

ROUGHLY EDITED COPY

MOVING FORWARD: TRANSITION CONFERENCE FOR YOUTH
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WORKSHOP: WORK INCENTIVES SEMINAR (WISE)

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>> Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to the WISE event. We are DRN's program and we have got a lot more acronyms for you.

But WIPA stands for the Work Incentive Planning and Assistance Program, and we do exactly that. We assist you young people and families to understand what Social Security has in terms of incentives to help you go to work because I see quite a few parents in this room, and being a parent myself, I do understand that one of our goals in life is to get you out into the work force.

So Social Security happens to believe the same thing. And what they did was put a program together free of charge that offers you and your children individual counseling to help you make the decisions that you need to make in order to complete your career goals. So this afternoon we have a brief presentation and we have really great information. You will find people throughout the room available to help you. We are here afterward to entertain questions, we have a toll free number where you can reach us, and ask us questions, free confidential services to help you go onto the next step. Because no one in this room has spent all of the time, money, and everything else to have you sit home after school with that remote control.

So having said that, I will proceed with this program.

What can you expect from this seminar? More income, independence, you can expect to learn about new skills that

may be available, and meet new people. Now, on this little list can begin tell me what their favorite reason to go to work might be?

>> Yes, ma'am.

>> So meet new people.

>> To meet new people. Very important. You can't meet them at home sitting on the couch with the remote control. Anybody else?

>> Yes.

>> Learn new skills.

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: Learn new skills, how important is that? What kind of new skill do you have in mind? What would you like to learn?

>> I would like to learn how to associate with underprivileged people within the urban areas and how to help them and how to identify with them.

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: Well, I think that is a worthy ambition. Thank you. Anybody else?

>> More income?

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: More income. I knew somebody was going to say that. But what is very interesting that out of the comments you heard from the young people in the room, the one that you didn't hear was more income. But I will step out on a limb and say more money, more money is good.

How about independence? Anybody want to speak on that one? No parent wants to speak on the fact that these children are going to someday leave your house?

>> Please! (Laughter).

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: Yes, ma'am.

>> I think it's -- because I still live with my parents and I'm 19. I actually think it's best for us to be more independent because I don't want to live with my parents when they are old.

I love my parents.

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: I got you. Believe me, we understand.

>> I don't want to be the one to have to help them do think and.

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: Okay. We can stop there.

>> Don't get me wrong.

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: I am not going to get you wrong. I understand.

>> I love my parents and they do everything for me, but it's time for me to start doing things for myself.

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: Yes.

>> And start learning how to drive and learning how to

do other things without them?

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: Absolutely.

>> Because they are not always going to take me to the doctor. They are not always going to take me to the dentist and everything but I got to learn how to start paying my own bills, gas, oil, and it would be really fun for me to learn all of that.

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: Really fun to learn independence [applause]

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: That's by somebody we did not plan.

My administrator doesn't think I'm loud enough, but I know you guys do.

These are question that's come up when people are thinking about going to work and they are receiving Social Security benefits. The first thing we hear is will I lose my benefits? The next thing we hear is cash benefits or really a major important one is healthcare. Because formerly, people that had disabilities and decided that they wanted to go to work, the first thing he would do is lose their healthcare. And we would get calls from places like OVR and support people that would say oh, my gash, I just helped somebody get a job, and they called me and told me that they lost their healthcare.

Well, who in the world would want to take employment if they could not have access to affordable healthcare? So, again, this is one of the services that is available to you and there are many options, and when you call the WIPA we meet you where you are in the process and we identify resources that will help you maintain your work goals.

How do I get the skills that I need? Now, this young man back here that spoke to us earlier, he has an idea about what it is that he wants to do. I wonder if he knows some places or some employment networks that may be able to help him reach these goals. Do you?

>> Yes, yes, there are. Within the Philadelphia area, there is shelters and there is rehab facilities, and there are some centers meant for employment that can help the underprivileged person who might have just been laid off get started again.

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: Okay. Well, today, you are going to meet some employment networks that have joined us that are actually in the business of helping you attain your career goals. And, you know what, we have been around the state in different places, and we do get the -- there are none. But there are some and, again, today we are here to identify who they are and how you can make contact with them.

What if I stop working? Another really important question. You got the job, and maybe you have worked a year, and your disability flares up and you can no longer work. Well, you want to know what it is that you can expect. You want to know that you can go into the Social Security office, report that you are no longer working, and have your claim reopened under an expedited manner. This is very important. These are things that you deserve to know. You also deserve to have a program that can answer these questions for you on an individual basis.

So this part of our program we are actually going to talk about some of the work incentives that Social Security has put in place. We are very honored today to have a Social Security representative with us that's going to talk to you a little later in the program, but for right now I'm going to have a counselor, Ms. Jessica Rogy, from our WIPA program that is going to talk about work incentives, that would be, Social Security disability, SSDI, supplemental security income, SSI, and for those people that are receiving both benefits, SSDI and SSI, they are called concurrent beneficiaries, and there is also some things in place to help them along. So, Jessica? You have a great group here that I can tell is going to have a lot of questions.

>> Good afternoon, everybody. I'm so glad to see that you are all here, made it out on this beautiful Saturday. As Phyllis said I am going to talk about work incentives, specifically those for SSDI and SSI and if you can flip to the next slide that would be great. Work incentive advantages. They provide a safety net so that you can return to work. Or go to work for the first time, and maybe that transition a smooth one. Our goal is to educate you, so that you can feel empowered and hopefully lessen some of the fears and concerns you have been returning to work. Not only will these work incentives allow you to try different jobs, some of them will allow you to be trained for different skills. Gain confidence and maybe start a new career if you have worked before. We are going to first talk about the SSDI work incentives. What happens if I go to work and I'm receiving SSDI? Well, the first incentive you get to use is a nine month trial work period. The nice thing about the trial work period it allows you to go work, figure out what you want to do, how much you want to work, how much you can work. Maybe you think I want to work full time and you start out, and you think this full time is not for me, I can't do it, so I would like to work part time or maybe vice versa. Maybe you start out part

time and you are doing really well and the job is a great match so you decide I would like to work more, maybe work my way up to full time. The trial work period allows you to do that. And even if you have significant earnings, it will not affect your disability check. You get to keep your SSD check, you get to keep Medicare and on top of that during the trial work period, you get your paycheck as well, so you have this great increase of income and try out something new.

>> I have a question. Could you explain the difference between SSDI and SSI?

>> Surely. SSDI, Social Security disability insurance is an insurance program that Social Security has when you see your pay stub, there is a whole bunch of taxes that are taken out of it. One tax is a FICA tax, and that's where the Social Security disability insurance money comes from. It is there so that way then if you need to go out on disability, that's where Social Security pulls from. It's from a work history of some kind. Either from your own work history, or from a parents' work history if the individual was diagnosed with an illness or impairment before the age of 22, and mom or dad worked, and is now retired or deceased, the child can receive from a parent or maybe a person was married, and their spouse worked and paid into Social Security. And now they are spouse is deceased, they can receive disability that way as well. SSI, on the other hand, supplemental security income, is a needs based program. Individuals who are young can receive it if they have a disability. Elderly can receive it. People in between can receive SSI if they meet the needs-based income levels. So that one is not about work. That one is about low income and other criteria. Does that answer your question? Okay. Yes?

>> Along those lines I'm looking at retiring under, perhaps, the end of this school year, I'm a teacher, so right now she gets SSI, but then do I have to apply for her to get SSDI or does she not get that? How does that work?

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: Could we ask Social Security.

>> We certainly can ask Social Security that question. Alex would you like to address that question for us?

>> You don't have to apply for her. She is going to continue to receive -- when you go in, you want to mention that she has a disability and at that time they will discuss whether they will take a claim for your child at that time.

>> So when I go to retire, then I just mention that?

>> Yes.

>> And they will decide, they will take a claim at that time or not. Because they will ask you that question when you file for your benefits if you have any children at home that are disabled.

>> Okay. Thank you.

>> Thank you, Alex.

>> You are welcome.

>> So trial work period. Great first incentive, you get to work and have it not affect your disability check. You get to keep receiving that as well as your health insurance, your Medicare. What happens if I stop work after I complete my trial work period? Well, fortunately, there is another incentive that starts right after the trial work period. It's called the extended period of eligibility. If you are not working when you enter that, a couple of months into it if you decide that you start work again, it gives you the reassurance that if I am not able to receive my SSD check because of my income level, Social Security looks for a certain income level during the extended period, and if you meet or exceed that level, you wouldn't be eligible to receive your check for that month. So it allows you to try. Do I want to work off my benefits, maybe? It allows you to try that out knowing that I'm not going to be terminated from my benefits. I'm not going to lose those benefits. I can simply, as I'm reporting to Social Security that I'm working, I can simply report to them, hey, I am no longer making those big Bucks that I was, I'm making underneath the limit that you are looking for, so don't forget to send me my SSD check.

After that extended period is over, there is even another work incentive that is out there. It's called expedited reinstatement. And all that big fancy term means is if I am terminated from my benefits because of my earnings, after that extended period is completed, I can go back to Social Security and say, I need my check to be reinstated because I'm no longer working. My impairment or my illness or something related it is keeping me from being employed.

And that is a five-year window from your date of termination where you can go back to Social Security. And you do not have to reapply for those benefits. So it gives you another window of opportunity to keep working.

Other work incentives that can reduce the amounts of your earnings that SSA counts. There are several other incentives that are more person specific so we won't go into them too much today, but that's certainly something that the WIPA team would be happy to talk with you

individually about. There is something called an impairment related work expense that is great for those of you who maybe need particular items in order for you to get to work, and without those particular items, you wouldn't be able to work. So for maybe a person who is in a wheelchair and has to take a special van, somebody has to come and pick them up, take them to work, and then pick them up from work to take them home. They can't get on septa, they can't get in a regular cab, they need a special bus and they are paying for that out of their own pocket. That can be considered an IRWE. And Social Security can look at that expense especially if a person is working at a higher income level and take that into consideration.

What happens to Medicare if SSDI benefits stop?

>> Good news, it continues for at least 93 months after the trial work period is completed. So even if you are working in your extended period and you aren't eligible to receive your SSD check, you still get to keep the Medicare which we all know is important. And after that, you may be able to purchase Medicare coverage if you need it, and want it.

Now, we are moving onto the SSI work incentives.

Go ahead and flip for me, Phyllis, few wouldn't mind. How earnings affect SSI payments. SSA counts less than half of your earned income. And we will read the example that's up here. For example, if I earn \$885 in wages, Social Security is not going to look at that whole amount that I earned. They will only look at \$400 and count it against my SSI and Social Security always works in gross figures just to keep that in the back of your head. They look at it before taxes. And certain impairment related work expenses can be deducted from your gross wages so those impairment related work expenses can work for both SSDI and SSI.

>> What happens if my earnings are so high that my SSI stops? Well, you are still considered an SSI beneficiary even if you are not receiving that cash benefit. Your benefits can start again if you stop working or your earnings decrease just like with SSDI. If your earnings are so high that your SSI payments stop, guess what, your health insurance continues. There is a great provision that Social Security has put into place to allow you to keep that Medicaid those health benefits that you need in order to be able to continue working.

You may be eligible to do a plan to achieve self support. Pass. Pass plan is great especially for those transition youth, which are the majority of you here today,

that's what this seminar is for. For those of you who maybe would like to do some additional schooling so that you can become a nurse or go into another job field, this pass plan allows you to set aside money into a separate account and not have it count as a resource for Social Security, which we all know is a big thing for those on SSI, resources are very limited. But in a pass plan, if those moneys are set aside, it's not looked at a resource. As long as there is an employment goal of some kind. Somebody may want to start their own business so the money set aside in this PASS plan is geared for starting your own business from point A to point Z. It is a great, great plan. If you get both SSI and SSD guess what, all of those things I just talked about apply for you. So please come and talk to one of us so we can help you keep it all straight.

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: Are there questions for -- all right. I knew that was going to happen. Okay.

>> I will say if there are specific questions that you have regarding you, please come talk to one of us afterward so that way then we can get more information from you and talk one on one with you but if it's a general question that you think would help others, please feel free to ask.

>> With survivors benefits that's SSDI and how would that work because they are with the income, there are different rates for someone who is receiving survivors benefits, right? So how does that work with this?

>> Alex I will let you answer that one.

>> Well, there is definitely different income rules for survivor benefits and retirement benefits. I can talk to you afterward if you want to discuss is that type of thing. There will be different limits to -- that apply to someone who receive that's benefit.

>> It might be for anyone because a lot of people may be receiving survivors' benefits and they would like to know how this would work for someone receiving survivor's benefits.

>> This is if you are working and receiving disability benefits so that's a different type of benefit so there would be a different type of earnings limit for that benefit. These are special rules that apply when you are working and disabled.

>> Is someone with a disability who is receiving survivor's benefits?

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: What I would like to say is that's more of a less general question, it can be answered, and if we could sit down and get more information from you, we

will be glad to address that question.

>> All right.

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: There are other questions?

>> Good afternoon, I have heard you say several times -- well, I believe you said this earning grid, is there something on the web site that says if you earn this much, you get this much in benefits so people can just look it up for themselves so they can almost kind of figure out how they want to manage their lives if that's, you know, a way to think about it, because like I said I keep hearing it and I have tried to look for this grid without waiting an hour on the phone to get the numbers on, you know, what is the income guidelines to receive benefits. I just think that would be helpful if there was somewhere where people can get their hands on it.

>> To receive disability benefits or income guidelines for work?

>> Both because you talked about disability benefits and I think you talked about work too, and you are saying you have to meet the guideline. I know the guidelines for Pennsylvania may be different than for Washington State. So how does -- if I'm at the transition for my child and I'm trying to see which way I want to go with this, I would like to bring that document to the IEP table saying, well, if he wants to do this type of job and make this type of money, how is that going to affect -- it just helps to have the document instead of guessing or saying when I call Social Security, this is what they said on the phone, because schools aren't she receptive to hearsay, they need documents.

>> I think I'm understanding what you are asking, if not, please clarify it for me. So if a child is already receiving benefits from Social Security, what are the income guidelines?

>> There has to be a grid. When you call Social Security, they are looking at a grid. We as parents, family members would like to see that same grid -- there has to be a grid somewhere that we all could see. How do you get that grid that they are looking at?

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: I think what I'm hearing you say is that you want to see a grid where this person can earn this and that person can earn that depending on whatever, but actually, it works depending on what program your child is receiving benefits from. And that is why Social Security had the foresight to put our program into effect. Now, they have materials, one of the great resources called the red book and it's written by Social Security and without a

lot of direction, you actually have one. We gave you one in your packet today, but it shows you how Social Security looks at the program you are receiving. That's it. Red book and it's actually red. So there is lots of information in there that depends on what program your child is collecting from. But what makes it really good is the fact that you don't have to decipher all of that for yourself, what you have to do is know that you have contact information in your packets that allows you to call and ask us about your specific issues because everyone is not the same. One size does not fit ale. Does that answer your question somewhat?

>> I think she is asking that we go and we want our children to be individuals and they make a certain amount of money, is it worth I think she is asking work versus SSI?

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: Again, it really depends on what program your child is collecting under. Now, I could throw out a number and say that this year in the year of 2009, a person receiving SSDI benefits is allows to make \$980 a month gross without it affecting their benefits and I can throw that out at you all day long, but believe me, that does you no good at all if your child is receiving SSI because it's figured out differently if your child goes to work. That's why I'm saying it's an individual thing, one size doesn't fit all. We couldn't just throw numbers out and say your child can make, you know, when we first started this job years ago, people were telling young people, graduating, spent 12, 14 years in school, you can earn \$65 a month. Okay. We have to get away from that thinking. What we have to do is use the incentives that have been put in place to help people reach their individual goals, and that's going to take the counseling session. Okay? So, again, throwing out numbers arbitrarily is not doing you any good. Sitting down with you and your child on a face to face basis and showing you how it works by the laws that have been written to help them is what is going to make the difference here.

I hope that helps.

And I certainly hope that if you have other questions, that aren't addressed here at this seminar today, we have sheets in the back at the table, and we ask you, would you like a counseling session, would you like someone to call you? That's why we are not addressing the personal issues here, more of general, but we do look to hear from you with your questions. Someone else? Yes?

>> I have a question. You answered part of it, like

throwing out the figure \$980 a month. Okay. Why is it before taxes? What's the sense in going to work once you get your city, your state, your county, and then the good old income tax and you find out, like, I don't know whether anybody is aware of this, but you got your new Blue Cross Blue Shield books that the coverage has jumped substantially, my coverage has gone from \$125 to \$193 a month. We have Medicare and Blue Cross, okay. If you are going to make \$980 before taxes, what's the incentive of going to work because you are not going to be taking home enough money to help you pay your extra money you have to put out for health insurance. Why is it before taxes? If I took that home, I would be happy.

>> I hear you. And can I answer that question? About why Social Security looks at gross? No.

Okay. But I do feel your pain?

>> Yes.

>> Okay. Because I'm also dealing with people that are looking at my gross also, but what I do want to say to you is if you contacted our WIPA program and you said I want to go to work but all of this doesn't make sense, show me the money, then you and I would be having a discussion about maybe a cheaper insurance program that you might -- that might be available to you.

>> Well, see, we live in Montgomery County.

>> It's okay. This is for the State of Pennsylvania.

>> Yes, but, still, there is a difference in coverages for Aetna?

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: There is absolutely a difference in coverage, but there are options out there that we would love to discuss with you.

>> Yes, but when you are over the limit for the Medicare options to help you pay for that by 2, \$300, you are screwed so you got to carry your own health insurance.

>> I don't mean to put it, but you literally are. There is no other way to put it?

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: Literally there are some other options because a person that chooses to use the MAWD program, we have people that work and make \$40,000 a year, and, yes, and that's also in your package, but we have given out a lot of material today and this is the reason we are having this conference because we want to address these questions. I mean, some like why do they look at my gross? We are working with what we got, okay. But having said that, when you go to work, you are always -- you will always end up with more money than you had before you started. Thank you for your question. And I hope that you

sign the page so that we can take a look in more detail at your individual issue of insurance, which is a very important one.

Yes?

>> I think what this woman is trying to say, if you even do have an appointment and say your specific, you know, where you are getting your SSI or SSDI, and they put it, say, you get so much a month. I think she needs something documented because I know I have gone to many years of IEP's. Does she come out with something to prove what she is trying to say to them? How much money her daughter would receive if going to work or so on? Am I correct?

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: Well, if that is what her question is, yes. That is what the WIPA does, the WIPA program looks at the benefit the person is receiving. We verify everything with Social Security, and we provide you with a written summary of exactly how going to work is going to affect your benefits.

And, again, it is not a one size fits all. It is a very individual service, and before we tell you anything, everything has to be verified from Social Security so that we are giving you the proper and correct information.

Thank you for clarifying that.

>> Hi, is it mandatory for you to get into the ticket to work program?

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: That's another great question. And that's the next part of our program. How did you know? We brought Social Security here.

>> Because I'm on Social Security disability.

>> We brought Social Security here today and she is going to talk, our representative here today is miss Alexis Buyers and she is going to talk about ticket to work because we get a lot of questions, okay? And thank you so much. Let me just check the room to see before we move on with the program, if there are any other questions that, yes, ma'am.

>> I don't -- we are not getting Social Security benefits right now. I want to know how to start that ball rolling?

>> There is a couple of different ways you can file for disability benefits or for SSI benefits, can you call and make an appointment, you can do it over the telephone or you can come into the office. You can also file for benefits on line, it's right on our web site, first page it says apply for disability. If you click on there, that will start the process for an adult or for a child.
WWW.Social Security.GOV.

>> That's also in your packet of information.

Before we get to Alexis, because I could see you guys are really excited about hearing from her, I did want to mention that the best thing is a success story by Ms. Hilly. You are here talking this and if we do this, we can get that, but how about the fact that there are people that had questions just as you have got today and they stepped out on a limb and they took those jobs, and we have someone here with us today, this is Michelle Leahey, and I want to tell you how important this population is to us, and I mean transitioned age youth. We need you guys working. That Social Security fund is dipping and we need some help. But besides that, we want you to know that there is honor in all work, and, again, we know everybody is not going through everything that they are going through to sit home at the television and say, woe, is me. If you can dream it, you can be it. You are so important to us as a country, that these incentives were put in place to encourage you to do just that, to get out and do the best you can do. Not everybody is going to be a lawyer, a doctor. I mean, you have got poor little people like me that want to work and make a living, and you have people that have dreams of doing and being everything under the sun. Don't let anything limit or stop you.

So when we come to success stories, we think of our own Michelle Leahey because she is a CWIC that works with transitioned age youth. That's her only job. They want her to get out and talk to families, and talk to people and say see what I did, see what you can do. So I'm going to turn the mic over to Michelle, and just let her talk to you a little bit. Thank you.

>> Well, you guys heard me at our little dessert with Bill, so I will try to make this a little bit more interesting and brief. One of the reasons why I love my job as a transition work incentive coordinator is because growing up, I received SSI, and I had the same fears that many parents, my parents had the same fears, oh, my God, I'm going to lose those benefits, I can -- those benefits and I was going to college and doing great stuff and I was scared that it was all going to go away, and it doesn't go away. And one of the biggest things is that in this job, I have students that are actually working while they are in school, and not losing a penny of their SSI benefits. And there is different gimmicks, these work incentives that Phyllis and Jessica have all talked about, they are little gimmicks within the Social Security program. And they actually are gimmicks to help you go out to work and get

infected with getting that paycheck. I know one thing, I would rather get 26 or 52 paychecks, a weekly paycheck instead of 12 measly months. That's like a big deal to me. I know by the 15th of that month, that check is almost gone. So one of the things is that my, a couple of people that I have worked with have actually started to go to work while they were in school, and the reason why is they were actually putting into taxes, they were starting to receive their SSI benefits while in school, you know, going and doing the IU's or going into and getting competitively employed while in school, and achieving the student earned income exclusion where they didn't lose a penny of their benefits. But they had to tell Social Security. Social Security isn't going to come knocking on your door and say, hello, are you still in school. Hello, these work incentives are here for you. They don't really do that. You have to be proactive and you have to let Social Security know that you are a student, that you are receiving SSI and you want to go out to work and you are capable of going to work. So one of my students that I'm working with right now, who is like 23, he is actually not a student anymore, he started to work when he was 18. And when he was 18 he was working at again Genardi's, going to work, living the life and he was a person with mental retardation, Down's Syndrome and what mark did was he worked while he was in school and then he graduated. So he was still infected with this idea of going out to work, that he was earning enough money that he always because he was receiving SSI, he always made more money and was able to balance his paycheck on a weekly basis along with that supplemental security income. So he is able to add the entire monthly countable income that he was receiving, and being able to budget on a weekly basis instead of always depending on that 1st of the month. Then, three years went by and guess what happened? Mark was eligible for SSDI. He was entitled to that SSDI benefit because he put into the system. He put into the system, so he was entitled to get out of the system. When he was 18, he was eligible for SSI and that's a huge difference. When you are -- you are receiving SSI, you are eligible for the benefit. When you are receiving SSDI, you are entitled to the benefit. And that's a big difference because we were talking about gross income. You were talking the \$980, but the reason they count that is because you are actually, when you are earning a paycheck, you are putting into the system. I would rather be entitled and eligible for both benefits, and that's what happened with mark. He game entitled to

SSDI based on his own work history. And the younger you are, the less work history credits -- I don't know if someone of you are close to retirement age but the thing is when you are getting to 40 years or 30 years, you are like how many quarters am I getting? Everybody talks about their quarters closer to when they are retirement. So what the thing is, the younger you are, the less amount of quarters you need to be entitled to your SSDI benefit. So, Mark, actually became entitled to SSDI, didn't receive enough money through SSDI, so he still became eligible for his SSI benefit, was able to work still have a slight reduction in his SSI, so he is getting three forms of income. He is getting his SSI check. He is getting his earned income from working at Genardi's and he is getting the SSDI check and he is like, I want to go back to school. He wants to become a more of a culinary artist. So what Mark is doing, Mark is in the process actually of developing that plan for achieving self support. So what mark is actually doing is taking his entire SSDI check, and sticking that into a separate savings account so he can actually -- because all unearned income countable unearned income is counted dollar for dollar so the SSI. So he is taking that unearned income, and I know this is confusing, and I know, I don't want you to -- there is not going to be a quiz at the end of this, but I just want you to understand this concept, that working is an achievable goal, and working is a good thing. So what happens is that mark is actually going for a PASS so he can become more marketable, and more, and be able to earn more income so he is not so dependent on those two checks. But he still receiving both his Medicare, head Medicaid and waiver services through the Montgomery County assistance office, and that's also a big deal because a lot of people are scared that they are going to lose their PFDS waivers or their OBRA waivers or their attended care waivers and these -- and I want to take that fear out ever this room. You don't need to be fearful of this. And talk to one of us, talk to DRN, talk to AHEDD and these are things we can do and this ticket helps with providing additional job support, additional job coaching, additional and protects you from different things that may happen within Social Security. Any questions? I know, I'm a bit of a Pollyanna because I love my job.

>> Well, Michelle, that's the first time I have heard it explained the way you just did it, and that was excellent, and I know that it can be -- but first of all, you need to know the system because what you are saying to me is that

this person knew how to maneuver the system to get all of the services and support that they need. I mean, that was excellent, but parents, families are very scared. They don't know that, and if we can clone you to come to school district meetings, whatever, because the fear is that their children are going to lose benefits, that is clear. I mean, I have been in many parent meetings and they are afraid. As soon as you say work, they don't want to hear it. So it's the stigma, and the only thing I can say to you guys is you need to outreach more and let families know exactly how you maneuver the system like that.

I understand it perfectly.

>> I am trying and I have been out there for a year and a couple of months and I have been knocking on every school district's door, and if you could get me in their door, I will go. You tell me, I will grow wings on this.

>> When you say that, just like you are entitled to Social Security disability benefits, and how you can use those Social Security benefits to bank, you know, for you are actually banking.

>> Yes.

>> So it's excellent. I never heard anybody explain it the way you just did and I just wish that more patients understood that.

[Applause]

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: I think it sounds like you all agree that Michelle is a success story. But so is each and every one of you and your children who are going to go onto the next step. So we are going to move on with the program. And the next part of it is to talk about another work incentive is that Social Security has in place, and it's called ticket to work.

But just before that, we will say that Social Security has put in place a number of things to help you because as you pointed out, parents don't know this. How would they? That is why the program was put in place to answer these questions and to help you maneuver your way and navigate your way to help your child with a better, brighter future by choosing to work.

So we have something called employment networks and we actually bought some employment networks here today, Michelle is from an employment network, she is from a network called AHEDD. We also have some other employment networks in the room, and they are going to address you after Alex Buyers talks to us a little bit about the ticket. So there you see, you have work incentives, planning and assistance program with the acronym of WIPA,

and that's who we are. Again, there is something and someone in place to answer these questions that keep you up at night. Okay. Operations and support manager is Maximus, they are the ones that administer the ticket to work program. We have state protection and advocacy, and those, that is the host of that program today are PABS program and I would like to introduce Jennifer Garman and she is part of the big puzzle to help you reach self-sufficiency.

>> JEN GARMAN: Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Jennifer Garman and as I said earlier today, I am the PABS project director in the State of Pennsylvania and a staff attorney with the Disability Rights Network of Pennsylvania. PABS stands for the protection of advocacy of beneficiaries of Social Security, so I work with Social Security beneficiaries and individuals with disabilities on barrier that's they are facing to employment. So how does that all fit into this? One of the things that my program can do is if you are just kind of initially wondering what are these work incentives I'm not sure I'm ready to take that step yet. You can contact me and we can talk briefly these are the work incentives out there. If your questions are more in depth, or you are ready to take the next step that's when you would contact the state WIPA program. If you are already working or you are trying to get services in order to be able to work, so you are working with OVR or you are working with support services and you are not getting what you need, you can contact my program, and we will help to advocate on your behalf to help you get the services that you are entitled to help you be able to work. And one of the big things that we are looking to do more work around is once you have returned to work or you are just starting work, if you need an accommodation in the workplace and it's not being provided for you by your employer, we would also be able to step in on your behalf and work with you to make sure that you got the accommodation you needed in order to be able to work.

It was really interesting to hear you say that this is a need for parents and the outreach with the school district and hearing Michelle say that you have been trying and knocking on doors. I'm trying the same thing and hopefully we can all work together and maybe if we all team up, we will be able to get this information out there, because we want you all to be able to work. That's the whole purpose of the ticket to work is to get the information out to everyone that under are these -- there are great work incentives and you don't have to be afraid and you can take

steps and it doesn't all need to be kind of everything shut down at one time. So like I said, I can provide information about work incentives, also if you need assistive technology in order to be able to work, we can connect you with assistive technology services across the State of Pennsylvania, and also that could be an accommodation in the work place that you may need. If you have some health-related issues and are having problems with healthcare, that's another issue that my program is able to work with you on. Anything in the realm of work if you are having an issue and you are a Social Security beneficiary, I am able to work with you on that. I'm with the disability rights note work of Pennsylvania -- Disability Rights Network of Pennsylvania.

>> I work a lot around transportation and accessible precipitation individuals with disabilities because time and time again we hear that's the barrier to employment my PWD provider stops running at 4:00 so I can get to work but not home from work and we are advocating across the state to try to get expanded service hours for a lot of providers, and, you know, the more feedback that we hear from the community, the greater it is for us to take it to groups like PennDOT to say, hey, this is a real need out there. We need to hear from individuals in the community so we have support for the continued work that we are doing.

And I think that's kind of it. Does anyone have any questions?

>> What incentives do you have for if people want to start their own jobs, a lot of times since there is not a lot of availability for our kids, if we want to start our own business to get our children, as far as entrepreneur how are you helping with that?

>> JEN GARMAN: That's interesting that's not something I generally hear too much about, but I'm sure if we could talk.

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: The WIPA program has resources and we help people that want to start businesses on their own, and Social Security is partnered with us and there are certain incentives put in place to help you do that, including -- help you do that including the PASS plan we talked about where you can set aside money to start a business, but you have to do everything everybody else that starts a business does too, write a plan, have sufficient backing. So it's very involved situation, but I want you to know that, yes, the WIPA can help you get the needed information if you are talking about self-employment.

>> JEN GARMAN: One thing I would like to add to that. If you happen to be working with OVR, self-employment is a goal that you can have and work with OVR as well so you could be entitled to get OVR services and be starting your own business. Next question?

>> Yes, my question is how does a parent decipher? I went on the web site and printed out all of the companies on the ticket. How do we decipher which company is going to be the best one? I know nothing about any of them. Where do I start to say, well, this is the one I would like?

>> What I would encourage you to do is if there is certain ones you are interested in, maybe contact those agencies and talk with somebody from the agency to see if that's a fit for your child or you, and just see what their services are available, because they can be tailored to be working with different disability groups providing different services. So it would really be an individual decision where you feel this is a good fit for my child, I feel this is a good fit for me, but do that leg work is what I would suggest initially.

>> This is actually more of a comment really. I know if you are a Montgomery County resident, in Montgomery community college they have courses geared towards opening your own business specific to people interested in that. There is also a program that you can find on the MontcoPA web site called the score program that also helped individuals with resources on starting their own business.

>> JEN GARMAN: That's fantastic. Thank you.

See, that's what today is all about, networking a little bit and getting information on resources so thank you.

>> My question is for the Social Security representative here. And I'm trying to help my daughter who is disabled and is working, I would like to help her apply for Social Security -- SSDI, and also for the MAWD, but one of my concerns is that she had started a retirement fund. Would this make her ineligible for that type of thing? Would I have to stream that money into a special needs trust?

>> No. What we would need to see -- that would be a situation we would talk to you one on one, you would come in, you have to show your proof of how it's set up and that type of thing and we would take a look at it and let you know then and there if you would still be eligible for the benefit or not. I can't really, it's not afternoon easy question. I'm sorry.

>> Could somebody explain about the MAWD program?

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: Joyce, that is what our program does. We look at you where you are and where you and your child want to go, and when you bring up questions such as those where it's not, that's not quite a Social Security question, but there might be other things involved, that's what we are there to do. We are looking at everything that's going to be involved when your child decides to take work. Okay? Very quickly, the MAWD program has different eligible and resource limits, and, again, that's something that we hope that you will call us and get more information about.

>> Could you tell us what the acronym means MAWD?

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: Medical assistance for workers with disability.

>> JEN GARMAN: It's a fantastic program. It really is. Another question?

>> To be part of that MAWD program, do you have to be on welfare?

>> JEN GARMAN: No.

>> Is there an income limit because I have been fighting to get a power chair. If I can get a power chair, it will be making me more accessible to get a job. And it's just the idea they are 10 to \$15,000 for the specialty one that I need and you have to pay 20% of that no matter what coverage you have. Where do you come up with the extra \$4,000 to get that when you don't have the income? Does that program help you out to get it?

>> JEN GARMAN: I think, again, that's an individual question that we would be glad to address with you afterward.

There is a question in the back.

>> I got distracted for a minute, but what's the name of the program that you were speaking of that if you need accommodations in the work, assistive technology?

>> JEN GARMAN: That's my program, it's the PABSS, and it's protection and advocacy for beneficiaries of Social Security.

It's the longest job title known to man. That's what I always say.

And one last thing I would like to add that I didn't say is I do trainings all across the state on all kinds of issues related to work, so on ADA, on assistive technology in the workplace, and I would be glad, and like Michelle said, I am trying to get connected with school districts now and outreaching to transition counselors so if you feel there is a need and you know there is a lot of parents in your area who need or would benefit from a training, feel

free to contact any of us and we will keep fighting to get in there, because we want this information out to everyone.

One more question.

>> I have one quick question, you mentioned transportation for people with disabilities. Is that a statewide program or based on county?

>> JEN GARMAN: It's statewide funded but it is run by individual county providers.

>> Does every county in Pennsylvania have that?

>> JEN GARMAN: All but four it is launched in right now.

>> Are they four in this area?

>> JEN GARMAN: They are not actually. They are more rural and out towards Pittsburgh.

>> Thank you.

>> JEN GARMAN: The last thing and I can't believe I forgot to talk about this is if you are having an issue with any of the ticket partners, so not that this would ever happen but if you have a complaint about the WIPA staff or services, if you have a complaint and you feel you are not getting service from an employment network you are have been working with, if you are having an issue with OVR, you could contact PABSS and we would mediate a resolution to those problems. The main group that works on OVR issues is the client assistance program, Jamie Ray was here giving a presentation. If appropriate, we would also refer you to them and if it's something my program can't necessarily help you with, we always try to get you connected with an agency or services that would be able to help you with the issue you are having, so, one last question.

>> If there is a problem with transportation, my daughter does go to college. In our Bucks County, they have the shared ride program, and to find someone going the same place with a lift at the same time has been impossible. Who do we contact for help with this?

>> JEN GARMAN: I'm a part of the statewide transportation alliance and I could connect you with someone through at license that does a lot of work on issue something I can help you with.

>> Is your name and phone number in this information?

>> JEN GARMAN: I will come talk to you.

>> Thank you.

>> JEN GARMAN: Thank you, everyone.

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: Thank you, Jen.

>> We will hear from Social Security, this is Alex buyers and she will talk to us about ticket to work.

>> Hello, everyone. Social Security has many different

work incentives or special rules that allow you to receive your check and work at the same time. Ticket to work is just one of our many work incentives that allow you access to the different services that the employment networks offer. So maybe if that's a little bit of clarification, you don't have to take the ticket, the ticket is just another work incentive for people who are receiving either Social Security disability benefits or SSI benefits. Again, the ticket allows you access to receive services everyone has been speaking about, I think employment networks will talk again, but that is the way you access services is through our ticket program.

And, again, a ticket is available to everyone from the age of 18 through 65. And who will take your ticket are the employment networks. We do have a great web site, Social Security.gov you don't have to bother writing it down, it's on everything that Social Security has. We also have a red book which has all of our work incentives in there, it explains the ticket program which is another work incentive that we offer. The ticket will allow you access to the employment networks that are partnered with Social Security to give these different services, benefits counseling. There are some things we can't necessarily counsel you to do. We can make you aware of different work incentives who are already in place for people who are disabled and would like to return to work.

While you use the -- why you use the ticket, if you choose to do so, it's a voluntary thing you would do, the ticket allows you to not have a medical review during the time that you are using your ticket and your ticket is in use. So there are different positives when you do use the ticket, there is no medical review. You have access to the services, to the employment networks that are here today to benefit counselors. And, again, the ticket is a voluntary program. You choose to select it or not. If you are interested in using your ticket, you would call maximus. That is on your ticket to work page, that should be in your folder. It's also in your red book. It's also on the web site, but that's how you would start the process, you would call maximus and say you would like to use the ticket. Then as the lady said, there is a lot of homework involved. You have to look and see what services are offered by the employment networks so that is something you have to do, put in the homework, come to things like this, listen to the employment network, see what they have to offer. If you are interested, again, the ticket allows access to the services that they provide.

I think I'm done.

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: So questions.

>> Any questions for me? I'm sorry. I went a little too fast.

>> If you did get the ticket and chose not to use it, what happens?

>> Nothing happens.

>> So if you want to restart again, you have to go through maximus and restart it over again.

>> Yes, or if you go directly to the employment network, they can contact maximus and let them know that you are assigning the ticket to that employment network. There is a couple different ways you can go directly to the employment networks or use the maximus. They have a web site where you can do research, see the employment networks' sites lists, see the services they have to offer.

>> The employment network, do you have to have like a ticket to work or something to access the employment networks? That is how it works.

>> Yes, that's how it works.

>> So you need that to be able to get to services, you can't do it independently?

>> Right, but everyone receiving benefits has the option to use the ticket program.

>> Is the ticket something you physically have in your hand or is it just something that's --

>> No, I'm sorry you don't need the actual ticket. If you are interested in the program, you call maximus or you call an employment network that's already in place and tell them, and they can start the process for you, so you don't necessarily need the actual physical ticket.

>> I have been told by maximus and Social Security that, by both of them that -- to call back Social Security, call there and call there, and call there. Total run around.

>> Okay. I'm sorry that you are having that experience.

>> Can you give me a list of the providers? And then I'm thinking, well --

>> There is a web site, your ticket to work, that is where you would go and it has a list of all of the employment networks in the entire country. You could put in your zip code that would narrow it down. You can, I think there is check boxes you can check what you are actually interested in, what type of services that you are looking for, that would narrow the search for you as well.

>> This question probably would be aimed towards maybe Phyllis. I know based on what I'm hearing it's all about the students that are receiving these types of benefits,

SSI and SSDI. What about a student that is not receiving either, but does have documented paperwork that confirms they have like a learning disability or what is out there for a student like that? As far as the type of employment services and things like that to assist a student from that situation.

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: Well, I thank her for making that question for Phyllis.

Today's conference was set up to give you an overview of different services that are offered in your community for different people at different skill levels. All of them are not on Social Security. However, the WISE event, this one that you are sitting in now, is for beneficiaries of either SSI or SSDI. And I don't mean that to infer that there are not services available for your child just because they are not receiving benefits, and I would inquire on the way out about some of the other services that are available in your community.

Thank you.

Are there other questions? Is your question for --

>> No, actually for you. You were saying that there is services out there, but I have been trying, trying real hard. Everybody that has been on my team or whatever you will call it, they have been trying, and nothing.

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: She is a plant. I know it. It's a perfect segue. Thank you for your question, because the next part of the program is there actually are services. Are they hard to find?

>> They are not hard to find, it's just every time I do try to -- like I fill out paperwork, I send it back to them, and then they are saying to me that oh, that you can't -- there is no way you could be in this service, because of you are going to be in high school, after high school, that's when that service stops.

And then I'm thinking, okay, I want to go to college, so do I get new people? But I already work with these people for this, like a long time, I can't work with the same people I have been with?

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: Great question. And something just flashed in my head and it was OVR. But actually the next part of our program is going to introduce you to agencies that do provide with these services after you graduate. And they just clue you in, that's the purpose of this whole thing, so make sure that you don't stop now. If you have gotten to the point where you are graduating from high school, you deserve everybody else to go and fulfill your dream and go onto the next step, whatever that

might be. So having said that --

>> can I ask one question. How does child support factor in on eligibility for SSI and SSD?

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: The short answer is that it figures in on SSI and not SSD. Okay? That's the short answer. But, again, that's a very particular issue that can be addressed on a one to one basis, and if you will call the WIPA, we will be glad to have that discussion with you.

Thank you.

So at this point we are going to talk about EN's because that's exactly what this young lady is talking about. Who is out there to help me when I'm finished high school and I'm ready to go on to the next step? And Social Security has done a lot of work, put a lot of money out there to put agencies in place and community partners that are there to help you go to the next step.

So how do you choose an employment network? With a lot of work. It's called due diligence. No one has a magic wand that is going to tell you that this is the EN for you. Just like you chose programs and you went and talked to teachers at school and you stand up and demand that your rights are respected and your kids get what they need. That's the same thing you have to do with an EN, an employment network. There are services out there and you have a right to choose and get the option that is going to work for your child. So what are some of the things that employment networks do? They do skills testing, interest testing, resume preparation, interviewing and skills training, job search and placement services, work incentive counseling and job coaching and other ongoing services. Does that sound like something you might need, young lady?

>> Okay.

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: When you contact an employment network, you discuss what your goals are. You look at your disability and you look at what your road is going to be like. So these are things that you really want to take your time in doing. You can't just choose somebody out of the phone book and say they are going to service you. You got to do your homework. What will they do and what can you expect from them? So as you can see, selecting an employment network probably is more like having a part time job, but at any rate, we are there to help you with that, because we go out and interview employment networks, we have them come in and speak, we talk to people who have used their services so you are not walking around in the blind. If you give us a call, we will make a referral, send you to someplace that we think is going to work with

what your goals are in employment. So saying that, I'm going to have employment networks, take five minutes and this is especially for OVR, to explain some of the things that they do.

All right. So we have employment specialists from OVR, OVR representative Miss Patricia Roman. Would you like to come up and speak to our audience today about some of the services that OVR provides?

>> Five minutes. Five minutes? I don't know why that was directed at me. I try to be brief. Hello, everyone, it's good to see you today. I am from OVR, the office of vocational rehabilitation. We have some information in the back for you to take home with you. We are a state agency, and we receive federal funds to provide comprehensive rehabilitative services to people who have disabilities that interfere or impact their ability to either get a job or keep a job. You do not have to be -- to receive Social Security to get services from OVR. I think that was a question. No, you don't have to be Social Security eligible. It is an eligible based program though and we have to, the first step is to get medical documentation or psychological reports, IEP reports that document the. It has to rise to a certain level. It is eligibility based. It is also voluntary. We can't force you to have services. You can participate for as long as you like, when you are dissatisfied you can quit. Otherwise with you until you have achieved your employment goal. First of all, it's eligibility so you would complete an application. We ask you to sign releases of information, we get medical records to know that you are eligible for services. And, again, this is working one on one with an individual counselor. The next step is we look at physical restoration services, the person who needed a wheelchair, we do work with people, if that's what you need in order to be able to work, we would work with your doctors, we would work with you to get a prescription for the wheelchair, I don't know who needed a wheelchair, but we would work with you to get that, and we could help with it, paying that 20%. If it is -- again, you would have to work with your counselor. I can't tell you that it's guaranteed, but we do try to make sure that you have the things that you want. Within physical restoration, we purchase wheelchairs, canes, braces, hearing aids, we do medical services that enhance your ability to work, all of our services are employment focused. There may be some other things that you need to have done, but if it's not directly related to employment, I'm sorry, we can't do that. But we will try to refer you

or help you with getting information. So once we know that you are eligible, you have gone through physical restoration services, again, because we want to know your strengths and we also need to know about your disability areas so we can work with you to plan for success. We want to avoid your disabilities and focus on your abilities. So, again, you work with a counselor. We get that kind of information. We provide a vocational evaluation, assessment to, again, identify your areas of strengths so that we can make suggestions and recommendations about which career areas we feel that you would be most successful in. If we can reach an agreement on an employment goal, we provide service services. In order to be employed and work successfully, some people need to have skill training. OVR can assist with college training, community college training, vocational training, at whatever level. We also work with on-the-job training contracts, we have a new -- an enhanced on the job contract available now through the stimulus program where we are getting a lot of funding, we can pay up to 90% of a person's salary if the employer agrees to hire them and train them, give them real skills, transferable skills that they will be able to go to a different employer with. Let's see. We do, again, financial aid for training, that's for the college. When you are finished with train or tech school or whatever, we can provide financial support for job coaching services, hire a job coach to work with you one on one, to, again, apply for jobs, develop resume, interview skills, once you get the job, we are also available to go on the job with you to help you with learning the skills. The job coach is available for the first 90 days of employment. After that we switch it over. It can either go to a county funds services, which is called extended services. If the person is not eligible for county funded services, OVR can provide some of those supports.

I'm wrapping this up real quick. OVR was the only game in town originally. State VR services if you wanted to go to work and had a disability, you had to come through OVR. The ticket to work has expanded it to other employment networks. A lot of times though we work in conjunction with them, so if you need funding for what we call big ticket items your employment network may refer you to OVR for funding so we work in partnership with just about every EN that there is. Okay. That's it -- we want you to work for at least, all of our services, again, once you work and you are working for 90 days, you are paying

those taxes, then we close your okay case, we go away, work, pay taxes, because that's what we need to do. If something happens, you lose a job, you can come back to OVR and reapply for services. Okay. That's it. Questions.

Yes?

>> Okay. And you probably do a very excellent job and one of the challenges that a lot of the parents have, especially children who are in transition, we call and we have children who have intellectual disabilities. We are told over the phone we don't do that. Also getting them to come into the school and work with the child, so for families who have children with certain disabilities, OVR just telling us, and I don't understand how they can without discriminating. You probably do an excellent job. Families are frustrated because they have to write a better IE plan. Is there something they need to do to make sure that OVR will come into their school or work with our children when they turn 18 or 19, because one of the things we hear is no, no, no.

>> OVR services are designed to start when a student leaves school. Yes, we are part of the -- we have an obligation as part of the IDEA. The education act that we should be involved with the transition services prior to a student graduating from high school. Part of the issue is resources and counselors. We don't have a lot of counselors. I'm assigned to certain high schools. I attend IEP meetings when I'm called and invited if I can make it. If I cannot make it, I make sure each school I'm connected with has information. There is a process for them to send us referrals and we do send out the applications. Yes, ma'am, I'm sorry, it didn't work well for you.

>> What I'm saying to you is I hear you. You do an excellent job, I have no doubt. What I'm saying if I'm a parent, I call OVR and say, listen, I have a child, he has intellectual disabilities some things I would like to do, and as soon as I say intellectual disabilities as soon as I say mental retardation, we don't do that.

>> Ma'am, where do you live?

>> I live in Philadelphia.

>> Philadelphia does have its own OVR office, I work in Norristown. Norristown covers Montgomery, Bucks, Chester and Delaware Counties. Just keep calling. Call, I'm serious.

>> What I want to say to you, as a parent who has to attend IEP, who has to continue fighting the system, this is frustrating, and this is something that's supposed to be

there. And all I'm saying is this is not only -- I'm not just talking myself, this is a challenge for parents all in the southeastern region. This is not just Philadelphia also. And if you go upstate, because I do statewide stuff, it's upstate also.

>> We will try to do better.

>> We have Cheryl bits Harris that would like to address that question.

>> Hi, for those of you who don't know me, my name is Cheryl Baits Harris and I work for the National Disability Rights Network in Washington, D.C. and I train system advocates and PABSS advocates across the country and there is another factor here in Pennsylvania. It's called an order of selection. The rehab act is supposed to provide services to individuals with the most significant disabilities first. Now, it's a complicated process, but in a nutshell, no one should be turned away based on a phone call for any federal program. You need to go, you need to complete an application, and you need to sign on the dotted line. The worst that's going to happen is that your son or daughter may qualify for services, but not meet the open priority of category for services, and I think that's exactly what's happening there. They are making the assumption that the intellectual disability is a learning disability. They are dismissing it. They don't believe you are going to meet the order of selection. You need to apply for services, eligibility is then determined and then VR is required to determine whether that individual is an individual with a most significant disability, a significant disability or simply a disability. But you need to complete the application process and you should never accept no based on the telephone.

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: Well, thank you, Ms. Harris.

Any other questions about OVR?

>> I have OVR and every time I have an IEP meeting they are supposed to come. That's what my teachers tell me, but they never show up. They never call saying that they can't show up. They never say anything to us. They just don't come at all.

>> Do you have -- do you have an assigned counselor?

>> Not that I know of.

>> They just said I have OVR and OVR should be coming.

>> You have the opportunity to sign up for OVR services. If an OVR counselor is not available to come to your IEP meeting, then what you need to do is pick up one of the brochures back there and you need to call on the phone. You will be asked to give basic information. You have to

give us your Social Security number because that's the only way we can put you in the system and we will send you an application. You complete the application, there is a return envelope, you send it back to us, and you will be assigned an OVR counselor.

>> All right. Thank you.

>> You are welcome.

>>

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: Can we address one more question for OVR.

>> And that can be done before they leave this school system.

>> We suggest, okay, technically, you can apply, a student can apply as early as I think the tenth grade or something like that. In effect, it's usually, we usually get the referral in the eleventh or twelfth grade, two years prior to graduation, again, when we will attend the IEP meeting, get the information and we can put services in place. We will attend the meetings, particularly the transition meetings. You really focus on that because the school has an obligation to for services leading up to graduation, but we can make suggestions and recommendations in terms of what you might want to ask for. You might want a transportation assessment. That's the biggest thing. In order to get any job, you got to get there. So if there is a transportation issue, then that needs to be done prior to graduation by the school. Now, if it's not done by the school and the student graduates, OVR can do that. Okay.

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: I'm sorry, now, you know why I said five minutes.

Ms. Roman always gets a lot of questions, some of them are complaints, some of them are questions and you really need answers. And that is why today Ms. Roman is going to be here for an hour afterward, and please seek her out and ask questions. I'm going to move it along a little bit because we have other employment networks and, again, I'm going to encourage you to keep some of your questions for our meet and greet time because everybody you need here today is going to be around where you can ask the question and if you need an answer and you came for an answer today, you are going to leave with one. Having said that, I'm going to subtract Patricia's time from Michelle, which leaves you two seconds. I just wanted Michelle to speak very quickly about AHEDD.

>> You heard about our services at lunch so I will be very brief. We are a ticket collector. We collect tickets and we helped get 208 people that are receiving SSI or SSDI

benefits tickets to work, and we helped them find employment last year. We work with OVR. We are one of their providers. We work with the mental retardation services of every county in southeastern Pennsylvania and we want to help you get to work and become capitalists.

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: Thank you. We also have another EN here from Delaware County, actually, her name is Michelle Fitzpatrick, and she is from an EN organization called care link. And I asked her to come today because she actually has some good things to tell you about our program.

>> Hi. I was a career counselor with care link for 2.5 years and while I was a career counselor I very much utilized the WIPA program. Jess has come out and presented in so many different places where I have worked with people at. Phyllis has done presentations, talked to people one on one, and I think that the most important part of the WIPA program is showing somebody not how someone with receiving benefits, how those benefits will be affected if they return to work, it's how you yourself personally can be affected. So that -- sorry. I'm sort of on the spot here. So they give people the opportunity to see exactly how they have been affected or how they might be affected so that people can plan individually rather than having information that's general for everyone that they may run into a glitch later on. So I think that that's something that they were able to help me with as a career counselor. And care link still offers career services I just don't work in that program anymore I switched to a transition age program. They are in Delaware County and they do work with OVR and they are a wonderful program.

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: Thank you. 3.5 minutes for those who don't know. Horizon house, Emily Scott.

Emily is an employment network in Philadelphia, horizon house and I will tell you what, the last WISE event, the participants in her program made our meal for us, and they are just wonderful. That's an important program and we use and work with horizon house a lot.

>> Thank you very much. And it's nice to see all of you out here. And I also work very much hand in hand with all of these people too, so the disability rights network, OVR, so important. I always, the first thing I do is give everybody your phone number.

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: Oh, yes?

>> Yes, you and Larry, so watch out, and I call you too bows I have the red book right by my desk and I want to make sure people are taking advantage of the work incentives. I also work with Pat Roman. We have a mutual

customer who was an OVR customer and we were able to help him. So people call, people call with a ticket to our, they call me at horizon house and they say I have a ticket, what can you do. And the one good thing is we can take your ticket. We don't have to take your ticket, but all different -- the employment networks work with different people and I know it's frustrating for people to call and then to find out that we can't help them if they don't have whatever the disability is that we serve, so it is a lot of work and you got to make those phone calls. At horizon house we work with people that have intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, mental health disabilities, things like that and developmental disabilities with a mental health disability. We also have a really exciting program it's education plus youth where -- and I have even gone to IEP meetings with OVR counselors in Philadelphia that are getting ready to graduate, and it's a neat program because for some students that aren't sure what they want to do, we help with just exploring their dreams or they might not be ready for college yet. We try to help build up people's skills for the entrance exams. So horizon house we offer a lot of different services, but we have a youth program just for 18 to 23 or 22-year-olds. So we can help sort of figure out where you are at and then we can help you apply for OVR if that's something you know you want to go into a medical field. We can do testing and assessment and find out what you might be good at. So I don't want to -- another thing we have at horizon house that is exciting is education plus and if you have a student in college with a disability, we go out and help, we work in conjunction with the offices of disability. It costs no money to you and we are expanding across the whole state, and if you have, if you want to go to college and you call us, it's just an extra port. We make sure that you get this, if you miss a test, that you can -- that we can help get the assignment for you, few have to go in a hospital, we can get homework or if you need extra tutoring or we can help you access that, and we help students, Chestnut Hill college, community colleges, all over, Penn State, so it depends on what you want, but we are here to help or else we will try to refer you to someone else who can help. Okay.

Thanks for having me, Phyllis.

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: Thank you. Okay. We do have another EN here and it's called the CIL of Bucks County whose information is on the back because unfortunately we double booked him, Mr. Glenn coil and he is in another workshop,

but Glenn was nice enough to leave his information in the back, again, all of us are going to be around for at least an hour to entertain your questions. We have one more EN on the program, and that's Mr. Benson sample, and he is from a program called the reach to your youth project.

>> Good afternoon. First I'd like to start out by saying that when we first started out, we had no idea that we were going to end up maybe doing a collaboration with the ticket to work program. The youth mentor project works for young adults mainly ones considered at risk and this is how we first started out. In 2005, we decided to diversify our organization to expand services with young adult, therefore, we collaborated with maximus to develop the ticket to work program. Our services include resume writing, all of the skill assets that were shown previously up here. We all basically do the same thing. The reach to the youth mentor project starts out by when we get our ticket holders, they come in for individual work plan. That work plan is discussed in detail on their needs, what is met for our criteria to be met for our services, the reach to the youth mentor project also wants our individual to take pride in themselves knowing that they have this disability that is hindering them from gaining employment. I just want to build on one of the things the laid Y. Michelle, said, one of the most important things is your self esteem and how you create pride within yourself and there is nothing like self accomplishment of working for yourself instead of relying on certain perks, handouts, and I don't want to put it in that terminology any more or less, but there is nothing like doing it yourself, and this is the services that we are offering to help individuals take pride back in themselves, get themselves back out to work. Is it hard? Yes, it is hard. Is it a battle? Yes, it is a battle. But I just want to ask the room one question, what is the main disability in life? No hope.

>> And that's one of them. Another one is lack of trying. And if you don't try, you can't achieve anything.

And like I said, we are out here, we are located in south Philadelphia, I'm standing in the back. We only provide our services in Philadelphia as of right now. By me coming here today, I was looking forward to expanding my services into the counties and the suburbs outside of Philadelphia. We work with young adults, 12 through 21. We are even working with older adults. It might not necessarily be about going back to work, but just to put that pride back within yourself to make you a better human being. Thank you.

[Applause]

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: So, we have come to the end of our program except for a couple of things, does everybody in here today have a good idea of where to start?

>> I'm not going to answer that question. But I wanted to share an observation prior to, I simply wanted to share an observation prior to the ending of the session. Early on our young presenter who sat on that end of the table as well as the attorney who was kind of interacting with her during her presentation, I got a perception that getting into schools is an access problem. Now, if that is correct, then I would hope that they would confirm that for me. In other words, they have difficulty getting their message into schools. Now, that follows another question. Who is there targeted audience? Are we talking about staff? Are we talking about parents? Students? Or all of them?

>> All of them.

>> PHYLLIS HILLEY: I think we are talking about all of them, and I hope that you will stay around and address those specific concerns with Michelle, who is the lady that spoke here, and also Jennifer Garman which is one of the hosts from Disability Rights Network today and those are the questions she wants to ask you. She wants to ask you if you know of a way that you can actually get this information in school. And we kind of figured the best way is to start by giving parents information so that they can go back and demand services. All right. So again, I'm going to step out on a limb. But did you learn about work incentives and they are closing the doors right now? Because a real important part of our program is coming up. We hope we gave you something to think about, and that at least one of the work incentives that we talked about is going to stick in your mind and you are going to call and ask us about it. Did you learn how to connect with an EN because, wink, wink, we did give you a list, it is in your package, along with all contact information. And, three, we want you to stay positive, and look for opportunities. Because this was an opportunity that you gave yourself today by coming out and listening to the information that we have. Now, we do have one request of you, and Jessica is going to tell you before we lock the doors and nobody leaves without an evaluation.

There is someone in the back with a stick just in case that doesn't work.

But we want to thank you very much for coming out today. Again, we are all going to be here, so if your question did

not get addressed, please stop one of us and we will be glad to talk about it with you. If you need WIPA services over at the table, you can sign up and we will call you.

[Applause]

>> All right. Please look in your packets that we gave you. If you are a beneficiary or a family member, you should have a yellow evaluation. If you are an EN or a community partner, you should have a green evaluation. It's very important that you have the correct one.

It's important that you correct one because there is different questions on there for you. At the top of each one, we need you to identify who you are. If you are a beneficiary or a family member, please circle which one you are. If you are the person receiving the benefit, please circle that. If you are a family member who is supporting, please circle that.

There will be people who are coming around to collect or if you need assistance, please, please ask us. As well as in the back, if you would like additional services, please let us know so we can contact you.