

## Quarterly All EN Call Transcript November 17, 2020

**Operator**: Please stand by. Good day and welcome to the quarterly all EN call. Today's conference is being recorded. At this time, I would like to turn the conference over to Rob Pfaff. Please go ahead, sir.

**Rob Pfaff**: Thank you. And good afternoon, everyone. Thanks for joining us. We have a lot of information to share with you as usual. We appreciate your time today and all of your efforts in servicing our beneficiaries.

A couple things that I will lead off with this afternoon is to begin with is the status of the Ticket Program Manager Contract. We are required under statutory language to have a Ticket Program Manager assist the agency in running the Ticket to Work Program. Maximus Federal is the current Ticket Program Manager contractor.

This contract is scheduled to end this year. We are in, I would say, the end stages of making a new contract award and we project that will occur at the end of November. We will announce to you who that contractor is and update you as soon as we know when the final award is made.

The second thing I wanted to share with you today is some updates regarding the marketing program. We've done a lot this last year in terms of the marketing program. Really it begins with converting it from a pilot to a business process. So we're not...

**Adelle Barr**: Rob, this is Adelle. Pardon the interruption. I believe we have some folks that are on that they are saying that they cannot hear. So I want to address that before we go further.

Rob Pfaff: Sure.

**Operator**: Audio is coming through loud and clear on the audio.

**Adelle Barr**: Okay. Is that on the phone? How about on the computer?

**Operator**: The webcast has joined.

Adelle Barr: Okay. Let's make sure. And I'm going to test. Okay. We're testing right now.

Folks that have indicated to me they're not able to hear, can you please send me a message and let me know that you can hear so that we can go forward.

Rob Pfaff: Okay. Do you need me to say anything to test this.

**Adelle Barr**: No. I don't want to bother you. I just need one person to chime in from the audience. (Cherry Lee), can you hear now? (James Stewart), can you hear? (Callie St. John), can you hear? Okay. All right. I think we are good to go.

Rob Pfaff: Okay. Are we ready?

Adelle Barr: Yes, sir.

Rob Pfaff: Okay, great. Apologies, folks, for the delay. For those of you who could hear me and welcome to the folks who could not hear me earlier and thanks for joining the meeting. Just to reiterate briefly, I mentioned that we were in the final stages of the TPM contract award process.

We project making a new five-year contract award at the end of November this month for a new five-year contract. And we will announce to all of you who that contractor is when the award is made.

I was talking about marketing and briefly covering some things in regards to marketing. We made a lot of changes for the marketing program. We've converted it from a pilot to a business process.

So we aren't testing anything any longer. This is a part of our business process moving forward. We've added many ENs if not all ENs who were previously waiting to join the marketing pilot. We have a total currently of 45 marketing pilot participants. That's 45 Employment Network organizations participating.

We do have 9 ENs that are currently in the onboarding process. And we do have space for more employment networks to join this marketing program.

And the goal of this program for those of you who do not know about this or may be otherwise unaware is to broaden the outreach of the Ticket to Work Program by providing



Employment Networks with limited beneficiary contact information that they can use to market their business directly to beneficiaries.

So if you're interested, Adelle will put up on the system there a mailbox that you can send the request to join. We do have some criteria that we ask Employment Networks to abide by if you're going to join.

And we ask that Employment Networks have the capacity to handle a minimum file size of 5,000 records. That's where we start to see assignments with beneficiaries go up is a minimum file size of 5,000. So your organization needs to be able to handle a file size that large and have the capacity to take new business.

We ask that participating ENs have an assignment rate of at least or approximately 1% of the size of the file. So if you're getting a file size of 5,000 records, the goal is to sign 50 Tickets from that file over a period of four to six months.

We are also training one-on-one with TPM and the ENs that are requesting to participate in the marketing business process. TPM works with the Employment Networks after they are approved for participation. And TPM helps distribute the files and oversee the marketing business process.

I'm going to talk next a little bit about an upcoming SSA operations Ticket to work regional call that is scheduled for November 19, which is this Thursday at 2:00 p.m. We are having a call with the Dallas and Kansas City regions.

These calls — we've had one call so far in this calendar year previously, that was with the Boston and Philadelphia regions. This call is with Dallas and Kansas City. So we're trying to get to all of the regions to share updates about the Ticket to Work Program, about the research we do.

One important thing that we have been trying to message to the operations participants is particularly in regards to the marketing efforts and reminding that the SSA operations staff that ENs that are marketing their business to beneficiaries, if a question arises from a beneficiary reaching out to operation staff about the legitimacy of that contact, we are reminding these operations staff that they are legitimate outreach efforts made by Employment Networks.

So that can be everything from telephone calls that the Employment Network is making to mailing letters and so forth. So in this day and age with all of the nefarious activities that are going on, it's important for us to remind operation staff that these contacts being made from the ENs that are marketing their services are legitimate.



But we also update and the purpose is to share information, to share contact information, for example, of Employment Network organizations that are located or service that particular region, contact information for the area WIPA projects and (paths) as well. So we share that information and try to promote the program to operation staff.

The next thing I want to talk about is a briefing we had with the Commissioner of Social Security. That happened on October 29. The Commissioner solicited a briefing about the program. And we had the meeting on the 29th. The Commissioner was very engaged and interested in the program.

He felt that the program provided a good service, a valuable service to our beneficiaries. And he was interested particularly in ideas for how we can increase program participation among beneficiaries and improve employment outcomes.

So we are in the process of putting together a presentation with some ideas surrounding these topics and sharing that information with the Commissioner. We do not have a date for a follow-up briefing, but I would anticipate that would occur probably in late November, early December.

And the final thing — I've talked a lot today so bear with me — just a reminder on gov delivery announcements. This is important. We recently identified that a lot of the ENs were not receiving GovDelivery announcements. And this is problematic because this is one of our primary ways of communicating directly with your organization is through GovDelivery announcements.

So if there's something going on in the program and we need to share information with you, one of our most important ways of doing this is through our GovDelivery emails and announcements to you.

What we found is that either staff in some instances had left the organization and there are other issues that we've identified where Employment Networks, for a variety of reasons, were not receiving these announcements.

So we want to remind you. Make sure that you have multiple staff sign up to receive our GovDelivery announcements and make sure that your organization is seeing information being delivered from us to you about what's going on in the program and reach out to us if you have concerns about receiving communications and let us know.

We want to make sure that you are connected to us and to the program. And with that, I'll turn it back over to Adelle.



**Adelle Barr**: Thank you, Rob, for all that information. And now we'll go forward with our agenda. And up next we have Cara.

**Cara Caplan**: Good afternoon, everyone. As you all know, everyone has received a new Ticket Program Agreement which is effective right now. So of the 526 ENs that we sent the Program Agreement to, just to give you some statistics of where we are right now, we have received 492 completed ones. So we appreciate everyone who responded and responded in full.

We did receive five incomplete ones and we are working with those ENs right now. And we have terminated 29 ENs for not responding.

And as it says in your TPA, just a reminder, whenever us or the Ticket Program Manager reaches out to you for any information, it is important that you respond and you respond timely because there's always a jeopardy of your agreement being terminated.

Let me move on to PII. As you know, there are some fairly new requirements for handling PII so I'm just going to go over some of the highlights.

EN staff may use their own email system, like the ((inaudible)) now to send encrypted PII to other EN staff and EN partners. However, PII may not be in the subject line of that email. You may not send encrypted emails though to Social Security or to TPM.

TPM does not provide assistance to ENs on how to encrypt documents. So that is up to you to learn how to encrypt a document.

ENs may not send PII to Ticketholders via text messaging SMS under any circumstances.

When Ticketholders send PII to an EN via an unencrypted platform, please delete the information immediately. That should not stay on your system.

We have a service provider foundation online module entitled Properly Safeguarding Personally Identifiable Information and the URL will be on your Ticket to Work Web site.

We also have Web site content on your Ticket to Work Web site which includes the definition of PII, sending PII to Social Security and the TPM, best practices for faxing or mailing, sending PII to other, like, non-SSA or TPM email addresses, EN text messaging with beneficiaries and consequences for PII violations.



And I will hand it off to Ana now. Oh, one other thing. I apologize, Ana.

TPM is also — going back to the Ticket Program Agreement, TPM is also providing mandatory training to any new point of contact at your EN. So as you know when you filled out your new Ticket Program Agreement, you filled out Part 5, which you listed all of your contacts on there. So if any of the contacts are new to your EN, they must undergo this training. And now I will hand it off to Ana.

**Ana Morales**: Thank you, Cara. Thank you for that reminder. That's truly important. And as you mentioned, we have had an increase because of all of the information that needs to be updated.

Keep in mind that some of these new point of contacts may be new but some of the may have been added to your EN and never received the training. So we are reaching out to everybody and ensuring that everybody is properly trained.

So today I'm going to announce a new payment training that we have put in place. This training is for anybody at your organization that is submitting their first payment for the first time.

Anybody can take it, but especially those individuals that are a main payment point of contact for your EN. The purpose of this training is to fill the gap from the initial training to the time when the Employment Networks are submitting a payment for the first time.

As you know, every time there is a brand new EN or a new payment point of contact, we train them and we provide a series of trainings to get them ready and prepared to operate in the program.

But from that point to the point that the EN realistically is going to submit a payment request, sometimes it can take months but sometimes it can take a year or so. It all depends on Ticket assignments and therefore payments because everything has to follow a logical order.

So that is the purpose of this training. It provides a refresher for submitting that kind of request because all of that information is again provided at the beginning. But at the beginning there is a lot of information that is being shared with employment networks.

So we want to lower payment denial rates. We want to lower mistakes on submitting the payment. We want to make sure that when the EN is ready to submit those initial payment requests, they are clear on expectations and content, terminology, gathering all the



resources that are necessary to submit the payment request and most important managing the payments, how to read the information in the portal, the cost for a denial for example, how to understand that 18 month look-back and all the different requirements that are involved in payment.

This training is going to be provided as an e-learning. And what it means is that we are going to post the slides in the Web site. You are to get to get work — that is to say those are on the Web site. And we are going to have a voice recorded over the slides to explain and go into detail about each of this information.

You can review this information at your own pace on your time. And if you have any questions about it, please don't hesitate to reach out to EN operations at yourtickettowork.ssa.gov and we will be happy to assist, answer any questions or expanding or clarifying anything that you may need.

So, again, we're happy to put this new module in place. It's not mandatory. It's in the Web site. It's available to anybody that would like a refresher and just brush up that information on how to submit a payment request.

And with that, I'm going to pass it to Mike Greenberg. And one more thing. I'm so sorry, Mike. I'm sorry.

The link from where the modules are going to be posted is in the presentation, yourtickettowork.ssa.gov\trainingandevents and then the foundation's modules. That is where the presentation is going to be. It is not posted there yet today, but it's going to be posted there sometime next week. So it will be ready to be used. And with that now I'm turning it to Mike.

**Mike Greenberg**: All right. Thanks, again, Ana. Hi, everybody. This is Mike Greenberg. I want to talk to you about a survey that we recently conducted with a small group of ENs about their experiences with virtual services.

Those of you who were on the May 19 all EN call may recall that several ENs were invited, you know, to the call and, you know, shared how they were adapting to the new ways of doing business that they had been forced into really as a result of, you know, the twin effects of the COVID pandemic and the downturn in the nation's economy.

That call really kind of piqued our curiosity and TPM wanted to learn more — get some more details about these experiences. So we recently convened a panel of 14 employment networks. It happened sort of late summer, early fall. And, you know, we



surveyed them about the challenges they're facing in serving Ticketholders, especially serving Ticketholders remotely and how they're achieving successful employment outcomes in this sort of new service environment.

We asked them kind of specifically about the resources and how they're adjusting their business practices, you know, to facilitate virtual service delivery. And we wanted some details, you know, about how they were adjusting their business operations.

We got some terrific responses to the survey, very detailed responses. And I have to tell you we were really impressed because we created some narrative space for people to give us, you know, their own views, their own testimonials about how things are happening out there.

And we were really impressed with the commitment, you know, of this group, you know, to really, you know, be resolute in their commitment to support Ticketholders and helping them, you know, meet the employment goals of the Ticketholders who were surveyed.

We briefed Social Security on what we learned. And they encouraged TPM to pull together a fact sheet, which we're now working on, have that fact sheet posted in the service provider toolkit that highlights, you know, what certainly appear to be effective practices for virtual service delivery.

And this will be kind of my spoiler alert because I'm going to give you, you know, some idea of just how precise the feedback we got from this group of ENs. So some examples and, you know, you may recognize some of these examples in your own EN and the practices that you're developing.

So establishing and maintaining remote operations really is a pretty, you know, widespread activity and not only impacts the Ticketholders you're serving, but also how ENs are managing, you know, their staff since, you know, many of the ENs, you know, that we have interviewed, you know, have shifted to either a hybrid or a remote only operation.

One of the secrets that they're telling us, you know, is it's imperative to maintain frequent contact with Ticketholders and really stay positive and supportive in this process. They're all pretty much seeing and utilizing more broadly the use of video, live chat, texting and social media to keep engaged with the Ticketholders they're serving.

Many acknowledged that, you know, they too are experiencing some financial difficulties. And so they have increased the scope and marketing of the program, really casting a wider net to, you know, reach Ticketholders.



This was certainly true with ENs who were maintaining in-office operations. We heard from quite a few who are expanding to multistate or more typically expanding to a national outreach. Because of the changes in the economy, the disappearance of some jobs and on the other hand the growth in new jobs and new industries, they acknowledged that one of their goals is to develop new jobs in these growing industries.

And all in all they're, you know, seeking to build new and really strengthening those existing partnerships with Ticket Program allies and employers. So be on the alert.

The fact sheet is still in development. But we expect to have it - we'll be sending it forward to Social Security for their approval and hopefully you'll see it in short order on your Ticket to Work Web site. Thanks for your time. I will pass it on to Jayme.

**Jayme Pendergraft**: Thanks so much, Mike. Good afternoon, everyone. This is Jayme Pendergraft. I'm the program outreach manager with TPM. And we're just going to go over some resources that are available for your use and some upcoming events and publications this afternoon.

The first item I'd like to talk about is our service provider outreach toolkit. And we got a lot of questions from people during the (NINA) conference about where some of these things are located and what resources are available to you to use.

So we do have a service provider outreach toolkit on your Ticket to Work Web site. And it includes a wide array of resources, including fact sheets, success stories, printable materials, the logo, which I'll get to in just a minute, and a bunch of other information that you are all welcome to download and use to help promote the program.

And I'll keep going in just a second. As I mentioned, the logo in particular is available for people to download on the service provider toolkit. And that link is on this slide. But it's yourtickettowork.ssa.gov\resources\marketing-materials, that html. And we do strongly encourage you to use these resources.

There are a bunch of different file types and file sizes that you can download. We encourage you to put them on your Web site and I know at this point, Rob wanted to say a couple of things.

**Rob Pfaff**: Yes, I did. I strongly encourage organizations to use this logo on your materials. So, you know, I mentioned earlier in regards to marketing and particularly in regards to questions that beneficiaries have raised about the legitimacy of an organization



reaching out to them or sending them information and what is this and so forth and so on and putting that log on your materials or on your Web site particularly helps establish that you're affiliated with SSA and adds legitimacy, another layer that you can point to if the issue comes up to say this is their logo. You can go to this Web site and you will see this logo, whether it's your Web site, and it will match the Choose Work Web site because the logo appears right there at the top.

So please give this consideration. I know several years ago I did a site review and before we do site reviews oftentimes will check an EN's Web site. And, you know, these materials have been around for many years and they've been available.

But I remember checking the two ENs that we were going to visit on a particular day and there was nothing in their Web site that, you know, referenced Ticket to Work or showed the logo.

So please give it some thought and consideration. We strongly encourage you to maximize and leverage these materials. Thanks, Jayme.

**Jayme Pendergraft**: Thanks so much, Rob. And in addition to providing the logo files, we do also provide some brand guidelines in the outreach toolkit.

So if you have questions about how to use it or how to post it on your site, you can start with those brand guidelines and the directions provided on the Web site about the logo. And, of course, you can always send us an email if you do have additional questions or need something else that's not in the toolkit already.

As I mentioned, success stories are also a big part of the toolkit. These stories are real stories about actual Social Security disability beneficiaries who have achieved financial independence through work.

And when we cover some, we encourage you to share them on social media or in your newsletter and it's because they demonstrate the positive outcomes of the Ticket to Work Program.

These are people who have actually used the program, graduated off of benefits and are now completely financially independent. Some of them do still get support from the

Employment Network, which is also a really good thing to highlight. And we do include that if it's happening in their stories.

But these are a really good way to highlight the services that you provide even if you



weren't the person's EN necessarily. It's a way to mirror and tell people the type of opportunities you can help connect them with.

And along those lines, we do encourage ENs to submit information about success stories and stepping stone candidates. We do have two different types of success stories. A full success story features individuals who have achieved financial independence with the help of Ticket. So those are the folks who have worked their way off of benefits and have been off them for a particular period of time.

The stepping stone stories, however, are people who have made a step on the path to financial independence. So maybe they have achieved a certificate, graduated from college or started working part-time and are on their way to full-time work or something along those lines but have not yet gotten off of their benefits.

So we do feature those two different types of stories and we encourage you to send us candidates. If you have somebody in mind who would make a good story, we're always looking for new leads. And you can send an email to storiesatchoosework.ssa.gov.

And we actually did just release a new success story last week about a lady named Hazel. She works with the Alaska Job Center. And she did work her way off of benefits after a very long time struggling with mental health and addiction.

And she now serves others, actually, at one of the places that helped her. So we do encourage you to take a look at her story and the link is on the screen. And I will just add we did publish this last week and we sent out a GovDelivery message with social media content in it asking you to share her story. And we do encourage you to do that as always.

Now to talk a little bit about our WISE webinars. Every month we host a webinar for a nationwide audience, prepared for people who are ages 18 through 64 and receive disability benefits and their family members, their friends and also for you all in other organizations in the community who might be interested in learning about Ticket.

We always talk about the Ticket Program during our webinars. Sometimes we have particular topics that we focus on, such as mental illness or part-time - or, I'm sorry, working from home. And I will get to the next webinar in just a minute to tell you the topic.

They are typically held on the fourth Wednesday of every month, November and December are a little different because of the holidays. So the November webinar is actually tomorrow afternoon at 3:00 and the December webinar will be a week early on December 16.



And, again, we do send out those GovDelivery messages encouraging you to share the webinar. I always view the webinars as a good way to get potential clients an introduction to what the Ticket Program is, the services you can provide them and kind of give them a basic intro to the program before they come through your door potentially so they get some of their basic questions answered and then we hand them off to you to get into the details. And, again, we send those sample social media posts every single month.

As I mentioned our webinar this month is tomorrow from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m. Eastern Time. We'll be debunking the three biggest of disability benefits and work. Ray Cebula from Cornell will be our presenter.

If you haven't registered and you would like to, you can do so at choosework.ssa.gov\wise. We also have a WISE On Demand or WISE archive page available where you can go back and watch our older webinars. We do keep them archived for about a year.

Or if you have some clients or Ticketholders interested in a particular topic, for example last month we talked about working from home, that webinar is now archived. So you could share a link to the webinar with your Ticketholder who might be interested in work from home.

So we do hope you will join us tomorrow. It should be a good one. We have about 1,300 people registered right now. And we'd love to see that number go up. So, again, continue to spread that word for us.

Feel free to log on to social media and share or retrieve our posts or send us a note if you have questions about including webinar content in your email or in a newsletter or on your Web site or something like that.

And my last slide today is how to stay in touch with us. It does include all of our social media content and how to subscribe to GovDelivery updates. So, again, that is a very important part of our messaging. That's how we stay in touch with you and that's how we give you tools to promote the Ticket Program to your audiences. And with that, I will hand it over to Adelle.

**Adelle Barr**: Thank you, Jayme, and thank you, everyone, for that great information. Now we can all go ahead and open up the lines now for any questions you may have. And we will go back and forth between the questions we've received here on the Web. And, (Lauren), if you can help us with setting up those questions on the phone.



**Operator**: Yes. Thank you. If you would like to ask a question, please signal by pressing star 1 on your telephone keypad. If you are using a speakerphone, please make sure your mute function is turned off to allow your signal to reach our equipment. Again, that is star 1 to ask a question. And we'll pause for just a moment to allow everyone an opportunity to signal.

**Adelle Barr**: Oh, good, (Lauren), I'm going to ask a few from the chat so that those can be compiled. Jayme, it looks like how long before the current WISE webinars are archived for view for those who can't make the live webinars?

**Jayme Pendergraft**: Thanks, Adelle. They're typically archived within 2 weeks. Sometimes it's a little bit less. Sometimes it might be a day or two more but within 2 weeks.

Adelle Barr: Awesome. And how can folks register for the WISE webinars?

Jayme Pendergraft: Was that how many are registered?

**Adelle Barr**: No. They want to know how people can register for the call.

**Jayme Pendergraft**: Okay. Sure. You go online to choosework.ssa.gov\wise and you just sign up there. And people can also register by calling the Ticket to Work Help Line.

**Adelle Barr**: Okay. I think this question is who is managing the Florida disability specialist contact list? When may we expect an updated list? I'm not sure who that question is for.

**Rob Pfaff**: So, Adelle, that might be a marketing question. I'm not entirely clear though based on what you read. But that's what it sounds like. And that might be a (Rose James) question.

**Adelle Barr**: Okay. I do think Rose joined.



**Rose James**: I am. Sorry, Adelle. I was trying to unmute myself. Can you please ask the question one more time. I didn't catch the whole thing.

**Adelle Barr**: No problem. We know all about that mute button. Who is managing the Florida disability specialist contact list and when may we expect an updated listing?

**Rose James**: I would have to look up Florida disability specifically. I'm not sure who manages that for them. I certainly can look that information up and get back to you, get back to them. I can get that email address and email from them from the data box.

**Adelle Barr**: Okay. Thank you for that. (Lauren), do we have any on the phone?

**Operator**: We have no phone questions, but once again that is star 1.

**Adelle Barr**: Okay. No problem. I still have questions here. Okay. This is in reference to texting and PII, I believe. Did I hear correctly that we cannot text beneficiaries in our Ticket Program or is it just that we cannot text their information?

Cara Caplan: Hi. This is Cara. You just cannot text PII. You can text general things.

**Rob Pfaff**: And I will add that, (Rose), we have guidance pertaining to this that is sent to participating employment networks on texting, I believe. Is that correct, (Rose)?

**Rose James**: Hi, Rob. We have some stuff in our FAQ document that would address that. So if you want to reach out to us at the data.marketing.poc@ssa.gov email box, we'll be happy to send that to you.

**Adelle Barr**: Thank you for that. A question about services and supports review. Will we get a confirmation that documents were received? That's about the services and support reviews. Just checking to see if there's confirmation.



**Rob Pfaff**: I think that would be a (Jenny) question if she's on the line.

**Ana Morales**: She's not. But this is Ana. Yes. You should receive a confirmation. Remember that all of this information is sent via GSO accounts now. And we are constantly monitoring that information. And also, once it's received and analyzed and processed, you will receive a response from programming letting you know about the results of that review.

**Adelle Barr**: Okay. Thank you. Another question about PII. Can we email resumes of beneficiaries to employers without encryption with client's permission?

Rob Pfaff: Can you repeat that please?

**Adelle Barr**: I sure can. So it's a question about PII. Can we email resumes of beneficiaries to employers without encryption with the client's permission?

**Rob Pfaff**: Cara, do you have any guidance on that?

Cara Caplan: You can't text PII even with their permission.

**Adelle Barr**: Okay. This question is about virtual services. How did SSA choose the EN they got feedback from regarding virtual services?

**Mike Greenberg**: Sure. That's an excellent question. So, you know, we interviewed - well we surveyed 14 ENs. Twelve, you know, responded, which was a great response rate. And, you know, we kind of — we chose purposefully. We wanted to get ENs that was a

mix of longevity in the program. We wanted to go back to the folks who were on that call and kind of delve a little bit more deeply.

We looked at ENs that had — we wanted to get a mix of business models. We also, you know, wanted to handpick, since we were handpicking anyway, you know, ENs that, you know, had a reputation of being open and willing to share their businesses practices.



So, you know, I didn't mean to suggest or imply that this was, you know, a random research project. We really kind of went out there and said, you know, let's talk to some folks, you know, who we think would, you know, be cooperative and by virtue of our past experiences, you know, be willing to chat up, you know, how they're doing, the challenges they're facing.

And, you know, all in all we were very pleased with the depth of their response and, you know, the specificity. And we hope, you know, when you all see the product, I hope you'll find it worthwhile.

Our goal here really was to try to create something that would be, you know, a learning experience moving forward for ENs who are facing the same challenges that other ENs are facing.

So that's how we went about it. We nominated the groups. We approved the group and we moved forward from there. I hope that answers your question.

**Adelle Barr**: Thank you, Mike. I'm just checking, (Lauren), are there any questions on the phone queue?

**Operator**: We do have one question from Steve Tanski with Certified Rehabilitation Services.

**Darlene Tanski**: Hi. I'm wondering if you could clarify the question. I didn't hear the response to emailing the resumes with the client's permission to area businesses.

**Rob Pfaff**: Cara, I believe the answer was that it was not permissible. Are we certain about that?

Cara Caplan: Say that one more time. I apologize.

**Rob Pfaff**: This was a question — the question was...

(Crosstalk)



**Operator**: Ma'am, if you could please repeat your question.

Rob Pfaff: Yes. Thank you.

**Darlene Tanski**: Yes. The question was I just wanted just to clarify the answer. I didn't quite hear the answer of being able to email our clients' resumes unencrypted with permission to area businesses.

Cara Caplan: If it contains PII, you cannot send it unencrypted.

Darlene Tanski: Okay. Thank you.

**Rob Pfaff**: Cara, can I ask a clarifying question on that?

Cara Caplan: Of course.

**Rob Pfaff**: Is our guidance for not sending PII in regards to the EN sending any information to us or does it cover anything? I mean, can you clarify that? And you may have already done this.

**Cara Caplan**: No, that's fine. So when they're sending it to us, they're not sending it through email at all. So that's a totally different thing sending it to us and that's part of the training from Ana's staff in their guidance that went out.

When you're sending anything to the Ticketholder for anyone else within or outside your organization, everything must be encrypted. And, I mean, the basis of this is that it's our job to protect the beneficiary's PII.

**Rob Pfaff**: So in that example it's the EN sends — can the EN send an encrypted email containing the resume to an employer if the employer has the capacity to unencrypt it? Would that be permissible?



**Cara Caplan**: Yes. That is totally fine. As long as they can encrypt it, they can send it.

Rob Pfaff: Okay. Thank you.

Adelle Barr: Thanks, team. (Lauren), do we have any other questions on the phone

queue?

**Operator**: As a reminder, that is star 1 to ask a question.

Adelle Barr: Okay. I do have plenty here.

**Operator**: We do have a phone question if you'd like to take a phone question.

Adelle Barr: Oh, go ahead.

Operator: We'll take our next question from (Hamid Hajabeijan) with H&H Employment

Training.

**Hamid Hajabeijan**: Yes. Hello. I am talking about sending the resume. What about online applications that they fill out or if we're filling out online applications? For example putting in information, addresses and it says please upload the resume on that online application form. What would we do in that case if it was an online application where they would request for an upload of the resume?

**Cara Caplan**: This is Cara. So if the beneficiary is sending their own information and uploading it and putting it on a site, that's completely different then the EN doing it. Also, and I can't assume this, but in most circumstances when you're doing an online application, for example, you're applying for a government job, you're generally doing an online application, but those are secure sites.

So it's different than just a general email. But we can't tell the beneficiaries no you cannot send your own information. That's completely different than the EN doing it.



**Hamid Hajabeijan**: What if the two of us were together and we were applying online for job sites, the both of us together, myself, the EN, and the client? Would that be different?

**Cara Caplan**: I see. I think that's probably — I'll let Rob weigh in as well. But I think that's probably fine if the beneficiary is sitting there and doing it.

**Rob Pfaff**: Yes, I would tend to agree. You know, we're getting into the nuances of legal issues. But, you know, if the beneficiary is the one hitting the send button, for example, then that's essentially the beneficiary sending their own information to a source.

**Hamid Hajabeijan**: Okay. Oftentimes we'll be doing things through the video phone because of COVID. So often they'll be on their own on their computer or we'll be face timing and I'll be helping them kind of walk through the process.

For example, I'll ask them their job history and help them fill that out online. And when they feel ready to submit, often I'll take a picture to confirm with them — to confirm the submission, the terms of agreement. I will send that picture over to the beneficiary. And that's typically my practice and then I keep everything on file and protected. Would that be okay or is that okay?

**Cara Caplan**: So who is actually — can I ask you who is — and like Rob said we're getting into, like, nuances and we could have a private conversation with you if you would like. I'm more than willing to do that. But if the beneficiary is the one doing the typing and sending it, that simply is different than you doing it.

**Hamid Hajabeijan**: Right. Oftentimes my clients are quite poor and they don't have a computer or access to technology at all. All they have typically is an iPhone when I work with them or an Android or an iPad. But usually they don't have the capability to apply and send resumes, et cetera, online.

**Cara Caplan**: Then I would advise you that you can only do this if you know that it's a secure site. I mean, most major companies would have a secure site if they're doing an online application.



**Hamid Hajabeijan**: Exactly. Okay. I'm relieved and I got clarification. Thank you very much.

**Operator**: We have another question. We'll take our next caller, Linda Benedict with (Careersource Suncoast).

**Linda Benedict**: Yes. I think you answered the question. It's not that we can't give the employer a resume. We can if we fax it over or it's on a secured site.

Cara Caplan: Correct.

**Linda Benedict**: That's correct, right? Because we're a workforce board so that's what we do. We hook people up to jobs at no cost. So I just wanted to make sure what you were saying. But that's the way I understood it. Thank you.

**Cara Caplan**: Perfect. And just so that you guys can see, we have posted where the PII training is located on the Web site and maybe that will be helpful.

**Adelle Barr**: Any other questions from the phone line, (Lauren)?

**Operator**: Our next question comes from Sandra Abbott with Abbott & Associates Financial Services, LLC.

**Sandra Abbott**: Yes. Good afternoon. I had two questions. In the new training program for the payment process, is there information on what particular form you would use according to the phases? You know, like the Phase 1 versus Phase 2?

**Ana Morales**: This is Ana. Yes. This is Ana. The form to request a payment is always the same form. But, yes, we will go over requirements for each of the different payments.



**Sandra Abbott**: Okay. All right. Thank you. And then the second question is you were talking about communications that were going out to the EN. Is that the same as the SSA monthly digest?

**Ana Morales**: This is Ana again. I believe you are referring to the newsletter that we distribute every quarter?

Sandra Abbott: Yes.

**Ana Morales**: And that's separate. That is a - it is actually sent through GovDelivery email. GovDelivery is a platform that Social Security uses to distribute emails and important information.

The Ticket newsletter is just a newsletter that we put together every quarter compiling different information from Social Security as well. But they are all sent through the same platform. So if you are receiving that one thing you are good to go. You are receiving those emails.

Sandra Abbott: Okay. Thank you.

**Operator**: Our next question comes from Freddie Floyd with Return to Work Consultants.

**Freddie Floyd**: Hi. Good afternoon. I have two questions. The first question is you mention about the logo that we can upload and use that in our marketing. Did you say that there was a certain Web page for that?

**Jayme Pendergraft**: Hi. This is Jayme. It's on yourtickettowork.ssa.gov, and it is in the outreach toolkit.

**Freddie Floyd**: Okay. And the second question is in working with the beneficiaries, when we send — I always do this after — well, I'm going to start doing this. After the IWP, can we have the beneficiary sign a form authorizing us to contact employers, send resumes or follow-up with employers regarding the status of their resume or application?



Is that okay to do that? Have one of the beneficiaries — have a beneficiary sign a form, you know, that we will send out to them. They will send it back to us. And then whenever they go in for an interview if they have not heard anything from the employer, we can send them a form stating, you know, the results, what were the results of the beneficiary's application or the status I should say.

**Debbra**: This is Debra. Is Cara on?

Cara Caplan: I am.

(Crosstalk)

**Freddie Floyd**: I could hardly hear you. I'm sorry.

**Debbra**: Okay. Cara, if I'm not mistaken, isn't that listed under the IWP rules that the employer — the agreement between — I'm sorry, the EN and the beneficiary in that agreement that the EN can contact the beneficiary's employer?

**Cara Caplan**: Yes. I think your question is multifold so absolutely you can. That's right, (Deb). But you're saying also sending the resume. That's where it gets glitchy because, like we were stating before, you may not send PII unencrypted. You can send a resume for the beneficiary as long as it's encrypted.

**Freddie Floyd**: Okay. I just thought that there was a - that if we could have asked the beneficiary, would they sign this authorization form that would allow an employer to discuss the status of their resume or the status of the outcome of an interview that the beneficiary had.

**Cara Caplan**: Yes. You can do that as long as you have permission from the beneficiary to do that. Now that's up to the employer if they're going to, you know, comply or not. But, yes, you may do that.

Freddie Floyd: Okay. Thank you.



**Cara Caplan**: And I will just give you a little bit of advice though. I would get that in writing and keep that...

Freddie Floyd: Okay, but, okay.

Cara Caplan: ...and keep that in their file. So for instance if we come for a site visit and let's just say we had a complaint for any reason, I'm not saying we would but if we did, you can show us, you know, or produce a written statement from the beneficiary.

Freddie Floyd: A signed authorization. Okay. We will do that. Thank you.

Cara Caplan: Yes. So make sure you keep it.

Freddie Floyd: Okay.

**Operator**: And we'll take our next question from Asas Tamir with Employment Options, Inc.

**Asas Tamir**: Yes. Hi. Thanks. There was a mention of a marketing program that EN can join and receive listings of beneficiaries who are eligible for the Ticket Program. And I was wondering where we can find more information about joining this program.

Rob Pfaff: Adelle, would you like to share that if you can?

**Adelle Barr**: Yes. Yes, I will. I actually just posted it. It's in an email, <a href="mailto:data.marketing.poc@ssa.gov">data.marketing.poc@ssa.gov</a>. And that should be available for you to review.

Asas Tamir: Could you repeat that one more time, please?

Adelle Barr: Data.marketing.poc@ssa.gov.



**Asas Tamir**: Got it. Thank you very much.

Adelle Barr: Thank you.

Operator: We'll take our next question from Joe Garza with TCOE.

**Joe Garza**: Hello. At the risk of sounding like a broken record, but just again for clarification regarding resumes, I am housed at an HAC so we have workforce partners that we collaborate with to help us place our beneficiaries to work, whether it be an OJT contract or a direct hire with an employer.

But that would require me sending the workforce partner the resume. And, of course, I understand it should be sent encrypted. But they in turn may send the resume to the employer. Should it then still be encrypted from the workforce partner or is that something that maybe - well I don't have the contact with the employer so it would have to be the workforce partner that would be negotiating the contract and sending the resume to the employer.

**Cara Caplan**: What I would advise is that you encourage them to encrypt it. You know, it's hard. Now we're dealing with third-party people who aren't under agreement with Social Security. So we don't have control over those people.

But if they are partnered with you, you know, I mean, I would just encourage them to do it. I mean, the ultimate goal is to protect the beneficiary's PII. And identities get stolen so easily nowadays, we just want to take every precaution we can.

**Joe Garza**: Okay. Okay. I'll see what I can work out. Because maybe I can, you know, send the resume directly to the employer encrypted if the partner will allow me to do that, have that communication with that employer so. Yes, okay.

Cara Caplan: Thank you.

**Operator**: And we'll take our next question from (Hamid Hajabeijan) with H&H Employment Training.



**Hamid Hajabeijan**: Hi. Good afternoon. I have got three kind of small questions. My first question, just curious, is Cara's last name Caplan, C-A-P-L-A-N, the one who was just speaking on that last question?

Cara Caplan: It is.

Hamid Hajabeijan: Oh, hi, Cara. Okay. Now I know who you are. Thank you.

My next question is in regards to IWP, the internal content in the IWP, like the questions, they'll say, you know, what I plan to do, what are the goals, what kind of job do you want to find to implement a job plan and develop that.

It already tells us - or it already says I will follow-up so and so company. I will contact this client. I intend to set up an interview so on and so forth. And it seems to already be laid out there in the IWP in regards to following up, talking with the company, the status. So the interview is already inside the IWP with just one signature.

Do I need a separate signature agreement from the client or would we need two of those or is one going to be sufficient with the IWP that already seems to cover everything under one signature itself?

**Cara Caplan**: Let me make sure I understand your question properly. So you're saying in the IWP, the beneficiary is basically stating I will give you what?

**Hamid Hajabeijan**: No. I understand what you mean. In the IWP there are several questions like, what would you like to do in the short-term? What are your long-term goals?

And so, for example, if that information is already there, you know, my action plan will include getting in contact with this company, following up with this specific company. And I have that all written out with a signature and the beneficiary can see, you know, the grand...



**Cara Caplan**: Okay. I think the miscommunication is that that's great that you have that. But in order to send - to do something directly to get in touch with them, you still do need permission from the beneficiary to do that.

I think it's okay to have it - I take it back. I think it's okay to have it in my IWP. But it must be written very clearly that the beneficiary understands that you're getting in touch with their employer.

Because I will tell you we have had complaints from beneficiaries, Ticketholders, because they did not want their employer to know that they had a disability. So we just want to make sure that the Ticketholder completely understands.

**Hamid Hajabeijan**: Yes. I understand what you mean. I guess I just feel that the IWP could be like a - we could write all the agreements that we want to sit in the IWP of what I'm going to be doing and what actions I'm going to be taking, like, set the expectations in the beginning.

**Cara Caplan**: Yes. No, I think that's great. I mean, it's the IWP. It should be individualized. But I just want to make sure for the beneficiaries say that it's extremely clear to them what actions you will be taking.

But part of doing the IWP is not just in signing it. Like it should be a conversation. I mean, it should be several hours of a conversation and them really understanding what they're doing and what you're doing.

**Hamid Hajabeijan**: Exactly. Thank you. My third and final question so far two or three beneficiaries have asked me to send resumes to them. And they email them to me and then ask me to send resumes directly to the -- one moment. This is an interpreter and I just need to clarify the question.

So for example, the beneficiary has asked me to send the beneficiary's resume out. So I asked them to send me a copy of their current resume. Would I be allowed to send it, for example, if they don't have the encryption capability? I don't know how that might work.

**Cara Caplan**: If you want to send it to an employer, you must encrypt it. An employer should be able to unencrypt.



**Hamid Hajabeijan**: What if I'm sending the resume to the beneficiary, like the client? If they ask me to send them a copy of their resume that I already have.

**Cara Caplan**: You should not be sending anything unencrypted. I mean, it's really that simple.

**Hamid Hajabeijan**: The problem is if the client doesn't have the technical capability to unencrypt it if I send it to them in an encrypted form.

Cara Caplan: I'm a little confused. They're sending it to you and you're sending it back to them?

**Hamid Hajabeijan**: Okay. Let me repeat the question. I don't think the interpreter is understanding. So for example if myself and the client are developing the resume and then later on the client asks me for a copy of that resume that we worked on together, how could I get that sent to them?

Ana Morales: Cara.

Cara Caplan: Go ahead. Ana.

**Ana Morales**: I was about to offer assistance and follow-up with him directly. It seems like he has...

Hamid Hajabeijan: Ma'am, I can't understand you. Can you start your sentence over?

**Cara Caplan**: Yes. We will reach out to the person asking the question directly and give them some guidance. So, Ana, or somebody on her team will follow-up.

Hamid Hajabeijan: Sure. Not a problem. I'll look forward to that.



Cara Caplan: And I'll just say quickly, an alternative is they can put it in the regular mail.

Hamid Hajabeijan: Okay. Yes, ma'am. Thank you.

**Operator**: And we'll take our next question from Sandra Abbott with Abbott & Associates Financial Services, LLC.

**Sandra Abbott**: Yes. I have a question in regards to following up on a beneficiary. If you have an individual that you've been sending correspondence to and they're not responding, can you call their employer that they have given you the information on to see if they're still employed?

**Cara Caplan**: You really shouldn't without their permission. We have sent guidance on this before. If you're trying to make your quarterly or monthly contacts with them and they're not responding to you, then we advise that you send them -- you try, try again, you know what I mean, and then you send them a letter.

And you want to keep a copy of the letter and when you sent it yourself, you know, take a picture and whatnot and put it in their file and document that they are non-responsive. And we will not penalize you for them not responding.

But we do need to see that you are making attempts to respond. So just make sure you document, you know, in their file I called them on November 1, no answer. I called again on November 5, no answer. You know, just that type of thing. Does that make sense?

**Sandra Abbott**: Yes. And I'm doing that.

Cara Caplan: So we have guidance on that that we have sent out.

**Sandra Abbott**: Okay. Because the question is the person -- you know, as an EN I'm eligible to submit a payment request for him as being employed. And, excuse me, he has not submitted any of his payroll stubs to me.



And I'm, you know, trying to contact him. I sent, like, a monthly notice to everybody to make sure that they send a copy of their payroll stub to Social Security. But I don't want to, how do you say, infringe on the potential beneficiary, but I would like to be able to bill for the services.

**Cara Caplan**: Right. And it really depends on - and I think where you are in the process with that beneficiary. Like I don't know what payment you're trying to request.

Sandra Abbott: Like the P1, M1.

**Cara Caplan**: So it is Phase 1, Milestone 1, and you've already lost contact with the beneficiary. And, you know, you would send in -- (Debra), do you want to step in? They would send in the certification of services -- not the certification of services, the proof of relationship form, correct?

**Debbra**: Yes. That is correct. If you're not able get copies of the beneficiary's paystub, you would have to send in a proof of relationship form and on that you would have to document your contact with the beneficiary and the services provided.

But you would also need to have some proof of earnings. Now if you go through the portal and the portal gives you a message that shows that proof of -- that SSA has the earnings in their system that's fine. You have the earnings requirement met. However, if you don't have copies of the paystubs in addition to the earnings, you must submit a proof of relationship form.

And at some point, since this is the very beginning, at some point if you can't get in touch with the beneficiary and you have very little or nothing to document if you haven't made contact, it might be advisable to unassign their Ticket.

(Crosstalk)

**Sandra Abbott**: Yes, ma'am. I have contacted him many of times by phone, text. And then I sent out two letters to him. And he's not responding. And I don't know if he moved or — you know, because I'm calling him as well and, you know, leaving messages and asking him to give me a call.



However, I do know that — well I'll say the time that we did have the communications that he was working, but I don't have any physical proof of his paystub.

**Debbra**: Okay. Again, without that — and, again, the fact that you're not able to get contact with him and you've made multiple attempts, it sounds like this might possibly be a Ticket that you would want to unassign.

**Sandra Abbott**: Yes. Excuse me. And I thought about that, too. However, he does have some mental issues. You know, he disappears sometimes. So that's why I was just trying to continue, you know, to see if in time he will eventually connect. But before I do the termination of services, I'm going to send him another letter letting him know, you know, at that point if I don't hear, you know, from him within a specific amount of time that his Ticket would be let go.

Debbra: Okay.

**Sandra Abbott**: So if I don't have the proof and I don't know — you know, again, I don't know if he's — let me ask you this if I may real quick. On the portal is there a way to see for each beneficiary what they have sent in, you know, like their paystubs for the month?

**Debbra**: Excuse me. No, you cannot see that by way of the portal. What you can do is when you submit a claim by way of the portal, the portal can you let know whether the SSA has earnings in its system. That's the only, you know, you could see that.

If they're not in the SSA system then either the beneficiary hasn't reported the earnings or there are no earnings or the employer — there was no report of the earnings to Social Security or Social Security did not have that information in the system.

So that's the only thing that you could see when it comes to looking at the requirements for a payment. You need to have earnings. You have to have a beneficiary status that you would not know necessarily.

But for Phase 1 milestones you need to have a proof of a relationship. Paystub or evidence of a proof of relationship. But if no paystubs then you have to fill out the proof of relationship form.



And the purpose of that is because of the fact that for Phase 1 milestones that's when the beneficiary needs the most support. And we have -- as an EN you have to show that you're continuously working.

Now it seems as though you had tried to attempt to work with this beneficiary or tried to get in touch with him but that did not happen. Again, I would advise you to consider unassigning the Ticket.

**Sandra Abbott**: Okay. So I can just send in the proof of relationship to apply for the P1 M1 payment?

**Debbra**: Sorry. I went on mute. Yes, you could do that but you still have to have proof of earnings, I mean, some earnings information. If you cannot get it, you could go through a third-party to try to get those earnings information and the work number is one source.

And, again, when you submit that claim through the portal, Social Security may give you a message back that there are earnings there to satisfy the Phase 1 milestone earnings requirement.

But you have to hit some earnings -- you have to submit that as well or have it in the SSA system. You cannot just submit the proof of relationship form on its own. There are two things. You need the earnings and you need that form.

Sandra Abbott: Okay. Thank you.

Debbra: You're welcome.

**Operator**: And we'll take our next question from Natalie Harrison with Lighthouse Louisiana.

**Natalie Harrison**: Hi. Good afternoon. I'm not sure if this is an appropriate platform for this question and maybe someone can guide me on who to speak with. But I'm having an issue with a Ticket that was assigned.

And it was assigned -- it was closed with the state VR as unsuccessful, I mean, as successful but the beneficiary did not meet the criteria for a successful closure. And it is



preventing our EN from billing for all Phase 1 milestones. So I'm not sure if that's an issue that can be addressed now or if there's a certain person I could speak with regarding that.

**Ana Morales**: This is Ana Morales. Can you please send an email to <a href="mailto:enoperations@yourtickettowork.ssa.gov">enoperations@yourtickettowork.ssa.gov</a> and we will be happy to schedule some time and talk to you.

Natalie Harrison: Okay. Thank you. Enoperations@ssa.gov?

Ana Morales: At yourtickettowork.ssa.gov.

Natalie Harrison: Okay.

Ana Morales: Thank you.

Natalie Harrison: Thank you.

**Operator**: And we'll take another question from (Hamid Hajabeijan) with H&H Employment Training.

**Hamid Hajabeijan**: Yes, hello. So recently a person was struggling to contact someone that person with that situation. I also had a situation like that with a couple clients from the VR. And they had a guardian. Another client had also a payee, like, a relative or somebody that's taking care of the beneficiary's benefits. So there's a payee.

And while they developed their IWP, what do you do when you face a beneficiary who has a payee or a guardian? Does that mean if I don't get a response from the beneficiary, do I contact the payee to get that information? Is that okay?

**Ana Morales**: Hamid, this is Ana Morales again. I know that we are going to schedule -- I will schedule some time to talk to you so we can definitely address all the questions that you have.



But in general for the audience, the Ticket can only be assigned to one agency at a time. And if the Ticket is assigned to a EN or to a VR and there is a (guardianship) situation or something like that, it has to be in sequence.

The Ticket cannot be with two agencies at a time. But I will follow-up with you (Hamid) because I know we need to discuss other questions that you had. And I will be happy to answer the questions that you have about this situation.

(Crosstalk)

**Hamid Hajabeijan**: ...for, like, the audience, everyone here, they do need to know, you know, at once we're all in the same boat here. You know, the client, you know, they might have lower mental function. You know, they might not be as competent with their independence, like they must have a guardian or a payee.

So I'm not sure what to do in that situation. So definitely let me know for any people in the audience or the queue that can learn at the same time. So thank you again. Just let me know.

**Adelle Barr**: Thank you. Lauren, we are approaching the end of our call. We can take one more question. We'll take our next question from Steve Tanski with Certified Rehabilitation Services.

**Darlene Tanski**: Hi. This is Darlene. I'm sorry about that. My question was about the Milestone 1 payment, Phase 1 Milestone 1 in regards of not being able to reach somebody. The other caller had that similar question.

And I just wanted to follow-up on that because I'm not sure if unassigning the Ticket is the right way to kind of handle that because you could have potentially worked with that individual for an extensive period of time providing job development services and helping them secure the position.

But then not being able to get their paystubs or them not contacting you back becomes a difficulty I think we all face with the individuals that we work with. I'm wondering if there are other options that you could come up with or if there's something else that we should be doing to ensure that we can keep contact with people.



**Debbra**: This is Debbra. And I was the one that provided a response for that other EN. I was not saying that she should. It was a recommendation if she could not get in contact, if she could not get any earnings. So those are two requirements for a Phase 1 outcome. That's it.

So I did give some suggestions on how she could get her earnings. But the proof of relationship form, if there was a relationship, if she provided services and there was contact, yes, she would be easily able to fill out that form and that part of the requirement would be met.

The other part of it is just a matter of getting earnings, which is a requirement. If she cannot get paystubs or get in touch with the employer or whatever, the other source is perhaps the SSA system or through the work member or some other third-party who may have gathered earnings information.

Darlene Tanski: Okay. Thank you very much.

**Adelle Barr**: Thank you, Debra. Thank you, Lauren. And it looks like we are at the end of our call. We do have the email for any questions that may not have been addressed. And I think I'll paste that right now in operations@yourtickettowork.ssa.gov.

And we'll also do our best to address any questions that were not addressed from the chat. So look for the post-information for this call. Let me see. Rob, are you still on the line?

Okay. Well I will go ahead and take on the responsibility of thanking everyone for their time and attention today. Please have a wonderful rest of the day. And the next call is scheduled for February 23, 2021. Thank you all.

**Operator**: And that does conclude today's conference. We thank you for your participation. You may now disconnect.

