Ticket to Work Help Line – WIPA Referral Protocol: Transition-Aged Youth

August 2017

Background Information

Social Security established the Ticket to Work (TtW) Help Line to process and respond to beneficiary inquiries related to work and employment services and supports. They fund the Ticket to Work Help Line (Help Line) under Section 1148 of the Social Security Act. This section specifically authorizes outreach services for beneficiaries who are eligible to participate in the Ticket to Work program. Beneficiaries receiving services from the Help Line must be eligible for the TtW program, and the TtW program requires an adult determination of disability. Thus, the Help Line may not serve callers between the ages of 14 and 18, including parents on a child's behalf.

With Social Security's emphasis on outreach to transition-aged youth, there is concern that youth in transition or SSI youth might contact the Help Line and become discouraged. To respond to this need, a protocol is in place that will allow the Help Line to refer young beneficiaries or their representatives directly to WIPA projects through the ETO system.

Social Security defines transition age youth as being at least 14 years old through the age of 25. This group is high priority for individualized WIPA services regardless of where the person is on the employment continuum. Transition youth who are in the earlier stages of considering work, or are calling for more information on the SSI Youth brochure, may not be as urgent as a transition youth who is working or has a job offer pending; however, they are still high priority for WIPA services. You should enroll all transition age youth who want individualized services in the WIPA program.

TtW Work Help Line Screening and Referral of Transition-Aged Youth Callers

Help Line Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) screen all beneficiaries with inquiries about work incentives. When the Help Line CSR identifies the caller is under age 18, they will verify in iTOPSS, and ask specific probing questions to determine if the caller:

- Is under age 18, or the parent or representative payee of an under-18 youth;
- Receives a Social Security benefit based on disability;
- Is calling because of the SSI Youth brochure;

- Is working or expresses an interest in going to work in the future; and
- Has a need for and interest in receiving WIPA services.

Beneficiaries between ages 14 and 18, who are interested in WIPA services will be referred by the Help Line to the WIPA serving their place of residence. In generating the referral, the Help Line CSR will complete the following steps:

- Enroll the beneficiary into the Efforts To Outcomes (ETO) Information &Referral (I&R) program;
- Collect I&R intake information, including name and contact information for the representative payee;
- Record referral notes, including information that the individual is a transition-aged youth and their county of residence;
- Provide the youth or their representative with information about the protection and use of personally identifying information (PII) that will be shared with the WIPA in the referral process; and obtain the beneficiary's consent prior to send this information.

Important Note: Those individuals calling in regards to the SSI brochure, who are under age 14 or not receiving a Social Security benefit based on disability will not be referred.

Guidance for WIPAs on Viewing and Taking Action on Youth Referrals

WIPA Projects are required to complete the following steps for transition-aged youth referrals:

- Review the beneficiary's referral information in ETO to identify transition-aged youth status. Referrals of transition-aged youth will show in the 'View Pending Referrals' section of ETO in the same manner as other referrals from the Help Line. The only indication that the beneficiary is a youth will be in the 'referral notes' section of the Referral Details.
- Check the beneficiary's county of residence to confirm they are within your WIPA project service area.
- Check ETO to ensure that the beneficiary is not already being served by your WIPA project. To check for previous enrollment, use the "Search for current WIPA and BOND participants" link on the homepage. You must enter the SSN of the beneficiary WITHOUT including spaces or dashes for the search to work correctly.
- 'Accept' or 'reject' the referral in ETO. Accepting the referral will enroll the youth in the I&R program in ETO and provide access to additional beneficiary data gathered by the Help Line CSR on the Initial Contact and Demographics form.
- Initiate attempts to contact the youth or their rep-payee.

Situations in Which the WIPA is Unsuccessful in Contacting the Beneficiary

WIPA projects may be unable to contact the beneficiary or representative payee after multiple attempts within the five to ten business day period. In these instances, WIPAs should take the following actions:

1. Remove the beneficiary by changing the last name to "Fake"; and
2. Contact the TtW Help Line via email support@choosework.ssa.gov and copy Laura Coffey ljcoffey@vcu.edu to inform them of the removal of the transition-aged youth from your ETO site. WIPA projects should use the standard email template for this communication.

Where to Go for Additional Assistance

- For questions pertaining to technical issues, such as accessing ETO data, contact: support@wipaccess.com or 855-816-0890
- For questions or issues pertaining to a beneficiary referral, such as questions regarding the beneficiary data notes, assistance in re-referring a beneficiary when the referral is erroneously rejected, inaccurate email communications and similar concerns; or for technical assistance on this guidance and related materials, contact: Laura Coffey, TtW Help Line Training Coordinator, at 502-479-5865 or ljcoffey@vcu.edu