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**The Role of the Public Workforce System
in the Ticket to Work Program
for Persons with Disabilities**

Final Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The U.S. Department of Labor’s (DOL’s) Chief Evaluation Office (CEO), in collaboration with the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), contracted with IMPAQ International, LLC (IMPAQ) to investigate the public workforce system’s involvement in the Social Security Administration’s (SSA’s) Ticket to Work (TTW) program. The TTW program is designed to reduce or eliminate reliance on SSA disability benefits by increasing beneficiaries’ financial independence. It is also designed to give beneficiaries with disabilities a choice of vocational service providers beyond the state/federal vocational rehabilitation (VR) system by providing a “ticket” that they can assign to any qualified employment services provider. Under the TTW program, an organization interested in providing employment services to beneficiaries can apply to be approved as an employment service provider by qualifying as a TTW Employment Network (EN). Approved ENs can then have tickets assigned to them and receive payments from SSA when ticket holders obtain and sustain employment and eventually no longer receive disability benefits. The state, regional, and local workforce agencies of the public workforce system, including individual American Job Centers (AJCs), are among the employment services providers that have become ENs under this program. This descriptive study focuses on the experience of these Workforce ENs and how they compare with ENs operated by other types of organizations.

The purpose of this study is to understand the role of the public workforce system in the TTW program by assessing the operations and outcomes of Workforce ENs, as well as how they operate TTW and how they integrate ticket holders into workforce service provision. The study also assesses how Workforce ENs compare with other types of ENs in terms of their organizational characteristics, whom they serve, and outcomes they achieve. This foundational evidence and knowledge can be useful to DOL policymakers as they develop policy guidance and technical assistance to increase access to high-quality workforce services under TTW and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

This study focused on answering the following specific research questions:

1. What is the number of tickets assigned to Workforce ENs?
2. How many milestone and outcome payments have the different types of ENs received over time? What is the amount of ticket revenue that the different types of ENs have received over time?
3. How do ticket holders choose an EN for ticket assignment and how do ENs select which ticket assignments to accept?
4. Are individual ticket holders served by multiple entities in their community, including public Workforce ENs, other types of ENs, disability service agencies, and VR? If so, how do the different entities collaborate with one another?
5. How are services provided by Workforce ENs different from those provided by Non-Workforce ENs?
6. How are the characteristics of ticket holders served by Workforce ENs different from those served by Non-Workforce ENs?
7. How do beneficiary outcomes vary across different types of ENs?
8. What lessons can be learned from current experience about strategies for improving services to ticket holders through Workforce ENs in the future?

This multi-method study of the role of the public workforce system in the TTW program combines quantitative and qualitative approaches. Site visits to 12 ENs, including 6 Workforce ENs and 6 Non-Workforce ENs in the surrounding communities, were used to learn about TTW implementation and how it might differ between Workforce and Non-Workforce ENs. Administrative data from SSA provide information on program outcomes and EN characteristics.

Summary of Qualitative and Quantitative Findings

Here we summarize the key findings from the study for each research question. This summary includes findings from both the quantitative SSA data for FY 2016 and the qualitative data from the site visits.

Research Question #1: What is the number of tickets assigned to Workforce ENs?

- The average number of tickets assigned to Workforce ENs not including the New York Employment Services System (NYESS) was 68.2. When including NYESS in the group of Workforce ENs, the average was 135.6.
- As of the end of FY 2016, 16,272 tickets were assigned to 120 Workforce ENs.

Research Question #2: How many milestone and outcome payments have different types of ENs received over time? What is the amount of ticket revenue different types of ENs have received over time?

- Non-Workforce ENs received a higher number of milestone and outcome payments, on average, than Workforce ENs in FY 2016.
- In FY 2016, the Workforce ENs received payments for 3,360 ticket holders, earning sufficient income to generate ticket payments for a total of \$11,899,356 in ticket revenue for the year.
- Non-Workforce ENs had higher average ticket revenue than Workforce ENs for both milestone payments and outcome payments in FY 2016.

Research Question #3: How do ticket holders choose an EN for ticket assignment and how do ENs select which ticket assignments to accept?

- According to both staff and beneficiaries at the ENs we visited, most ticket holders learned about TTW when they received the letter from SSA informing them that they had a ticket and listing the ENs in their ZIP code that they could contact about it. Several interviewees reported that customers contacted their EN because they had found it on SSA's *Choose Work* website, although others said that they had never heard of any customer finding them through *Choose Work*.
- At almost every EN we visited we heard that customers had chosen that particular EN from among their choices because, after calling four or five ENs on the provider list, this EN was the only one that answered the telephone or called them back.
- Regardless of whether the EN is a disability services organization, a community-based social service organization, or part of the public workforce system, the EN it will welcome any SSA beneficiary who expresses an interest in employment.
- At every site, TTW staff said they were unlikely to deny a person a ticket assignment if the person was interested in working. If a TTW applicant could not, however, convince the EN that he/she was really ready, willing, and able to go to work, most TTW staff said that they would hesitate to move forward with assigning the ticket.

Research Question #4: Are individual ticket holders served by multiple entities in their community, including public Workforce ENs, other types of ENs, disability service agencies, and VR? If so, how do the different entities collaborate with one another?

- Ticket holders often receive services from multiple providers. These include a range of disability-related services that ENs can provide through effective partnerships and integrated resource teams.
- ENs that collaborate with other local agencies and resources are able to maximize the scope and fit of services that they offer to people with disabilities. Collaboration with agencies specializing in serving people with disabilities brings expertise to the table, as well as expanding the resources available to serve customers with disabilities.
- The Partnership Plus program (a collaboration between VR and ENs, in which beneficiaries who obtained employment through services from a VR agency have their tickets reassigned to an EN for follow-along services) did not seem to be working well for most ENs in this study. Some Workforce ENs found it difficult to provide long-term follow-along services because that was not their typical service delivery practice. In some cases, EN staff perception was that VR agencies viewed the ENs as competition.

Research Question #5: How are services provided by Workforce ENs different from those provided by Non-Workforce ENs?

- Both Workforce ENs and Non-Workforce ENs offered the same TTW services including, career counseling, skills assessment, resume help, job referrals/search assistance, benefits counseling, and post-employment support. A few ENs offered additional employment-related services such as money management, computer classes, and job readiness training, but there was no pattern of differences between Workforce and Non-Workforce ENs.
- The service delivery process at the ENs we visited follows a similar path, regardless of whether the visited site was a Workforce EN or a Non-Workforce EN. Ticket holders receive services from one or more dedicated staff with responsibility both for specialized TTW services, often including benefits counseling, and for handling the complex procedures required by SSA for moving the ticket holders from reliance on benefits to full-time employment.

Research Question #6: How are the characteristics of ticket holders served by Workforce ENs different from those served by Non-Workforce ENs?

- Except for the type of disability, it did not appear that the characteristics of ticket holders were very different between Workforce and Non-Workforce ENs. Non-Workforce ENs that were organizations specializing in serving individuals with mental health disabilities or developmental disabilities reported a larger portion of their ticket holders having these disabilities than Workforce ENs did.

Research Question #7: How do beneficiary outcomes vary across different types of ENs?

- The number of beneficiaries obtaining employment with sufficient earnings to generate ticket payments (achieving a level of income of at least the trial work level of \$810 per month in 2016), was higher for Non-Workforce ENs and NYESS than for Workforce ENs. The average number of ticket holders earning sufficient income to generate ticket payments was 20.7 for Workforce ENs not including NYESS, 34.2 for Workforce ENs including NYESS, and 33.2 for Non-Workforce ENs.

Research Question #8: What lessons can be learned from current experience about strategies for improving services to ticket holders through Workforce ENs in the future?

- Workforce ENs that provide center-wide training on serving individuals with disabilities and accessing disability-related services through partner agencies were able to integrate ticket holders into their regular service-delivery process and provide full access to AJC services. ENs that do not provide this kind of training may limit a ticket holder's service experience to working with a single TTW coordinator or case manager. Staff at the ENs we visited reported that, in order to provide effective TTW services, it is valuable for every staff person who has contact with customers to understand the challenges and resources that are unique to the disability target population.
- ENs that train and certify one or more of their own staff members in benefits counseling are able to provide information about the potential impact of working on ticket holders' SSA benefits from the initial orientation throughout their entire service process. Interviewees reported that expert counseling on work incentives and the financial impact of working can be an essential service for ticket holders throughout their involvement in the TTW program.
- The TTW program was reported by EN staff to be somewhat burdensome administratively. Some ENs addressed this challenge by joining an administrative EN (such as NYESS or American Dream Employment Network), thereby shifting the administrative burden to that entity so TTW staff could focus their efforts on service delivery. ENs that handled their own administrative processes reported that strong leadership commitment and a program champion contributed to ensuring effective follow-through with administrative tasks.
- Because of the time delay between providing employment services to ticket holders and when milestone and outcome payments are eventually received, ENs need financial support to help with start-up or scaling up. Becoming part of a well-established administrative EN can help them be ready to serve ticket holders within a fairly short time.
- Even though ENs no longer receive disks from Maximus with lists of ticket holders in their area, that does not mean that outreach and recruitment are no longer viable. ENs that conduct outreach targeted to the disability community are able to build up their TTW caseload. Through partnerships with disability organizations in the community and general outreach to the public, some ENs let ticket holders know of the services available and encourage those who are motivated to work to attend orientation sessions to learn about the TTW program.
- Successful ENs tended to have both disability specialists and/or dedicated TTW staff and, if a Workforce EN, AJC staff trained to work with people with disabilities or, if a Non-Workforce EN, disability services staff trained in providing employment services.
- Finally, it is important to recognize that not every AJC may be well suited to be an EN or serve ticket holders. Leadership, commitment, a strong WIOA program, a suitable location, availability of public transportation, and availability of community resources are all factors that might affect an AJC's suitability or readiness to participate in the TTW program.

Implications for Future Studies

This study has gathered useful data and gained valuable insights about the role of the public workforce system in the TTW program. However, it is an exploratory study and therefore has also identified many questions that could be answered in future research. Future studies could be implemented that would gather data on a broader scale to more definitively address questions about factors affecting the success of the Workforce ENs, as well as potentially explain why the Non-Workforce ENs have been able to assign

more tickets and generate more revenue, on average, than the Workforce ENs. More in-depth data collection and analysis could also potentially target Workforce ENs toward specific subgroups and services within the TTW program for which they might make their most valuable contribution. The following are several possible future studies that could inform the shaping of the most appropriate role of the public workforce system in the TTW program.

Conduct analysis of individual-level ticket holder data. This exploratory TTW study has looked at implementation of the TTW program through the experience of a relatively small sample of Workforce and Non-Workforce ENs and has looked at TTW program outcomes only at the aggregate EN level. Analysis of individual ticket holder data could be used to learn more about the characteristics of ticket holders served by Workforce ENs and whether there are specific subgroups among beneficiaries with whom the public workforce system is either particularly effective or less successful. Individual-level data can also be used to better understand ticket holders' pathways through the service process, the length of time spent in different phases of service delivery, and any stages in the process in which ticket holders appear to become stuck or drop out.

Visit a larger sample of ENs. The aggregate EN data used in this study include very little information about the characteristics of the ENs. Conducting site visits to a larger sample of ENs would make it possible to learn more about the characteristics of ENs, how TTW programs vary across different types of ENs, and how different characteristics might affect outcomes.

Examine a wider range of characteristics of the ENs. In addition to conducting a study with a larger number of ENs, another source of data for better understanding how EN characteristics might affect outcomes would be to access data included in ENs' original applications submitted to SSA. EN applications provide information about the organization' characteristics, subcontractors and partners, services and supports provided, and geographic service area.

Study ticket holders not served. Many ENs will accept tickets from beneficiaries whose initial goal is to supplement their disability income with part-time work, with the anticipation that they may eventually consider terminating benefits as a longer-term goal. However, some ENs, especially those dependent on ticket revenue to support TTW staff, limit the ticket holders they serve to those with a clear goal of becoming self-sufficient and terminating SSA disability benefits. There is currently no source of data to look at the characteristics of ticket holders who have contact with an EN but whose ticket is not assigned to it. It might be possible to partner with the National Employment Network Association to design and implement a simple data collection procedure that would gather information about the ticket holders an EN does not serve, or that the EN provides services to but not through the TTW program.

Study the national ENs. This study has focused on Workforce ENs and other ENs serving the same local communities. The site-visit sample did not include any of the large national ENs or administrative ENs. This means that the picture of the TTW landscape is incomplete. As these ENs take on an increasing number of ticket assignments, it will be important to understand where they fit into the TTW program in order to better understand the role of the public workforce system.

1. INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL's) Chief Evaluation Office (CEO), in collaboration with the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), contracted with IMPAQ International, LLC (IMPAQ), to investigate the public workforce system's involvement in the Social Security Administration's (SSA's) Ticket to Work (TTW) program. The TTW program is designed to reduce or eliminate reliance on SSA disability benefits by increasing beneficiaries' financial independence. The primary objective of this study is to examine TTW program implementation and outcomes in the public workforce system. A key focus of the study was to compare TTW Employment Networks (ENs) operated by American Job Centers (AJCs), Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), and other state and local labor agencies (Workforce ENs) with ENs that are not part of the public workforce system (Non-Workforce ENs). This report describes the results of this *Study of Workforce Employment Networks in the Ticket to Work Program* (TTW study), which builds on IMPAQ's earlier study, *Evaluating the Accessibility of American Job Centers for People with Disabilities* (AJC Accessibility Study).¹

1.1 Background and Purpose of the Study

In June 2016, the Bureau of Labor Statistics released analyses of 2015 Current Population Survey data on the characteristics of people with disabilities in the labor force.² Employment statistics for people with disabilities show a continuing pattern of limited workforce participation. For example, for all age groups, the employment/population ratio for people with disabilities is less than one-half the ratio for people with no disability. People with disabilities also continue to experience higher unemployment rates than those without disabilities (10.5 percent versus 4.6 percent).³

Before the Ticket to Work program was launched in 2002, individuals receiving disability benefits through the SSA were served primarily through the state/federal Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program. Under SSA's TTW, in addition to state VR agencies, other agencies can also become Employment Networks⁴ and receive payments for serving people with disabilities. These agencies may include both public and private organizations (e.g., workforce agencies, community-based organizations, and private firms), which increases the choice SSA beneficiaries with disabilities have when seeking service and supports to enter, re-enter, and/or maintain employment in the labor force.

The American Job Center system is the primary service delivery component of the national workforce system under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) enacted in 2014. Section 188 of the WIOA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 require that, as a condition for receiving federal funding, AJC partner programs must ensure that their programs, services, and facilities do not exclude individuals from participation, deny them benefits, or subject them

¹ IMPAQ International LLC, *Evaluating the Accessibility of American Job Centers for People with Disabilities: Final Report*, for U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy, January 2017.

<https://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/completed-studies/AJC-Accessibility-Study.pdf>

² <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/disabl.nr0.htm>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ A given EN contracts with the SSA to either provide or coordinate delivery of necessary services to Social Security disability beneficiaries. The EN can be a single individual, a partnership/alliance (public or private), or a consortium of organizations. From *Employment Networks in Social Security's Ticket to Work Program*, <http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10065.pdf>.

to discrimination because of a disability.⁵ Furthermore, AJC programs, services, and facilities must provide programmatic, communication, and physical accessibility to persons with disabilities under Section 504 and Titles II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).⁶

AJCs were established under the WIA to offer training referrals, career counseling, job listings, and similar employment-related services to help Americans find work and enhance their long-term economic security.⁷ AJC accessibility for people with disabilities may be a factor in the employability of the 36.8 million Americans over 18 years of age with disabilities⁸—making it important for policymakers to understand the level of AJC system accessibility and to identify ways to improve it. Most research on AJC accessibility for people with disabilities has involved case studies or limited surveys focused on specific issues. Prior to the AJC Accessibility Study, no documented research had provided a national estimate of AJC accessibility to people with disabilities.

Before the TTW program began in 2002, individuals receiving disability benefits from the SSA were served primarily through the state/federal Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program. Under TTW, agencies in addition to state VR can become Employment Networks (ENs)⁹ and receive payments for serving people with disabilities. These agencies can include both public and private organizations (e.g., workforce agencies, community-based organizations, and private firms), which increases the choice SSA beneficiaries with disabilities have when seeking service and supports to enter, re-enter, and/or maintain employment.

In July 2014, when IMPAQ began to collect data for the AJC Accessibility Study,¹⁰ there were 1,681 comprehensive and 799 affiliate AJCs.¹¹ As the nation's largest and most comprehensive network of employment services, the public workforce system is well positioned to establish ENs nationwide. Four factors are key to this expansion of AJC services to include the TTW program:

1. **Increased pressure on the workforce system** by the customer base of people with disabilities due to factors such as an increase in veterans using workforce system services, aging baby boomers, increased self-disclosure of disabilities, increased numbers of individuals expecting to join the labor force due to school-to-work transition programs, and awareness of disability rights through implementation of the ADA.
2. **Changing employer practices**, such as how employers hire, accommodate, and retain workers with disabilities, for reasons that include Executive Order 13548, suggesting that federal agencies

⁵ 29 U.S.C. § 2938(a)(1); 29 U.S.C §794(a).

⁶ Blanck, P., Hill, E., Siegel, C.D., and Waterstone, M. (2009). Disability civil rights law and policy: Cases and materials. St. Paul, MN: West.

⁷ AJCs provide a full array of employment and training-related services for workers, youth, and businesses, including mandatory WIA partners (i.e., Veterans, Vocational Rehabilitation) onsite. Affiliate AJCs provide limited employment and training services for workers, youth, and businesses, but do not include all mandatory WIA partners onsite.

⁸Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2015). Disability is defined as having at least one complex activity limitation. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hus/2016/042.pdf>

⁹ An EN contracts with the SSA to either provide or coordinate delivery of necessary services to Social Security disability beneficiaries. The EN can be a single individual, a partnership/alliance (public or private), or a consortium of organizations. From *Employment Networks in Social Security's Ticket To Work Program* at <http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10065.pdf>.

¹⁰ IMPAQ International LLC, *Evaluating the Accessibility of American Job Centers for People with Disabilities: Final Report*, for U.S. Department of Labor, Chief Evaluation Office, January 2017. <https://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/completed-studies/AJC-Accessibility-Study.pdf>

¹¹ Number of AJCs included on list of AJCs provided to IMPAQ by USDOL, July 2014.

increase the number of employees with disabilities working within federal agencies;¹² new Section 503 rules for federal contractors, including affirmative action with an aspirational goal of 7 percent employees with disabilities.¹³

3. **Previous DOL initiatives** have illustrated ways that AJCs have integrated customers with disabilities into the workforce system (e.g., DisAbility Employment Grant Program, Customized Employment Initiative, Ticket-to-Success Project, Disability Program Navigator Initiative, Disability Employment Initiative [DEI], and Add-Us-In Initiative).
4. **The new revenue stream provided by TTW** to help support disability specialist staff and strengthen partnerships with VR and other disability service agencies in the community.

The purpose of this study is to assess the role of the public workforce system in the TTW program. This study allows us to assess the implementation and outcomes of Workforce ENs, as well as understanding how they operate TTW and how they integrate ticket holders into workforce service provision. The study also assesses how Workforce ENs compare with other types of ENs in terms of their organizational characteristics, whom they serve, and outcomes they achieve. This foundational evidence and knowledge can be useful to DOL policymakers as they develop policy guidance and technical assistance to increase access for people with disabilities to high-quality workforce services under TTW and WIOA.

1.2 Review of Previous TTW Research

The Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 created the TTW program, which was launched for ticket holders in 2002. TTW aims to help disability beneficiaries successfully transition into employment. Historically, moving disability recipients off benefits and into waged employment has been very challenging for many reasons—among them, limited choices to help beneficiaries become economically self-sufficient.¹⁴ The TTW program was structured:

1. To allow disability recipients **more choices in the process** of obtaining supportive and employment services.
2. To **incentivize job placement** by paying the EN providers after TTW ticket holders reach a set earnings level.

Results from the early implementation years indicated substantial implementation challenges—including low participation rates among eligible beneficiaries, low interest and participation among EN providers, and limited evidence of effectiveness for improving service delivery or employment outcomes.¹⁵ In July 2008, the SSA introduced regulatory changes with major revisions to the financial incentive structure for TTW, revising the payment schemes,¹⁶ and making it easier for providers to obtain payments for achieving

¹² Executive Order 13548: Increasing Federal Employment of Individuals with Disabilities, Federal Register, Vol. 75, No. 146, Friday, July 30, 2010: Presidential Documents.

¹³ Affirmative action and nondiscrimination obligations of contractors and subcontractors regarding individuals with disabilities, Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended at 41 CFR Part 60-741, Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, US DOL.

¹⁴ Thornton, C., Fraker, T., Livermore, G., Stapleton, D., O'Day, B., Silva, T., Sama Martin, E., Kregel, J., and Wright, D. (January 2006). Evaluation of the Ticket to Work Program: implementation experience during the second two years of operations (2003–2004). Washington, DC: Mathematica Policy Research and Cornell University Institute for Policy Research.

¹⁵ Bertoni, D. (2011). Social Security Disability: participation in the Ticket to Work Program has increased, but more oversight needed. GAO-11-828T. Testimony before the Subcommittees on Social Security and Human Resources, Committee on Ways and Means, House of Representatives, September 23, 2011.

¹⁶ The new payment scheme is called the Milestone-Outcome EN payment system (MO), which makes payments to ENs for intermediary outcomes. The older system, the Outcome-Only EN payment system (OO), made payments once a participant achieved “substantial gainful activity” (SGA), which refers to work activity at or above a specified wage level per month.

intermediate goals rather than merely the set income threshold.¹⁷ In addition, the revisions made it easier for state workforce development systems (called One Stop Career Centers at that time) to become ENs.¹⁸ This change was concomitant with other efforts to make employment and training services more accessible for people with disabilities.¹⁹

The initial effects of the 2008 changes in the TTW program were positive in some respects. There were rapid increases in the number of tickets assigned to ENs—from 22,000 in fiscal year (FY) 2007 to more than 49,000 in FY 2010.²⁰ In addition, the alternative payment structure was very popular among EN providers, who reported that the new structure was more financially viable than the traditional payment scheme. State workforce agencies (SWAs) also increased involvement in the TTW program, with the number of new Workforce EN ticket assignments increasing from 46 in 2007 to 291 in 2010, although Workforce ENs still made up only a small share of ENs overall.²¹

In other respects, however, the TTW program changed in only minor ways after the 2008 reforms and continued to have serious implementation challenges.²² The number of Workforce ENs among the top 100 ENs (by payment amount) remained unaffected by the regulatory changes. In addition, the state VR agencies still dominated in new ticket assignments, while novel business models for ENs issued fewer tickets.²³ Given that the most recent studies of the TTW program have captured data only from the first two years after the 2008 regulatory changes, understanding of the TTW program post-reform and post-recession is still limited.

In addition, although the reforms and other initiatives have integrated the TTW program more closely with the workforce system and increased the number of workforce agency ENs, there has not yet been a systematic look at how Workforce ENs are serving ticket holders, and with what level of success. From an implementation standpoint, it is unclear to what extent state VR agencies are coordinating with the AJs to enhance TTW success. There is also very limited research on how Workforce ENs compare with other types of ENs in terms of whom they serve, how they provide services, or what outcomes they achieve.

1.3 Overview of the Study Design

1.3.1 Study Objectives and Research Questions

As discussed in the previous section, the workforce system has had increasing involvement in TTW in recent years, providing an opportunity to investigate how Workforce ENs operate and how Workforce ENs compare with other types of ENs in terms of whom they serve and outcomes they achieve. This study focused on answering the following specific research questions:

1. What is the number of tickets assigned to Workforce ENs?

¹⁷ Altshuler, N., Prenovitz, S., O'Day, B., and Livermore, G.A. (September 2011). Provider experiences under the revised Ticket to Work regulations. Washington, DC: Mathematica Policy Research.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ For example, the U.S. Department of Labor's Disability Employment Initiative, <http://www.doleta.gov/disability/DEI.cfm>.

²⁰ Bertoni, D. (2011). Social Security Disability: Participation in the Ticket to Work Program has increased, but more oversight needed. GAO-11-828T. Testimony Before the Subcommittees on Social Security and Human Resources, Committee on Ways and Means, House of Representatives, September 23, 2011.

²¹ Schimmel, J., Stapleton, D.C., Mann, D., and Phelps, D. (2013). Participant and provider outcomes since the inception of Ticket to Work and the effects of the 2008 regulatory changes. Washington, DC: Mathematica Policy Research, July 2013.

²² Schimmel, J. (2013). New evidence on the role of provider business model in the economic viability of employment networks under Ticket to Work. Report prepared for the Social Security Administration by Mathematica Policy Research, Issue Brief No. 13-04, July 2013.

²³ Ibid.

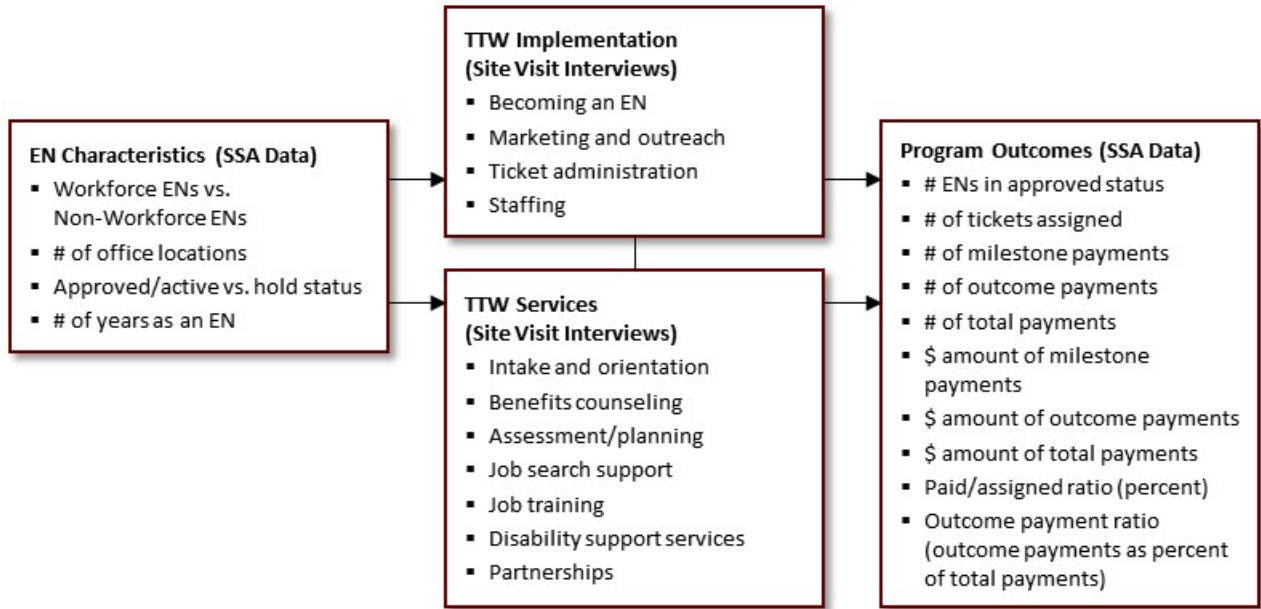
2. How many milestone and outcome payments have the different types of ENs received over time? What is the amount of ticket revenue that the different types of ENs have received over time?
3. How do ticket holders choose an EN for ticket assignment and how do ENs select which ticket assignments to accept?
4. Are individual ticket holders served by multiple entities in their community, including public Workforce ENs, other types of ENs, disability service agencies, and VR? If so, how do the different entities collaborate with one another?
5. How are services provided by Workforce ENs different from those provided by Non-Workforce ENs?
6. How are the characteristics of ticket holders served by Workforce ENs different from those served by Non-Workforce ENs?
7. How do beneficiary outcomes vary across different types of ENs?
8. What lessons can be learned from current experience about strategies for improving services to ticket holders through Workforce ENs in the future?

1.3.2 Overview of Approach

This multi-method study of the role of the public workforce system in the TTW program combines quantitative and qualitative approaches. Site visits to 12 ENs, including 6 Workforce ENs and 6 Non-Workforce ENs in the surrounding communities, were used to learn about TTW implementation and how it might differ between Workforce and Non-Workforce ENs. Administrative data from SSA provided information on program outcomes and EN characteristics.

Exhibit 1 presents an overview of the measures used to address the research questions. Our study relied on data on EN characteristics and program outcomes that came from the SSA data and data on program implementation and service delivery that came primarily from the site visits. As the exhibit shows, we hypothesized that in this system the EN characteristics influenced the implementation process and service delivery, which, in turn, influenced TTW outcomes.

Exhibit 1. Overview of Workforce System TTW Study



2. STUDY METHODS

The present study uses two major sources of data to create a composite picture of TTW in the public workforce system. First, SSA administrative data provide basic information, such as number of ticket holders served and number and amount of ticket payments. Second, site visits to Workforce ENs and Non-Workforce ENs provide more detailed information about program implementation and service delivery. In addition to these two primary data sources, we also look to the recent AJC Accessibility Survey to see whether Workforce ENs are more accessible to customers with disabilities than other AJCs.

2.1 Social Security Administration Data

Social Security Administration data are used to describe the current ticket assignment and payment activity of Workforce ENs as of the end of FY 2016. The strength of this data source is that it comes directly from SSA. It is thus the definitive information available on the ENs. This information is used to address study questions about number of ticket holders and number and amount of ticket payments, as well as to compare these measures between Workforce ENs and Non-Workforce ENs. In addition to information about FY 2016 activity, the SSA data also include information on total ticket payments historically, the date each became an EN, the number of office locations, and whether the EN is currently accepting ticket assignments.

IMPAQ obtained two data files for this study.²⁴ The first was the Workforce EN Primary Data file, prepared quarterly for DOL's Office of Disability Employment Policy under its memo of understanding (MOU) with SSA. We used the FY 2016 4th-quarter file, which included initial EN award date, EN status, and total EN payments historically in addition to ticket and payment data for FY 2016. The second was a matching file of data on Non-Workforce ENs prepared by SSA specifically for this study. These files contained the data items used to describe EN characteristics and measure program outcomes, as shown earlier in Exhibit 1. These files contained data on the universe of 588 ENs that provide ticket holders with an alternative to traditional state vocational rehabilitation services.

The SSA data was analyzed by merging the two data files together with an added identifier for Workforce vs. Non-Workforce ENs. The resulting dataset was used to address research questions about EN ticket activity and outcomes. Descriptive analysis included simple frequencies and cross-tabulations.

2.2 Site Visits

The purpose of the site visits was to examine the operation of TTW programs in Workforce ENs and Non-Workforce ENs, identify perceived challenges and opportunities encountered in TTW implementation, and identify lessons learned that might contribute to program improvement. The IMPAQ team conducted visits to 12 ENs in 6 communities across the United States where it was determined that a Workforce EN and a Non-Workforce EN served roughly the same geographic area. During these visits, which were conducted by researchers experienced in accessibility, disability, and the public workforce system, we conducted interviews with the staff identified by the TTW coordinator as those most involved in implementing the TTW program, including TTW coordinators, benefits counselors, case managers and administrators from the selected ENs, and conducted focus groups with SSA beneficiaries participating in

²⁴ These two files were the only data made available to us for this study by ODEP and SSA, and the quantitative analysis was limited to the variables provided in these files.

TTW. The strength of the site visits is that they allowed us to collect in-depth qualitative information about TTW program implementation. The limitation of this data source is that as qualitative data, it provides descriptive information but cannot attribute causation. A brief profile of each of the 12 ENs visited is included in Appendix A.

2.2.1 Site Selection and Sample

For the site visits, we selected a purposive²⁵ sample of six Workforce ENs²⁶ and six Non-Workforce ENs serving the same or nearby communities. Although one of the limitations of a purposive sample is that the data cannot be generalized to all ENs, we developed selection criteria designed to ensure that the sites selected would have sufficient TTW experiences to contribute to an understanding of the program, and to ensure that the sample was representative of several variations in types of ENs. The initial criteria for selection of the Workforce ENs included:

- ENs representing different state-, WIB-, and AJC-level organizational models
- Both DEI and non-DEI ENs
- ENs from communities with multiple ENs (to facilitate comparison between Workforce and Non-Workforce ENs)

Our primary sources of data for selecting the sample of Workforce ENs were the quarterly reports of EN primary data from SSA, which showed for each EN the number of current tickets assigned, the number of office locations, the total amounts of outcome and milestone payments made, and other data that would allow us to identify promising ENs to visit—that is, sites that achieved TTW outcomes. In reviewing the most recent SSA report at the time site selection began (October 2016), we used four criteria to identify ENs with substantial ticket activity:

1. Tickets—current number of tickets >50
2. YTD—payments through June 2016 >\$50K
3. Ratio—ratio of outcome payments to milestone payments >50 percent
4. Current—current month’s payment >\$15K

We found that including centers that met at least one of these criteria resulted in a list of 62 Workforce ENs with substantial ticket activity and milestone payments. We decided that, even if centers met other criteria, we would limit the list to sites with more than 50 assigned tickets, resulting in a list of 38 potential Workforce ENs. However, when searching for Non-Workforce ENs serving the same communities, we were sometimes unable to identify ENs with a comparable number of tickets assigned. In these cases, we needed to select an EN with fewer than 50 assigned tickets (see TTW Site Profiles in Appendix A). In addition, we sometimes needed to reconsider our original Workforce EN choices, when we were unable to identify suitable Non-Workforce ENs serving the same communities.

²⁵ The responses in a purposive sample are limited to the staff who responded to our questions and should not be used to assume that they represent the perspective of those not in the sample.

²⁶ This number represents 5 percent of the estimated 120 Workforce ENs nationwide. This estimate is based on *Workforce EN Primary Data Report 8-5-14* provided to DOL by SSA.

Other efforts made to identify sources of data to use in the site selection process included:

- Searching SSA’s Choose Work website to identify ENs that had been in existence for at least a year and had a substantial number of tickets. In particular, we used the location search feature to identify geographic areas where a Workforce EN and a Non-Workforce EN both served the same community and where ticket holders thus had a choice between them (and, often, other ENs as well).
- Reaching out to the DEI Ticket Ambassadors, per the recommendation of DEI and its training and technical assistance provider, the National Disability Institute (NDI). The ambassadors include disability resource coordinators and other DEI staff (such as state-level EN administrators) who have been operating Workforce ENs across the country. They have been identified from the field as having proven experience in assisting SSA beneficiaries in achieving successful employment outcomes, as well as tackling the complex tasks of EN administration.
- Cross-referencing the AJC finder at the [CareerOneStop](#) website to clarify information about the specific location of Workforce ENs, especially those with multiple offices.
- Asking for suggestions for Non-Workforce ENs from members of the [National Employment Network Association](#) (NENA), the national professional association of ENs.
- Asking for suggestions from the [American Dream Employment Network](#) (ADEN), a national administrative EN that includes both Workforce and Non-Workforce ENs among its members.
- Talking with ENs themselves for ideas about other ENs that serve ticket holders in a community.

After selecting the sites, we worked closely with DOL and, as appropriate, state workforce agencies and other relevant governmental entities or nonprofit organizations, to recruit or secure permission to visit AJCs and other entities involved in TTW implementation.

The resulting sample of ENs for the site visits identified 8 possible pairs of state and local ENs and 2 national ENs. Based on ODEP’s feedback, we reached out to 6 pairs of ENs for site visits. Once a site was selected, we identified a point of contact (POC) for the EN. For both Workforce ENs and Non-Workforce ENs, this was generally the manager/coordinator of disability employment programs and services.

2.2.2 Site Visit Interview Guide

The IMPAQ team conducted site visit interviews using an interview guide that built on the guide used for the AJC Accessibility Study, with additional items focused on understanding implementation of the TTW program. Exhibit 2 shows the key topics addressed, along with specific issues for each topic. (The interview topic guide is attached as Appendix B.) While on site we also conducted focus groups with program participants. (The focus group guide is attached as Appendix C.)

Exhibit 2. Key Issues Addressed in Site Visit Interviews

Topic	Issues
Context/Site Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service area description and demographics ▪ History – becoming an EN, when EN established, development over time, etc. ▪ Respondent’s background, experience with TTW, role in the EN/community • Location of services, TTW administration
Organizational Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organizational structure of EN and TTW program ▪ Funding/resources for TTW service provision, administration ▪ TTW program size and revenue

Topic	Issues
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ TTW programs and services ▪ Staffing (disability resource coordinator, certified or non-certified benefits counselor, etc.) ▪ Staff training on disabilities
TTW Service Delivery Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Targeted populations ▪ Service planning process ▪ TTW services and service process ▪ Characteristics of ticket holders served ▪ Any marketing or outreach conducted ▪ How ticket holder becomes involved with EN ▪ Customer communication ▪ Confidentiality ▪ Accommodations
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key partner agencies and organizations ▪ Nature, extent of collaboration with partners ▪ Partnership Plus service provision ▪ Integrated resource teams
EN Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Physical facility description ▪ Accessibility, including accessibility for individuals with specific disabilities ▪ Adaptive and assistive technology
Lessons Learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ TTW Implementation ▪ Most significant challenges and success in meeting these challenges ▪ Recommended improvements

2.2.3 Lessons Learned in Site Selection Process

In the process of selecting the Workforce and Non-Workforce ENs to be included in the sample for this study, we encountered situations that contradicted many of our assumptions about how ENs were operating their TTW programs. We expected, for example, that the coverage area for a given EN would be fairly well defined and that identifying one or more ENs that served roughly similar geographic areas would be relatively easy. We also thought that ticket holders were often active decision makers when choosing an EN or that ENs in the same area might be competing for ticket holders. The following are lessons learned about how TTW was being implemented by ENs:

1. There is no one type of Workforce EN, nor is there a single type of Non-Workforce EN, which made it difficult to identify Workforce/Non-Workforce EN pairs that serve the same geographic area and, thus, roughly the same population. There is enormous variability in models for the operation and administration of an EN. Some of the many forms an EN may take include:
 - a. An AJC or disability services organization with a single location
 - b. An AJC with multiple locations, sometimes across a wide geographic area
 - c. A regional or state-level entity that handles EN administration for multiple EN operations
 - d. A national EN that operates entirely through virtual (online and telephone) communication with ticket holders
 - e. A national EN that provides start-up resources and administrative support for ENs operated by entities at the local level

The existence of this great variation in EN models not only complicated the site selection process, but also presented challenges to our efforts to describe the characteristics of ENs and what an EN must do achieve successful ticket holder outcomes.

2. Because of the complex operating structures of many AJCs, a given organization—for example, Goodwill—could be either the operator of a Workforce EN or its own Non-Workforce EN, unrelated to an AJC. One of the organizations visited for this study is the operator of a Workforce EN and, at the same time, a separate Non-Workforce EN, with its own ticket holder clients and a set of complex procedures to maintain the firewall between the two programs.
3. The presence and influence of national ENs has grown in the past several years, and national ENs now appear to be important players on the TTW stage. When we first began to work as subcontractors on the DEI evaluation in 2010 and spoke with grantees about establishing an EN and operating a TTW program, the existence of national ENs was seldom mentioned. Over the years, we heard about such organizations cold-calling ticket holders in states where they had no physical presence and offering employment assistance by telephone or online. Only in the past several years have we seen the emergence of national programs that provide more comprehensive services, as well as programs such as the American Dream Employment Network, which provides a full range of administrative services and start-up/training resources for local ENs.

2.2.4 Related Source of Data

In addition to the TTW visits described previously, this study draws on our recent experience with a related study that provided us with the opportunity to visit Workforce ENs and understand their accessibility and service delivery to people with disabilities. The AJC Accessibility Study (of which this TTW study is a component) involved conducting 100 site visits to AJCs, of which 21 were ENs. Although we did not conduct a formal analysis of AJC Accessibility site visit data for this TTW study, our experience in conducting the site visits further informed our understanding of the operation of Workforce ENs.

For the AJC Accessibility Study, we also collected data in a web-based survey from the universe of AJCs nationwide. Completed by AJC center directors, the survey was designed to collect information about center accessibility and services provided to customers with disabilities. The survey data provide an opportunity to explore differences between Workforce ENs and Non-Workforce ENs in service delivery practices that have a potentially significant impact on employment outcomes for ticket holders.

Between December 2014 and March 2015, IMPAQ conducted the web-based AJC Accessibility Survey, which was distributed to all 2,453 AJC directors. We designed this survey to obtain data directly from AJCs directors (and other staff members, as needed) to measure the level of accessibility of the AJCs across the spectrum of communications, physical, and programmatic accessibility. We developed the survey instrument systematically to ensure that it had appropriate content and construct representation and to enable us to administer it to all AJCs nationwide and to maximize our response rate.

Using data from the AJC Accessibility Survey, along with data from site visits to 100 AJCs throughout the United States, we categorized AJCs according to the accessibility levels illustrated in Exhibit 3.²⁷ We assigned centers an overall accessibility level as well as a level for communications, physical, and programmatic accessibility.

²⁷ For a full description of this methodology, see IMPAQ International LLC, *Evaluating the Accessibility of American Job Centers for People with Disabilities: Final Report*, for U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy, January 2017. <https://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/completed-studies/AJC-Accessibility-Study.pdf>

Exhibit 3. Levels of Accessibility

FULLY ACCESSIBLE	EXEMPLARY ACCESSIBILITY Centers have gone the extra mile to ensure that all people can participate to the same extent / in essentially the same way
	ACCESSIBLE All people can participate to the same extent/ in essentially the same way
NOT FULLY ACCESSIBLE	PARTIALLY ACCESSIBLE People with disabilities can participate in some services/programs/activities but not in others, or not in the same way
	NOT ACCESSIBLE People with disabilities really cannot participate in the same way as other AJC customers

In addition to examining AJC accessibility, our survey also asked centers to specify whether they were an EN. Using the accessibility information along with this information about EN status allowed us to compare the accessibility of AJCs that are ENs to those that are not.

3. STUDY FINDINGS

In this chapter we present the findings from this study. We begin with the characteristics of the ENs (Section 3.1) based primarily on SSA data. We then describe the characteristics of program participants (Section 3.2), and the service delivery process (Section 3.3), based primarily on data from the 12 site visits. Finally, we compare TTW outcomes for Workforce and Non-Workforce ENs, based on the SSA data (Section 3.4). (Summary tables presenting the quantitative data used in this section are included in Appendix D.) We also present qualitative data from the site visits on factors that appear to be associated with TTW program outcomes.

3.1 Characteristics of Workforce and Non-Workforce ENs

This section describes the characteristics of ENs participating in the TTW program in FY 2016.²⁸ This information is provided as a descriptive overview of the program rather than addressing a specific research question. The quantitative data presented here represent the full universe of ENs (n = 588). This information is presented as a descriptive introduction to the ENs, rather than addressing any specific research question.

As shown in Exhibit 4, about one-fifth of the ENs are part of the public workforce system (Workforce ENs), and the other four-fifths are organizations outside the workforce system (Non-Workforce ENs).

Exhibit 4. ENs Participating in TTW in FY 2016

	Workforce ENs	Non-Workforce ENs	Total
Number of ENs in FY 2016	120	468	588

3.1.1 Selected Characteristics of Workforce and Non-Workforce ENs

SSA data on EN activity available for this study included only a small number of EN characteristics in addition to the data on tickets and payment outcomes. These include:

- Employment network status (Approved or on Hold)
- Number of office locations
- Number of years as an EN

In the exhibits that follow we compare these characteristics between Workforce ENs and Non-Workforce ENs. As mentioned earlier, a key component of the study design is to compare Workforce ENs with Non-Workforce ENs to understand how Workforce ENs might differ from Non-Workforce ENs.

It is important to note that in FY 2016, the largest EN in terms of number of tickets assigned was the New York Employment Services System (NYESS). NYESS is an administrative EN operated by the disability agencies in the state of New York. Because it is the administrative EN for many of the AJCs around the state, we include it in the data on Workforce ENs in these exhibits. However, although many of its tickets are assigned through the AJCs, others are assigned through state disability agencies, which are not usually considered to be part of the workforce system. In some ways, this unique and very large EN does not belong in either

²⁸ FY 2016 covers the period of October 1, 2016, through September 30, 2017.

category of EN. For this reason, we present analysis results for the group of Workforce ENs both with (red bars) and without (beige bars) NYESS in the majority of the bar-chart exhibits that follow.

In addition to the SSA EN data, we also include in this section site-visit data, as applicable. For additional information on characteristics of the sites we visited for this study, see Appendix A: TTW Site Profiles.

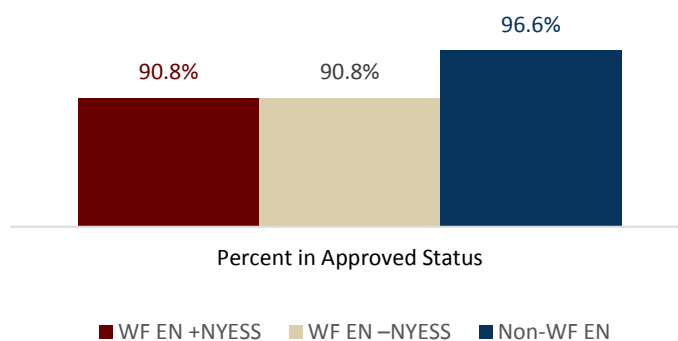
Employment Network Status. An EN’s status describes its readiness to receive ticket assignments and begin serving ticket holders. “Approved” status indicates that the organization:

- Has completed the Employment Network Request for Quotation (RFQ) process
- Has been awarded its EN blanket purchase agreement (BPA)
- Has at least one person on staff who has passed suitability
- Has completed the mandatory training on the ticket program required of all new ENs
- Is ready to begin assigning tickets and serving Social Security beneficiaries

“Hold” is a temporary status used at the request of an approved EN that is not ready to begin ticket operations or is not available to accept new ticket assignments. This status is also used when Social Security is investigating an EN’s blanket purchase agreement (BPA) compliance or performance.

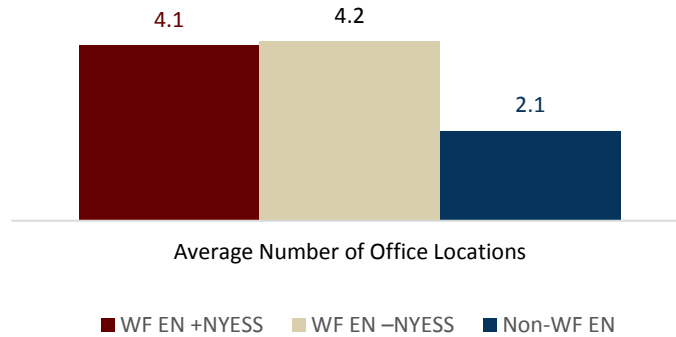
The status is an important characteristic to consider when comparing outcome measures across groups of ENs, as the smaller the proportion of ENs in Approved status, the fewer ENs are contributing to the overall outcomes of the group. As ENs get up and running, or as they experience staff turnover, some may not be well equipped to provide services immediately or consistently from the time they are approved. Some of the ENs that are on Hold may also be addressing compliance or performance issues. As Exhibit 5 shows, 96.6 percent of Non-Workforce ENs were in Approved status at the end of FY 2016, compared to 90.8 percent of the Workforce ENs.

**Exhibit 5. Percentage of ENs in Approved Status as of the End of FY 2016:
More Workforce ENs Are on Hold than Non-Workforce ENs**



Number of Office Locations. Whereas some ENs operate out of a single location, close to one-half (46 percent) operate out of multiple offices. Ten ENs have more than a dozen offices; the EN with the largest number of offices has 43. As shown in Exhibit 6, the Workforce ENs have a significantly higher number of offices, having on average about twice as many as do the Non-Workforce ENs. From our site visit interviews we discovered that in some cases, operating the TTW program out of multiple offices meant spreading TTW staff time across multiple locations, whereas in other cases, each location had their own TTW staff.

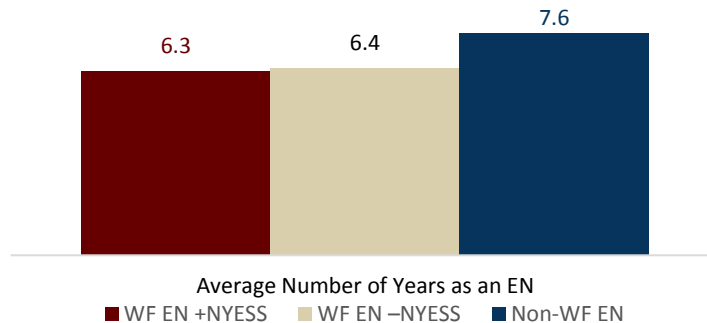
**Exhibit 6. Average Number of Office Locations:
Workforce ENs Have More Office Locations**



Length of Time as an EN. The Ticket to Work program has been in existence for 15 years. Some of the original ENs are still active, whereas others have undergone organizational changes or discontinued participating in the TTW program. Exhibit 7 shows that Non-Workforce ENs have, on average, been participating in the TTW program about a year longer than have the Workforce ENs. However, the range is up to 15 years for both types of ENs.

Staff report that it can take several years for an EN to become fully operational and begin receiving substantial payments—even longer if there is staff turnover. One commonly reported reason for implementation delays and slow start-up is the complex process that an organization must go through to become authorized as an EN, a process that may be especially difficult for a small disability-services organization that is unused to dealing with the intricate maze of the Social Security Administration. Another frequently mentioned cause of slowness is the time, cost, and effort involved in individual staff becoming certified to provide benefits counseling. Some ENs make a concerted effort to scale up quickly in order to generate significant income, whereas others remain relatively small until they decide to invest in expanding the number of ticket holders they serve. At several of the ENs we visited in our site visits, the decision regarding whether to expand or not became a question of organizational capacity—of whether, and how far, the organization could stretch its staff resources to accommodate an increased number of ticket holders.

**Exhibit 7. Average Number of Years as an EN:
Non-Workforce ENs Have Been ENs Longer**



3.1.2 Accessibility of AJCs That Are ENs Compared with Those That Are Not ENs

One additional characteristic of Workforce ENs available for this study was the degree of accessibility to customers with disabilities. In our study of the accessibility of the AJCs, we found that greatest variability in accessibility across AJCs was in the area of programmatic accessibility that focuses on accessible service delivery practices. The survey data provide an opportunity to explore differences between workforce ENs and non-workforce ENs in service delivery practices that could help support positive employment outcomes for ticket holders. As an additional source of information about Workforce ENs, we used the AJC Accessibility Survey data to look at the level of accessibility of Workforce ENs compared to AJCs that are not ENs. Exhibit 8 shows this comparison across three domains of accessibility and overall. (The number of AJCs identifying themselves as ENs is higher than the total number of Workforce ENs in the SSA data because some Workforce ENs have multiple AJCs participating but are identified in the SSA data as a single EN.) As the exhibit shows, a significantly higher proportion of AJCs that are ENs are accessible in both the communications domain and the programmatic domain and are thus more likely to be accessible overall than AJCs that are not ENs. There was no significant difference in the percentage of ENs that are accessible in the physical accessibility domain. This is not surprising given the very high percentage of AJCs nationwide that are physically accessible.²⁹

**Exhibit 8. Accessibility of Workforce ENs and Non-EN AJCs:
Workforce ENs Tend to Be More Accessible than AJCs That Are Not ENs**

Accessibility Domain	Workforce ENs (N=346)	Non-EN AJCs (N=610)
Physical	93.1 percent	92.5 percent
Communication	80.6 percent	65.7 percent
Programmatic	39.3 percent	57.8 percent
Overall	49.7 percent	33.3 percent

Source: AJC Accessibility Survey, 2015³⁰

3.2 Characteristics of TTW Participants Served by Workforce and Non-Workforce ENs

In order to address Research Question #6 about the characteristics of ticket holders, we used site visit data to compare the characteristics of ticket holders served by Workforce and Non-Workforce ENs. Part of understanding any difference in outcomes across different types of ENs includes understanding where there appear to be any differences in the types of people being served. Based on qualitative data from the site visit interviews, the following are the reported characteristics of ticket holders served by six Workforce ENs and six Non-Workforce ENs. With one important exception, there was no “typical ticket holder” across either group of ENs, as the type of ticket holder served varied according to the type of organization and the demographic and labor-market characteristics of its geographic location.

The one characteristic common to ticket holders in all the sites we visited was that most are on Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), rather than Supplemental Security Income (SSI). TTW staff we interviewed reported that most of their ticket holders are people who have had some work experience and are eager to return to the workforce. It was often mentioned by interviewees that people on SSI who,

²⁹ IMPAQ International LLC, *Evaluating the Accessibility of American Job Centers for People with Disabilities: Final Report*, for U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy, January 2017.

<https://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/completed-studies/AJC-Accessibility-Study.pdf>

³⁰ Ibid.

by definition, have little or no work history rarely seek TTW services from programs that are focused on moving into full-time employment.

For the Workforce ENs we visited, the demographic characteristics of the population of ticket holders closely resembled the population served by the AJC overall, as SSA beneficiaries interested in employment tended to go to the AJC location closest to where they lived. (However, in one large urban area with multiple employment centers, participants in the TTW program noted that they wanted services from the AJC that served the area in which they wanted to work.) TTW staff at one large urban AJC noted that they serve many immigrants. EN staff reported that the education level of customers at the Workforce ENs also tended to parallel that of the overall population served by the AJCs, ranging from less than high school to college and above. The Workforce ENs we visited typically served ticket holders across the range of disabilities, although relatively few served large numbers of individuals with psychiatric or intellectual disabilities, as these ticket holders were more likely to go to ENs that provided specialized services for these disabilities. Likewise, individuals with visual and/or hearing impairments also tended to go to an EN with specialized services, rather than to a local AJC.

The characteristics of the ticket holders served by the Non-Workforce ENs tended to vary according to the type of organization:

- **An organization that serves people with mental health disabilities that has a TTW program serving people across the range of disabilities.** Program staff reported that about half of the participants in the TTW program come from the organization's mental health programs, and the other half from the larger disability community. Staff reported that, in their experience, many of the TTW clients who come from the organization's mental health programs are on SSI and have limited work history and relatively low income; the TTW customers from the larger community are more likely to be on SSDI and represent a wider range of income levels. The TTW Coordinator at this site told us, "Because disability can affect people across social class, we see people from across the income spectrum."
- **A community-based social service organization located in a very disadvantaged urban location that offers TTW among its other programs (e.g., job search, transportation, housing).** Ticket holders at this site were reported to have very low incomes, with little education and, often, a history of substance abuse and multiple encounters with the justice system.
- **An organization serving people with disabilities and low-income individuals that offers TTW as an employment program for clients with disabilities.** The program estimates that about 10–15 percent of the people with disabilities they serve are ticket holders; most are on SSDI and only a few are on SSI. Staff reported that the organization has seen an increase in recent years in the number of veterans in the TTW program, as well as in the number of ticket holders with mental health issues. Although the organization's services include a supported employment program for people with developmental disabilities, none of its current ticket holders has a developmental disability. (The program has found that people who are in supported employment who might be ticket-eligible prefer to remain in supported employment part time rather than opt for the full-time work that is the focus of the TTW program.)
- **A disability services organization in a large, densely populated area of multiple cities and small towns that serves people with a range of disabilities.** The program estimates that almost three-fourths (70 percent) of the TTW customers are between the ages of 30 and 60; most are on SSDI. Staff reported that the organization's SSI clients are primarily people with mental illness.

- **A disability services organization in a small city surrounded by many rural communities that serves people with a range of disabilities.** Staff reported that, although the EN provides TTW services to many of its existing clients who initially came there for other services, about 60 percent of their ticket holders were new clients who “called in from outside” based on their interest in the TTW program and in finding employment.
- **An organization serving individuals with developmental disabilities in a large geographic area made up of many small cities and suburbs around an urban core.** According to staff, the organization’s ticket holders represent the range of income and education that is representative of the wider community of which it is a part.

Except for type of disability, it did not appear that the characteristics of ticket holders were very different between Workforce and Non-Workforce ENs. Non-Workforce ENs that were organizations specializing in serving individuals with mental health disabilities or developmental disabilities reported a larger portion of their ticket holders having these disabilities than Workforce ENs. Staff of these organizations perceived that their knowledge and experience of serving these populations contributed to many of these clients participating in their TTW programs. In general, staff at the Workforce ENs reported that they did not feel as well equipped to serve individuals with mental health or developmental disabilities as the disability agencies that were Non-Workforce ENs.

3.3 Service Delivery

This section describes the service delivery process (to address Research Questions #3 and #4) and services provided (Research Question #6) at both Workforce ENs and Non-Workforce ENs. This section is based on the qualitative site visit data.

The service delivery process at the ENs we visited follows a similar path, regardless of whether the visited site was a Workforce EN or a Non-Workforce EN. Ticket holders receive services from one or more dedicated staff members with responsibility both for specialized TTW services, often including benefits counseling, and for handling the complex procedures required by SSA for moving the ticket holders from reliance on benefits to full-time employment. As one TTW coordinator told us, it was not his job to serve as a case manager, although he would always try to help the ticket holder with guidance and assistance with all aspects of the “case.”

3.3.1 Initial Contact

To address Research Question #3 about how ticket holders choose an EN and how ENs select which ticket assignments to accept, we asked site visit respondents to describe ticket holders’ initial contact with the EN. According to the experience of the EN staff and TTW participants with whom we spoke during our site visits, most ticket holders learned about TTW when they received a letter from SSA informing them they had a ticket and listing the ENs in their ZIP code that they could contact about it. Several interviewees reported that customers contacted their EN because they had found it on the Choose Work website, although others said that they had never heard of any customer finding them through Choose Work.³¹ Interestingly, at almost every EN we visited we heard that customers had chosen that particular EN from among their choices because, after calling four or five ENs on the provider list, this EN was the only one that answered the telephone or called them back. It is unclear whether this was due to SSA providing outdated information (e.g., there was no answer because it was not a working number) or whether some

³¹ Several respondents indicated that their customers found the *ChooseWork* website to be confusing and difficult to use.

organizations on the list were ENs in name only, with little concern for being responsive to potential ticket holders. In any case, it appeared that having someone to talk to in an initial contact was critical to persuading potential customers to come into the EN and choose it for their ticket assignment.

Many customers learned about the EN by word of mouth. In some communities, ticket holders gravitated toward the AJC when they decided they wanted to work. In others, the pull was toward a disability services organization (5 of the 6 Non-Workforce ENs). Occasionally, TTW staff reported having customers who came to them after their VR case was closed, and re-assigned their tickets; however, we did not often find what sites considered to be effective partnerships with VR in the small sample of ENs we visited.

Several ENs said they conducted outreach to potential TTW customers—for example, by distributing TTW literature and conducting workshops in the community or sending informational postcards to people identified as being on benefits. Almost all the ENs we visited have a page on their organization’s website that highlights their TTW program, and several have TTW options on their telephone system.

3.3.2 Accepting Ticket Assignments

Almost by definition, any agency or organization that becomes an EN has as its goal for the TTW program to help individuals who are receiving Social Security benefits to become employed so they can reduce their financial dependence on receiving SSI or SSDI. Regardless of whether the EN is a disability services organization, a community-based social services organization, or part of the public workforce system, the EN welcomes any SSA beneficiary who expresses an interest in employment. Ticket holders who come to the EN but who are not seeking employment at that time are either directed to other services within the organization or referred to other organizations that can better meet their needs for non-employment services. No one is turned away without receiving help, and ticket holders can always return at a later date if they later decide to return for employment services.

With individuals who are seeking employment, the steps toward ticket assignment in the ENs we visited were relatively straightforward. A common practice at the Workforce ENs was to include information about TTW during a group orientation to the AJC’s services. In most cases, this provided an opportunity for potential ticket holders to identify themselves (or be identified) as people who may be eligible for the TTW program. The Non-Workforce ENs we visited tended to identify potential ticket holders as they became involved in other services provided by the organization, especially services that required inquiry into an individual’s financial resources for eligibility determination. In either case, the next step was for the potential TTW customer to meet individually, and usually in person, with a staff person with specific responsibility for the TTW program. For the Workforce ENs, this was typically a disability services coordinator or program manager; for the Non-Workforce ENs, this was usually someone involved in providing vocational services within an organization that considered employment as one of the many services it offered its clients.

At every site, TTW staff members said they were unlikely to deny a person a ticket assignment if the person was, as one TTW specialist said, “seriously interested in working.” If a TTW applicant could not, however, convince the EN that he/she was really ready, willing, and able to go to work, most TTW staff said that they would hesitate to move forward with assigning the ticket. Moving forward with TTW was often based on a gut feeling that the person was ready for work. If a ticket holder’s interest in TTW appeared to be uncertain or casual, TTW staff would work with the person to find services that were a better fit for the individual. As needed, they could refer people back to regular WIOA services, referrals, placement, and the like.

3.3.2.1 Ticket Holders Desiring Part-Time Employment

A complicated situation arises when an individual expresses an interest in part-time work only, which is inconsistent with the goals and requirements of the TTW program. The ENs we visited reported that they handled this situation in several different ways:

- In several Workforce ENs, the TTW coordinator will decline a ticket if the program isn't a good fit for the ticket holder. This includes people who say that they want to work only part time and will not change their minds. Ticket holders like this are referred to other services in the AJC.
- Staff at one Non-Workforce EN said that even if a customer wants to work only part time, they still take the ticket because they know "it leads to self-confidence and could then lead to full-time employment." One of their directors told them, "As long as there is some willingness to work, then bring them into the program." They do not turn away anyone who wants to be assigned a ticket.
- One TTW coordinator said that he will assign a ticket when the ticket holder has a goal of part-time or less well-paid work as long as he feels that the ticket holder is committed to steady work toward a short-term goal that can be built upon.

3.3.3 Service Planning

Once the decision to assign the ticket is made, the TTW coordinator works with the ticket holder to develop an individual work plan (IWP) with both short-term (2–24 months) and long-term (3–5 years) goals for SSA; the long-term goals must be for full-time work (or earnings high enough to terminate benefits). In all the sites we visited, staff reported that they provide at least initial guidance on benefits very early in the process, often at the first meeting, and always within the first stages of the service-planning process. A crucial next step is for a certified staff person (or outside benefits counselor) to submit a Benefits Planning Query to SSA to obtain detailed information on the implications of employment for the individual's benefits. This usually takes about 8 to 10 days and is discussed with the ticket holder at the earliest opportunity. The ticket holder will typically meet regularly in person, or sometimes by telephone, with TTW staff for as long as it takes to obtain employment. Following that, periodic check-ins and regular follow-up will be held to keep track of the individual's employment status and milestones.

Several staff pointed out that benefits counseling is not only valuable during initial service planning, but can also be important throughout the service process, especially in assisting ticket holders with overpayments and other kinds of paperwork once they begin working. Staff reported an advantage to having benefits counselors on staff to provide this type of ongoing benefits-counseling support—having the staff there onsite made easier to make benefits counseling available on an ongoing basis than if participants had to go to another location for this service. Staff also reported that having certified benefits counselors on staff was their goal, or that having a counselor on staff was a key factor in their success. One of the main reasons why some ENs did not have benefits counselors on staff was because of the difficulty in completing Community Work Incentives Coordinator (CWIC) training. Staff reported that there is a high demand for the training with a long waiting list. Interviewees also reported that the cost and amount of time involved were barriers to completing training.

To address Research Question #5 about how services provided by Workforce ENs might differ from those provided by Non-Workforce ENs, we asked site visit respondents to describe the services they provide. We found that both Workforce ENs and Non-Workforce ENs offered the same TTW services, including career counseling, skills assessment, resume help, job referrals/search assistance, benefits counseling,

and post-employment support. A few ENs offered additional employment-related services such as money management, computer classes, and job readiness training, but there was no pattern of differences between Workforce and Non-Workforce ENs.

In all the ENs we visited, participants needed to be active in order to keep their cases open. However, the different ENs had different ideas about what they considered to be “active” participation. Several of the Non-Workforce ENs were very conscious of how their resources were being spent and were relatively strict about how much time they would allow people to demonstrate their seriousness in seeking employment: staff at one Non-Workforce EN said that if a person was not following up or working on goals after three months, they would close the case; another said that they would give the individual six months. One Workforce EN TTW staff person said she expected a certain level of investment for ticket holders: “I don’t want to start the process just to get a one-month milestone payment.” However, she wouldn’t put a time limit on how long she would give someone who was not following through, nor will she un-assign tickets unless she receives a request to do so. Other ENs were more flexible about keeping cases open. At several Workforce ENs, we were told that if the person needed to take some time off, the center did not close the ticket but kept following up and encouraging the person to try again. They would not un-assign a ticket just because the person had become disengaged, largely because it had been their experience that the disengagement was often temporary and the person just needed a little more time. There is no specified time limit for ticket holders, and their cases can be closed and reopened with no problem.

3.3.4 Partnerships

In order to address Research Question #4 about the partnerships and collaboration with other service agencies, we asked site visit interviewees whether and how they worked with other individuals or organizations in their community in serving ticket holders. We also asked specifically about their experience with Partnership Plus, a collaboration between VR and ENs, in which beneficiaries who obtained employment through services from a VR agency are assisted in reassigning their tickets to another EN for follow-along services once their VR case is closed.

Both Workforce ENs and Non-Workforce ENs identified multiple community-based organizations and government agencies that serve as resources for providing employment services to customers with disabilities, although we found variation in the extent to which the different ENs we visited partnered with these other entities in providing TTW services to ticket holders. Among the Non-Workforce ENs, three were part of well-established coalitions or interagency networks within which they collaborated extensively. Additionally, some Non-Workforce ENs had strong referral relationships with their local AJCs and would refer ticket holders for WIOA training services. However, staff at three of the Non-Workforce ENs based in disability services organizations offering a wide range of programs in addition to employment services, reported that although they were familiar with other organizations providing disability employment services, their own services were so comprehensive that they rarely saw a need to collaborate with them in serving their TTW customers.

Workforce ENs also reported a range of variation in community collaboration. Two of the Workforce ENs we visited are co-located with other social services agencies and non-profits within the same building, making collaboration particularly easy. In some cases, relationships with other agencies are limited to referrals, while others involve collaboration in service delivery, either informally or formally through Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs) or other formal partnering mechanisms. Three of the Workforce ENs reported participating in an established committee, coalition or partnership with other local agencies. On

the other hand three of the Workforce ENs reported that very few of their ticket holders were receiving services from multiple agencies.

The Partnership Plus program did not seem to be working well for most ENs in this study. Some Workforce ENs found it difficult to provide follow-along services over the long term because that was not their typical service delivery practice. In some cases, EN staff perception was that VR agencies were reluctant to reassign tickets because they viewed the ENs as competition. Some ENs may not be able to provide follow-along services for individuals for whom they have not received previous milestone or outcome payments unless they have sources of funding other than the TTW program to support those services.

3.4 Outcomes for Workforce vs. Non-Workforce ENs

In this section, we examine program outcomes by reviewing SSA data on ticket assignments and payments. The outcome measures provided in the SSA data and used in the analysis include:

- Number of tickets assigned
- Number of ticket holders with payments
- Total EN payments
- Number of ticket holders for whom payments were made, FY 2016
- Number of EN payments, FY 2016
- Total EN payments, FY 2016
- Number of outcome payments, FY 2016
- Total outcome payments, FY 2016
- Number of milestone payments, FY 2016
- Total milestone payments, 2016
- Paid/assigned ratio, FY 2016
- Outcome payment ratio, FY 2016

In some cases, we refer to information gathered during the site visits to interpret these results.

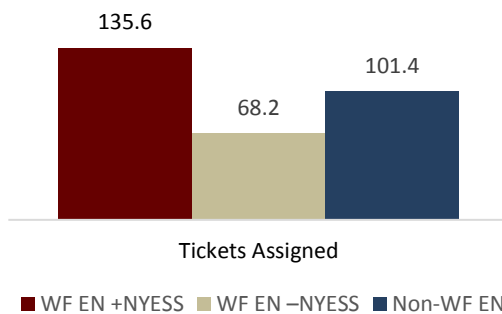
3.4.1 Number of Tickets Assigned

This section addresses Research Question #1 about the number of tickets assigned to the ENs. Here we summarize both the total number of tickets assigned and the average number assigned to each EN.

Number of Ticket Holders. The number of tickets assigned to each EN is a measure of caseload size. The total number of tickets assigned as of the end of the fiscal year includes both tickets that were assigned during the year and tickets still active from previous years. (The life cycle of a ticket can be quite long by the time an individual obtains employment, completes the trial work period, maintains substantial gainful activity, and eventually ceases to receive SSI/SSDI benefits.) Most ENs provide a range of services, of which the TTW program is only one. Workforce ENs provide a range of AJC services, and Non-Workforce ENs are often community-based organizations providing a range of services to people with disabilities. The number of tickets assigned is an indicator of the size of the program, the effectiveness of its outreach, local demand, and the level of effort or priority given to TTW among the organization's range of services.

The total number of tickets assigned to all 588 ENs as of the end of FY 2016 was 56,949. There were 16,272 tickets assigned to 120 Workforce ENs and 40,677 tickets assigned to Non-Workforce ENs. As shown in Exhibit 9, the average number of tickets assigned to each EN ranged from 68.2 among Workforce ENs that did not include NYESS to 135.6 among Workforce ENs including NYESS, with the Non-Workforce ENs in between at an average of 101.4.

**Exhibit 9. Average Number of Tickets Assigned as of the End of FY 2016:
 NYESS Had a High Number of Tickets Assigned**



The number of tickets since program inception ranged from 42 at a Non-Workforce EN that had significantly reduced its TTW services due to funding cutbacks, to 468 at a large metropolitan Workforce EN that had been a DEI grantee and had developed a robust sustainability plan (although staff there attributed their high numbers purely to the large population served by the AJC, rather than to a focus on serving people with disabilities in general or on the TTW program in particular).

Most ENs did not have any specific growth goals or targets for number of tickets or amount of ticket revenue. (One Non-Workforce EN mentioned a goal of 25 tickets, another estimated that 35 tickets would be sufficient to generate the revenue to support a staff person, and a third mentioned a goal of increasing ticket revenue by \$75K as a way to support an additional staff person.) However, several ENs, both Workforce and Non-Workforce, raised the issue of organizational capacity when discussing their common philosophy of “don’t turn any customer away,” and questioned how far the organization could stretch its staff resources to accommodate a large number of ticket holders. On one hand, accepting any eligible ticket holders into the TTW program was seen as consistent with the EN’s goal of helping people become employed and, in at least one case, as “a good strategy for getting more tickets.” However, this was acknowledged as a difficult strategy to implement if there was only one case manager. Staff in one Non-Workforce EN were explicit about the need to balance the level of support they could give ticket holders because they were in a small agency with limited resources and did not get paid until the ticket holder reached a sufficient earnings level. If it seemed that a client would need more than the four to six hours of support per month that the EN typically provides, they would suggest that the client assign their ticket to another EN with whom the first EN could partner *after* the client is on the job, and offer post-employment support.

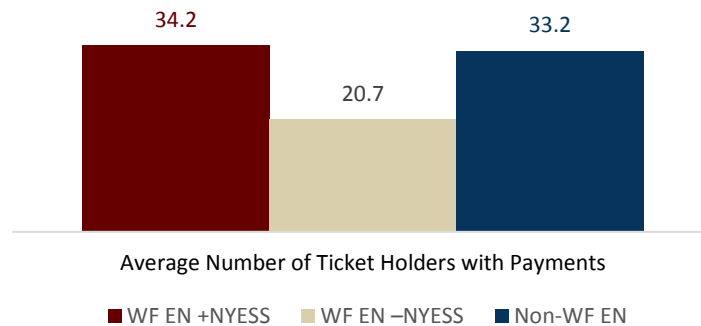
3.4.2 Number of Ticket Holders Achieving Substantial Earnings

A key measure of program effectiveness is the number of ticket holders who successfully obtained employment and achieved a level of income of at least the trial work level (\$810 per month in 2016). To obtain these results, we used the number of unique Social Security numbers associated with FY 2016 payments. This is not a measure of the number of individuals who reached this level of income during the year, but rather a measure of the number of individuals for whom the EN received payments, many of whom achieved this level of income in prior years and were continuing to maintain income at or above

the trial work level in FY 2016. In FY 2016, the 120 Workforce ENs received payments for a total of 3,360 ticket holders earning sufficient income to generate ticket payments. The 468 Non-Workforce ENs received payments for a total of \$15,519 in ticket revenue.

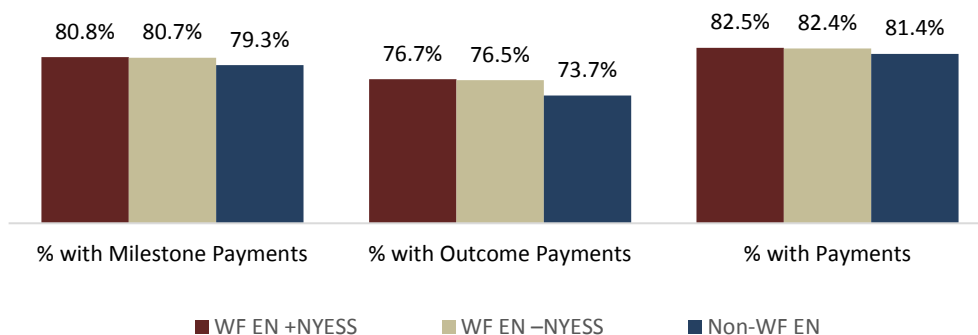
To address Research Question #7 about how beneficiary outcomes vary across different types of ENs, we compared the number of ticket holders for whom ticket payments were made between Workforce and Non-Workforce ENs. As shown in Exhibit 10, on average, Non-Workforce ENs had significantly more ticket holders for whom payments were made than the Workforce ENs without NYESS. When including NYESS, the average numbers were similar between Workforce and Non-Workforce ENs.

**Exhibit 10. Average Number of Ticket Holders for Whom Payments Were Made in FY 2016:
NYESS and Non-Workforce ENs Had Significantly More Ticket Holders with Payments**



Another measure of program outcomes we compared across types of ENs for addressing Research Question #7 was the percentage of ENs of each type that received ticket payment revenue. As shown in Exhibit 11, the percentage of ENs receiving ticket payments during FY 2016 was very close to the same across the groups of ENs.

**Exhibit 11. Percentage of ENs with Payments in FY 2016:
About the Same Proportion of Workforce and Non-Workforce ENs Received Payments**



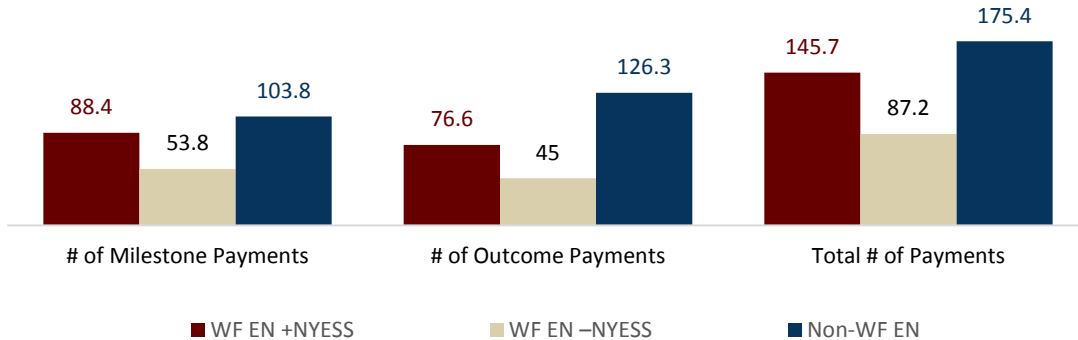
3.4.3 Number of Ticket Payments

To address Research Question #2 about the number of payments, this section summarizes the number and amounts of payments across different types of ENs. The number of ticket payments reflects the payments the EN receives for individuals who have achieved a level of income of at least the trial work level (\$810 per month). For beneficiaries earning at this level who are still receiving disability benefits, the EN receives monthly **milestone** payments. Once the ticket holder is has been earning long enough

at a sufficient level to cease receiving benefits, the EN receives **outcome** payments for 36 months (SSDI) to 60 months (SSI).

Among the 588 ENs, 480 ENs (81.6 percent) received payments during FY 2016. As shown in Exhibit 12, the Non-Workforce ENs received a higher number of payments, on average. Note that the average number of payments for Workforce ENs drops noticeably when NYESS is not included in the Workforce EN sample.

**Exhibit 12. Average Number of Payments in FY 2016:
Non-Workforce ENs Had Significantly More Outcome Payments**

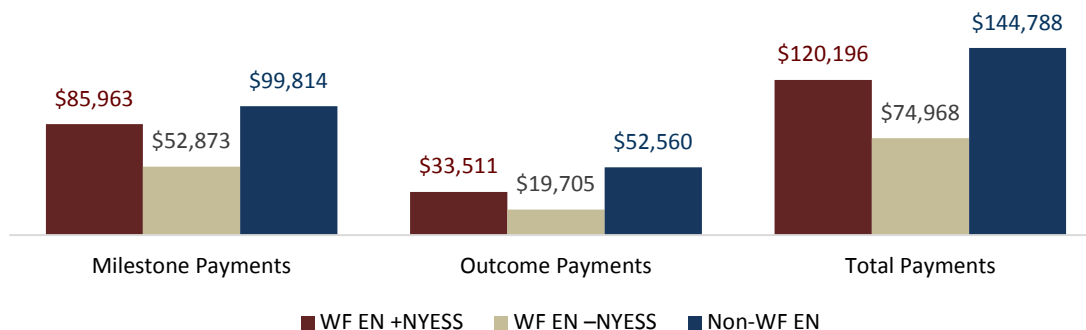


3.4.4 Ticket Payment Revenue

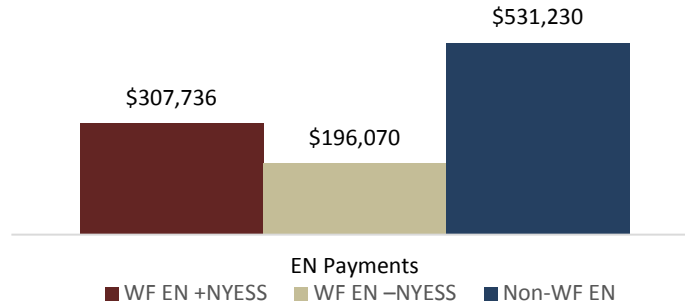
To further address Research Question #2, we summarize here the amount of ticket revenue different types of ENs received. The 480 ENs with payment activity during FY 2016 collected payment revenue totaling \$67,063,442. Ticket payment revenue can be seen as a primary outcome for measuring TTW success because the ENs rely on ticket payments to fund the delivery of TTW services, at least to some degree. Even ENs that begin serving ticket holders with other sources of funds look to the ticket payments to offset most, if not all, of the costs. Some Non-Workforce ENs rely solely on ticket payments to cover their TTW program costs.

As shown in Exhibit 13, Non-Workforce ENs had higher average payment revenue for both milestone payments and outcome payments. Whereas Exhibit 13 summarized FY 2016 payments, Exhibit 14 shows the total payments ENs received since becoming ENs. Again, the Non-Workforce ENs were more received more than the Workforce ENs.

**Exhibit 13. Average Payment Revenue FY 2016:
Non-Workforce ENs Might Be Receiving Higher Payments than Workforce ENs**



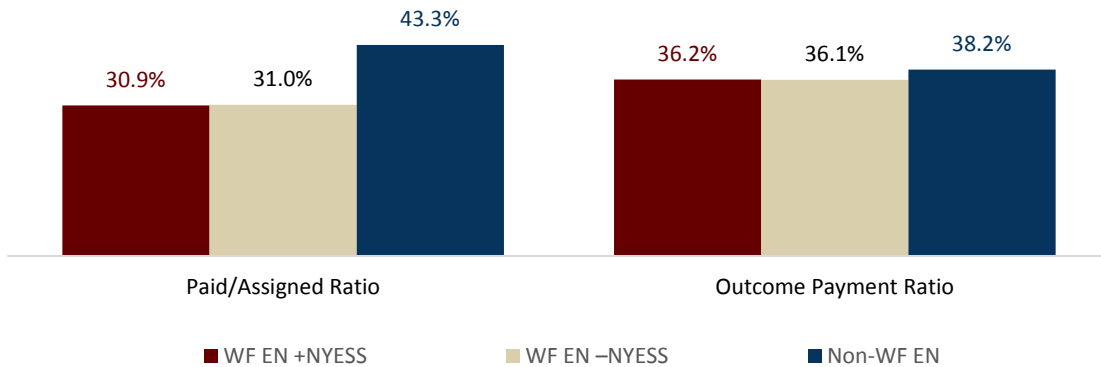
**Exhibit 14. Average Total EN Payments Historically:
Non-Workforce ENs Appear to Have Higher Payments Historically than Workforce ENs**



3.4.5 Ticket Payment Ratios

Two different payment ratios serve as additional measures of beneficiary outcomes for addressing Research Question #7. The first is the proportion of ticket holders for which the EN is receiving payments. This is a kind of proxy for how long it takes for ticket holders to obtain employment and earn sufficient income to trigger ticket payments to the EN. The *paid-to-assigned ratio* is the number of employed beneficiaries who qualified for ticket program payments as a percentage of all ticket assignees that ENs were supporting at the end of a report period. As shown in Exhibit 15, a higher proportion of Non-Workforce EN ticket holders generated ticket payments than did the Workforce ENs. Based on our site visits to Workforce and Non-Workforce ENs in the present study and on our site visits to AJCs and disability services providers on past studies,³² it appears that the higher proportion of tickets generating payments for the Non-Workforce ENs is likely related to the fact that many of the Non-Workforce ENs are operated by disability services organizations with extensive experience providing employment services to individuals with disabilities.

**Exhibit 15. Average Paid/Assigned Ratios and Average Outcome Payment Ratios FY 2016:
A Higher Proportion of Tickets in Non-Workforce ENs Generated Payments**



The outcomes paid as a percentage of all payments, or *outcomes ratio*, is the percentage of claim payments paid to ENs for earnings resulting in the suspension of SSI or SSDI cash benefits for that month out of total payments made. This ratio is an indicator of the EN's overall success in helping beneficiaries

³² The IMPAQ team has conducted AJC site visits for the evaluation of the DisAbility Employment Grants, the evaluation of the Disability Employment Initiative, and the AJC Accessibility study, in addition to the site visits for this TTW study.

move toward program exit and economic self-sufficiency through work and earnings. As shown in Exhibit 15, Workforce ENs and Non-Workforce ENs had similar outcomes ratios, on average.

3.4.6 Summary of NYESS Outcomes

As mentioned earlier, because NYESS is somewhat unique, we have presented findings in two ways in the majority of exhibits: Workforce ENs both with (red bars) and without (beige bars) NYESS. Here we briefly summarize NYESS outcomes, to provide a context for the importance of including the two different calculations.

- **Ticket assignments.** NYESS holds the largest number of ticket assignments of all the ENs. As of the end of FY 2016, NYESS held 8,180 ticket assignments.
- **Payments.** NYESS accumulated fiscal-year payments totaling \$4,552,477 for 590 beneficiaries. The NYESS payment total comprised 7 percent of all EN payments made in the fiscal year.
- **Payment ratios.** While NYESS had the highest outcomes of all the ENs in terms of ticket assignments and payments, its paid-to-assigned ratio was only 18 percent. However, among those payments, the proportion that were outcome payments was above average, at 48 percent of the 7,023 payments made.

3.4.7 TTW Program Challenges and EN Responses to Those Challenges

To address Research Question #8 about lessons learned, we asked site visit respondents for the perceptions of the challenges encountered in implementing the TTW program and how they have addressed those challenges. Exhibit 16 summarizes these challenges and provides examples of EN responses and solutions. As the exhibit shows, the various challenges reported by site staff are related to seven different aspects of program operation:

- Outreach and recruitment
- Job training
- Transportation
- Staff expertise
- Ticket holder goals
- Developing effective partnerships
- TTW administration

The sites we visited can all be considered to have at least moderately strong and effective TTW programs, as evidenced by the fact that all of their TTW programs have been in operation for several years, are serving more than a small handful of ticket holders, and received milestone and outcome payments in FY 2016. Thus, ENs' varied responses to the challenges they identified provide examples of practices that might be useful to agencies interested in implementing the program.

Exhibit 16. TTW Program Challenges and EN Responses/Solutions

Issue	Challenges	EN Responses /Solutions
Outreach and Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EN has difficulty finding TTW-eligible participants. ▪ Information about EN services on Choose Work is limited, resulting in consumers lacking understanding of what each EN has to offer. ▪ EN staff does not make the effort to let consumers know about TTW services and ask if they might qualify. ▪ EN has difficulty finding ticket holders who are the right fit—that is, ticket holders they have the resources to effectively serve. ▪ EN lacks the expertise to serve TTW customers with certain disabilities (e.g., intellectual disabilities, mental health). ▪ Ticket holders choose EN that is most responsive by telephone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EN conducts targeted outreach to disability community (distributes TTW literature, conducts local workshops and presentations, and participates in community agency partnership meetings). ▪ EN encourages staff to let consumers know about the TTW as part of their staff training. ▪ EN’s website highlights their TTW program. ▪ EN has TTW options on telephone system. ▪ EN ensures TTW telephone calls are returned as soon as possible. ▪ EN sets target goal to increase ticket revenue to be sufficient to support hiring additional staff.
Job Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EN has insufficient access to training funds. ▪ SSDI benefits may be high enough to disqualify the ticket holder from WIOA training funds earmarked for low-income individuals. WIOA staff may be reluctant to enroll ticket holders in training because of concern over WIOA outcome measures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EN uses DEI funds for short-term certifications, books, etc. ▪ EN provides disability awareness training to WIOA staff to reduce attitudinal barriers or concerns that ticket holders are less likely to succeed than other customers.
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EN services are not easily accessible via public transportation. ▪ EN is not located close to a bus route. ▪ Ticket holders may not be able to drive or know how to reach job interviews. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EN provides remote assistance and meets with ticket holders via Skype and online web applications. ▪ EN staff meet with customers at a convenient location. ▪ EN provides assistance with coordinating transportation.
Staff Expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EN lacks sufficient trained/certified staff (i.e., disability training, benefits counselors, etc.). ▪ EN encounters difficulty obtaining staff certification for benefits counseling (high demand, waiting list, cost and time involved, etc.). ▪ EN lacks sufficient staff to manage both case work and administrative burden of program. ▪ EN has staff turnover among specialized staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EN hires staff already trained for and experienced in dealing with customers with disabilities (setting up accommodations, assistive technology, etc.) ▪ EN uses previous experience or in-house subject matter expert (disability specialist from DEI grant) and relationships with local disability services agencies to provide training and support for staff, customers, and employers. ▪ EN provides disability awareness training to all center staff who have contact with customers. ▪ EN uses partnerships to provide specialized training opportunities for staff.

Issue	Challenges	EN Responses /Solutions
Ticket Holder Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EN finds that ticket holders are seeking to work only part-time in order to keep earnings low enough to retain SSA benefits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EN establishes part-time work as a short-term goal with the hope/expectation that it will eventually lead to full-time employment. ▪ EN refers ticket holders seeking to work only part time to AJCs for regular WIOA services. ▪ Both Workforce and Non-Workforce ENs provide benefits counseling to help customers better understand work incentives.
Developing Effective Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EN perceives competition from other ENs for ticket assignments. ▪ Rather than working cooperatively through the Partnership Plus program, VR agencies keep clients to themselves instead of sharing ticket holders with other ENs. ▪ VR agency is reluctant to work with consumer-driven independent living center. ▪ EN ticket holders need additional services not always available directly through EN (training funds, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A Non-Workforce EN conducts presentations with other ENs and develops direct one-on-one relationships with staff from other ENs. ▪ EN has developed a good relationship with VR. Not only does VR refer clients but a simple telephone call asking them to re-assign the ticket is working well. ▪ EN has contract with VR to provide benefits planning and job placement/retention services.
TTW Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EN lacks relationship with and responsive assistance from SSA. ▪ EN receives inconsistent answers from different SSA staff. ▪ SSA does not provide sufficient training. ▪ SSA portal is sometimes out of date. ▪ EN is not well equipped to scale up quickly (i.e., lack of experience, lack of resources/funding/staff). ▪ EN finds it difficult to serve enough ticket holders to generate the income to support staff needed to serve them. ▪ EN philosophy of “don’t turn any customer away” leaves staff with large caseloads and unclosed tickets. ▪ EN staff need to spend considerable time helping clients figure out the logistics of going to work (personal assistance, transportation, etc.) and spend more time on that than on the actual job search. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EN reaches out to general SSA help desk rather than contact representative. ▪ EN builds a relationship with at least one point of contact at SSA. ▪ EN conducts periodic check-ins and regular follow-up on individual’s employment status and milestones. ▪ EN uses E-Pay system. ▪ EN shifts administrative burden away from TTW staff (e.g., accounting handles payments). ▪ EN joins an administrative EN that takes care of all the administrative tasks and frees up TTW staff to focus on services to ticket holders. ▪ EN hires staff to generate significant ticket income. ▪ EN remains relatively small until number of ticket holders increases. ▪ EN uses other sources of funds to serve ticket holders until the program becomes self-sustaining. ▪ EN balances the level of support they can give ticket holders with their limited resources. ▪ EN refers ticket holders with intense needs to other ENs.

4. Study Findings and Implications for Future Studies

4.1 Summary of Findings

Here we summarize the key findings from the study for each research question. This summary includes findings from both the quantitative SSA data for FY 2016 and the qualitative data from the site visits.

Research Question #1: What is the number of tickets assigned to Workforce ENs?

- The average number of tickets assigned to Workforce ENs, not including NYESS, was 68.2. When including NYESS in the group of Workforce ENs, the average was 135.6.
- As of the end of FY 2016, 16,272 tickets were assigned to 120 Workforce ENs.

Research Question #2: How many milestone and outcome payments have the different types of ENs received over time? What is the amount of ticket revenue that the different types of ENs have received over time?

- Non-Workforce ENs received a higher number of milestone and outcome payments, on average, than Workforce ENs in FY 2016. The average number of milestone payments was 53.8 for Workforce ENs not including NYESS, 88.4 for Workforce ENs including NYESS, and 103.8 for Non-Workforce ENs. The average number of outcome payments was 45 for Workforce ENs not including NYESS, 76.6 for Workforce ENs including NYESS, and 126.3 for Non-Workforce ENs.
- In FY 2016, the Workforce ENs received payments for 3,360 ticket holders earning sufficient income to generate ticket payments for a total of \$11,899,356 in ticket revenue for the year.
- Non-Workforce ENs had higher average ticket revenue than Workforce ENs for both milestone payments and outcome payments in FY 2016. The average total milestone payment revenue during FY 2016 was \$52,873 for Workforce ENs not including NYESS, \$85,956 for Workforce ENs including NYESS, and \$99,814 for Non-Workforce ENs. The average total outcome payment revenue was \$19,705 for Workforce ENs not including NYESS, \$33,522 for Workforce ENs including NYESS, and \$52,560 for Non-Workforce ENs.

Research Question #3: How do ticket holders choose an EN for ticket assignment and how do ENs select which ticket assignments to accept?

- According to both staff and beneficiaries at the ENs we visited, most ticket holders learned about TTW when they received the letter from SSA informing them they had a ticket and listing the ENs in their ZIP code that they could contact about it. Several interviewees reported that customers contacted their EN because they had found it on the *Choose Work* website, although others said that they had never heard of any customer finding them through *Choose Work*.³³
- At almost every EN we visited we heard that customers had chosen that particular EN from among their choices because, after calling four or five ENs on the provider list, this EN was the only one that answered the telephone or called them back.
- Regardless of whether the EN is a disability services organization, a community-based social service organization, or part of the public workforce system, the EN will welcome any SSA beneficiary who expresses an interest in employment.

³³ Several respondents indicated that their customers found the *ChooseWork* website to be confusing and difficult to use.

- At every site, TTW staff said they were unlikely to deny a person a ticket assignment if the person was interested in working. If a TTW applicant could not, however, convince the EN that he/she was really ready, willing, and able to go to work, most TTW staff said that they would hesitate to move forward with assigning the ticket.

Research Question #4: Are individual ticket holders served by multiple entities in their community, including public Workforce ENs, other types of ENs, disability service agencies, and VR? If so, how do the different entities collaborate with one another?

- Ticket holders often receive services from multiple providers. These include a range of disability-related services that ENs can provide through effective partnerships and integrated resource teams.
- ENs that collaborate with other local agencies and resources are able to maximize the scope and fit of services that they offer to people with disabilities. Collaboration with agencies specializing in serving people with disabilities brings expertise to the table, as well as expanding the resources available to serve customers with disabilities.
- The Partnership Plus program did not seem to be very effective for most ENs in this study. Some Workforce ENs found it difficult to provide long-term follow-along services because that is not their typical service delivery practice. In some cases, EN staff perception was that VR agencies were reluctant to share or reassign tickets because they viewed the ENs as competition.

Research Question #5: How are services provided by Workforce ENs different from those provided by Non-Workforce ENs?

- Both Workforce ENs and Non-Workforce ENs offered the same TTW services, including career counseling, skills assessment, resume help, job referrals/search assistance, benefits counseling, and post-employment support. A few ENs offered additional employment-related services such as money management, computer classes, and job readiness training, but there was no pattern of differences between Workforce and Non-Workforce ENs.
- The service delivery process at the ENs we visited follows a similar path, regardless of whether the visited site was a Workforce EN or a Non-Workforce EN. Ticket holders receive services from one or more dedicated staff with responsibility both for specialized TTW services, often including benefits counseling, and for handling the complex procedures required by SSA for moving the ticket holders from reliance on benefits to full-time employment.

Research Question #6: How are the characteristics of ticket holders served by Workforce ENs different from those served by Non-Workforce ENs?

- Except for the type of disability, it did not appear that the characteristics of ticket holders were very different between Workforce and Non-Workforce ENs. Non-Workforce ENs that were organizations specializing in serving individuals with mental health disabilities or developmental disabilities reported a larger portion of their ticket holders having these disabilities than Workforce ENs did.

Research Question #7: How do beneficiary outcomes vary across different types of ENs?

- The number of beneficiaries obtaining employment with sufficient earnings to generate ticket payments (achieving a level of income of at least the trial work level of \$810 per month in 2016) was higher for Non-Workforce ENs and NYESS than for Workforce ENs. The average number of ticket holders earning sufficient income to generate ticket payments was 20.7 for Workforce ENs not including NYESS, 34.2 for Workforce ENs including NYESS, and 33.2 for Non-Workforce ENs.

Research Question #8: What lessons can be learned from current experience about strategies for improving services to ticket holders through Workforce ENs in the future?

- Workforce ENs that provide center-wide training on serving individuals with disabilities and accessing disability-related services through partner agencies were able to integrate ticket holders into their regular service-delivery process and provide full access to AJC services. ENs that do not provide this kind of training may limit a ticket holder's service experience to working with a single TTW coordinator or case manager. Staff at the ENs we visited reported that, in order to provide effective TTW services, it is valuable for every staff person who has contact with customers to understand the challenges and resources that are unique to the disability target population.
- ENs that train and certify one or more of their own staff members in benefits counseling are able to provide information about the potential impact of working on ticket holders' SSA benefits from the initial orientation throughout their entire service process. Interviewees reported that expert counseling on work incentives and the financial impact of working can be an essential service for ticket holders throughout their involvement in the TTW program.
- This study appears to support a major lesson learned in the AJC Accessibility Study—that job seekers with disabilities benefit from interactions with a subject matter expert or disability specialist who stays current on state and federal programs and regulations, develops strong relationships with local disability services agencies, provides people with disabilities with benefits information and a positive center experience, provides training and support to other center staff, and provides hiring and job accommodation expertise to employers. Until the EN can generate sufficient ticket income to support the time and effort needed for a staff member to become an effective disability specialist or disability resource coordinator, such a position requires ongoing funding support.
- The TTW program was reported by ENs staff to be somewhat burdensome administratively. Some ENs addressed this challenge by joining an administrative EN (such as NYESS or American Dream Employment Network), thereby shifting the administrative burden to that entity so TTW staff could focus their efforts on service delivery. ENs that handled their own administrative processes reported that strong leadership commitment and a program champion contributed to ensuring effective follow-through with administrative tasks.
- Because of the time delay between providing employment services to ticket holders and receiving payments when milestones and outcomes are eventually achieved, ENs need financial support to help with start-up or scaling up. Becoming a well-established EN can be time-consuming, and it can be challenging to devote significant staff time to the TTW program during the start-up phase before ENs begin to receive TTW payments. Even fairly well-established ENs can find it difficult to scale up to serve a sufficient number of ticket holders to generate the income needed to support TTW staff. Some interviewees noted that becoming part of a well-established administrative EN can help an EN be ready to serve ticket holders within a fairly short time. As the EN of record, an administrative EN can not only shoulder the paperwork burden but also provide valuable technical assistance, tools, and resources to help with start-up and expansion.
- Even though ENs no longer receive disks from Maximus with lists of ticket holders in their area, that does not mean that outreach and recruitment are no longer viable. ENs that conduct outreach targeted to the disability community are able to build up their TTW caseload. Through partnerships with disability organizations in the community and general outreach to the public,

some ENs let ticket holders know of the services available and encourage those who are motivated to work to attend orientation sessions to learn about the TTW program.

- Finally, it is important to recognize that not every AJC may be well suited to be an EN or serve ticket holders. Leadership, commitment, a strong WIOA program, a suitable location, availability of public transportation, and availability of community resources are all factors that might affect an AJC's suitability or readiness to participate in the TTW program.

4.2 Implications for Future Studies

This study has gathered useful data and gained some valuable insights about the role of the public workforce system in the TTW program. However, it has been essentially an exploratory study that has raised almost as many questions as it has been able to answer. Future studies could be implemented that would gather data on a broader scale to address questions about factors affecting the success of the Workforce ENs, as well as potentially explain why the Non-Workforce ENs have been able to assign more tickets and generate more revenue, on average, than the Workforce ENs. More in-depth data collection and analysis could also potentially target Workforce ENs toward specific target groups and services within the TTW program for which they might make their most valuable contribution. The following are several recommendations for future studies that can inform the most appropriate role of the public workforce system in the TTW program.

Conduct analysis of individual-level ticket holder data. This exploratory TTW study has looked at implementation of the TTW program through the experience of a relatively small sample of Workforce and Non-Workforce ENs and has looked at TTW program outcomes at only the aggregate EN level. Analysis of individual ticket holder data could be used to learn more about the characteristics of ticket holders served by Workforce ENs and whether there are specific subgroups among beneficiaries with whom the public workforce system is either particularly effective or less successful. Individual-level data can also be used to better understand ticket holders' pathways through the service process, the length of time spent in different phases of service delivery, and any stages in the process in which ticket holders appear to become stuck or drop out.

Visit a larger sample of ENs. The aggregate EN data used in this study includes very little information about the characteristics of the ENs. Conducting site visits to a larger sample of ENs would make it possible to learn more about the characteristics of ENs, how TTW programs vary across different types of ENs, and how different characteristics might affect outcomes. A larger sample would make it possible to include ENs that represent a wide range of different settings and circumstances and to examine the significance of variations such as:

- Urban, suburban, and rural communities
- Different labor markets and industries
- Single location versus multiple locations
- Participation in Partnership Plus
- Type of organization (AJC, regional WIB, state agency, community-based social services agency, disability-focused organization, private for-profit)
- Stand-alone ENs versus those associated with administrative ENs

Examine a wider range of characteristics of the ENs. In addition to conducting a study with a larger number of ENs, another source of data for better understanding how EN characteristics might affect outcomes would be to access data included in ENs' original applications submitted to SSA, including.

- Type of organization (e.g., faith-based, healthcare/mental health, state/local government, AIC)
- Type of certification or accreditation that establishes the ENs' qualifications
- Organizational structure, subcontractors and partners
- Programs, services and supports offered
- Business model and marketing approach
- Whether operating under a consumer-directed services model
- Whether operating as an administrative EN
- Service area—single or multi-state, specific counties and/or zip codes

Study ticket holders not served. Many ENs will accept tickets from beneficiaries whose short-term goal is to supplement their disability income with part-time work, with an expected long-term goal of eventually terminating benefits. However, some ENs, especially those dependent on ticket revenue to support TTW staff, limit the ticket holders they serve to those with a clear goal of becoming self-sufficient and terminating SSA disability benefits within a reasonable time. There is currently no source of data to look at the characteristics of ticket holders who contact an EN for TTW but whose ticket is not accepted for assignment. It might be possible to partner with the National Employment Network Association to design and implement a simple data collection procedure that would gather information about the ticket holders an EN does not serve, or that the EN provides services to through programs other than TTW.

Study the national ENs. This study has focused on Workforce ENs and other ENs serving the same local communities. The site visit sample did not include any of the large national ENs or administrative ENs, such as NYESS or the American Dream Employment Network. Little or no research is being conducted on the national ENs that have developed as major players in TTW in the last several years. This means that the picture of the TTW landscape is incomplete. As these ENs take on an increasing number of ticket assignments, it will be important to understand where they fit into the TTW program to better understand the role of the public workforce system.

APPENDIX A: TTW SITE PROFILES

California

Workforce EN

Name of Organization/EN:	MCS (Managed Career Solutions)/MCS Hollywood WorkSource
Type of Organization:	For-profit human capital and economic development organization with workforce development focus
Target Populations:	All job seekers, including individuals with multiple barriers to employment
Organization Description:	MCS operates the Hollywood WorkSource Center (AJC) under contract to the City of Los Angeles, as well as AJCs in Alhambra and West Covina.
Service Area Description:	MCS operates out of a main office in Los Angeles, seven satellite offices throughout Southern California, and as the operator for three AJCs. Major employment sectors include security, technology, and medical.
Description of EN:	MCS became an EN in 2004. The Workforce ENs at the WorkSource centers in Los Angeles fall under the umbrella of the City of Los Angeles' administrative EN. Tickets of ticket holders visiting MCS' Hollywood WorkSource for WIOA services are assigned to the City of Los Angeles EN. MCS is also a Non-Workforce EN. Tickets of ticket holders responding to an MCS outreach mailer or contacting them through the MCS website are assigned to the Non-Workforce EN. The TTW program is staffed with a Disability Services Coordinator, a Disability Services Specialist, and two WIPA benefits counselors.
# Tickets as of 10/1/16:	98

Non-Workforce EN

Name of Organization/EN:	Community Centers, Inc. (CCI)
Type of Organization:	Non-profit organization
Target Populations:	At-risk and foster youth, people with disabilities, disadvantaged individuals, families, and veterans
Organization Description:	CCI helps people become self-sufficient through counseling, employment, immigration, education training, support, and referral services.
Service Area Description:	CCI serves the large Greater South LA area, mostly blacks and Latinos, very poor, and there is a large population with impairments (narcotics, self-inflicted injury, and crime), the area has high unemployment (55 percent in the 90044 ZIP Code) and low education. Employment involves mostly blue-collar jobs in construction, security, and services, and in the new sports arena.
Description of EN:	CCI became an EN in 2001 when they were an AJC. When the City of Los Angeles became the umbrella EN for its WorkSource Centers in 2013, CCI decided to continue to operate as its own EN. CCI no longer has a WorkSource contract and is currently completely dependent on private funding, with the Facilities Manager serving as TTW Coordinator.
# Tickets as of 10/1/16:	94

Florida

Workforce EN

Name of Organization/EN:	CareerSource Broward
Type of Organization:	AJC that is governed by the Broward Workforce Development Board, operated by a private human resources firm
Target Populations:	All job seekers, including veterans and youth
Organization Description:	CareerSource Broward is the AJC for the Fort Lauderdale area, providing employment and training services and assisting job seekers with job search, developing work skills, etc.
Service Area Description:	Large, primarily urban population, with a labor force of just over 1 million people and a low unemployment rate. There is a large low-income population (44 percent of Broward County and 58 percent of Dade County is either underemployed or living in poverty). Most of the jobs are in warehousing, customer service, hospitality, and security. Broward County is the largest employer in the area. The school board is also a large employer.
Description of EN:	CareerSource Broward became an EN in 2008 and was awarded a DEI grant in 2012. The TTW program is staffed by a Program Manager, two Disability Program Financial Success Coaches, and three Disability Resource Coordinators – one at each of the three locations.
# Tickets as of 10/1/16:	454

Non-Workforce EN

Name of Organization/EN:	Center for Independent Living of Broward (CILB)
Type of Organization:	Community-based non-profit organization
Target Populations:	Persons of all ages with disabilities of all types
Organization Description:	Centers for Independent Living are community-based, cross-disability, non-profit organizations that are designed and operated by people with disabilities. They operate with a strict philosophy of consumer control; people with all types of disabilities directly govern and staff the organization.
Service Area Description:	CILB serves a six-county area that is largely urban. The population is large and highly diverse, with a sizable low-income population. The population potentially eligible for TTW is also very large: 48,000 people are on disability in Broward County alone (over 65,000 people are on disability in Miami/Dade County). Unemployment is high, but seems to be declining. Retail is the largest employer in the area, followed by transportation and delivery services (e.g., FedEx). The program does not work with fast food employers.
Description of EN:	CILB became an EN in 2009. It strives to enhance the lives of people with disabilities in Broward, Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, and Lee counties. TTW is the major focus of CILB's employment program; it has been providing TTW services for approximately 20 years. The TTW program is staffed by a Director of Employment and Benefits Counseling, who previously worked at the Workforce EN.
# Tickets as of 10/1/16:	111

New York

Workforce EN

Name of Organization/EN:	CNY Works
Type of Organization:	Non-profit organization
Target Populations:	All job seekers in the greater Syracuse area
Organization Description:	CNY Works is an AJC that provides a full menu of services for job seekers and employed customers. Job seekers receive universal access to comprehensive employment services and tools for job readiness. The Center provides local labor market information, as well as a forum for community partner collaboration and business partnerships.
Service Area Description:	The area's economy is dependent on healthcare, community services, hospitality, and some manufacturing. There is a new mall, with a hotel being built next to it, and there is considerable development around the lake. In general, CNY Works serves the same customer base as Access VR and Circare, i.e., the greater Syracuse area.
Description of EN:	CNY Works became an EN in 2011 under their DEI grant. Originally the New York Employment Services System (NYESS) served as the administrative EN for CNY Works, but CNY Works eventually decided to administer its own TTW program, which is staffed by the Disability Resource Coordinator.
# Tickets as of 10/1/16:	52

Non-Workforce EN

Name of Organization/EN:	Circare
Type of Organization:	Non-profit organization
Target Populations:	Adults and children with multiple chronic health conditions, including mental health and substance use disorders residing in Central New York
Organization Description:	Circare was founded in 1989 as Onondaga Case Management Services in response to the New York State Office of Mental Health's initiative to provide intensive case management services to individuals diagnosed with mental illnesses. Over the years, clinical, vocational, peer-based, forensic, and crisis-intervention services for youth and their families were added.
Service Area Description:	The majority of TTW customers are from within the inner city, and some come in from the suburbs. Healthcare is a major driver of the local economy, along with education and insurance, with a substantial decline in manufacturing jobs in the area. Unemployment in the city is high, with very low income levels. Lack of education has been a substantial barrier to employment.
Description of EN:	Circare became an EN in 2009. Its original goal in instituting TTW was to assign tickets to its current clients. Because Circare is a full health provider and not an employment services contractor for Access VR, the organization was able to accept tickets. The TTW program is staffed by the Director of Vocational Services and an Employment Specialist.
# Tickets as of 10/1/16:	42

South Carolina

Workforce EN

- Name of Organization/EN:** SC Works – Midlands
- Type of Organization:** Non-profit organization
- Target Populations:** All job seekers
- Organization Description:** SC Works is an AJC that provides all job seekers with career counseling, job referrals, testing and training services, and resume-writing assistance. The SC Works Online Services System links all of South Carolina’s state and local workforce services and resources.
- Service Area Description:** The area served is urban and suburban. Industries are primarily service and manufacturing jobs. The majority of the jobs TTW customers are looking for and obtaining are greeter- and administrative-type jobs. The unemployment rate in Columbia is around 4 percent and steady.
- Description of EN:** SC Works became an EN in 2008. They previously had a Disability Navigator Grant. Under a DEI grant, South Carolina initially implemented TTW in two centers located in Columbia and Greenville. Once the process was standardized, TTW was implemented across all SC Works centers. The TTW program is staffed by a Workforce Consultant/Employment Specialist/TTW Coordinator.
- # Tickets as of 10/1/16:** 306

Non-Workforce EN

- Name of Organization/EN:** ABLE South Carolina
- Type of Organization:** Non-profit organization
- Target Populations:** Persons of all ages with disabilities of all types
- Organization Description:** Centers for Independent Living are community-based, cross-disability, non-profit organizations that are designed and operated by people with disabilities. They operate according to a strict philosophy of consumer control, wherein people with all types of disabilities directly govern and staff the organization.
- Service Area Description:** The ABLE TTW program serves the entire state of South Carolina including both urban and rural areas. ABLE primarily focuses on serving 23 counties that cover more than one-half the state. For TTW customers who do not live in one of those 23 counties, services are provided online using remote meetings. Most ticket holders work in manufacturing and customer service.
- Description of EN:** ABLE South Carolina became an EN in 2012, primarily to sustain an employment program. ABLE does not feel the TTW program is running smoothly yet, as many ticket holders still have their tickets assigned to other organizations. ABLE is staffed with individuals with disabilities who are also ticket holders, generating an internal revenue stream. The TTW program is staffed by the TTW Program Manager and the Director of Employment Programs.
- # Tickets as of 10/1/16:** 21

Virginia

Workforce EN

Name of Organization/EN:	SkillSource Group, Inc. /Fairfax SkillSource Center
Type of Organization:	Non-profit organization
Target Populations:	Job seekers and employers in Northern Virginia. The TTW service area includes the entire state of Virginia.
Organization Description:	The SkillSource Group (SSG) is a separate non-profit entity of the Northern Virginia Workforce Development Board. SSG serves as the Board's fiscal agent and pursues additional funding sources to further sustain and create workforce development initiatives for all employers and job seekers in the region.
Service Area Description:	SkillSource's service area includes three counties in northern Virginia: Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William, as well as the independent cities within these counties. The TTW service area, however, includes the entire state of VA. The main industries are hospitality, construction, healthcare, and IT, but most ticket holders work within the service sector.
Description of EN:	In 2010, the Fairfax SkillSource Center was awarded a DEI grant, which required the organization to become an EN. The Center became an EN before the rest of the state. There are two full-time staff dedicated to TTW who administer the program and work with clients.
# Tickets as of 10/1/16:	146

Non-Workforce EN

Name of Organization:	Mount Vernon Lee Enterprises (MVLE)
Type of Organization:	Non-profit organization
Target Populations:	People with disabilities in Northern Virginia, serving Alexandria, Arlington, Prince William, and Loudoun counties
Organization Description:	MVLE is an internationally accredited agency that partners with commercial businesses, government, and other not-for-profit agencies to empower individuals with disabilities through employment.
Service Area Description:	MVLE serves Northern Virginia, which is primarily a suburban area of Washington, DC. The unemployment rate is low, but many people work 2–3 minimum wage jobs in order to make decent income for the area. MVLE staff suggested that, although there are many government jobs in the area, people with disabilities have a difficult time competing for them. Staff also noted that there is a very highly skilled labor force in the area, exacerbating competition for jobs. Ticket holder jobs are mainly in janitorial services, clerical positions, grocery stores.
Description of EN:	MVLE has been an EN for over 10 years (since 2002) through its Individual Supported Employment (ISE) program. Three staff members work on TTW, but no one works on it exclusively.
# Tickets as of 10/1/16:	15

Washington

Workforce EN

Name of Organization/EN:	Snohomish County WorkSource
Type of Organization:	Government agency administered by non-profit Workforce Snohomish
Target Populations:	All job seekers and employers in Snohomish County
Organization Description:	WorkSource is a statewide partnership of state, local, and non-profit agencies providing employment and training services to job seekers and employers in the state of Washington.
Service Area Description:	It serves Snohomish County (north of Seattle), population 800,000. Major industries in a growing economy are manufacturing, aerospace, healthcare, naval shipyard, retail. Very low unemployment rate, many people retiring.
Description of EN:	WorkSource became an EN in 2014 with the Round 2 DEI funding. Later, when the state (Employment Service) became an administrative EN, the center became part of the state EN. The state EN handles all the paperwork and retains a 10 percent administrative fee, passing the remaining funding back to the center. It is co-located with veterans, youth, and WIOA service offices.
# Tickets as of 10/1/16:	91

Non-Workforce EN

Name of Organization/EN:	Cares of Washington
Type of Organization:	Non-profit organization
Target Populations:	People with disabilities and individuals with low incomes in Seattle, Tacoma, Port Orchard, and Monroe
Organization Description:	Originally founded in 1980 as the International Association of Machinists Center for Administrating Rehabilitation and Employment Services, Cares of Washington became a multi-state employment service agency, headquartered in Washington, DC. Cares of Washington became an independent agency, expanding services to include low-income individuals. Its mission is to provide tailored opportunities for people with disabilities and low incomes to become self-sufficient.
Service Area Description:	Cares' service area for TTW is five counties in the Seattle area, including Snohomish, from four office locations. This is an area of urban expansion, with an explosion of housing costs and commercial development, surrounded by undeveloped rural areas. There is a large low income population in outlying areas, with a lack of transportation and limited access to health care or other resources. The major industries are aerospace, IT (gaming, online tech, hardware), health care, research, and biotech.
Description of EN:	Cares became an EN in 2008, prior to receiving a DEI grant. While implementing DEI, the TTW program was part of the WIB, and Cares administered tickets through the Workforce EN. Cares is not currently a provider under WIOA, and this year decided to become its own EN.
# Tickets as of 10/1/16:	21

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR ENs

In this discussion guide:

- *Notes and instructions for site visitors are in italics.*
- *Some questions are followed by **PROBES** to provide additional detail or context for a better understanding the responses.*

[Below are suggested introductory remarks. While it is not necessary to follow this as a script, it is important that you cover all of the main points contained here.]

I work for IMPAQ International, and we are conducting a study of the Ticket to Work (TTW) program for people with disabilities (PWD). The U.S. Department of Labor contracted with us to conduct this study. In this study we are looking at Employment Networks (ENs) under the TTW program that are operated by the public workforce system, as well as ENs operated by other kinds of agencies.

As part of our study, we will be interviewing selected managers and staff in your organization to understand your organization's experience with serving Ticket to Work customers. We are not evaluating your agency or your services. We are gathering information to better understand how the program works and looking for promising practices that can potentially improve services for all TTW ticket holders. We will be asking about a wide range of different practices, and we do not expect any programs to be doing all of the things we ask about, so please answer as honestly as you can, and don't worry about trying to make your program "look good."

Everything that we discuss during this interview will be kept **confidential and used only for purposes of this study**. This means that your responses will not be shared with USDOL or anyone else in any way that could identify you or your organization. Should we determine that it would be valuable to identify your program in our report, we will invite you to review any description of your agency or practices and ask for your permission before attributing the information to your program. Before we begin, do you have any questions about the purpose of the evaluation or our confidentiality policy?

To start, do you mind if we tape record our session? This will help if we need to go back to make sure we captured the full discussion.

1. Organizational Structure

1.1 **ALL** What is your position in this organization? What is your official job title? What is your role in this organization?

PROBES:

- What is your role with regard to the TTW program?
- How long have you been working at this organization, and how long have you been involved with its Ticket to Work program?
- Are your TTW duties an official part of your job description?
- What kind of background do you have as a TTW specialist? As a disability services specialist? With workforce development in general?

1.2 **DIRECTOR, TTW MGR** How are TTW activities administratively organized at your organization?

PROBES:

- Who do you report to, and who do you work with here on TTW?
- How many dedicated staff work with TTW customers?
- [If not a disability-specific organization:] Does your organization have a disability services specialist? What roles does the disability specialist play in the TTW program?
- Besides your own organization, are other entities part of your EN?

1.3 **DIRECTOR** Could you please tell me a little about the service area for this location of your organization?

PROBES:

- Is your service area mostly urban, suburban, rural?
- Are there substantial low-income populations?
- What are the main industries here?
- Is there a lot of unemployment?
- Have there been any recent changes in the local population or economy that affect employment opportunities for your customers?

1.4 **DIRECTOR, TTW MGR** Does your organization focus on specific populations (such as youth, Veterans, TANF, ex-offenders, a specific industry, etc.)?

2. Overview of the TTW Program

2.1 **DIRECTOR, TTW MGR** Please describe your agency's first involvement in the TTW program.

2.2 **DIRECTOR, TTW MGR** *[If first involvement was not becoming an EN]* When did your agency become an EN?

2.3 **DIRECTOR, TTW MGR** How long did it take for your EN to become what you would consider "fully operational?" Please describe the start-up process.

PROBES:

- What challenges did you encounter during early implementation?
- How did you address them?
- What challenges do you face now?

2.4 **DIRECTOR, TTW** How does your EN identify and recruit potential TTW customers? Do you do any targeted outreach to ticket holders?

2.5 **TTW MGR, SERVICE STAFF** Are ticket holders finding out about you through your website? Does the website inform them that your agency is an EN? Does it include information about the TTW program?

PROBES:

- How else do ticket holders find you (SSA letter/list, ChooseWork website listing, word of mouth, etc.)?
- Why do they choose you instead of another EN? (Examples: geographic location, “whoever answered the phone or called back fastest,” alphabetical on SSA or ChooseWork list or SSA letter, no other choice)

2.6 **TTW MGR, SERVICE STAFF** (*if not Workforce Center*) How does your EN determine if an individual is a prospective TTW customer? (*If Workforce Center*) How is a new customer identified as being a ticket holder? Do they typically then go through the regular process of signing up for services?

2.7 **ALL** Could you please describe what ticket holder’s initial contacts with your organization are like?

PROBES:

- Is the initial contact typically in-person, online, or on the phone?
- Are their initial contacts with your organization different from other customers?

2.8 **DIRECTOR, TTW MGR** Do you know roughly what proportion of ticket holders interested in your program actually end up assigning their tickets to you? Why is that?

PROBES:

- Does your agency ever decline to accept a ticket or recommend ticket holders assign their ticket to a different agency?
- If so, what are the characteristics of the ticket holders whom you tend to serve or not serve?
- When do you close out a ticket (e.g., unable to reach for 6 months, doesn’t reach SGA within a year)?

2.9 **DIRECTOR, TTW MGR** What programs and services are offered, either on-site or by referral, by this organization and its partners to TTW ticket holders?

2.10 **DIRECTOR, TTW MGR** How many tickets does your agency currently have assigned?

2.11 **DIRECTOR, TTW MGR** Do you know how much ticket revenue your agency has received so far this year? Last year?

PROBES:

- Does revenue come directly to the EN?
- How is it used?

2.12 **DIRECTOR, TTW MGR** Does your agency have any goals for the number of ticket holders you should try serve? Is there a minimum? Is there an optimum number?

3. Service Delivery

I'd like to ask you a few questions about the service delivery process. We'd like to learn how your service delivery works in general, and how customers with disabilities, particularly ticket holders, are served at your location.

3.1 **TTW MGR, SERVICE STAFF** Please describe the service planning process.

PROBES:

- Do you do any kind of assessments during the service planning process?
- How early in the service planning process do you develop the IWP?

3.2 **TTW MGR, SERVICE STAFF** Where does benefits planning fit into the service process? (e.g. SSI/SSDI, Medicaid, Medicare)

PROBES:

- Who provides the benefits planning? (In-house staff? An outside benefits counselor or other consultant? Both?)
- How early in the service process?
- Ongoing benefits counseling?
- Problems with overpayments?

Partnerships - Now I'd like to ask some questions about how your organization works with other agencies and organizations to provide services and programs to ticket holders and other PWD.

3.3 **TTW MGR, SERVICE STAFF** What disability and/or employment services organizations in the community do you partner with? Who are they, and what is their relationship to your organization? Please describe how your organization works with partners in the community to provide services to ticket holders.

PROBES:

- Which agencies refer clients to you?
- To which agencies do you refer customers with disabilities for services?
- Do you refer jobseekers with disabilities to an agency such as Vocational Rehabilitation instead of serving them here?
- What kinds of services do you provide directly to PWD here at this location, vs. refer to other agencies for?

3.4 **TTW MGR, SERVICE STAFF** To what extent are individual ticket holders served by multiple agencies?

PROBES:

- Which agencies (Workforce ENs, Non-Workforce ENs, VR, AJCS, disability services agencies, other agencies)?
- How are decisions made about which agencies will serve them and whether they are offered co-enrollments?
- How many are co-enrolled in WIOA training services?
- Do you use Integrated Resource Teams (where caseworkers from different agencies collaborate to leverage resources for individual customers with disabilities)?
- Do ticket holders with the most significant disabilities tend to seek services from Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) or other ENs instead of from you?

3.5 **TTW MGR, SERVICE STAFF** Are VR services offered to PWD at this location? How do you coordinate with VR in providing TTW services?

PROBES:

- Are VR counselors considered to be co-located with you here? [Note: here we are interested in what they consider to be co-located.]
- How much time does the VR counselor spend here, and how long have VR services been offered on site?
- Does VR staff have their own designated space at this location?
- Is VR under an Order of Selection?
- Do you work with your VR agency in the Ticket-to-Work program?
- Does your EN provide services under Partnership Plus?
- Aside from referrals, does your organization coordinate other activities with VR?
- Has VR provided training to staff about serving PWD?
- Do you collaborate with VR on job accommodations? Interpreter services? Assistive technology?

Confidentiality - Now I would like to ask a few questions about how your organization assures PWD the confidentiality of their disability information.

3.6 **ALL** Are customers informed that information about their disability will be kept confidential? Can you tell me about the process?

PROBE:

- Are any confidentiality procedures different for TTW ticket holders versus other customers?

3.7 **ALL** How do staff discuss with PWD the pros **and** cons of talking about their disability with employers and/or potential employers? Can you tell me about the process?

Staff Training – Now I would like to ask you a few questions about the kind of training staff receive on serving customers with disabilities in general and serving ticket holders in particular.

3.8 **ALL** Does the staff receive training focused on any of the following subjects? Please tell me about it, including how often that training is offered.

PROBES:

- Orientation to serving PWD for new employees [Does this go beyond ADA orientation/compliance training to include information about how to serve PWD?]
- Basic disability etiquette
- Orientation to TTW, the Employment Network, and procedures for serving ticket holders. Other specific employment strategies for PWD (e.g., supported employment, customized employment)
- Knowledge of specific types of disabilities and implications for service delivery
- Community resources and in-house resources that can support PWD
- Avoiding assumptions about the capabilities of ticket holders when evaluating skills or job opportunities
- Other disability training? Please describe.

4. Addressing the Needs of PWD with Specific Disabilities

4.1 **TTW MGR, SERVICE STAFF** Can you describe the types of disabilities that are common among the ticket holders that you serve? What kinds of PWD do you *not* serve or rarely serve?

PROBES:

- Deaf/hard of hearing?
- Blind/visually impaired?
- Wheelchair users?
- Individuals with intellectual disabilities (aka developmental disabilities)?
- Individuals with psychiatric disabilities (aka mental health clients)?
- SSI recipients vs. SSDI recipients?

4.2 **TTW MGR, SERVICE STAFF** Can you readily support customers who are deaf or hard of hearing? Does your facility provide sign language interpreters? Does the need come up often? Is it easy to find them?

4.3 **TTW MGR, SERVICE STAFF** Can you readily support customers who are blind or visually-impaired? Can you easily provide materials in accessible formats (e.g., Braille, large print, audio recorded)?

4.4 **TTW MGR, SERVICE STAFF** What kinds of supports do you provide for individuals with developmental or intellectual disabilities? Do you have staff with expertise with this population? Are you able to provide TTW and benefits information in a way that is understandable? Do you have partnerships that help you support this population? Do you provide supported or customized employment?

5. Physical Facility

- 5.1 **DIRECTOR, TTW MGR** Tell us a little about your physical location. For example, is your facility near public transportation? In a safe/well-lighted area? Relatively flat (not on a steep hill) terrain? Do you think your physical location affects which ticket holders might choose your EN?
- 3.2 **DIRECTOR, TTW MGR** Are there other aspects of your physical facility that might make it attractive to or cause barriers for ticket holders?

6. Lessons Learned

Before we go, I would just like to ask you to reflect a moment on your experience with the TTW program and any advice you might offer to other ENs.

- 6.1 **DIRECTOR, TTW MGR** What lessons have you learned about implementation of TTW that you might share with other ENs? Anything that has gone particularly well?
- 6.2 **DIRECTOR, TTW MGR** Can you think of any major challenges that you have overcome? Anything you would have done differently?
- 6.3 **DIRECTOR, TTW MGR** As you think about the future, are there any major improvements you would like to make to your TTW services?

APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP MODERATOR'S GUIDE

1. Focus Group Overview

As part of our study of Ticket to Work (TTW) and Employment Networks, or ENs, we will conduct focus groups at 12 ENs where we will be conducting site visits. An overview of the focus groups to be conducted is presented below.

1.1 Purpose of the Focus Group Sessions

The purpose of the focus group sessions is to learn about the perspectives of PWD on the subject of TTW. We will ask focus group participants questions about their experiences, perceptions, challenges, sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and support received prior to, during, and after receiving TTW services.

1.2 Focus Group Participants

To the extent possible and practical, each focus group will include participants representing a range of individuals across the full spectrum of disabilities, including individuals with physical, sensory, mental, cognitive, and emotional disabilities.

1.3 Participant Selection

The IMPAQ team will work closely with the 12 ENs selected to host focus groups to identify potential participants for the focus group sessions. IMPAQ will work with the ENs to identify any needed communication aids or supports for focus group participants (e.g., sign language interpreter) and either will request to use the EN's contractor to provide such services for the focus group or will work with the EN to identify an outside vendor to provide such services.

2. Moderator and Note Taker Roles and Responsibilities

The IMPAQ team conducting the focus group will include a moderator who will lead the discussion and a note-taker who will support the focus group session logistics and be responsible for capturing the key points and detailed discussion. Below we provide an overview of the roles of the moderator and the note-taker.

2.1 Role of the Moderator

The moderator's role includes:

- Ensure room arrangements are made and that participants are invited with sufficient notice
- Arrive 15–30 minutes prior to focus group to ensure room is arranged appropriately
- Greet participants
- Explain study and purpose of the focus group to participants

- Moderate pacing of the focus group to ensure that all topics are covered as thoroughly as possible
- Facilitate the discussion to ensure the group stays on topic and that all participants have a chance to give their input
- Thank participants at the end of the focus group.

2.2 Role of the Note Taker

The note taker's role includes:

- Arrive 15–30 minutes prior to the focus group to set-up room
- Help to greet participants
- Ensure that any participants requiring communication aids and devices are able to fully participate in the session
- Distribute and collect Participant Information Sheets (PIS) and Informed Consent and Agreement to Participate forms
- Take notes and operate the recorder during the focus group (if applicable)
- Ensure comments are accurately captured
- Collect all flip chart sheets and document the statements in the notes as appropriate.

3. Focus Group Preparation

The IMPAQ team will work closely with the host EN to ensure that appropriate facilities are available for the focus group sessions and that the facilities will be arranged in a way suitable for the sessions.

3.1 Room Arrangements

Below is a list of requirements for the rooms where the focus group sessions will be held:

- Focus group sessions should be held in a conference / training room provided by the host EN that allows for confidential conversations to take place
- The room should be easily accessible to focus group participants who are PWD that may have limited mobility
- Any necessary communication aids or services should have been arranged for in advance of the focus group session and should be ready to be used at the start of the focus group session
- The room should be large enough to accommodate 10–14 individuals comfortably
- To facilitate conversation, participants should be seated around a conference table, in a U-shape, or chairs in a circle
- Each room should have at least one flip chart and markers.

3.2 Pre-Group Logistics

The Moderator and the Note Taker should greet participants as they arrive and ask them to take a seat and make themselves comfortable. If there are refreshments, encourage participants to help themselves.

The Note Taker should distribute the ***Informed Consent and Agreement to Participate Form*** and the ***Participant Information Form (Appendix 1)*** to each participant and ask him or her to complete the form while waiting for the focus group to begin. These documents:

- Request background information about the participants
- Describe the meeting format
- Detail the privacy protections that will be provided to participants
- Give the potential participant an opportunity to decline to participate

The Moderator and the Note Taker should ask participants if they need any help in completing the forms.

4. Focus Group Protocol

The Moderator should formally welcome the focus group participants to the discussion and explain the purpose of the focus group and standard procedures (see below):

4.1 Opening and Introduction

The Moderator should read the following statement:

Thank you for coming today. My name is [MODERATOR NAME] and this is [NOTE TAKER NAME]. We work for IMPAQ International, which has been contracted by the U.S. Department of Labor to lead this session.

My role, for the most part, is to make sure that we get through our agenda, keep to the time frame and make sure that you all have a chance to share your experiences. [NOTE TAKER NAME] will help me do these things, and will also be taking notes. In addition, we will be audio-taping the session, which will ensure that we record the discussion accurately. The discussion session today will last for about 1.5 hours.

The purpose of this focus group is to obtain input from people with disabilities, impairments, or health conditions about their experiences with the Ticket to Work program. We are conducting focus groups at 12 centers like this one throughout the country. The results of these group discussions will be included in a report that will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Labor.

It is important that we hear what has worked for you and what has not so that solutions can be developed that have practical application for the Ticket to Work program.

I know that some of you have gone out of your way to be here, and we genuinely appreciate your interest and willingness to share your experiences. We are eager to learn about your experiences at this agency.

The OMB Control Number for this information collection is 1290-0010 and the expiration date is 10/31/2017.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, persons are not required to respond to this collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number and expiration date. Responding to this survey is voluntary. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 90 minutes, including time for completing the Participant Information Form. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information to Juston Locks at Locks.Juston@dol.gov.

4.2 Participant Confidentiality

The Moderator should read the following statement:

Confidentiality and anonymity means that we will not share or use your name, address, or any other identifying information in reports or other materials related to this study. We will not identify any of the participants by name. All of the information we collect here today is confidential. All data will be pooled with data from similar sessions with participants in other focus groups being held throughout the United States and published in aggregate form only.

This research is being conducted under OMB Clearance Number 1290-0010. If you wish to obtain more information about the overall study, you can contact the individuals listed at the bottom of your Informed Consent and Agreement to Participate form.

4.3 Participant Consent and Agreement

The Moderator should read the following statement:

The Informed Consent and Agreement to Participate form will be our record that you have agreed to participate in the focus group and that you have agreed to be tape-recorded. Do you have any additional questions about the focus group or about the consent and participation form? If you do not have any further questions and have not signed and dated the consent form, please do so now.

Please pass the signed Informed Consent form and the completed Participant Information Form forward.

4.4 Focus Group Definition and Working Procedures

The Moderator should read the following statement:

Let me begin our discussion by reviewing a few ground rules about how we will conduct the session.

This focus group is a way for us to listen to people and learn from them. During this discussion, we would like you to focus on topics that are of particular interest to us. We are interested in what everyone has to say about our discussion topics. If someone throws out an idea that you want to expand on, or if you have a different point of view, please feel free to speak up. Occasionally, I may have to interrupt the discussion in order to bring us back to a particular topic to make sure that we cover everything on our agenda.

There are a couple of common-sense guidelines that we will follow during this session:

- 1. In this type of group setting, it is important for everyone to get involved and express their opinions openly. We want all of you to express your honest opinions about the discussion topics – we are interested in multiple points of view on the topics. There may be differences of opinion, but there are no right or wrong answers and we are not here to resolve any issues you may bring up.*
- 2. Please do not hold “side conversations” – don’t talk individually to other participants during the session. We want to be able to hear from everyone, and we want you to hear what everyone else has to say. Because we are also recording the session, it would really help us if you could speak up so that everyone can hear you. I would also very much appreciate it if you would state your first name the first couple of times you speak.*

If there are no other questions, let’s begin the discussion.

4.5 Focus Group Discussion Questions

Participant Introductions

Ask each participant to introduce him or herself and to briefly tell the group something about themselves, such as a favorite activity. The Moderator should start with his or her own introduction and favorite activity.

During this process, the Note Taker should make sure that the recording equipment is working appropriately and that the microphone is picking up all voices in the room.

Initial Contact with the EN

This first set of questions is focused on your initial interactions with this agency.

1. How did you first learn about the TTW program?
(PROBES: from SSA or somewhere else? How long after you became a beneficiary? How long had you known about TTW before contact with this agency?)
2. How did you first learn about this agency?

- If you received a referral from another organization or agency, who did you receive the referral from?
 - Have you used SSA's ChooseWork website to find TTW programs?
3. Did any of you learn about the agency from their website?
 - If so, did you find that the website provided information that was helpful to you?
 - Did you find that the website addressed issues related to your specific needs?
 4. At what point in the process did you decide to assign your Ticket to this agency? (PROBES: How did you decide which EN to assign your ticket to? Did you assign your ticket to another agency before this one?)

Physical Accessibility of the EN

The next set of questions is focused on the physical accessibility of the EN and any accommodations they made to assist you.

1. When you first came to visit the agency, how did you get here (i.e., public transportation, paratransit, drove yourself, a friend or family member gave you a ride, referring agency provided transportation)?
 - Did you find the agency easy to get to? Were there any difficulties in getting to and from the agency?
2. Let's talk about your ability to get around within the EN and use its resources.
 - Did you have any difficulties entering or maneuvering in any of the rooms or the restrooms? If so, please describe the challenges you faced.
 - Did anyone have any problems using a drinking fountain, a public telephone, or an elevator?
 - Did anyone make use of the computers available at the agency? Were the computers equipped with software/technology you needed?
 - Did any of you need assistive technology here?
 - Were staff able to help you access the assistive technology?
 - Was there any assistive technology you needed that wasn't available? If so, please describe.
 - Were the signs posted around the agency adequate for you?
3. Were there any other issues you faced regarding the physical accessibility of the agency and its resources that you want to share?

Communications with Staff

The next set of questions is focused on communications with staff at the agency.

1. How were your initial interactions with the staff?

- Did you identify yourself as a person with a disability? How was this brought up – were you asked about your disability by staff or did you volunteer this information to them?
 - How knowledgeable did staff seem regarding working with PWD?
 - How comfortable did staff seem regarding working with PWD?
 - Were there any specific things that staff did or did not do to make you feel welcome or not welcome here?
2. Did anyone have any difficulties in communicating with staff and in understanding any of the materials/information provided to you?
 - Did you have any difficulties understanding the information in any of the materials given to you? Was staff willing to assist you in understanding the materials? If so, how did they do this? (PROBES: interpreters? Materials in writing? Alternate formats?)
 - Did you have any difficulties contacting the agency in order to get additional information (i.e., using the EN’s Web site, email, regular telephone, a telephone relay service, or through a TTD/TTY)?

Services Received

The final area we want to ask about is other types of services you received from the agency.

1. How did you learn about the different types of services the agency offers, including those that you were eligible for? (PROBES: orientation? One-on-one with a counselor? Materials?)
2. What services have you received from the agency? (PROBES: counseling, assessments, job search assistance, resume help, skills training, work readiness training, on-the-job support, benefits counseling)
3. Did you ask for/receive any accommodations to assist you in participating in services? How did that go – Did you get what you asked for? Were your needs met?

Closing

1. Would recommend this agency to other PWD? Why or why not?
2. Are there any other topics related to the Ticket to Work program or the other services at the agency that we have not covered?

Thank the group for their participation and remind the group that this information will be handled in accordance with applicable privacy laws and individual names will not be used in any reports.

**APPENDIX D: DATA TABLES FOR COMPARISON OF WORKFORCE
AND NON-WORKFORCE ENS**

**Exhibit D-1. Characteristics of Workforce ENs and Non-Workforce ENs
(Including New York Employment Services System: NYESS)**

Characteristic	Workforce ENs (N=120)	Non-Workforce ENs (N=468)
Percent of ENs in Active status	90.8 percent (SD=0.026) (n=120)	96.6 percent (SD=0.008) (n=468)
Average number of office locations	4.1 (Range 0 -39) (SD=5.1) (n=120)	2.1 (Range 0 - 43) (SD=3.1) (n=468)
Average number of years as EN	6.3 (Range 0 –15) (SD=3.8) (n=120)	7.6 (Range 0 – 15) (SD=4.4) (n=468)

**Exhibit D-2. Characteristics of Workforce ENs and Non-Workforce ENs
(Excluding New York Employment Services System: NYESS)**

Characteristic	Workforce ENs (N=120)	Non-Workforce ENs (N=468)
Percent of ENs in Active status	90.8 percent (SD=0.027) (n=119)	96.6 percent (SD=0.008) (n=468)
Average number of office locations	4.24 (Range 0 -39) (SD=5.1) (n=119)	2.1 (Range 0 - 43) (SD=3.1) (n=468)
Average number of years as EN	6.4 (Range 0 –15) (SD=3.8) (n=119)	7.6 (Range 0 – 15) (SD=4.4) (n=468)

**Exhibit D-3. Outcomes of Workforce ENs and Non-Workforce ENs
(Including New York Employment Services System: NYESS)**

Characteristic	Workforce ENs (N=120)	Non-Workforce ENs (N=468)
Average Number of Tickets Assigned	135.6 (Range 0 – 8,157) (SD=758) (n=120)	101.4 (Range 1 – 7,383) (SD=432) (n=401)
Average Total EN payments historically	\$307,736 (Range \$668 - \$12,032,615) (SD=\$1,181,928) (n=106)	\$531,230 (Range \$0 - \$27,302,731) (SD=\$2,159,141) (n= 411)
Average Number of Ticket Holders for Whom Payments Were Made FY 2016	34.2 (Range 0 - 1,460) (SD=143) (n=106)	33.2 (Range 0 – 2,015) (SD=133) (n=468)
Percentage of ENs with Payments FY 2016 [FY through 09-30 Paid]	82.5 percent	81.4 percent
Average Number of EN Payments FY 2016	145.7 (Range 0 – 7,113) (SD=654.4) (n=120)	175.4 (Range 0 – 9,007) (SD=635.3) (n=468)
Average Total EN Payments FY 2016	\$120,195.5 (SD=\$460,493) (n=99)	\$144,787.6 (SD=\$481,985) (n=381)
Percentage of ENs with Outcome Payments [Sum of FY16 Total Outcome]	76.67 percent	73.72 percent
Average Number of Outcome Payments FY 2016	76.6 (Range 0 - 3,393) (SD=330.6) (n=106)	126.3 (Range 1 – 5,038) (SD=420.9) (n=345)
Average Total Outcome Payments FY 2016	\$33,511 (SD=134,466) (n=92)	\$52,560 (SD=229,704) (n=345)
Percentage of ENs with Milestone Payments [Sum of FY16 Total Milestone]	80.83 percent	79.27 percent
Average Number of Milestone Payments FY 2016	88.4 (Range 0 – 3,720) (SD=364.7) (n=106)	103.8 (Range 1 – 5.026) (SD=352.2) (n=371)
Average Total Milestone Payments FY 2016	\$85,963.54 (SD=\$333,531) (n=97)	\$99,814 (SD=337,759) (n=371)
Average Paid/Assigned Ratio FY 2016	30.9 percent (SD=0.241) (n=120)	43.3 percent (SD=0.625) (n=468)
Average Outcome Payment Ratio FY 2016	36.2 percent (SD=0.257) (n=120)	38.2 percent (SD=0.293) (n=468)

**Exhibit D-4. Outcomes of Workforce ENs and Non-Workforce ENs
(Excluding New York Employment Services System: NYESS)**

Characteristic	Workforce ENs (N=119)	Non-Workforce ENs (N=468)
Average Number of Tickets Assigned	68.19 (Range 0 – 8,157) (SD=173) (n=119)	101.4 (Range 1 – 7,383) (SD=432) (n=401)
Average Total EN Payments Historically	\$196,070 (Range \$668 - \$1,702,230) (SD=\$275,575) (n=105)	\$531,230 (Range \$0 - \$27,302,731) (SD=\$2,159,141) (n= 411)
Average Number of Ticket Holders for Whom Payments Were Made FY 2016	20.7 (Range 0 - 219) (SD=30.24) (n=105)	33.2 (Range 0 – 2,015) (SD=132.84) (n=468)
Percentage of ENs with Payments FY 2016 [FY through 09-30 Paid]	82.4 percent	81.4 percent
Average Number of EN Payments FY 2016	87.2 (Range 0 – 944) (SD=130.2) (n=119)	175.4 (Range 0 – 9,007) (SD=635.3) (n=468)
Average Total EN payments FY 2016	\$74,968 (SD=\$98,216) (n=98)	\$144,787.6 (SD=\$481,985) (n=381)
Percentage of ENs with Outcome Payments [Sum of FY16 Total Outcome]	76.47 percent	73.72 percent
Average Number of Outcome Payments FY 2016	45.0 (Range 0 - 368) (SD=60.12) (n=105)	126.3 (Range 1 – 5,038) (SD=420.9) (n=345)
Average Total Outcome Payments FY 2016	\$19,705 (SD=23,477) (n=91)	\$52,560 (SD=229,704) (n=345)
Percentage of ENs with Milestone Payments [Sum of FY16 Total Milestone]	80.67 percent	79.27 percent
Average Number of Milestone Payments FY 2016	53.8 (Range 0 – 576) (SD=78.9) (n=105)	103.8 (Range 1 – 5.026) (SD=352.2) (n=371)
Average Total Milestone Payments FY 2016	\$52,873 (SD=\$71,310) (n=96)	\$99,814 (SD=337,759) (n=371)
Average Paid/Assigned Ratio	31.0 percent (SD=0.241) (n=119)	43.3 percent (SD=0.625) (n=468)
Average Outcome Payment Ratio	36.1 percent (SD=0.259) (n=119)	38.2 percent (SD=0.293) (n=468)