



All State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Call

Welcome

Rob Pfaff welcomed everyone to the call and spoke about an employment support summit held at SSA on June 12 and 13. SSA gathered a cross section of service providers as well as other stakeholder groups to speak on a variety of topics. There was also representation from federal partners, including the Department of Education, Department of Labor and Health and Human Services. VR participation was strong with representation from Maryland, New Jersey, Wisconsin, Virginia, Utah, and Vermont. SSA had robust discussions around the life cycle of the return to work process, which is benchmarked in five distinct ways.

These include: (1) outreach to beneficiaries to engage them in thinking about engaging in work; (2) entering the Ticket into cost reimbursement status; (3) the delivery of services and supports needed to return to work; (4) job placement; and (5) the best techniques for keeping the beneficiary in employment with ongoing supports and services.

A draft summit summary report with a more detailed description of the section topics is under review. SSA will also develop a high-level summary report with take-away and a list of action items. You will be notified when the employment summit reports are available. SSA will likely post the information on the Your Ticket to Work website and disseminate through GovDelivery message.

Claims backlog

There is an unprecedented backlog of cost reimbursement claims pending over 60 days. Jennelle Bratcher noted that if claims are pending over 60 days, VRs can reach out for a status check. Please do not reach out before 60 days. If the claim appears on the VR's pending claim report, then we are already aware of it. This entire fiscal year, SSA has received more than double the number of monthly claims. SSA has authorized overtime and dedicated staff to working on backlog claims. SSA hopes VRs notice the difference soon.

In June, SSA had a 7-day Portal systems issue that caused a loss in claims processing time. SSA informed the affected VRs via GovDelivery that they could send a request for a waiver for the 7-day period. If VRs have not already requested the waiver, they can still do so.

Portal login issues, suitability clearance update

Several Portal questions have come to VR help desk. The first relates to a locked "my SSA" account. Katie Striebinger noted that if you have a problem with your account being locked, it is related to your "my SSA" account. While the VR team cannot unlock your

account, VRs can get assistance by calling the dedicated help desk. VRs can call 1-800-772-1213 and when prompted, say, “help desk”. You should hear the voice response of “mySSA help desk”.

Second, SSA had a systems problem in April, May and June. When opening and closing files, VRs may have received a VA27 error message indicating, “the current pay status could not be determined”. The problem is fixed and VRs can resubmit the entire files for April, May and June in July or pull out and resubmit the ones with the VA27 error message.

Natalie Sendidorfer noted that there is a slight change in the suitability clearance procedure. The 3 required eEquip forms, including Form 306 — Declaration for Federal Employment, the Fair Credit Employment Act Authorization Form and the Applicant fingerprint card — will no longer be sent to her. Instead, the forms will be sent directly to the SSA suitability office with a copy to Bash Kamara in our office. An email blast will be sent to all VR agencies to notify them of the new process.

VR on-site, two-day training, RSA codes

We are nearing the end of the fiscal year and Shada Roper shared that a final 2-day VR cost-reimbursement training will be held on site at SSA before the end of September. SSA will send 2-day training dates between August and September for consideration.

RSA codes were scheduled to be changed a few years ago in accordance with WIOA but, to date, have not been changed. In lieu of your RSA code, use the SSA code or the SSA code that is closest to the RSA code. SSA is not changing their codes.

Savings to the trust fund, Portal calculator

There has been several inquiries from the VR agencies questioning whether the calculator in the Portal is correctly computing the maximum payout for claims for payment codes 950 and 610 when there is a zero dollar amount due. Candice Whaley shared that the systems analyst reviewed the claims and determined the VR payment calculator in the Portal and the payment system match. The difference is the amount entered in the Portal calculator for SSDI or SSI versus what was entered on the claim. SSA must use the last amount in current pay for SSI unless benefits cease or terminate and use the last amount prior to that date. For SSDI, SSA uses the last amount that coincides with the last month of SGA. Unless benefits are terminated, the amount is used prior to that date. The maximum amount changes if we are paying a concurrent claim with both SSDI and SSI. VRs should enter both amounts in the Portal calculator. If the VR enters the correct factors for the claim paid, the maximum payout should match. For questions about savings to the trust fund calculation, please contact Candice.Whaley@ssa.gov directly or the VR help desk.

Case closure request, FY20 Cost Formula

Raquel Donaldson noted that she receives a case closure request in two ways. The first is via the Benefit Support Help Line when a beneficiary calls in to request that their VR case be closed. A beneficiary can request their case be closed at any time for any reason. We close the case in the Portal and do not question the beneficiary about their reason.

The second case closure occurs with a VR to VR transition. SSA may receive an e-mail from a VR agency that has picked up a client from another VR agency where the case is still open. Resolution is between the two VR agencies. When there is no agreement in place, SSA suggests that the beneficiary contact the Help Line and request case closure with the VR agency. The Beneficiary Support Help Line phone number is 866-968-7842.

Regarding the FY20 Cost Formula, RSA is doing away with the RSA-113 document. Raquel shared that she and several SSA staff met with RSA staff on May 8 to go over the revision of SSA's cost formula and how it will change with the RSA- 911. VRs will receive an e-mail by the end of September with information on the FY20 cost formula. VRs will receive a Word document instruction on calculating the cost formula using the RSA-2 and RSA-911, or they can use the Excel document. SSA can assist with the process.

Questions and Answers

A question and answer period, which is part of the call recording and transcript, concluded the call. Unfortunately, due to technical difficulties, the call ended earlier than expected.

The full transcript and audio from the All State VR Agency Call are available at <https://yourtickettowork.ssa.gov/web/ttw/events-archive>

The next All VR State Agency Call will be held on **Tuesday, October 8, 2019 at 3 p.m. ET.**