

# Veterans Benefits Administration

## Veteran Readiness & Employment (VR&E) Service (formerly known as Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment)

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U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# Mission/Vision

## Mission:

- Assist Service members and Veterans with service-connected disabilities and an employment handicap prepare for, find, and maintain suitable careers, or maintain a life of independence

## Vision

- Customer Centric Service Delivery
- Highest standard of service
- Best in class program outcomes
- Focus on the Field



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# VR&E Overview

- VR&E participants have a 90.4% positive or neutral response, according to VSignals.
  - VR&E Service recovery will address the 9.6% who had an unfavorable view.
- Veterans who complete the VR&E program on average earn between \$20-\$30K more than Veterans who discontinue the program.

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## VR&E Positive and Employment Outcomes

Fiscal Year	FYTD	FS Target	EFS Target	O Target
Positive Outcomes	12,709	14,271	14,558	14,838
Employment Outcomes	8,657	9,615	9,704	9,913



# Key Services Provided

VR&E employs over 1,000 professional vocational rehabilitation counselors (VRC) and delivers services through a network of nearly 350 office locations.

Our service delivery model works to support Veterans where they are located, and includes operations at 56 regional offices, the National Capital Region Benefits Office, approximately 142 out-based offices, 70 Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) installations, and 104 VetSuccess on Campus (VSOC) schools/sites serving nearly 86,000 student Veterans



# Key Services Provided (continued)

- Vocational counseling and planning
- Higher education, apprenticeships, or vocational training
- Monthly living allowance
- Books, supplies, tools and equipment
- Job-seeking skills and assistance in finding employment
- Accommodations as needed to participate in the program and maintain suitable employment
- Independent living:
  - Training in activities of daily living
  - Personal adjustment counseling and support services



# Chapter 31 Eligibility and Entitlement

## Active Duty Servicemembers:

- Expect to receive an honorable discharge upon separation from active duty
- Apply for Veteran Readiness & Employment services
- Obtain a memorandum rating 20% or a proposed IDES rating from VA
- Entitlement based on establishment of employment handicap resulting from a service-connected disability
- Sec. 1631(b) of the National Defense Authorization Act (PL 110-181) established VR&E eligibility and automatic entitlement for severely injured active-duty individuals before a VA rating is issued. This became a permanent law on September 30, 2018

## Veterans:

- Honorable or other than dishonorable discharge
- Apply for Veteran Readiness & Employment services
- VA service-connected disability rating of at least 10% or a memo rating of 20%
- Entitlement based on establishment of employment handicap resulting from a service-connected disability
- Serious employment handicap needed to establish entitlement for Veterans rated 10%



# VR&E Tracks

If entitled to VR&E benefits and services, the Veteran/ Servicemember will work with a VRC to develop a personalized rehabilitation plan following one of five tracks:

- **Re-employment-** Veteran was recalled to active duty and requires assistance returning to former employer
  - ▢ 264 participants
- **Rapid Access to Employment-** Veteran has the necessary skills, requires additional assistance securing employment
  - ▢ 2,301 participants
- **Self-Employment-** VR&E assists Veteran with certain self-employment activities
  - ▢ 175 participants
- **Employment Through Long-Term Services-** Majority of Veterans are in this track requiring retraining into another career field
  - ▢ 80,781 participants
- **Independent Living-** When working is not an option, VR&E can assist with activities of daily living
  - ▢ 435 participants

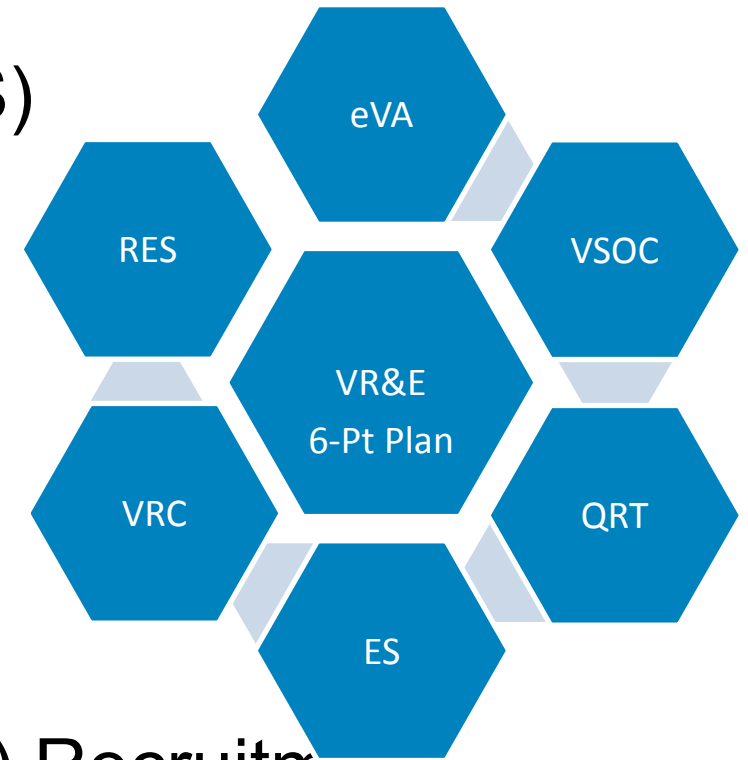
There are 128,836 active participants in the Chapter 31 program.

*\*Data as of 6/30/2023.*



# VR&E 6-Point Plan Overview

- Readiness and Employment System (RES)
- Electronic Virtual Assistant (e-VA)
- VetSuccess on Campus (VSOC)
- Employment Services
- Quality Review Team
- Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) Recruitment





# Readiness & Employment System (RES)

- Awarded 10-year, \$141M Period of Performance (PoP) contract on March 28, 2023, to GovCIO.
- GovCIO will provide Managed Service Provider activities for:
  - the development and configuration of new case management platform (Appian) in the VA Enterprise Cloud (VAEC) environment
  - training and training materials to VR&E staff
  - post-deployment Operations and Maintenance (O&M) support.
- Completed requirements validation with field users and VR&E Service staff:
  - Five-week Requirements Roundtable event with field users, May 15 – June 16, 2023
    - Review over 200 Statement of Objectives (SOO) requirements
    - Review over 80 use cases
- Completed the initial intake sessions for 14 of 18 systems within 8 weeks of project kickoff.
- VAEC development and pre-prod environments stood up on July 6, 2023.
- Program Increment (PI) 1 scheduled start date July 24, 2023



# Electronic Virtual Assistant (e-VA)

In Quarter 3 (Q3) FY20, VR&E deployed the electronic Virtual Assistant (e-VA), a vocational rehabilitation artificial intelligence platform that provides faster, easier, and more useful communication between claimants and staff.

- e-VA's claimant adoption rate is **>97%**.
- e-VA has documented over **22 million case notes**.
- e-VA has automatically scheduled over **477,744 appointments**.

In November 2022, VR&E implemented document repository and electronic signature enhancements to the electronic Virtual Assistant (e-VA). The implementation of the e-VA enhancements improved efficiencies to send and receive documents from VR&E program participants.

**VR&E staff have sent 5,953 documents for electronic signature with 80% of transactions completed.**

- Electronically signed and returned e-VA documents currently take on average **3 days (72 hours)** to complete.
- The enhancements have reduced processing times for VR&E documents by up to **83%** when compared to the other methods (physical mail, email, and VBMS package manager) of transmitting documents.



# Vet Success on Campus (VSOC)



VSOC Counselors provide the following:

- Adjustment counseling to resolve problems interfering with completion of education programs and entrance into employment.
- Vocational testing
- Educational and career counseling (Chapter 36)
- Expedited VR&E services
- Support and assistance to all Veterans with VA benefits regardless of entitlement, benefit usage, or enrollment status.

VR&E realigned the Chapter 31 workload to include distribution among VetSuccess on Campus (VSOC) counselors:

- VSOC counselors able to provide Chapter 31 counseling and assistance to the Veterans on the campuses they serve
- Provides VSOCs with hands-on experience in Chapter 31 claims to Veterans on the campus where they serve

Requests for a VSOC for your campus may be submitted to: [VREOUTREACH.VBACO@VA.GOV](mailto:VREOUTREACH.VBACO@VA.GOV)

# Employment Services 2.0

VR&E's goal is to find suitable employment for our Veteran Clients

To improve employment outcomes, VR&E is modernizing its Employment Services

VR&E will make the following updates to Employment Services:

- Standardization of employment coordinator functions
- Improve knowledge of employment benefits available to Veterans
- Improve knowledge and communication of labor market to train Veterans for in-demand jobs. Some examples include cybersecurity, trucking, and logistics



# QRT – Quality Review Team

- VR&E is establishing a dedicated team to perform local quality reviews to promote efficiency and consistency
- VR&E Service's new Internal Review Team (IRT) and Quality Review Team (QRT) will:
  - Improve consistency and error trend analysis to deliver targeted training for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors
  - Remove quality review functions from local supervisors
- Dedicated Quality Review Teams will be used to improve training for counselors and improve service delivery to Veterans



# VRC Recruitment

VR&E Counselors are essential to the delivery of service to Veterans

VR&E has an affirmative education requirement for counselors which makes recruitment challenging

In order to improve service delivery to Veterans, VR&E has developed a VRC Recruitment strategy

VR&E's new Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) recruitment strategy has created national and regional postings to reduce time to hire. It will:

- Expand recruitment to six additional Masters degrees
- Allocate 25 Vocational Rehabilitation Specialists to perform administrative case management tasks, allowing counselors more time to focus on their core duties



# e-Invoicing & e-Authorization

## Invoice Payment Processing System

The Invoice Payment Processing System (IPPS) is an electronic invoicing platform that enables vendors to receive electronic authorizations from and submit electronic invoices to VR&E. This platform standardizes and streamlines the invoice payment process, significantly reducing the amount of time needed to receive, process, and pay vendors. This platform allows national oversight for compliance with Public Law 115-407 requiring payment within 60 days.

IPPS Statistics from 10/15/2019 to 06/22/2022:

- 903,378 total invoices received
- 818,536 total invoices paid for **over \$2.4B**
- 99.30% invoices paid in less than 30 days
- 99.90% invoices paid in less than 60 days

**What this means for Veterans:** IPPS reduces the time it takes staff to make payments, eliminates paper invoice processing for Veterans' tuition, books, and fees, and increases the percentage of on-time payments, all which mitigate potential gaps for Veterans to continue in their programs.



# Additional Resources

VR&E Homepage

<https://www.va.gov/vre>

VSOC Homepage

<https://www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/vsoc.asp>

VR&E Fact Sheets

<https://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/factsheets.asp#BM11>

GI Bill Fact Sheets

<https://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/factsheets.asp#BM4>





# Question & Answer Session



*Thank you!*



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