

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

- Provide personalized world-class services empowering Veterans to achieve meaningful employment and independence.

Key Services Provided

- VR&E employs over 2,000 professional staff to support Veterans nationally.
- VR&E has over 350 office locations to deliver over \$1.6B annually to over 171,000 Veterans.
- 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, and approximately 142 out-based offices.
- VSOC
 - We currently collaborate with 104 schools across the country to provide educational and vocational counseling and other on-site services to an available population of nearly 86,000 student Veterans on campus.
- IDES
 - We provide early intervention counseling and other available services for wounded, ill, injured and other transitioning Servicemembers at 70 military installations.

Key Services Provided (con't)

- Help Veterans with service-related disabilities:
 - Achieve and maintain suitable employment
 - Gain independence in daily living
- Vocational counseling and planning
- Education or vocational training
- Monthly living allowance in addition to disability compensation
- Tools required for the program (e.g., auto mechanic tools, computers for technology/professional fields)
- Job-seeking skills and assistance in finding employment
- Independent living:
 - Training in activities of daily living
 - Personal adjustment counseling and support services

Chapter 31 Eligibility and Entitlement

Veterans:

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

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

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 & requires assistance returning to former employer
- **Rapid Access to Employment**- Veteran has the necessary skills, requires additional assistance securing employment
- **Self-Employment**- VR&E assists Veteran with self-employment activities
- **Employment Through Long-Term Services**-Majority of Veterans are in this track requiring retraining into another career field
- **Independent Living**- When working is not an option, VR&E can assist with activities of daily living

Modernization Efforts



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Readiness & Employment System (RES)

RES will replace VR&E's legacy case management system, CWINRS, to streamline VR&E case management functionality. RES integrates 20+ modern VA systems into a single solution to automate repeatable business processes and workflows, while ensuring accurate and timely payments to Veterans, and providing a robust and scalable platform for up to 2,500 field users delivering benefits and services to 170,000+ program participants.

RES will:

- Automate repeatable processes
- Automate complex awards calculations
- Provide intelligent document routing
- Provide modern user interface
- Leverage VA Enterprise Cloud for scalability of resources
- Provide a companion environment for continuous training of staff

What this means for Veterans: The impact to Veterans will be reduced time to eligibility determinations, reduced time to entitlement decisions, and increased accuracy for payments.

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. Like VVC Tele-counseling, e-VA is an option for claimants.

- Since Implementation (June 20, 2020)
 - e-VA's claimant adoption rate is >**98%**
 - e-VA has documented over **34 million case notes**
 - **FYTD > 9 million case notes**
 - e-VA has already scheduled over **1.2 million appointments**
 - **FYTD > 379,490 appointments**

What this means for Veterans: e-VA breaks down communication barriers by enabling Veterans to connect faster with their counselors using their smartphone, tablet or computer. e-VA allows Veterans to ask questions and receive timely responses, submit documentation, schedule appointments, and receive automated alerts and reminders. Moreover, automated documentation of routine communications improves continuity and quality of case management.

Tele-counseling | VA Video Connect

In 2019, VR&E implemented tele-counseling through the VA Video Connect (VVC) Platform which provides secure video teleconferencing technology to Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRCs).

- This allows VRCs the capability to remotely counsel Veterans who have busy schedules, live in rural locations or face transportation challenges.
- Since inception, VR&E Regional Office field staff have scheduled **over 1.2 million** tele-counseling appointment

What this means for Veterans: This platform enabled continuity of operations and determined the baseline for managing business virtually. Tele-counseling has helped VR&E provide a continuity of service that would've been nearly impossible during a period of facility closures, mandatory quarantine periods and restrictions on travel.

e-Invoicing & e-Authorization

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 07/04/2024:

- 1,218,969 total invoices received
- 1,110,267 total invoices paid for over \$3B
- 99.19% invoices paid in less than 30 days
- 99.88% 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.

Veteran Orientation Express

The Veteran Orientation Express (VOX) is a web-based tool with short embedded videos designed to enhance the Veteran orientation experience. VOX provides Service members and Veterans with clear, accurate information about the VR&E program BEFORE deciding to apply.

VOX is embedded in VR&E's Form 28-1900 application page on VA.gov, and guides Service members and Veterans through a series of questions to help them understand and determine their potential eligibility.

When the individual appears eligible, the tool will then guide the applicant through a series of videos explaining the VR&E process and each of VR&E's Five Tracks to Employment, so they are able to make an informed choice about enrolling in the program.

What this means for Veterans: VOX is designed to increase Veterans understanding of the VR&E program and enhance the Veteran experience. VOX is for transitioning Service members, Veterans, and other partners interested in the VR&E program (Veterans' family members, friends, etc.). It provides individuals with clear, accurate information about the VR&E program before deciding to apply, including eligibility, program offerings, processes, and VR&E's Five Tracks to Employment.

Key Information Updates



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48-Month Rule Overview

- VA reviewed a long-standing interpretation of a law known informally as the “48-month rule” (38 U.S.C. 3695) and determined a more favorable interpretation of this law would help eligible Veterans maximize their education benefits.
- Now, Veterans who use VR&E benefits prior to using any other VA education programs, such as Montgomery GI Bill or Post 9/11 GI Bill, can still use up to 48 months of the other educational assistance benefits programs.
- EDU and VR&E will continue the current practice of allowing Veterans now deemed eligible for Chapter 31 benefits to request retroactive induction of previously used Chapter 33 benefits to Chapter 31 benefits if the training would have been approved.

Approved Courses of Education or Training for VR&E Participants

- 38 U.S.C. 3104(b) states, to the maximum extent possible, VR&E participants must attend training programs that have been approved by State Approving Agencies for Chapters 30 and/or 33 participants.
- That means a VR&E participant may attend any program that is approved for use under Chapters 30 and/or 33, including test prep courses.
- 38 U.S.C. 3104(b) also allows the Executive Director (ED) of VR&E to grant waivers to individual VR&E claimants for courses not approved for Chapters 30 or 33 participants by approving a course of education that is only used for a Chapter 31 participant.
- There is a detailed review process used for ED to review and approve these waivers.

M28C (VR&E Manual)

On October 1, 2020, VR&E deployed the M28C (converted), which is available to VA employees through an internal server in the VA Knowledge Management (KM) portal and for public access at the KnowVA Knowledge base. M28C content updates (248 so far) are simultaneously uploaded to both locations.

The [M28C](#) is an updated, more efficient, and consolidated version of the previous VR&E manual, M28R (revised), which was previously available in the Web-Automated Reference Manual System (WARMS). The M28C has 54 chapters that were consolidated from the previous 86 chapters of the M28R version.

What this means for Veterans: The M28C platform provides a more user-friendly and accessible environment than previous VR&E manuals. It contains an intuitive search engine and hyperlinked cross references to other M28C content and internal and external resources.

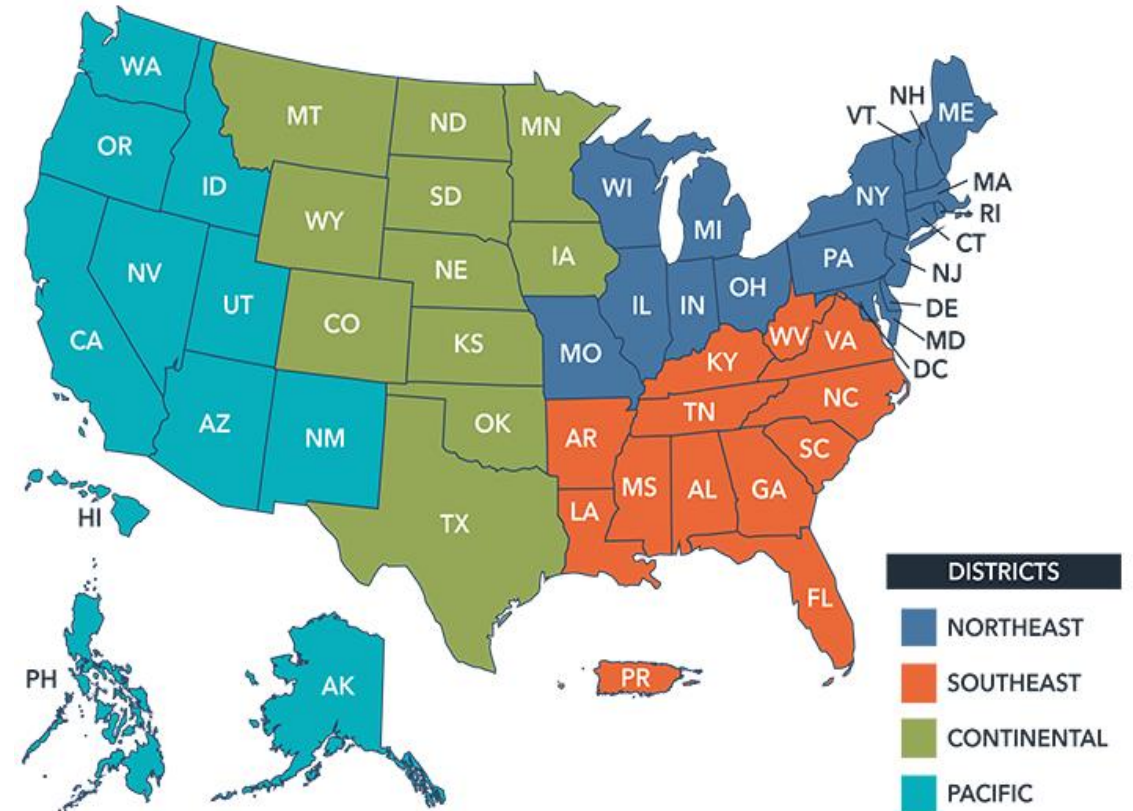
Note: Information for School Certifying Officials (SCO) may also be found in the [VR&E SCO Handbook](#).

SCO Resource Matrix

Browse By Topic	https://vbatraining.adobeconnect.com/scocontactmatrix/default/index.html	
Updating Certifying Officials; VA Form 22-8794	Enrollment Manager Technical Guidance	Certification Guidance
Certification Guidance for OJT & Apprenticeship Programs	Certification Guidance for VET TEC Training Providers	85/15 Reporting
Program Approval Documentation	Explanation of School Overpayments; Other Payment Issues	Listing of Overpayments by Facility Code
Listing of Payments by Facility Code	Individual Student Benefit Information; Hardship Cases	Updated Catalogs and Programs
School Address Updates	Changes in Accreditation Status or Ownership	Chapter 31 Issues
VR&E vs. GI Bill Comparison	Invoice Payment Processing System (IPPS)	Tungsten
SCO Training Portal Support	SCO Training Content	GI Bill Comparison Tool
Yellow Ribbon	Work Study	WEAMS (Approved Programs)
WEAMS (Approved Licensing and Certifications)	WEAMS (Approved National Exams)	Foreign Program Approval

VA Regional Offices

- Veterans can continue to get information about benefits or file a claim for benefits by visiting our website at www.va.gov.
- Veterans with claims specific or other questions may request information via Ask.VA.gov | [Veteran Affairs](http://VeteranAffairs) or telephone at **1-800-827-1000**.
- Please continue to check www.va.gov for updates. You also may follow us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/veteransaffairs) and [Twitter](https://twitter.com/veteransaffairs).



Tungsten Support and SCO VRE Handbook

The Tungsten Support team is available to assist should any issues arise while utilizing the electronic invoicing processing system. The most efficient way to obtain support would be to open a helpdesk ticket via the [online portal](#) or by reaching out to the Tungsten Network Support Helpdesk directly at 1-877-489-6135.

Additional Tungsten support information links

- VA microsite with instructions for vendors
 - <https://www.tungsten-network.com/customer-campaigns/vre/>
- Instructions on how to convert a PO into an invoice
 - https://tungsten-network.my.site.com/contactCustomerSupport/s/article/How-to-convert-my-Purchase-Order-into-an-invoice?recordId=ka04I000000J0HTQA0&language=en_US
- SCO's are invited to attend a webinar which will provide a demonstration and Q&A session to discuss e-invoicing using the Tungsten Network. Please register below for one of our upcoming sessions.
 - [Registration Link](#)
- VR&E School Certifying Official Handbook
 - [VR&E School Certifying Official Handbook \(va.gov\)](#)

Employment Services Upcoming Events

- July 24, 2024 – Heart to Hand: Mentorship Webinar for VR&E Veterans
- July 25, 2024 – National Hire a Veterans Day (FYI)
- August 21, 2024 – “Back to Business Virtual Career Fair” for Veterans, Service members and military spouses sponsored by VR&E and Hire G.I.
- November 6, 2024 – Virtual Career Fair in honor of Veterans Day Month sponsored by VR&E and Military Hire
- November 11, 2024 – Veterans Day (Will hold a virtual career event in honor of Veterans Day)

Additional Resources

VR&E Homepage

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

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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