

Welcome

Rob Pfaff (SSA)

Robert Pfaff welcomed everyone to the call, including new ENs, and introduced Vernon Collins.

Fingerprinting and suitability

Vernon Collins (CSPS)

The Center for Suitability and Personnel Security (CSPS) suitability processing is operating as usual with a few changes for those affected by the current pandemic. OPM is currently allowing CSPS to submit suitability cases for clearance without fingerprints for those located in areas where businesses are closed, individuals who are sheltering in place, or those with pre-existing conditions who are at risk of contracting the Coronavirus. ENs should submit initial documentation as directed in the Ticket Program Agreement (TPA). The EN will then receive an EQIP invitation. If applicants are not able to get fingerprinted when the EN receives the EQIP invitation, the EN's Company Point of Contact (CPOC) should email CSPS at DCHR.OPE.Suitability@ssa.gov to inform that the applicant has completed the initial documentation and is unable to get fingerprinted at this time. CSPS will confirm and let the EN know that SSA will process the case, and that the applicant is to complete the fingerprint process when feasible. CSPS has allowed individuals in some rural areas to mail fingerprints to SSA for processing. However, ENs should not mail anything to the CSPS offices at this time, because they are closed.

Applicants are still required to sign the suitability forms by hand, and submit the forms via fax or email. SSA will not accept electronic signatures or mailed suitability documents at this time.

ENs must be sure to send complete forms to SSA in an effort to streamline the suitability process. The federal employment form contains 7 "yes/no" required questions. Be sure to include all information requested on the form. CSPS staff will email the CPOC if they need additional information after the initial review. Applicants should respond to requests in a timely manner. Applicants should also proactively submit student loan and payment information with the forms, or CSPS will ask for the information later, which may further delay the process.

There are two types of prescreened denial decision letters. One letter states that CSPS needs more information before making a suitability determination, and the other states the individual has been found unsuitable. ENs can find the name and email address of

the HR specialist assigned to the case on the bottom of the prescreened denial letter. The applicant should reach out to the HR specialist if they are unsure whether SSA needs more information.

The description on the notice of suitability letter is a prescreened approval. The complete background investigation starts after the individual is initially deemed suitable.

An applicant may receive an email asking for additional information several months after the start of the clearance process. SSA may need additional information before the final adjudication, which allows an individual to move from one federal agency to another without redoing their background investigation.

SSA Updates

Rob Pfaff

Status of Social Security related to pandemic

SSA and the Ticket Program Manager (TPM) staff are all working remotely during the pandemic. SSA does not have a timeframe for returning to office locations, or for the reopening of SSA field offices. To find out about your local field office, go to [SSA.gov](https://www.ssa.gov). On the main Social Security webpage, click on the Coronavirus (COVID-19) banner at the top of the screen. Next, click on Online Services and Office Closings for information on services currently handled by field offices, and services that are on hold.

The Ticket program is still robust and continues to assign Tickets. The average number of daily Ticket assignments this current fiscal year to date is 127, an increase over the 123 average daily Ticket assignments in FY19 and the average 104 daily Tickets in FY18.

SSA periodically hears anecdotal reports about the impacts of the pandemic. In one report, a beneficiary lost a job but was able to accept another job, making almost double the earnings. Grocery stores and other businesses like Amazon and Walmart are in need of employees and raising salaries to attract workers.

EN site visits are on hold and are not likely to occur this year.

Marketing Program Information

SSA and TPM are working to expand participation in the EN marketing effort. SSA will share a minimum of 5,000 data files consisting of limited beneficiary contact information with participating ENs so that they can market their services directly to beneficiaries. The purpose of the marketing effort is to expand beneficiary outreach with the goal of getting

as many beneficiaries as possible into the program, and working.

There are 21 ENs currently participating in the marketing program, with a maximum capacity of 75 ENs. SSA plans to enroll 35 more ENs by late August at a rate of about 10 ENs per month. ENs will receive their first data file by September 14. SSA will add ENs as capacity allows.

SSA expects ENs to meet a Ticket assignment rate of 1% of the number of data files received. ENs interested in participating in the marketing program should factor in whether they can conduct outreach to 5,000 beneficiaries every 3 months and handle the 1% assignment rate of 50 clients for every 5,000 beneficiaries on their marketing file.

ENs should email Data.Marketing.POC@ssa.gov to request to participate in the marketing program. SSA will add ENs to the waitlist as they receive requests.

EN updates and reminders

Cara Caplan (SSA)

Annual Performance Outcome Report (APOR) and 222 forms

SSA had a 99% response rate for both the APOR and 222 forms. SSA terminated seven ENs with a total of 83 Tickets this year for not responding to the annual APOR or 222 request. ENs can find updated APOR data on the Find Help web page soon.

COVID-19 Work from Home forms

SSA recently sent COVID-19 Work from Home forms to ENs via GovDelivery and the EN Operations mailbox. ENs working remotely due to the pandemic must notify SSA by signing the form and returning it to ENservice@ssa.gov.

To date, 338 ENs have not responded to the Work from Home form request. TPM plans to send another reminder. ENs should be sure to update contact information, as many messages were undeliverable as addressed.

Ticket Program Agreement (TPA) updates

SSA continues to review EN performance to ensure that ENs understand and adhere to the terms and conditions of the TPA. Under "Phase 2" of this review, SSA identified 62 ENs that have not met the requirement of at least 3 payments following their second year as an EN. SSA is working with most of the ENs; however, 3 have been terminated.

SSA is updating the TPA. The cover letter that SSA sends with the updated TPA will highlight the changes. The biggest change allows ENs to use cloud data storage. However, the cloud data system that ENs use must meet strict standards and requirements that will be outlined in the updated TPA. The EN signatory authority must sign and return the new TPA within the stated deadline, or the EN will be in jeopardy of termination.

Impact of pandemic on EN business and services

Ken Williams, Adelante; Becky Horner, Mission Possible; Melanie McGill, CareerSource Broward; Lori Tyndall, AHEDD; and Rachel Hoffman, Choice Group shared insights on the impact of COVID-19 on their businesses, services and Ticketholders, and shared strategies used to provide virtual services.

Ticket Portal changes

Katie Striebinger (SSA)

On February 1, 2020 SSA changed the policy for Phase 1 Milestones eligibility with State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agency involvement. VR involvement with a successful closure longer than 18 months prior to Ticket assignment will not prevent ENs from receiving Phase 1 Milestone payments if the beneficiary achieves Trial Work Level (TWL) earnings after Ticket assignment and all payment criteria are met. When the change went into effect in February, the Ticket Portal was not yet updated to allow for these requests, so ENs have been submitting manual requests. SSA updated the Ticket Portal on April 18 to remove this restriction.

ENs can now attach supplemental earnings statements to their payment requests.

SSA updated the Ticket status and usage screen, which displays Ticketholder information including the name, Ticket assignment and unassignment date. SSA has corrected the "Earnings in the last 24 months" field, and removed the "Impairment Group" field because it was unreliable and caused confusion.

SSA is updating the Ticket Portal Guide with these changes. Contact ENPaymentsHelpdesk@yourtickettowork.ssa.gov with questions.

Outreach update

Jayne Pendergraft (TPM)

Text messaging campaign from Ticket program

TPM is initiating an opt-in text messaging campaign for interested people who want to receive program information by text message. TPM will share more information when available.

Work Incentive Seminar Event (WISE) WISE webinar

The next WISE Webinar “Working from Home with Ticket to Work” will take place on May 27, 3 - 4:30 p.m. ET. Employment Options will share information about how the Ticket to Work program supports working from home, advice for succeeding on the job at home, and how to connect with Ticket program service providers. About 1,300 people have registered for this popular webinar. SSA sent a GovDelivery notice on May 18 with the WISE webinar registration information. Please share the webinar information on your social media platforms. For assistance with posting the webinar registration information, contact wise@choosework.ssa.gov.

Success stories

The current success story features Matt who is deaf and uses sign language to communicate. Matt worked with Community Integrated Services, a Pennsylvania EN, to achieve full-time employment and work his way off SSDI benefits. Next week’s success story features Johnny. Johnny had help from America Works of Tennessee and is now working full-time after dealing with a mental illness. She has accomplished the dream of purchasing a home.

TPM regularly sends announcements asking ENs to share this type of content. The success stories, WISE events and the resources included in these events are a great way to help people achieve financial independence through work. Participants are encouraged to follow up with the Help Line and contact ENs for assistance. If you have questions or want to share a story idea, contact socialmedia@choosework.ssa.gov.

Questions/answers

A question and answer period followed, which is part of the call recording and transcript.

Next call

The next Quarterly All EN Call will be held Tuesday, August 18, 2020, at 1 p.m. ET.

Transcript

The full transcript and audio from the Quarterly ALL EN Call are available at yourtickettowork.ssa.gov/web/ttw/events-archive.