# ***1) How can State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies enhance outcomes through their coordination with Employment Networks (ENs) operating under the Ticket to Work Program with the Social Security Administration?***

Coordination with Local ENs can provide an opportunity for wraparound services that complement the services provided by the DSU. Well established agreements with the ENs can be the basis for strengthening ongoing service impact (enhancing performance outcomes) as well as being a mechanism for re-engaging former participants in the VR services, should the situation require. In addition, the structure of the AJC presents an opportunity for the VR agency, in a core partner role, to work with other AJC partners to support the AJC operation as an EN. This can result in additional resources coming to the AJC to be strategically reinvestment to enhance stronger employment outcomes for all job seekers with disabilities.

# ***2) What are Partnership Plus Agreements?***

“Partnership Plus” is the name for a type of agreement that outlines how the DSU will coordinate services with SSA approved employment networks. While not required under WIOA, coordination with Employment Networks (ENs) with regard to shared customers is a requirement. The benefit of articulating how the agencies work together in an agreement such as this in advance of providing service has the impact of making the service flow for the customer and the agency staff more effective and efficient. In lieu of a Partnership Plus agreement, the coordination could be articulated in a Local MOU with the Workforce Development Board, if the EN is a part of that agreement.

***Benefits to SVRA’s as a result of good working relationships with Employment Networks (ENs) (from a draft resource developed by NENA****)*

1. The client is more likely, with support, to achieve nine months of earnings over SGA, which results in cost reimbursement.
2. EN support may result in better outcomes reported to WIOA.
3. Help in obtaining average quarterly hourly earnings Second and Fourth quarters after exit from VR services (WIOA).
4. Increased job retention/decreased recidivism.
5. Promotes self-sufficiency and decreases dependency on VR.
6. Hourly earnings (better outcomes for VR clients on benefits).
7. Higher wages at exit from VR.
8. Create a stronger working relationship with the EN.
9. Encourages a collaborative working environment.
10. ENs become an additional referral source for VR clients.
11. Smoother transition when leaving VR.
12. Better long-term supports.

# ***Recommendations***

1. Establish agreements with all ENs, including workforce ENs, in a manner that establishes cooperation and understanding between agencies and removes a competitive spirit that might exist in some areas.
2. Coordinate with all ENs to establish collaborative outreach to the disability community. Misinformation about SSA disability benefits is often an insurmountable barrier for many beneficiaries.
3. Work together with other ENs with regard to the investment of new resources in ways that will enhance their ability to connect individuals with disabilities into the career pathways of the community. This can include the enhancement of tools in the job center such as customized employment and SSA disability work incentives advisement and benefits planning.
4. Work with AJC partner agencies in the development of guidance to Workforce Development Boards in their development of the MOU’s with their Job Center partner agencies. If the Job Center is operating as an Employment Network, it is a suggested practice for successful workforce Employment Networks that the EN oversite be collaborative in integrating the operation into the overall customer service operation. It is also suggested that decisions on the investment of the Ticket to Work payments be made collaboratively as well, so that the diversity of expertise in the full Job Center partnership be allowed to contribute to the success of the operation. The success of the Job Center EN will boost outcomes for all job center partners (and other community partners) if done collaboratively. This could be outlined in the MOU with the Local Workforce Development Board.

# ***For More information and Technical Assistance***

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