries may be made for affirmative action non-competitive or toward points. An employer may not ask specific questions or conduct medical exams until after they have made a conditional job offer. Once a conditional job offer is made and before an employee starts work, the employer may ask any disability related questions they choose and may require medical examinations as long as this is done for all entering employees in a particular job category.
Some points were made about the disclosure in schedule a federal hire governmental hiring process and non-compete points sometimes used in state and local government. The part 2 discussion was facilitated by Pam Walker, CEO of Alliance Professional Services in Collieer, Tennessee, Ann Austin and Barbara Rodriguez, director of employment services at Employ Reward Solutions Inc., in Florence, South Carolina. Again the discussion focused on a couple of particular things. One was the idea how ENs (inaudible) and another was the strategies that en's are using to identify and/or share information on qualified ticket customers who are available to fill job openings with federal contractors and subcontractors and that part of the discussion also included information on sharing information about job openings.
I do want to mention that several references were made during this discussion to a new resource that OSM has created that is a listing of web based job postings, boards and resume' uploading sites that a number of en's have identified as things that they use for their ticket customers in helping to find employment. This current handout is focused primarily on 503 and federal contractor jobs. Our intent is to expand it to include a number of other sites that don't focus primarily on 503 issues. It is a very useful resource and it will be posted next week with the archive of this community of practice thing, but it is available right now in the information center on the dedicated 503 page when you click on the 503 you will then click on 503 resources and you will see just above the assistive technology resources a reference to this new listing of job posting boards and resume' uploading sites.
It was mentioned yesterday in discussing a couple of these sites that they tend to be very different. Some are focused primarily on professional jobs such as getting hired and others may be focused more on entry level jobs. So again we're going to continue to expand on this tool but I encourage you to download it now and take a look at it, explore it for yourself and figure out which ones work best for you.
One theme mentioned several times during yesterday's CoP was the importance of establishing a good relationship with federal contractors. Make sure you are only referring those ticket customers who have been screened and determined qualified for the position being advertised. Participants in yesterday's discussions strongly encouraged the partnering, the idea of partnering with State VR agencies and American Job Centers and other ENs for two reasons, one to expand the pool of qualified candidates available to fill jobs that federal contractors are advertising and the other is to actually share job leads and it really is a good opportunity for service providers to partner together to meet these needs.
It was noted that partnering with VR for the purpose of this 503 discussion is quite different than entering into a partnership plus relationship. As you heard a little while ago, Partnership Plus is really about ensuring that beneficiaries who have been placed in employment by a State VR agency have access to on-going support to maintain and advance in employment after VR's case closure. The 503 partnership are much more about sharing job leads and expanding the pool of qualified candidates available to be referred for these job openings.
I'm not going to go into any more detail about the cop yesterday, but I strongly encourage you to check the ticket to work web site next week, again go to the information center, click on the events archive, and then click on 503 community of practice to find the July 9th posting. The discussion and the exchange of ideas on yesterday's call are well worth listening to. And now I believe I will pass it on to Donna.

Donna De Julius: Yes, you are, Sallie. Thank you very much. We do have one quick question for you, and the question is why are for profits not included?

Sallie Rhodes: Charlene may want to weigh in, but that was a decision made by OFCCP.

Donna De Julius: Okay.

Sallie Rhodes: Charlene, do you know anything about why?

Charlene Dwyer: I have never seen or heard specifically an explanation but just a heads up that OFCCP has offered to provide a targeted training for Employment Networks sometime early this fall, late summer, early this fall, and they asked 4 questions and that is one of the questions they will be answering when they provide the training.

Donna De Julius: Oh, wonderful, thank you so much. That's good to know. And thank you, Sallie, for your reach out, it was a pleasure doing the chat for you yesterday on that call. As you said, it was very, very good and we do encourage people to visit our web site to see that information.
What I'm going to announce today is that we are asking for topics for 2015 round of effective practices. We have requested a list of topics internally, we have requested a list of topics from the work operations group and we would like to request topics that you would like to hear people present on for the effective practices series in 2015. Just to let you know, these are what I've already received. Suggestions for presentations on an effective administrative en model, using the portal for effective administrative processes, expanding and growing your business, utilizing job assessments to advance your career using MAPP, mentoring -- and I would like, this was not specified but we would be interested in either peer mentoring using ticket holders within your business to mentor other ticket holders, or en to en mentoring; ticket and assignments, balancing that to ensure the growth of your agency and tips for a successful en
so if you have other topics than these that you would like for us to develop and present in 2015 for effective practices, please email me, donnamdejulius@yourtickettowork.com. Please email me no later than the 20th of this month and I'm looking to the middle of August to send out the call for submissions. So please, we really want to keep the series going and we want you to be a part of it, we need your suggestions and your ideas. So please be in contact with me and I certainly appreciate you taking this into consideration.
So that is it for the next round of effective practices in 2015. We will be continuing through 2014 every month on the All EN Call, as Michelle mentioned earlier, so please tune in for that and at this point I'll turn it over to Michelle.

Michelle Laisure: Thank you, Donna, and we're close to 90 minutes for this call so I'm going to very briefly just share with you please tune in for the next two Ticket Training sessions in July. The topic will be Part 1 and Part 2 of Work Incentives and that will be very appropriate given that we're talking about the relationship between ENs and CWICs and supporting beneficiaries at their job site.
At this point, operator, I'm going to open it up if there are any questions we are available. I know that we have extended the call a little long today so operator please go ahead and open up the lines and see if we have any questions.

Operator: Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, if you would like to register for a question, please press the 1 followed by the 4 on your telephone.
Once again, to register for a question, press the 1 followed by the 4.
We have no questions registered at this time.

Michelle Laisure: Thank you, operator. Again, everyone, this is Michelle, manager of the en development and training department. Thank you so much for joining us today, we welcome your participation and questions. Again next month we'll have a full agenda and a presentation, we're looking forward to from Employment Resources, Inc. Have a good afternoon, everyone, thank you and good-bye.

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