

Cost Reimbursement (CR) Update

Nate Arnold (SSA): Noted benefit of new hires in reducing the backlog of CR cases to 2,000. The unit is currently working on May cases. Anyone with outstanding cases from April or before can contact the VR Help Desk (VR.Helpdesk@ssa.gov). Total nationwide CR revenue for May was \$29 million, an all-time record.

- In response to inquiries regarding news about hackers accessing files at the Office of Personnel Management, Arnold noted that they were not sure who was impacted. SSA believes access was limited to files of current and former federal employees. This breach should not impact any State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agency personnel who have gone through Suitability.

Ticket Portal Updates

Desiree Fitzgerald (SSA): The new Ticket Portal is ready to go live. The following are key transition dates in June and July when SSA will make important changes and announcements about the Ticket Portal via GovDelivery messages.

- June 8: Each State VR agency and Employment Network (EN) will receive a communication on what to expect as the transition moves forward, including their transition readiness and next steps.
- June 15: The Ticket Portal will go live for use by State VR agencies and ENs that receive an SSA communication that they are enrolled to use the new system. Suitability, a mySSA account, and confirmation from SSA is required to be enrolled. All enrolled will receive a message that includes the link to the Ticket Portal, information on completing the secure log-in, a user guide, and other resources. State VR agencies that are not ready will be enrolled at a later date. It takes about 2 weeks to establish a mySSA account with extra security, assuming Suitability is completed. Encourages all to transition to Ticket Portal ASAP.
- June 16: OSM-hosted Secure Provider Portal (SPP) will only process queries and reports. Other transactions will no longer be available.
- June 17 – end of July: Ticket Portal orientation will be held on Wednesdays. The same information will be presented each session. Self-paced training modules will be available on a secure site for those with Portal access. Sessions will provide training materials and Q&A.
- July 14: All VR call will include updates and a repeat of the Portal orientation session. May extend to 90 minutes.
- June 19 (6 pm) to June 21 (8 pm): System will be down for Ticket Portal release.
- Week of June 22: Pilot participants will test new functions, e.g., batch file uploads and responding to TPRs. Contact VR Help Desk if interested in being a tester.
- June 30: The OSM-hosted SPP and Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system will be shut down. Everyone must use the Ticket Portal or manual processes.



Other important information: Ticket Portal hours of operation - Mon-Sat, 5:00 am to 11:59 pm Eastern Time; Sun (8 am to 11:59 pm). All SSA systems are shut down aside from these hours. July Ticket Training Tuesdays will focus on key processes (assignments, payments and TPRs) using the Portal and manual processes. Ticket Portal will eventually automate the CR payment process resulting in quicker reimbursements. Target date for this function is April 1, 2016.

Anyone needing assistance with or information on the Ticket Portal, contact the VR Help Desk.

Portal and non-Portal Processes

Katie Striebinger (SSA): Compared key functions using Ticket Portal versus manual processes. Portal processes are real-time.

- Checking Ticket assignability – Check one SSN at a time. Portal response is immediate. Available Tickets can be put In-Use SVR immediately. State VR agencies with no Portal access will need to contact the VR help line or fax a list of SSNs to OSM.
- Ticket assignments – Using the Portal, enter full SSN, full first and last name, date of case opening.
- Batch Ticket/In-Use SVR assignments – Submitted through Portal get an immediate response. Will still be able to upload through Movelt for a short time. Turnaround time for Movelt is 7 days.
- Payment requests – Not for VR as ePay will still be available to State VR agencies.
- TPRs – Using Portal, select beneficiary and input TPR information. Manually, fax or email SSA form 1375 to OSM. Turnaround time is 10 days.
- Reports are real time in the Ticket Portal. As of June 30, reports will no longer be available in the SPP. State VR agencies must keep their own records until Portal access is granted.

Presentation: “Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) Ticket to Work Partnership Plus Opportunities”

Joseph M. Ashley, Rh.D., CRC, Assistant Commissioner, VA VR and Michelle Laisure, M.A. ENDT Manager, OSM presented on the new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) provisions referencing the Ticket program in the Rehabilitation Act for the first time: 1) A new State Plan assurance that VR will coordinate with other State agencies acting as ENs; 2) If VR is serving a person with an IPE in place and the person wants to assign his/her Ticket to an EN, the VR counselor must coordinate service provisions with the EN; and 3) When developing the IPE for an SSI/DI beneficiary, VR counselors must address the beneficiary’s access to Work Incentives benefits planning assistance. At case closure, beneficiaries must be informed of available resources to ensure employment success, including benefits planning assistance and ongoing employment supports. Opportunities to expand Partnership Plus and WIOA implementation challenges were discussed.

Summary of Q&A Responses:

- In response to a question about the Quarterly Beneficiary Earnings Report (QBER) no longer being available, it was noted that a replacement service will be available soon.



SSA is working on how to establish secure communications. Expect an update on the July all VR call. SSA will not grant a blanket waiver on timely filing simply because the QBER is not available. SVRAs may call SSA on a case-by-case basis if issues arise.

- Batch Ticket assignment process has had limited testing (not by pilot participants). SSA will provide a guide on the format to be used. SVRAs interested in using their data to test system are encouraged to contact the VR Help Desk. Not sure yet if test files will count or SVRA would also need to submit through Movelt. SVRAs submitting batch files once a month encouraged to hold off on submitting June files through Movelt or to split their files in half to test the system.
- Concerns were raised about an increase in CR denials. Several SVRAs noted an increase in the number of reconsiderations being submitted.

Reminders

The full transcript and audio from the call are available at <https://yourtickettowork.com/web/ttw/events-archive>

The next All State VR agency call will be on July 14.

