Quarterly All EN Call: Transcript
May 24, 2022

Derek Shields (Moderator): Welcome to today's Quarterly All Employment Network Call. My name is Derek Shields, and I will serve as the moderator for today's meeting. Before we begin our agenda, I have a few logistics and housekeeping items that I would like to cover.

First, the meeting is being recorded and transcription is also being captured. To some other specific logistics on the screen, please remain muted at all times during the call unless called upon by our moderator.

Please feel free to ask a question in the MS Teams chat section, which will be moderated by SSA and TPM. We will respond to questions as they come in or if they need to be held, we will keep that to the last 25 to 30 minutes, which is a Q&A interactive section.

If you're joining via phone and you wish to ask a question, please raise your hand utilizing STAR 5 and you will be unmuted by the facilitator. You will then need to use STAR 6 to unmute yourself. This is a two-step process, and we will assist you through that two-step process.

We do ask you to limit your questions to one per participant. Additional questions or comments can be sent to us via email at ENOperations@yourtickettowork.ssa.gov. Those questions that are not answered during the live event will be forwarded to the appropriate panelists for comment and we'll be able to provide some of those responses through the follow-up notes we provide.

Close captioning is available today for participants who join using the MS Teams application or utilizing a separate closed caption link provided. This was provided before in the chat and can be provided again. To turn on closed captioning in Teams, please go to the three ellipses in the top of the MS Teams window. It also has more or more actions listed there and go down to the list of turn on live captions. When using the link option, please paste the link in your browser and it will open up a separate window to view the closed captions. We thank you all for your participation and attendance today and appreciate your time and attention with that to the next slide please.

Before we turn to our first presenters, I would like to review our call agenda again. Today's call will be from 1:00 p.m. Eastern Time to 2:30 p.m. Eastern Time for 90 minutes with about a one-hour presentation. We'll begin with an update from Social Security provided by Mr. Robert Path.

Next, Miss Cara Caplan will provide some EN updates and reminders, followed by a topic that was requested by an EN, Medical and Work Continuing Disability Reviews by Mariely Lopez. Following that, we'll actually have some questions and answers directly. Then for Mariely and her colleague Kristine.

Next, we will have Mary Lynn Revoir from the American Dream Employment Network, or ADEN, provide a short presentation on their annual report. And following that we have a presentation or updates from the National Disability Rights Network from Cheryl Bates Harris. I'll come back after Cheryl and provide some updates on the Ticket Program, Communication and Outreach.

And as I mentioned, we'll have a final segment that will be open Q&A. So please provide your questions as we go along for presenters and know that we'll have a portion at the end where we'll look for raised hands and open up your audio line so you can engage directly with our presenters. Next slide please.

Now let's turn to our first agenda topic, Social Security Updates. In this segment, we will hear from Robert Pfaff and Mike Corso. After Rob and Mike are done, we will have time for questions for both of these presenters.
It is now my pleasure to introduce Mr. Robert Pfaff, the Director, of the Office of Employment Support and Social Security's Office of Research, Demonstration and Employment Support. Rob.

Robert Pfaff: Thank you Derek, and good afternoon and good morning to all of you. Thank you for joining us today. We have a lot of topics to cover, a lot of good information. Derek, thank you for walking us through this new process. We hope that you enjoy that at least with Teams, you will be able to see some of us speak with you directly, which is helpful in this remote environment that we're working in.

I'll go ahead and get started and let me also thank the folks that are presenting today, both from SSA, with Mariely and with Mary Lynn and Cheryl. You're going to hear some good information just to start, I'm going to give you an update on the Employment Summit report. I know I've talked about this quite a bit. It is very close to being done. It is with our Deputy Commissioner right now who was reviewing the document and associated summary information. We anticipate releasing that document shortly. It will go out through our communications channels. We will notify you when it is available, but we do anticipate having it out before the end of the month, hopefully. I'm not going to commit to that, but that's our hope.

Within that document, which you'll see is a summary of the summit that we held, a virtually two-day summit. We have a synopsis of the discussions that occurred among our EN and VR partners, as well as our federal partners, and the document will include recommendations and links to resources that were identified during the two-day session. So, we hope that it's useful for you. We hope that you can refer to it and that it will help you tap into some of those resources to assist your clients return to work.

One thing that we talk about in the summary report is the Abilities to Careers Technical Virtual Academy and the Talent Acquisition Portal. And so right now what I want to do is turn it over to Mr. Mike Corso, who is going to reiterate and share for those of you who may not have heard previously some opportunities that are available to you. So, Mike if you'd like to go ahead and then I'll turn it over to you.

Mike Corso: Thanks, Rob. I appreciate it. Thanks for the opportunity to have me on here to offer this to the ENs. As Rod said, my name is Mike Corso. I operate Disabled Person Inc. and the Talent Acquisition Network and the ACT Academy. Just to give you a little update, we presented to the ENs at the end of last year for the ACT Academy. As of the 18th of May we had 117 EN candidates in the Academy. Of the 117, 36% of the students completed at least one course, 48% are in-progress as we speak and 16% haven't started the courses yet. So we've got a real robust response and I'm here to tell you today that if you want to still participate, we have until August 31 of this year for the pilot program and we'll take as many individuals as you want. There's still time for a student to come in and complete a course. We have three months left. So, you see my name and my email on the screen here with my phone number. Feel free to reach out and send over your beneficiaries if you have them. We're happy to take them. We're happy to help. It's going great. We operate that through the Go One platform and also the Microsoft Teams. We now have three teacher's assistants to help the individuals.

And Go One has a wonderful support system. You know, sometimes there are technical issues, but the support is right on top of them. So, we're happy with how things are going. And like I said, we want to help as many people as we can. So, feel free to give me a call, send an email and send over your beneficiaries. With regards to the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP), again we made that available for 2022 to the EN. We currently as of the 18th of May has 17,113 beneficiaries in the portal.

So far in May we've had 67 people apply for positions. Last month we had 53 people apply for positions. I don't know the outcomes of those because nobody has told us, but we have over 400,000 jobs streaming on TAP at the moment. So come on, just let me know and we'll sign you up. And for those of you who have signed up on TAP, and haven't input your beneficiaries, if you need help, just give me a call. We'll be happy to help you get started with that. We also are going to be holding a virtual job fair in July or bring on employers with national footprints. And if you want your beneficiaries to participate in that, they have to be enrolled in TAP with a resume, a published resume.

So again, my name is Mike Corso. My email is mike@disabledperson.com. My phone number is 760-420-1269. We're happy to help send over your beneficiaries and we'll do what we can to help you help them get back to work. Thank you for the opportunity.

Robert Pfaff: Thank you, Mike. And really the most tangent opportunity really for ENs working with their beneficiaries to engage in something, have their…and one thing I, you may have touched on this, but the opportunity to have a screened qualified job ready candidate who would take this kind of training and make the most of it, would be a tremendous candidate. So, I think it's a fantastic opportunity and I'm appreciative of your efforts. We'll pause for a second and take questions, Derek, if you would, however you want to manage this piece.

Derek Shields: Thank you, Rob. Thank you, Mike. Yes, we have shared these instructions in chat, and I'll read it now. To ask a question via Teams you can use the chat or raise your hand tools. If you use raise the hand in chat, we will call on you and unmute your line. Via phone, please raise your hand by using STAR 5 and you will then need to be unmuted by our facilitator a two-step process. You also could send a question in through email at ENOperations@yourtickettowork.ssa.gov. It does look like we have a hand raised, so let's go to that option. If I could ask Nicole to identify that person for us, please.

Derek Shields: Stand by. We have a telephone number ending in 7811. I think you've been unmuted.

Nicole Black: Sorry about that. I couldn't get off mute. My apologies.

Derek Shields: It's OK. So, we've unmuted 7811 if you would like to speak, you can proceed.

Derek Shields: Well, it doesn't look like they're coming off mute.

Nicole Black: Yeah.

Derek Shields: We'll try it one more time. Telephone number ending in 7811.

Participant: I apologize, I did not get my telephone number, and could he just briefly tell us what that program is? I'm pretty new to the EN.

Mike Corso: Sure, my phone number is up on the screen. It's 760-420-1269. The ACT Academy is a virtual academy. It's all remote online and what we're doing is giving the opportunity for individuals with disabilities to train in IT certifications. This is for entry level IT certifications, and they can have stackable credentials of courses offered. There's digital literacy, there's Microsoft Office Specialist, Microsoft 365 Fundamentals, Microsoft Teams Administrator, Microsoft Azure Fundamentals, there's CompTIA, A plus, Network plus and Security plus. That's the first year. And yes, it is free up until August 31. That's why we're on here. We have licenses left that we're willing to give out. And if they can go through and finish, there's time for them to finish a course. And we're happy to get as many people as we can.

Derek Shields: Thank you, Mike. This is Derek. Just to follow up again, if we have any more questions for Mike and or Robert Pfaff, please provide those through chat or you could raise your hand on the Teams app or use STAR 5 to raise your hand through a telephone.
Like there's a couple of questions have come in. One, what is the cost projected after August?

Mike Corso: So after August, it's going to be $500 for a year and that's for as many courses as they want to take. We're keeping it at bare minimum just to pay the bills and keep the lights on. Our objective here is to help train people and get them to work.

Derek Shields: Thanks. And then a follow-up, Mike. Can they still remain with their original EN?

Mike Corso: Yes, we're not an EN. We're doing this to help. There are no Tickets assigned to us.

Derek Shields: Thank you and then Mike one last question here, what does the process look like for them to sign up?

Mike Corso: I just need a referral from the EN with the individual's name and contact information and then that's it. And I need the course which they would like to take. So, if you're interested, send me an email and I'll send you the course catalog. And explain how we move forward.

Derek Shields: Thanks for that. And as a reminder, you can email Mike@disabledperson.com. Mike, final question here, who pays the $500 when that fee goes into effect?

Mike Corso: Whoever has the money. It could be the individual. That's between the EN and the individual.

Derek Shields: Great, thanks for that. Again, Mike@disabledperson.com. You can learn more and continue to take advantage of the opportunity through August at no cost. We appreciate your time. I want to circle back to Mr. Pfaff one more time. Rob, do you have any other comments or closing remarks before we turn to the next section?

Robert Pfaff: No, I do not. Thanks.

Derek Shields: Excellent. Thank you both for being with us today. And with that, we'll conclude the SSA updates.

Mike Corso: Thank you.

Derek Shields: Now we're going to turn to our next segment of today's call. I'm pleased to welcome Miss Cara Caplan to the All EN Call. Cara is the Branch Chief of the Office of Employment Support. Cara will provide her updates and will return for questions during the open Q&A session towards the end of the All EN call. Cara, over to you.

Cara Caplan: Hi. Thanks, Derek, and good afternoon, everybody. On April 4, 2022, as most of you know, the Federal Government moved from using the Data Universal Numbering System, the DUNS number, to the Unique Entity Identifier UEI. That happened automatically for existing ENs. So, there was nothing that you needed to do at all. We just wanted to remind you that we are no longer using DUNS number for payment purposes. You don't need to take any action at all. We've migrated away. We are now using what we call a Provider ID number, which was your old DUNS number, as a reference number. So, we still have your DUNS number. We call it the PID number and your UEI number is what the Federal Government uses for payment purposes. If anybody needs further clarification on that, you know you can contact ENService@ssa.gov and we can help you. But it's pretty much a behind the scenes thing for you guys.

There's some EN training updates. I just wanted to remind everybody about your Ticket Program Agreement requirements for training and that it must be completed within 60 days of TPA award or any changes in key personnel. So, a lot of ENs have changed key personnel through the years, and they'll send people to training, and they'll start it and they're not filtering through the training, and they continue to work and that's not acceptable. We are starting to crack down on all the TPA terms and conditions. So, you will receive a one time notification or notification about how much time is remaining to complete your training. It will go to the learner, the Signatory Authority and the Program Contact if the learner is nonresponsive to the notifications that come from EN Development or they're not progressing through the training. That will result in a cure notice and can lead to termination.

During training on Ticket Portal, access for the trainee will be suspended. They are able to go in and play around with it, but they cannot utilize the Ticket Portal until all training is completed. So that was flipped for everybody who is currently in training. It was communicated to those learners and Signatory Authorities and that is how it will work moving forward.

For your Services and Supports Reviews, please make sure that your EN has at least one GSO user and make Program Integrity aware of who that user is. Maintaining your GSO account, you must log in every 60 days to maintain access. You will be sent reminder emails prior to your Services and Supports Reviews. Please check your GSO account for requested SSNs. The official request notification will be sent from the GSO system five days prior to the end of the month preceding your review month. So, if your review is for May, April 25, you'll receive a reminder. Those reviews are due back to Program Integrity within 10 business days. Also, for your IWPs, you should be using what we call SMART goals. When creating the short-term and long-term goals on the IWP, make sure they are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time based goals. We should not be seeing the same IWP for all of your Ticketholders. They must be individualized.

When you're communicating with EN Service, it's very helpful and we would appreciate if you include the EN name, your PID number and your state abbreviation in the subject line. Our staff is divided by states, and it'll just make your response go a lot more smoothly and timely. And that's all I have. Derek, thank you.

Derek Shields: Thank you very much Cara for the EN updates and reminders. We appreciate those to assist everyone with their operations at this point. I know we have a hand raise. What we're going to do is ask you to keep that question until the open Q&A. If you prefer, you can provide it inside the chat. And as you've noticed, Katie will be responding throughout and that will get you a timely answer now.

To continue with our agenda, I'm now pleased to turn to our next topic, Continuing Disability Reviews, Medical verses Work. It is now my pleasure to welcome Mariely Lopez to the meeting. Mariely is a Social Insurance Specialist and will review a topic that was submitted by an EN for this quarterly meeting. Mariely will present and then she will accept questions immediately after and we'll be joined by her colleague Kristine Erwin-Tribbitt. Over to you, Mariely.

Mariely Lopez: Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Mariely Lopez with the Office of Research, Demonstration and Employment Support. Today we'll be giving you a short briefing on medical and work continuing disability reviews. The Social Security Administration reviews disability cases periodically to see if a person with a disability still meets SSA disability rules. SSA performs two types of reviews, a medical continuing disability review and a work continuing disability review. Next slide please.

In our first slide, we will discuss medical continuing disability reviews. Medical reviews are performed periodically based on medical diaries. These diaries are established at the time of the initial allowance and after a medical determination. The DDS stablished these diaries based on the individual’s impairment. The field office technician will send out a packet of forms to the beneficiary. The packet will include a notice stating we are starting a disability review and ask for medical sources and authorization for release of medical records.

From there, an evaluation is done to establish if a beneficiary’s disabling condition has not medically improved. A disabled beneficiary would not have to undergo a medical continuing disability review based on work alone if he or she has received his ability benefits for at least 24 months or is participating in the Ticket to Work Program. Next slide please.

During a continuing disability Review, SSA looks at earnings to determine if the individual is eligible for monthly benefits to make a substantial gainful activity determination. SGA is a term used to describe the level of work and earnings. Consistently being above this could lead to an ineligibility for disability benefits. We generally use these guidelines to evaluate whether work is SGA. And individuals reported earnings, IRS earnings or other data sources are events that may initiate a work review. Earnings can be reported by phone, mail, fax, in person, or by completing the SSA 821 or 820 forms online. The SSA technician develops a work review via these forms. Depending on the type of work. Next slide please.

The technician would then evaluate for Work Incentives such as impairment, work related expenses, maybe the beneficiary has a mental impairment where they need medication to do their job or maybe they have a physical limitation where they need a wheelchair. We also developed for subsidies, special conditions such as having extra help on the job or a job coach leading to the trial work period. The trial work period provision gives the disabled beneficiary the chance to test his or her ability to work and hold a job without the threat of losing benefits. It consists of nine months, which do not have to be consecutive, but completed within a 60-month rolling period. After the trial work, you have 36 months which you can work and still receive benefits for any month in which your earnings aren't substantial. No new application or disability decision is needed to receive Social Security during this period. This is called the extended period of eligibility.

Once development is completed, a due process notice is generated that gives the beneficiary an opportunity to correct discrepancies before the decision is finalized. Once the decision is processed, a final notice is mailed. If the decision is a continuance, meaning there is no SGA, the notice provides details on the decision. If the decision is an SGA decision, the notice will contain appeal rights on the determination. Lastly, if an overpayment applies, the notice contains appeal and waiver rights. Alright. Does anyone have any questions for me?

Derek Shields: Thank you very much, Mariely. We appreciate the review of the content and the comparison of the two reviews. At this time, as I mentioned, we will take questions for Mariely and her colleague Kristine. To do that, please use the raise hand feature on the MS Teams application or you can submit your question through chat. Or as described in chat, thank you Brittany, you can use STAR 5 on the telephone and we'll be able to then unmute you and you could use Starr 6 to unmute yourself. Any questions on continuing disability reviews?

While we give folks a second, I will just share that these slides are now available online at the Ticket to Work Program website under Events where the All EN Call slides go. They will be shared afterwards as part of the notes. So, you'll be able to access this content. Somebody asked if they could have access to the slides.

We do have a question Mariely in the chat. Are timely progress reviews in suspense? And then if you're able to access the chat questions, you can feel free to respond if you'd like.

Kristine Erwin-Tribbitt: Hi, this is Kristine. I just want to step in really quick about the question about Timely Progress Reviews and suspense. Timely Progress Reviews are related to the Ticket Program. What we're discussing here is work and medical CDRs that are done outside of the Ticket Program. So, these are normal policies that we file; one, to make sure the person is still eligible for benefits, both whether they have a medical disability or whether they're working over SGA. So for timely progress reviews, Patrice, do you want to step in to finish it?

Patrice McLean: Good afternoon. Thank you so much. Kristine. Yes, SSA conducts Timely Progress Reviews periodically and we don't normally send out notifications of when we're conducting those reviews. So, it's important to make sure that. If you are working with your Ticketholders to always be ready to respond to a request for Timely Progress Review because you never know when exactly that's going to come up. So, it's always best to be prepared.

Derek Shields: Thank you very much. This is Derek. Thank you very much, Patrice and Kristine for tag teaming there on that response.

Nicole, I wanted to go to you. I believe we have a meeting guest with their hand raised.

Nicole Black: Yes, we do. Can you hear me?

Derek Shields: Yes.

Nicole Black: OK, we have Janine Culver.

Derek Shields: Great. Janine, are you able to ask your question please?

Derek Shields: Well, we'll see if we can get Janine back. She had her hand raised. If you do have a question for Mariely or Kristine, please consider dropping it in a chat or using your raised hand.

Derek Shields: Alright. Well, I think that does it for that section of today's call. We'd like to thank Mariely.

Janine's trying again. Let's go back and see if we can get Janine to ask her question before our presenters have to leave. Janine, go ahead and try to unmute yourself.

Derek Shields: Well, unfortunately that's not working. She's unable to unmute and I believe you're on the application. With that being the case, I'd encourage you to submit. Well, we'll try one last time. Otherwise, I encourage you to submit through chat.

We do have a question coming in from Whitney Willis. If you're able to ask your question now. Whitney, go ahead.

Keitra Hill: Hi, Whitney. Please dial star 6 to unmute.

Whitney Willis: Can you hear me?

Derek Shields: Yes, go ahead, Whitney. Thank you.

Whitney Willis: No. OK, sorry. Uh speakers, got muted. Sorry.

Derek Shields: We can hear you now. Go ahead and ask your question.

Whitney Willis: OK.

Whitney Willis: Umm, I was going back to the work continuing disability review. Could you give me an example of a SMART goal? For the IWP. And it was not related to. It's not exactly related to the continuing disability review, but can you give me an example wording wise for SMART goals. On other fees.

Derek Shields: Thank you, Whitney. So, what I'm going to do is I'm going to hold that question, and we're going to bring it up as our first question in the open Q&A.

Whitney Willis: OK, perfect.

Derek Shields: So we appreciate you submitting it and I haven't marked down, and we'll bring back Cara and or Katie to assist with that one. Thanks for the question.

Whitney Willis: OK. Thank you. Mm-hmm

Derek Shields: Alright, so thank you very much, Mariely and Kristine for joining us today. We appreciate your time for joining the all the in call. And with that, we're now going to move to our next presenter.

Mary Lynn Revoir is the cofounder and codirector of the American Dream Employment Network, or ADEN. Mary Lynn will provide us with an overview of the ADEN annual report, and Mary Lynn will also join us following all of the presentations for the open Q&A period. With that, over to you, Mary Lynn.

Mary Lynn ReVoir: Well, thank you, Derek, and thank you to Social Security for the invitation to present on the American Dream EN Annual Report. To begin, I wanted to share some general information in regard to annual report with the next slide.

What is an annual report? Well, it is a brief document that summarizes and reviews your outcomes or performances of the year's business activity. Here at the American Dream Employment Network, we feel there's lots of benefits of writing an annual report for the business that we're conducting. It can be used for marketing our Employment Network to beneficiaries and other interested stakeholders. It also identifies strengths and helps us establish future business goals.

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If you're like us, you often may get inquiries from a variety of different types of readers, and to have all of this information in one document, it’s a time saver. So, you can distribute the information to a variety of readers. There are also some funders or accrediting bodies who do require or favor being able to see your annual report. And so, it can be an advantage if you have that particular product available to show them. It identifies the information that you want to share. There might be statistical data that you want to pass on to interested stakeholders. And you can list the data so it could show trends or histories, or it may contain some new data to reflect a current or unique situation.

For example, during the peak of the pandemic, you know you might want to be able to share what you've learned and what was the experience of the activity level of your business. You will need some type of a data collection tool in order to generate the information, so you can create it into these findings. We do have a secured portal and that portal contains all of our business data as well as case management. You're going to need to also decide what data do you want to track, how often you're going to collect the data and when are you going to collect it. The next slide explains specifics to our EN annual report. So, the next slide please.

We start out by this overview throughout the year. We're collecting information. So it's not something you just wait and do at the end of the year, you're going to be a process throughout the year. The data is collected quarterly with a final pull at the end of the year. And then that information is converted into the report annually in the month of January. We just distributed the report that in February to stakeholders. It's common that we give it to our board of directors. We posted on our website for the general public, so Ticketholders can see this information as well as beneficiaries who haven't assigned their Ticket to us. We send it to our employer partners. We also send it to SSA and a few other interested parties.

What is the content of our annual report? When we start off with an opening section. That is related to our mission statement. And the measurements of success and this year we identified three of those measures. The first one is individuals with disabilities are on a path out of poverty through employment. Our second one is beneficiaries who leave the SSA disability roles due to employment, create a savings to the SSA Trust Fund, and contribute to the federal tax base. And our third measurement is evidence course services exceed industry standards and are effective.

The next slide describes the remaining section of the report, which is basically statistical findings. We look at beneficiary profile information such as what's the average age, what is the percentage of individuals receiving Social Security disability insurance versus SSI. We summarize what's the educational background of the beneficiaries that have a site in their Ticket with us, and then we move into employment outcomes. What's the top five industries that the Ticket that are assigned to us are, have employment in and how what's the percentage of individuals who are placed on the job? I think we're currently running around 63% of the those of us signed their Ticket are employed and what's the average length of time from the time there are signed? The time they're placed. Then we look into productivity. What type of service do we provide to our Ticketholders? What's the most common service? How? What's the frequency of services? How much time do we spend at an average?
And because we are an administrative Employment Network versus a traditional Employment Network, we then provide a profile of our service providers who operate under our umbrella. So, this describes the aid and affiliates. Hopefully that overview, which is brief, will provide you some insight. So, if you decide to do an annual report next year, you have the beginnings of getting that started.

Again, feel free to contact me. My name is Mary. Lynn Revoir. My phone number is 202-785-2373. Myself and my colleague Kevin Nickerson are co-founders and co-directors of the American Dream Employment Network that began in 2015. So with that, I'll wrap it up and I'll turn it back over to Derek.

Derek Shields: Thank you very much for that overview of the ADEN annual report. We appreciate your time, Mary Lynn, and your experience in creating the annual report. We did drop Mary Lynn's contact information including phone number inside of chat, and it is also available in the slides which is posted on the TPM EN event page.

So, with that, it's now my pleasure to move to our next presenter. We have our topic is going to be the National Disability Rights Network updates and we are pleased to be able to welcome with us today Cheryl Bates-Harris a Senior Disability Advocacy Specialist at the National Disability Rights Network. We look forward to your update, Cheryl, over to you.

Cheryl Bates-Harris: Thank you, Derek, and thank you Social Security for allowing me to join you today. If you go to the next slide, please, I'd like to explain what the National Disability Rights Network is.

The National Disability Rights Network is actually the membership organization of the Protection and Advocacy Programs that are nationwide. So what the heck is Protection and Advocacy? It's a network of legal based advocates and attorneys that receive federal funding under nine different pieces of legislation. So most of them are nonprofit organizations that provide services to people with disabilities so that they are exempt from abuse and neglect and discrimination based on disability. They were originally started after Geraldo Rivera did the expose on the Willowbrook Training School. So NDRN is the membership organization that provides training and technical assistance to the individual Protection and Advocacy agencies and one of the programs that is funded, of course, is from Social Security.

It's the Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security. So, that program was funded under the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act, as were most of the other programs. And our purpose is to help people remove barriers to employment so that they can go back to work. And I really like what Mary Lynn ReVoir said because my big motivating thing for beneficiaries is always, if you want to live in poverty for the rest of your life, then stay on benefits. Otherwise, let us help you remove those barriers. So there is a Protection and Advocacy in every state and territory across the country, all 50 states, the District of Columbia territories. We also have a Native American Protection and Advocacy agency that serves the Four Corners region of the country on the large Native American reservation areas.

We're legal based advocates. The programs are run by attorneys and supervised by attorneys. So we are a legal based organization, not a social service organization. And we are probably the only organization in the country that is really a true cross-disability. We provide services to individuals with all kinds of disabilities, and we are actually the largest enforcer of civil rights outside of the federal government. So we don't usually get a lot of people come and tell us the good things that are going on. But we know there are good things that are going on. We get the people who come to us with problems and barriers and legal issues, and our job is to help resolve them so the next slide please.

What we offer is really a continuum of remedies. Although we are legal based services and illegal based organizations, we very rarely have to resort to litigation. We provide services starting with information and referrals. When people come to us with problems or issues, we help them kind of identify or give them the information. That they might need in order to self-advocate. And if we can't, do you know the self-advocacy isn't enough, then we will go to a higher level of services for that individual. We make a lot of referrals to other organizations, sometimes for support they need or sometimes if they're just looking for opportunities or other places to engage.

I'm in order to do that. We provide a lot of outreach with a particular focus to unserved and underserved populations. So again, when we collect our data, we're looking at who is not getting services, are there certain populations of people that may not be coming to us, etc.? So we do a lot of outreach and we do a lot of community based training on training to parents, training to organizations, training to special education teachers. We know what the civil rights laws are that protect people with disabilities such as the ADA and the promise of nondiscrimination. What school systems are supposed to provide to students with disabilities on you know, how transition is supposed to occur. We do a lot of work around vocational rehabilitation and accessing services, so we know what the laws are. We know what the regulations say, and we know what the rules and regulations are.

When we provide that training and that outreach, again, it's oftentimes so that individuals can self-advocate. But if they can't, then they can come to us and we will discuss their situation, provide counsel to them and advise them of what their next steps where, their strategy ought to be and then we can also assist them with negotiation and mediation with whatever the problematic agency or situation might be. So we'll do a lot of negotiation and mediation and that includes mediation, both capital M, which means we do it utilizing a third-party neutral mediator or informal mediation between the advocate and the attorney and or the individual and the organization.

When we are unable to resolve things at that particular level, we then have the legal authority and legal ability to proceed to administrative proceedings within the state. And so again that gives us, you know, we're going a little step higher each time if during an administrative proceeding such as a fair hearing or a hearing with an administrative law judge within a certain agency. We are also able and capable to do individual litigation on behalf of the individual. If again, the individual litigation may or may not be successful, again, depending on the merit of the case, it may decide what the next steps are.

Another thing that we do an awful lot of is monitoring programs to make sure that they're complying with the rules, regulations, and nondiscriminatory provisions of law. So things like vocational rehabilitation, if they're denying services or choice of vocational objective whatever. We do a lot of monitoring and oversight, again, just to make sure, and to keep programs honest. We also do an awful lot of systemic litigation because we know from experience that situations are oftentimes not just one. There are affecting more than one client or more than one individual, and it's much easier to address the systemic problem than to go through a lot of individual cases to resolve a problem or situation that's a result of an improper policy or discriminatory policy.

Whatever in systemic litigation or systemic work can involve systemic litigation can also involve just working with the administration or the agencies to address a policy or a practice that's having a negative impact on individuals with disabilities. We also do a lot of public policy work. We have policy staff within our agency that works with all of the various administrations. Although my specialty is employment of people with disabilities. We have individuals that work primarily with just special education. We have individuals that work with the criminal justice system. We have individuals that work with vocational rehabilitation, assistive technology, all kinds of things, and a couple of the new areas that NDRN overall is expanding into involves both fire safety issues and human trafficking. So any issue that affects a person with a disability as we obtain additional funding, we certainly expand this broad as we can in order to have the greatest opportunity for people with disabilities to engage in their community in a non-discriminatory fashion.

And of course, the other piece of that is on legislative advocacy, public policy, working with the administrations you know, Department of Housing, Department of Transportation, those things are all well and good. But sometimes we actually have to fix the public laws that are creating these situations. So we again have staff that work with Hill staff primarily to tweak or improve the public policy and the laws that are available. To improve again on the full inclusion and integration of people with disabilities into the community so the next slide please.

I know that's a lot to understand, so I want to give you some examples of the paths kinds of issues that we address. We are kind of a sister program to the Work Incentive Planning and Assistance Programs, but their specialty is to provide benefits counseling in a benefits analysis, so people understand what work is all about. We do things that they can't do. We provide legal based advocacy to address issues and barriers that still exist, unfortunately in the Community. And of course the first of that is discrimination. Discrimination is alive and well and business is good. So we can address issues of discrimination both in the application process, the hiring process and the various phases of employment.

So assuring things that individuals are getting reasonable accommodations that are necessary for them to be able to be otherwise qualified for the work they're doing. Those kinds of things we with computers now readily available and computer kiosks to apply for jobs. That doesn't always work for people with disabilities, and the computers may not have the technology or the software programs to allow equal access. So, those are frequently kinds of things that we end up doing in the PABSS work. We also want to assure that individuals have access to the services and supports of various provider agencies, including the State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies, the American Job Centers or the One Stops. Various apprenticeship programs and other workforce programs.

Although people with disabilities will often go to Vocational Rehabilitation or require VR services, there's a lot of people with disabilities who don't actually need VR services. They may just need access to a job program or a support service, and so places like the American Job Centers need to be accessible to people with visual impairments on and or people. And other people who may not, you know, be able to operate just to standard computer. So again, ensuring access to these kinds of supports and services is something we look at.

We assist individuals with appeals on issues when requested or required. Individuals will come to us with a complaint, we'll try to resolve it informally. If that doesn't happen, we will assist them with the appeals process all the way through to litigation if required to protect their rights under the law. So I think I already mentioned this about assuring individuals get needed accommodations. Both in the education setting, in employment settings and other work-based learning experiences.

So you know we are there to advocate on their behalf to inform employers and providers about their legal obligations as well as to make it clear to individuals what is a reasonable accommodation. Oftentimes the issue comes down to the individual with the disability, might want the Cadillac version of something, the employer wants to provide the Volkswagen version of the accommodation, and so again we remind and work with the parties to understand that reasonable accommodation is derived through an interactive process. It's not a, this is what will give you or this is what all I'm going to accept; that it requires a communication and engagement in that process.

And then the final bullet point I have here is that we will often address systemic issues that prevent individuals from work such as poor paratransit services. If public transportation is not available and the individual relies on paratransit and paratransit is notoriously late, or their bus lifts do not operate. In essence, the person is being denied access to the transportation because the lift is broken. And they can't get on or off the transportation.

A lot of issues around housing. Individuals with disabilities have varying needs of support. And if a housing unit says no, you can't have handicap parking placard and the individual has to walk 1/4 mile to their parking or through their parking lot in order to get into their vehicle. Or the housing unit says you can't have a 24-hour nursing support if that is what's needed. So we address all kinds of issues with housing. It's not just finding people housing because we don't really do that. It's making sure that the housing rules and policies don't indirectly or directly have a disparate impact on people with disabilities. And of course, there is a whole range of health care issues, access to Medicaid, access to Medicare, access to durable medical equipment, who's going to pay for that, as well as assistive technology. A lot of assistive technology is pretty simple. But the question is always it's not our responsibility to pay for it. So helping people figure out what funding is available and how do we modify the policies around insurance covering assistive technology or durable medical equipment.

So I just those are some very, very broad examples, but I just wanted to make people aware that the Protection and Advocacy agencies are out there. We no longer really call them Protection and Advocacy. We call them on Disability Rights, Disability Rights Pennsylvania, Disability Rights New Jersey. We have, I think 37 states that have converted to that. There's a couple PNA agencies that still have very, very strange names. And therefore, I think they could be the best kept secret we have Equipped for Equality in Illinois and the Georgia Advocacy Office.

But if anybody wants to find your local Protection and Advocacy agency, you can go to our NDRN website, which is just NDRD.org that will bring you to our homepage. If you click on about us, it will bring up a map of the United States and you can then identify what your protection and advocacy agency is there and if you have any trouble with that, people are welcome to contact me. My work number — and I hope somebody will put this into the chat box for me please — is area code 202-408-1950. Sorry, haven't been in the office in so long and my extension is extension 117, and if you call and leave a message in my office that will forward to my email as a message. So feel free if you have questions to reach out and thank you very much. Turn it back to Derek.

Derek Shields: Thank you very much, Cheryl. There's been quite a bit of positive response in chat to your presentation and the content. So we thank you for your time today and apparently for your long time commitment and work over the years. Cheryl will be back with us at the open Q&A, right after my remarks. So please, if you have questions that haven't been answered, we captured a few of those, but we encourage you to bring those back momentarily. If we can move forward with the slides, please.

I will now take a few minutes to provide some updates on our final two topics, the first being the Affordable Connectivity Program that's coming out of the Federal Communications Commission and then afterwards I'll provide some Ticket Program Outreach Updates. Next slide please.

So if you haven't heard of the Affordable Connectivity Program, we wanted to make you aware of that today. It's called the Affordable Connectivity Program or ACP and it's coming from the Federal Communications Commission. It's a benefit program that's really trying to increase broadband access to more households. It's going to ensure that households can be more likely to afford broadband access for work, school, healthcare, or other purposes. The benefit provides a discount of up to $30 per month towards Internet service for those qualifying households and up to $75 per month for households on qualifying tribal lands.

Eligible households can also receive a onetime discount for up to $100 to purchase, not just the broadband but a laptop, a desktop computer or a tablet from participating providers if they can contribute more than $10 and less than $50 towards the purchase price. This program is limited to one monthly service discount and one device discount for each household. Next slide please.

So who is eligible? A household is eligible for the Connectivity program if the household income is at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines, or if a member of the household needs at least one of these criteria: Participates in a certain assistance program, such as SNAP, Medicaid, federal public Housing Assistance, SSI, WIC, or Lifeline; participates in a tribal-specific program such as the Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance, Tribal TANF, or the food distribution program that is on Indian reservations; participates in the National School Lunch program or the school breakfast program, including through the USDA Community eligibility provision; received a federal Pell Grant during the current award year; or finally meets the eligibility criteria for a participating provider's existing low-income Internet program. So those are the eligibility criteria. Next slide please.

How can you share this information? We recommend familiarizing yourself with the program so you can inform eligible Ticketholders about these discounts and options to increase access to broadband services. There are 10 tips for outreach providers that you can continue to share in your community, and we encourage you to visit the ACP Consumer Outreach Toolkit. There is a newsletter blurb, we all love blurbs, but you can pull that from the toolkit in order to share and increase and really amplify this program's availability, to qualifying ineligible ticket holders. You can find that at AC on next slide, please.

They do have in their toolkit these two social media posts that we encourage you to use if you're on social, there's a Facebook post and a Twitter post, and we really encourage you to go to fcc.gov/forward/A cpfcc.gov/ACP and to use the hashtag Broadband for all, so you could find morecontent@fcc.gov/ACP and hashtag broadband for all next slide please.

Derek Shields: Well, thanks for that. We wanted to support the work coming out of the Federal Communications Commission and as I mentioned, we also wanted to provide you some Ticket to Work Communications and Outreach Updates. So I'll now enter that content, next slide please.

First tomorrow, Wednesday, May 25, we're hosting our next WISE Webinar. These are online events designed to explain the Ticket program and Work Incentive through accessible learning platforms. Most of you probably are familiar that we hold these on the 4th Wednesday of each month and, on average, attendance rages between 400 to 600 individuals and it really depends on the topic. Tomorrow we'll be covering Expanding Your Job Search with Ticket to Work. We'll feature a focus on Section 503 for Federal Contractors, and we'll also look at federal employment through the Schedule A hiring authority and a final focus on apprenticeships.
The ticket Program Manager does send out sample social media posts for all the ENs to share every month through our GovDelivery. Hopely, you have received that, and we do encourage you to share and amplify our WISE events. We also wanted to give you a sneak peek about what was coming around the corner. Next slide please.

Our next wise webinars in June, we'll focus on Ticket to Work for People with Mental Illness. This webinar includes an overview of the Ticket Program and really builds in content specific to people who have mental illness. This is one of our largest audiences and is important as they received disability benefits that we find ways for pathways to work, including recovery through work.

In July, on July 27, we'll focus on Reasonable Accommodations and the Ticket to Work Program. We will have a presenter discuss reasonable accommodations and how they can help people succeed at work. And then in August we'll have Think Outside the Office, looking at blue collar employment and work opportunities. And this was something that was requested through some earlier reactions to some Facebook work and blog series posts. Next slide please.

As many of you follow us on Choose Work social media, we'd like to encourage you to continue to not just attend our events, but also to share and like and amplify what is happening here. TPM schedules daily social media post on Facebook and Twitter, and we promote and highlight blog posts, the Ticket Program resources and fact sheets, the WISE webinars we covered are success stories and stepping stone stories along with important Social Security updates and other relevant information coming from federal partner agencies.

We'll cover those ways of how to contact and follow these accounts, but really the ask here is to like and share content you find appropriate with Ticketholders. So the word can get to those that haven't heard yet about Ticket to Work and other Work Incentives. Next slide please.

I mentioned fact sheets. We would like to ask you this month to share and amplify the fact sheet on Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act. This is our feature in tomorrow's WISE event and expanding work and looking at federal contractors for work pathways. In June, we ask you to share and amplify another fact sheet, Benefits Counseling in the Path to Employment, that will help answer Ticketholders questions about how work will impact their benefits. Both of those links, for those fact sheets, were just posted in chat. Next slide please.

I mentioned Success stories. We have Success stories featuring individuals who have achieved financial independence, with the help of the Ticket Program. We also have a series of stepping stone stories featuring individuals who have made a major step on the path to financial independence but have not yet eliminated their reliance on the benefits. And we encourage you to explore those and share those. Next slide.

One of such stories is Shirley's story. We have picture here of Shirley on the screen, African American woman smiling. And it says here it took several years of combination of strategies and treatment for Shirley to manage her narcolepsy and depression. But once she did, she knew she wanted to return to work. And the Ticket helped her reach her goals. Importantly, a Benefits Counselor helped Shirley, a Benefits Counselor with America Works, and you know Shirley found answers to questions about how work would impact or benefits. And so she could focus on finding a job. And here we want to amplify this message as we go into June. And our themes around employment and mental health and the notion of building out of May being mental health awareness months and that really this work is year-round, not just in May. So we encourage you to support and amplify Shirley's success story. Next slide please.

How can you share these success stories? As I mentioned, you can promote them on your social media. You can become familiar with the stories themselves and really the storylines and identify which ones would be appropriate to share with Ticketholders. You encounter those Ticketholders with the similar background of the successor stepping stone stories specifically to align with our mental health focus. In June, we encourage you to share the stories we have listed here. Shirley, as I mentioned. We also have Lisa's and Cherie's success story. If you have a question around any of this content, we encourage you to reach out for sample social media posts or some assistance to socialmedia@choosework.ssa.gov. Next slide please.

As I mentioned, we're on social media. You can like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter. You could watch our videos on YouTube. We encourage you, if you haven't done so yet, to subscribe to the GovDelivery updates and to the Choose Work blog. And again, if you have any questions around these updates, we encourage you to reach out via socialmedia@choosework.ssa.gov. Next slide please.

So we appreciate your time and listening to our ticket program outreach updates. Uh, we now come to our final segment of today's Quarterly All EN Call and this is the open Q&A period.

We've been grateful to you for your patience. Some of you have had some questions that you've held. And so at this point, I'll just go to remind you of how you can ask a question over the phone. You can raise your hand by dialing star five. You will be on muted but the facilitator will call on you and then you will need to press star 6 to unmute yourself. In MS Teams, you can end your question in the chat, or you can use the raise hand feature.

When we call on you, you will still need to unmute yourself in the upper right corner next to the camera and Mic button on teams. So please recall to unmute yourself when called upon. And so with that, I'm going to check in with Nicole to see if we have had any raised hands or questions come across Nicole.

Nicole Black: So far, there are no raised hands.

Derek Shields: Great. Thanks for checking.

Nicole Black: And there's nothing new in the chat.

Derek Shields: Thank you, Nicole. I appreciate that. I want to go back to a question though that we did submit, and I asked Whitney to hold it to the end. And I think the short version of it was, could we get a SMART goal example for IWPs? And I just want to bring on, I think Cara. Cara, if we could get you to come on and do you have an example of a SMART goal that you would be able to share for Whitney and the attendees?

Cara Caplan: Yeah, yeah, sure. Thanks, Derek. And just so you know, like I said before, everyone should be individualized so this is just an example. But let's just say we'll call him George. George comes in saying he wants to be a security guard. He hasn't graduated high school yet, George is 27. You'll continue with his short-term goals and he's working as a short order cook right now. So he'll continue working as a short order cook while completing his GED within the next six months. Once he's finished his GED, then his long-term goals could be something to the effect of he’ll enroll in a security certificate training program. He'll continue in the program while working at the cafe. You would put down exactly what you’re going to do for George to help him achieve these goals.

And then when he successfully completes the program, he'll get a job as a security guard earning SGA. But you do need to list every step of the way what you've done for George, what his goals are. Make sure their goals are attainable. Let's just pretend that George wants to be a doctor, but he has. I mean, that's stretching it, a nurse, but he does not want to go to college. Well, obviously he probably can't be a nurse, and that's not an attainable goal. So you need to make sure what you write down as a goal and job is something that’s on the table for them and you need to write down specifically what services you're going to provide. And then in your case notes, you obviously need to say what services you provided for them on what day and then at any time if their goals have changed, you need to, you know, fix the IWP and have them re-sign it to reflect any changes. Does that help? You're on mute, Derek.

Derek Shields: Thank you, Cara. This is Derek. Thank you for the example. If you have a follow-on question, Whitney or others, please provide that in chat or again we can take other questions as well we.

Looks like we do have a raise hand, so I'm going to go to Nicole and ask you to help us bring that person online.

Nicole Black: So we have a, oh they went away.

Derek Shields: Well, I can see that we have Aaron that with a raised hand, so.

Nicole Black: Yes, it was phone number 7811. Had the first question that went away, and the mic is now allowed.

Derek Shields: So phone number ending in 7811. If you hit star 6, you should be able to unmute yourself and ask your question. Go ahead caller 7811.

Caller 7811: OK. I apologize it doesn't always automatically unmute me. You mentioned a WISE meeting tomorrow. How do we get that information?

Derek Shields: Great. Thanks for the question. That is on the website at www.Choosework.ssa.gov. We will also drop that in the chat for those that can view chat. You could go to that website though and you would find an icon right at the top of the page where you could register through.

Caller 7811: OK. Could you repeat that one more time please?

Derek Shields: Sure, www.Choosework.ssa.gov. And we would encourage you to also sign up for the notifications through GovDelivery to become aware of these moving forward as well. Thank you for the question very much.

Caller 7811: Thank you.

Nicole Black: Our next question is from Aaron. And your mic has been enabled.

Derek Shields: So Aaron, you might need to unmute yourself in the upper right corner of your screen if you're using the teams app. Well, I think I think we just lost Aaron. Let's try to move to Cheryl next please. Cheryl Simpson. Cheryl, we've unmuted your line now you would have to unmute yourself with your team's mic.

Cheryl Simpson: OK, I finally got it. OK, thank you.

Derek Shields: But Cheryl, if you can provide your EN name and then your question please.

Cheryl Simpson: Sure. My name is Cheryl Simpson. I'm with the Employment Network at the Endependence Center, located in Norfolk, VA. I have a comment and a question. A comment is it would be good if there were some automated email responses whenever we send something to Suitability and to the EN website. That email address that we have to send to because we send stuff and then we never hear back right away whether you got it or not. And so we're kind of in limbo. So if you could have an automated response added to their email that would be great. And then my question is, how long should we wait for a response from the EN web? You know, email address? I've sent things and it's been a month at least and I haven't heard anything back.

Cara Caplan: So this is Cara. That's concerning to me. I will talk with the supervisor in that area. I don't know what's going on there. Also, as far as the automated responses for the Office of Suitability, that's not our office. So we can't really tell them to do something like that. That's really them. It's another area in the agency. I personally don't like automated responses because people just become numb from them. But I will have the EN service staff send an acknowledgement email. When they receive it and let you know, like, you know we're researching it, we're working on it. You know, whatever happens to be the situation, I don't know what your exact issue is that you haven't heard if it's a suitability issue, they probably are researching it with the Office of suitability. If it's taking that long. But if it's something simple, I'm not sure why it's taking that long, but I can have this investigated.

Cheryl Simpson: Yeah, I had submitted a request for cloud storage. I we have a WIPA project as well. And we got the approval for the WIPA side and I sent that information, you know, same information I sent for that for the EN to do a separate cloud storage. And I haven't heard anything back.

Cara Caplan: And what was the name of your EN again? I apologize.

Cheryl Simpson: We're the Endependence Center? It starts with an E and we're located in Norfolk, VA.

Cara Caplan: OK, I will have them look into it today.

Cheryl Simpson: OK. I appreciate that. Thank you so much. Have a great day.

Cara Caplan: You too.

Derek Shields: This is Derek. Thank you very much for the question, Cheryl, and the comment. Let's try Aaron again. Aaron, we believe that you've been unmuted on our side. If you can try to either hit the upper right unmute button on the Teams app or STAR 6 on your telephone will try to get your question, go ahead. It doesn't seem to be coming off a mute on Aaron's side. So in the meantime we'll continue to troubleshoot that — if we can move to Justin. Justin has a hand raised; we've unmuted the line on our side. Justin, if you could unmute it looks like you have. Go ahead, Justin, please identify your EN first and then your question.

Justin Baker: My EN is Goodwill of Orange County here in California. And good morning, everybody. My question is also actually in regard to the suitability process and specifically the information provided on the Ticket to Work website. A little while back I was linked to a URL on the tickettowork.ssa.gov website titled Service Provider Foundations Learning modules. Among those modules there is a section called completing the suitability process and it gives you step by step instructions on how to do it. We followed, me and my manager followed the suitability instructions. Sent the information as an encrypted ZIP file to the DCHR.OPE.suitability@ssa.gov email address. However, it had been at this point, 2 ½ months with no response.

We contacted some staff over at SSA and I was given a completely different email address to contact instead. So are we making, we as the royal we everybody at Ticket to Work and SSA, are we making sure that information is updated properly to staff ENs, whoever or who may be looking into the programs and making sure everything is going to go smoothly for everyone? Because as far as I can tell, it's not updated information at all.

Cara Caplan: Hi Derek. I know you're like who's taking this? So as far as to like I said before, I agree suitability is a thorn for all of us. So I was just asking someone on my staff to get the correct email address. So sorry.

Justin Baker: The email address I was given is dchr.ope.csps.contractors.suitability@ssa.gov . That's the email that I was provided and my manager. I have also attempted to send that and now we are waiting on a response from them so I'm just wanting to make sure that's all.

Cara Caplan: Yes, so ok this is in reference to. So this is I apologize. So this is in reference to somebody on your staff obtaining suitability, correct?

Justin Baker: Correct, correct this is.

Cara Caplan: And it's been 2 1/2 months since you've applied?

Justin Baker: It has been 2 1/2 months since we originally applied by sending the email to just the standard DCHR.OPE.suitability@ssa.gov. It has been maybe about a week and a half or so since we received and forwarded the same information off to the contractors.suitability@ssa.gov

Cara Caplan: OK. Yeah, I've never heard of that contractor's email. The one we use is dchr.ope.suitability@ssa.gov, but just to help you, you can send it to on EN Service and put attention Natalie on it.

Justin Baker: Yeah. Natalie had provided an email in the chat before to send a request information to her.

Cara Caplan: Yeah, I think she probably can get you the answer. Yeah, absolutely. And she will. She will try to guide it through the process.

Justin Baker: OK, something else that, and this is just a general note for you because you mentioned it before. The subject line of the idea of having, the must haves in the email subject line, that would be good have on the suitability request email as well. Because as far as my manager was aware, he sent the subject line Suitability Request and then the DUNS numbers for our programs. Not the Suitability Request and then the PID numbers, which we weren't even aware was a thing yet. So.

Cara Caplan: Well, so I am talking about when you're sending stuff to EN Service, when you're sending stuff to Suitability. Actually, the Office of Suitability, the DUNS number and PID number, it's the same number. So it's very confusing right now and we apologize for that, but they actually use your contract number, your award number, the one that's SS00.

Justin Baker: OK. Yeah. The contact number, yeah, we have that one as well.

Cara Caplan: You know, that's what the Office of Suitability uses. And your name.

Justin Baker: So is that what we should be putting into the subject line instead?

Cara Caplan: If you're sending something directly to the Office of Suitability. When you're sending something to EN Service, we would like to know who you are. So your EN name, your PID number, which is the same thing as you're DUNS number. So it's just not called DUNS anymore and the state you're from, you can just put like Maryland. We live in Maryland, MD, we would put.

And it just makes it easier for us to put it to the right person. But if you're sending something for Natalie, I don't want to confuse people and I apologize. But if you're sending something for her through the EN Service inbox, all you have to do is say, attention, Natalie, in the subject line. And you know, just make sure she knows and your PID number or name would be helpful too. You don't have to put your state in that situation.

Justin Baker: Yeah.

Cara Caplan: But I don't want 50,000 people sending stuff to Natalie either. It should just be like if it's not getting done and it needs to be brought to a higher level.

Justin Baker: OK. well, yeah, the first time we submitted to the original email address was April 19. Nothing has happened, or actually, no, I'm sorry. Not April 19. No, there was one also in January that apparently was partially incorrect. What we did send it to that email address, but OK, so it might be a matter of waiting at this point, but we will still contact Natalie. Attention, Natalie.

Cara Caplan: Yeah, you should have heard something by now. I would contact Natalie and she will let you know if something's being done incorrectly, and she can find out from the Office of Suitability what's going on.

Justin Baker: OK. Thank you very much.

Cara Caplan: You're welcome.

Derek Shields: Thank you, Cara. This is Derek. Let's try Erin. I think Erin, your line is unmuted. Go ahead please.

Erin: OK. Can you hear me now?

Derek Shields: Yes, just identify your EN and then ask your question please.

Erin: Yes, I run Rehability, LLC in the Portland, OR and Vancouver, WA area. My question is, I've noticed that when I call the Ticket to Work Help Desk to ask questions about payments, that they no longer are able to give me, give us suggestions of when to bill. Maximus used to do that, and you know I have clients that, you know, start work and stop work and you know they have fragmented earnings and sometimes they're under the Trial Work Level or under SGA. And so I'm just wanting to ask why you have this policy because it's really frustrating. It's like sometimes it's like shooting in the dark. Yeah, we bill, and it's rejected. It's the wrong month and it's like, why can't you give it to us the information up front because you have access to all the earnings records. Why not just to make it easier so we don't have to try three times to get the right month? Maximus again used to help us when we called the Help Desk, but now I'm told we that cannot be done.

Derek Shields: So thanks for the question. I appreciate you're sticking with us to ask the question because I know that took you some energy, but we got you through. I'm not going to be able to answer your question immediately, but what we'd like to do since we have Cara, do you want to?

Erin: Yeah. Sorry about the audio. Yeah.

Cara Caplan: No, I think this one should go to Katie. She's the Payments Manager, so I don't want to answer for her.

Derek Shields: OK. Yeah. Katie. Go ahead, Thank you.

Katie Striebinger: Hi everyone. You know, we try to keep our payments questions right to the All EN Payments Call. So I would redirect you at this point. I don't want to take time on this call for payments questions. I do want to tell you to please do reach out via email and we can try to answer you individually about that or we could have this as one of the topics on our upcoming All EN Payments Call but I really would not want to take time to kind of discuss this on this call.

Erin: You can't just give a brief overview, because sometimes I can't make the All EN Payments Call because I do other work for Social Security. Can you give a brief summary why the change in policy?

Katie Striebinger: Well, I don't think it's a change in policy because like I said, it is very specific, right to a specific Ticketholder or specific issue. I don't know if you are relying on ePay or not relying on ePay. I don't know if it's specific issue, this is what I mean like.

Erin: Now from what I see is the difference with the Ticket to Work Help Desk and I don't know if other ENs have noticed, but I've been told when I call and my sister helps with billing that you know, no, we can't give you that information. Well, what do you mean? The Maximus Help Desk used to say, OK, this is what we see for these months, and this has happened a few times and like ok, there's some policy that they're going by. And again, it says frustrating for us because we're just trying to do the actual work and then the billing can be very painful if you all don't help us to say, OK, this is the month we see. Bill it then, and that's why we call the Help Desk. You know, we need help with the billing? Yeah. Because sometimes people are all over the place.

Katie Striebinger: I would say prior to the Ticket Portal in 2015, right, it was harder for you to figure out what was available right? To see earnings in the last 24 months to see the history? You know you are supposed to be tracking beneficiary earnings and you know, like I said, ePay is also there to facilitate that. Like I said, it would definitely be something I'm happy to flesh out and explain further on the All EN Payments Call, or we can send a blast with more information. I just don't want to take time on this call because we are at 2:31 already. I am happy to redirect it or rehash this conversation somewhere else, you know. Probably you reach someone at Maximus who was willing to do that for you. It was outside of their scope, it was outside of their swim lane, and you were very lucky to have that person helping you with that. But that is actually not our policy. So that's the best I can give you. But we can certainly discuss it on the next call and in another forum.

Erin: OK. Thank you.

Derek Shields: Thank you, Erin, for the question and thank you Katie for coming on to provide the response. I appreciate that there were some other chat around the topic and that there's some ongoing questions. It is the end of our Quarterly All the EN Call and on behalf of the

Ticket Program Manager, I'd like to thank you for attending today and I'd like to thank our presenters from Social Security and our partners for providing their presentations and content. Looking ahead, we'll have our next All EN Call on August 23. If we can go to the next slide, please. It will be on August 23 from at 1:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time. If you do have questions as a follow on today, we encourage you to email ENOperations@yourtickettowork.ssa.gov.

And like today, if you have a topic that you would like to request that that brought Mariely to us today, we encourage you to also email topics for the next all EN Call to ENOperations@yourtickettowork.ssa.gov. Thank you all for attending today and have a good rest of your day. This ends the May All EN Call.