# Quarterly All Employment Network (EN) Call

 Transcript

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Operator: Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for standing by, welcome to the
national employment network conference call. During the conference
all participants will be in listen only mode. If you have a
question please press star followed by 1 on your telephone. If you
need to reach an operator at any time please press star zero. I
will now turn the conference over to Mark Green, please go ahead.

Mark Green: Thank you, welcome, everybody. We have, as the flight
attendants say, a full plane today so we're going to hold off on
the questions to the end. Bad news is, I have several parts so you
have to listen to me several times.
Let me start off by giving you an update on the EN site visits,
this summer we did basically two types of reviews. Last year one
was QA, all of the ENs using all the consumer directed services
model, we've given reports to all of them, and we did some basic EN site reviews based on criteria, payments and suitability and things we thought were interesting enough to go out and talk to ENs.
For the most part ENs were doing what we expected them to do.
They were following the BPA for the most part. Virtually every EN
we saw were not following the requirements of IWP requirement as we laid them out. Regularly we saw goals that were much too generic and didn't seem to be the product of a conversation between the beneficiary and the EN we saw services that did not track the
goals, that did not clearly indicate how the EN intended to get the
beneficiary to the goal, and those ENs that did update IWP's,
which is a requirement, did that in the form of case notes, which
is fine for your purposes but it's not signed and as you probably
know, we look at the IWP as a form of contract.
So that's something we're going to be focusing on here and with
maximus doing additional training and mocking changes to the IWP to spell out exactly what it is we expect.
Second round of EN site visits, the QA staff is also going to go
out. We're going to be auditing all ENs that use the employer
model, there's a handful of them and other ENs that have come to
our attention and similarly staff and managers will be visiting
ENs for various reasons as before.
We just started, we're going through the end of the fiscal year, we'll be seeing 15 ENs, something like that, around the same for
the QAs. So we may be notifying you shortly so keep reading the
emails.
Thank you, we're going to move on to the next item on the agenda.
Remember, if you have questions we'll get back to you at the end.
We'll discuss the ticket help line and turn it over to Laurie
Armstrong.

Laurie Armstrong: This is Laurie Armstrong, Beneficiary Support Manager. I want to talk about February, March and April. Speaking about specifics we have been receiving on average about 20,500 calls per month and from those calls on average we have been sending out on average 5,900 employment network lists and define help tools from the choose work site have been accessed roughly 24,300 times per month on average. And that's a tool for beneficiaries and the public to generate employment network lists themselves.
As far as calls, we have a 42-second average time that the caller
has to wait to speak to one of our agents and our average
abandonment rate over February, March and April is 3.13 percent.
Next, the information that I have available today for the help line
and I’m going to turn it over to Karen Davidson, who is the program outreach manager. Karen.

Karen Davidson: Thank you, Laurie.
I’m going to be talking too a little bit about our outreach activity over the last three months. The first thing is our virtual job fair.
As you probably all know, we had one in March, on March 16. It
was a regional job fair covering the mid-Atlantic region and Puerto
Rico. We had 111 participants which included 81 beneficiaries who
had their tickets assigned and 21 service providers. 27 federal
contractors who participated in the virtual job fair and had booths
said up for meeting via chat with the job seekers.
During the virtual job fair we had 191 private chat messages and
877 group chat messages. We are actively following up with the
federal contractors who participated in March to track their
employment options or outcomes, I’m sorry. We also are following
up with the service providers who had beneficiaries who
participated in the virtual job fair to also follow-up on
employment outcomes and some of you may have already received calls. Those calls were started last week. And I’m excited to announce our next virtual job fair, which is going to be august 24th. This is going to be a national virtual job fair and it's going to be longer than the last one, it's going
to be from 11:00 am eastern time to 5:00 pm eastern time and we
also are streamlining the registration process to make it
easier for beneficiaries to register. We will have all the
information going on in the next couple weeks. We have 65 federal
contractors excited to participate, we're really excited about
that, and we're counting on you to make this a success. Your help
is crucial in reaching out to your assigned ticket holders to let
them know, in addition to our regular messaging that will be going
out through GovDelivery and social media.
Next I want to talk about our wise seminars, work incentive seminar
events. We have them usually on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 3:00 eastern time. Anyone can join but they are specifically designed for beneficiaries. They are very informative for both
beneficiaries and family members and contain a wealth of
information on ticket to work, work incentives and other subjects
depending on the monthly theme. So this is a great training
opportunity for your staff, especially if you have new staff, for
your staff to participate in as well.
Our February life event was on finding a job with a federal
contractor and it also included information about our March virtual
job fair. 321 participants and included in that number were 108
employment networks. So we know a lot of these employers are
dialing in to these webinars, which is good.
The March webinar was all about financial independence, we had 299 participants which included 94 employment net board of
corrections. April was ticket to work choosing a provider that's
right for you, we had 401 participants, including 109 employment
networks. Our May webinar is actually next Wednesday on the 25th and it's going to be surrounding mental health because May Is mental health month.
We're also going to be launching again our viewing party tool kit
starting next month. You May remember a couple years ago a viewing party tool kit was designed for (inaudible) invite ticket holders into their office to view the wise event, the wise seminar, and
would also give the employment network an opportunity to talk about their own services during that viewing party. And you can also view, you can also have a viewing party and show any of our
archived wise webinars that are on our web site in the webinar tab
on choosework.net. So at this time I would like to introduce Adelle Barr, our training manager. Adelle.

Adelle Barr: Hi, thanks for introducing me. This is a new role, we are going
to have training department and I have a staff that will help me
out with that, three individuals. We're excited to let you know that
EN development will have training available and will post that on
the web site, you can request it any time. Actually the training
that's listed on the BPA. And we just want to let you know there
are good things coming from training and be on the lookout for this.
And following me I’m handing this back to Mark to talk about ticket
status.

Mark Green: We're sending out different groups of ticket notices. First is
what we call the start-up notices, those are the traditional ones
we sent out through 2011 to new beneficiaries. We're sending out
catch-up notices to beneficiaries who would have gotten notices in
2011 and two new things we are sending out, one year and three year
anniversary ticket notice. The typical beneficiary will receive 3
ticket notices, I’m going to renew a request I’ve made before.
Please keep data that inform us whether this is an effective
outreach tool. You should be able to tell if somebody called you,
asked them, if you tell us how do you learn about this we'd like to
know how many beneficiaries learned from the so we can measure
before and after and things like that. This is an important
exercise for us. The notices has settled down to standard numbers,
we say about 35,000 notices and one year. Those numbers are pretty steady. They are a little lower than we thought but new members are starting out at a slower rate than previous years.
That's the ticket notices. I would like to amplify the point about
the date, we're going to have staff, maybe something more
organized, talk about ticket mailings. We'll be in touch with
everybody, figure out some way to get information from you guys. I
know you have information to share and you will not be able to get
through on the call after this. I hope you keep good records and
we can have a good conversation.
Now we're going to start about the restart on the IVR call
campaigns, turn it back over to Tammy Liddicoat.

Tammy Liddicoat: IVR, otherwise known as robo calling, we started this on May2. The campaign is running the same as it did on the BASS contract, this is new, we are making 30,000 calls monthly, approximately 25,000 of those calls are going to newly eligible beneficiaries, approximately 5,000 are going it those who have had a recent successful case closure from a VR agency. People are getting calls between 9:00 am and 6:00 pm so we're trying to avoid odd hours for receiving phone calls and I think that sums up where we are right now and we are starting to collect data and we'll have more information and these campaigns keep on running. I am just going to talk just a little bit, I’m going to sit down and talk about our outreach themes in that, as MAXIMUS has begun marketing and outreach efforts we have, our goals and efforts are to do monthly outreach and campaigns and align (inaudible) as well as incorporate provider outreach efforts according to monthly topic themes. So this includes various efforts that we are developing and implementing including the wise webinars that Karen just talked about, article, social media postings, Facebook, Twitter, also social media events, success story promotions, effective practice promotion, broadcast development, so it's a variety of activities that we are offering through our monthly campaigns. As Karen mentioned, during May we are focusing on mental illness. In June we will be promoting information services and support around a focus on youth in transition. In July that brings us to the ADA anniversary so we will be centering more on topics around accessibility, technology, accommodations, exposure, (inaudible) responsibilities. Again with the new T[, contract combining the beneficiary and provider support efforts to give us the opportunity to alert some of these messaging efforts, strategies, for both audiences and I just wanted to give you that update and stay tuned as we continue toward these coordinated themes. Look forward to information and marketing efforts for the beneficiaries, the EN community and other stake holders.
So with that I am going to turn it over to Katie Striebinger.

Mark Green: This is Mark. Before you do that, Marilyn asked a question
about what the message is to the beneficiaries on the VR case
closure calls. We will close the script, very short, for the IVR
calls on the web site. Take a look and you will see them there.

Katie Striebinger: Hi, this is Katie Striebinger from the Social Security
Administration. I just wanted to give a few reminders about the
information on the choose work web site to help beneficiaries
find providers.
The find help tool, it is your respond to make sure the information on the find help tool is accurate and display information you want beneficiaries to see about contacts for your agency. If the information on the web site is not correct or you want it changed, you need to email enservice@ssa.gov and on that email please make sure you include your duns so we can identify your agency closely. Once again we will be posting the email address in the chat window. Send an email to SSA service and be as explicit about what you want changed.
Another piece of information on the find help tool, for each site that you post on the web site, there is a description you can use to post information about your agency and what it does. If you have an EN description that you like to submit for approval before it is posted to the web site, you can send your description to en desk rev at ssa dot gov there's a separate email address for e descriptions and I’m going to send it to Mark to talk about TPR.

Mark Green: Those of you who have been on previous calls will be familiar with what I’m going to say, which is that we're still not ready to list the moratorium on TPR we need to do various things before we can transfer it to the portal. Those of you who are anxious, you have to wait, I’m sorry, I can't give a date. We will make it known when we have a date.
Beneficiaries who are in use when the moratorium began are still in use. We are not calling them up for CDRs just because we can't get to the TPR's. Similarly, we have a number of questions from ENs and field offices asking how beneficiaries are being called up for CDR those are simply the beneficiaries who were not in use before the moratorium, they failed. We said over the years we don't immediately call somebody up for a medical CDR when they fail, there's a schedule and they're going to get called up and that's what's happened. It can be a year or two, the moratorium is still in place, whatever status the beneficiaries were in before the moratorium started, that continues. The last item I want to discuss is the marketing proof of concept. I know you've heard us discuss that also. This is the strategy we are trying out to replace the beneficiary cd, we have just begun after a long development phase of sending out files to a select number of ENs who will receive either the name and telephone number or the address of the beneficiaries in the categories of beneficiaries they have asked for. We are creating the files, they tell us whether they are going to do robo calling or letters, we send them the file over the messaging, it is encrypted over the secure messaging. When the file runs they tell us and we have pretty strict requirements on these ENs participating in the proof of concept to let us know, again similar to the ticket mailings so they can tell us what is the impact of the calls or the letters they are sending out month by month.
We're taking our time on this main by because it takes some time to get it all together, about a week, so we're rolling them out probably a week apart, probably 20 days. There are 20-something ENs, we will be evaluating the proof of concept as it goes away and be evaluating it in great detail when over.
I know a lot of you have asked that you put on the list. I can't even tell you if we are going to (inaudible) the list because it's proof of concept. But you are on there, if we did decide to move ahead we will of course add those of you who have made the case. You will have to sign something specific and promise that you will give us date that that we were asking for, but I’m sure for anybody who can make a reasonable case.
And that, I believe, is the end of the presentation.

Cara Caplan: I wanted to let everybody know about suitability and some progress we are making. We recently got a video from the office of suitability and we are going to put it up on your ticket to work web site within a week or so. It should help with applying for suitability.
Also they are in the progress which should be within the next couple months of having finger printing throughout so you will no longer have to use the fingerprint card. There's also a help line number to use. You can call us if you want to, but we're just going to call that number ourselves. It takes out the middleman for you but if you need assistance of course we are available.

Mark Green: Thank you, Cara, for a very important message. Operator we are ready to take questions now.

Operator: Ladies and gentlemen, if you would like to register a question, please press the star followed by the telephone key pad. If your question has been answered and you would like to withdraw your question, please press pound.
One moment for your first question. The first question comes from the line of Stacey Talley.

Stacey Talley: Hello, this is Stacey from Massachusetts.
Regarding the moratorium and the CDR, can you explain it later? I think I have somebody but I don't understand the way it works. An individual who was self-employed was receiving money but not at the level of substantial gainful activity, she got a letter in the mail that said she had been at trial work level for a few months and she was going to get a medical review in September. And this seemed in contradiction to the stated aims of the program, which is to avoid the CDR, as long as somebody is involved in making progress. Perhaps weaves already over the trial work level. I don't really know, is that the example you are talking about?

Mark Green: I'll try. We will be working about two different TPR's. Either they passed and remain in use or they didn't pass and remain in use. That status continues to act. We will not be selecting beneficiaries who entered -- when we entered the moratorium, we are in use but we do see slightly better beneficiaries who are in use than those who are not in use.
If you have a question about a specific beneficiary, you can send DM.

 Cara Caplan: ENservice@ssa.gov, and I wanted to add we have had several of these where people think it's a medical review and it is a work review. I think the field office they will weigh it because sometimes the letters are confusing.

Stacy Talley: I did ask her question and she's said specifically it is medical.

Operator: Your next question comes from the line of Lisa Parlatino.

Lisa: Can you repeat the information about the proof of concept.

Mark Green: You can send me an email, mark.green@ssa.gov.

Lisa: Thank you very much.

Mark Green: You're welcome.

Cara Caplan: Can I just answer some questions that are on the chat? This is chair ra. Marry lynn the fipt centers that you've been charged for, those are not social service fingerprints on ours. I don't know what they are, but social security is not charging for these. They're not even out yes. They told us within the neption kim of months so I’m not sure that's what it is. If it's from social security you should not be charged.

 Angelina, if you are having an issue and you are waiting for them to get back to you and they are not getting back to you, contact your EN representative or EN service and it will get to them and we will inquire about that.

Mark Green: Okay, operator, we're ready to take more calls at this time.

Operator: Your next audio question comes from the line of Ann Austin.

Ann Austin: Hi, everyone. I have an -- my EN is not getting very many calls and talking to my peers around the country, I think the biggest issue for us is that our EN, the first letter of our name is l and I’m wondering if the web site, the choose work web site find help tool could be, instead of just being straight alphabetical, a program could be written to make it so if the person doesn't look for a zip code that they don't just get all of the a's and all of the b's and all of the c's because by the time they get to Lariden we're on the fifth page and they're never going to call us. Could you write some kind of code that mixes them up so people have a fair chance at actually getting a call? You know what I’m saying?

Mark Green: I’m going to ask Laura York to respond to you.

Laura York: I think at this point we have considered several options for organizing the site help tool and unfortunately there really isn't a way to make everyone happy because everyone obviously would want their EN to come up first. We will definitely, you know, consider other options but at this point we have considered many and this is the most reasonable option that we've come up with so far. But we're also considering new ones and will did we ever take it under advisement if and when we do updates, we will consider other options.

Mark Green: If anybody else has ideas or suggestions, Laurie was saying we have struggled over the years to try to help somebody, send us your ideas, this is the difficult thing, we're trying to sat -- satisfy as many people as we can, mainly the beneficiaries.

Robert Pfaff: Have you noticed an uptick in calls at all since the number of letters has increased?

Ann Austin: Yeah, this is Ann, we have seen a small uptick and I think randomization of that on the web site might be a huge help. And the people who do find us generally look in their zip code so that's how they are finding us. Because we're only a state-wide EN.

Robert Pfaff: Okay, thank you, I appreciate it. Again, we're always looking to get feedback relative to how the increase in the number of notices that we're sending out currently, whether or not they are helping or whatever the case Maybe. So please give us your feedback. Thank you.

Operator: You have a follow-up question from the line of Lisa Parlatino.

Lisa: Hey, there, thanks guys, it's on a different topic but for the good of the order we appreciate the letters. We have been taking calls and ticket assignments and that's from letters. We are taking steps every month from our offices so we appreciate that slight increase.
I have a question about the WIPA offices and ticket to work help line referrals and I think it's a question that I have for Laurie that I can maybe contact you by email. I know there was a lot of training going on, I know there's new staff. We can no longer refer to our local office, which is in our same town, although it's in the same time, sometimes it's confusing when people call and the information they are getting from the ticket to work help line representative are names of other networks. We've actually talked to them, work is imminent, they are already working, but we really like to have our customers get that WIPA information on the IWP so they are fully informed.

Robert Pfaff: What state are you in?

Lisa: Florida.

Robert Pfaff: Can you just elaborate by what you mean you are not allowed -- i have the Florida project sitting there, Margery.

Lisa: Margery is the AWIC?

Robert Pfaff: No, she's the (inaudible).

Lisa: They do not want our customers to call them directly. We used to have them co-located in our office, ticket to work customers in our office and they said they must receive their referrals through the ticket to work help line and that the ticket to work help line had certain standards that work must be imminent, they are not talking to anybody who is in active job search and not sure if they want to do the program. So it's really kind of hurting us because beneficiaries really need that information in order to jump sometimes. They really need to know how earnings will impact their benefits, particularly in their situation. The problem we had is that we can't refer locally, they don't come out any more, they meet customers not in person, only by phone, partly what they say is because of their large area and their capacity to serve and so we must refer our customers to the ticket to work help line and what happens at sometimes is that those customers then get information about other ENs and we're already working with them.

Margery McIver: Well there's a couple things. I am hoping we can figure this out. With the new WIPA competition we did try to shift the WIPA's to focus on more priority groups and we encourage some of them to put the ticket to work help line on their brochures and other material so they don't get as much information referral so they can focus on their cases.
But I think there may have been a little misunderstanding, if I can follow-up with you directly, would you mind, could you send me an email with your contact information so I can get in touch with you and I can reach out to the WIPA directly and we can clarify and work through some of these issues?

Lisa: Sure, that would be great.

Margery McIver: My email is margery.mciver@ssa.gov I will also add I know we did increase some of the area some of the WIPAs are covering in Florida, I know one in particular and I’m guessing it might be the one you are referring to, it sounds like there's some misinformation and you shouldn't be running back and forth and calling different people. Okay?

Lisa: Okay, thank you very much. That sounds good, I'll follow up.

Mark Green: We're ready for the next call.

Operator: Your next question comes from the line of Jill Kowolsky.

Jill Kowolsky: Hi, I’m with the nice icn, I just want some more information about the type of information you want us to collect?

Mark Green: The main thing we want you to ask is how did you hear about us. It's a simple data base. If they say it's from social security, dig a little deeper and it's a letter, we can measure the effect of the letter. I don't know if you are keeping this data beforehand, I suspect you might have, but if somebody asks us and we need to determine the efficacy of some of these letters and we can show it is a valuable marketing tool it's a valuable thing.

Robert Pfaff: This is Rob, any increase in the number of calls, perhaps you were tracking them before we were mailing the not, but if I happen to track the amount of contact you are receiving it would be helpful just in that regard as well. It's a little less scientific, but it would be helpful.

Operator: And to ask an audio question, press star 1. There are no further audio questions at this time.

Mark Green: All right, thank you, everybody. I see we have had an active chat back and forth about the find help tool, which is an on-going conversation the last 5 years or so. So I’m going to encourage you all again to engage us in this conversation, i know we've heard from some of you, i can see familiar names up there, but please we'd like to hear it has been a challenge for us. Thank you for joining. Next call, again we're on a quarterly schedule, will be august 18. We will be in touch several times before that to remind you.
This was a pretty good call, we had a lot to talk about and we'd appreciate it if you could get back to us, let us know if you feel like these were valuable topics. Thank you all very much and we hope to hear from you soon and definitely on August 18th.

Operator: Ladies and gentlemen, that concludes the webinar for today. We thank you for your participation and ask that you disconnect the line.

END OF CALL