

# **DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

## **Veterans Benefits Administration**



### **Under Secretary for Benefits Strategic Plan: 2009-2014**

**Published: 25 August 2009**

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## **Executive Summary: VBA Strategic Plan 2009-2014**

**I. USB Strategic Planning Tasker:** Develop a strategic plan based upon the USB organizational vision (7 Nov 08).

**1. Facts:**

- A. Developing a strategic plan is a USB priority.
- B. In September 2008, a strategic planner was hired.
- C. It has been ten years since the last VBA strategic plan was in play.

**2. Assumptions:**

- A. Resources will be available (time, money, people).
- B. Senior leaders will support and participate.
- C. Senior leaders will openly implement the plan.
- D. Senior leaders will fully communicate the plan to their employees.

**3. Specified Tasks**

- A. Minimize the impact on operations.
- B. Select a model that will enable learning and participation.
- C. Develop a dynamic plan that will adapt over time.

**4. Implied Tasks:**

- A. Develop a knowledgeable group of strategic planners across VBA.
- B. Avoid the errors of past VBA strategic planning initiatives.

**5. Results:**

- A. Our plan adequately addresses all tasks.
- B. Our plan contains:
  - Table of Contents
  - USB Statement
  - USB Vision
  - “4” Goals , “22” Objectives, “53” Action Items
  - Appendix 1: Glossary of Strategic Planning Terms
  - Appendix 2: Strategic Plan Governance Guidelines
    - Establish the Strategic Planning Board
    - Conduct Progress Reviews every quarter
    - Conduct Strategic Planning Workshop every “2” years
  - Appendix 3: Notional Dashboard
    - Progress indicators
  - Appendix 4: Quick Reference Guide
    - Indexes our Goals, Objectives and Actions Items

**II. VA Strategic Plan Way Ahead (August 2009):**

- A. USB presents the plan to Leadership Conference attendees
- B. USB introduces the plan to the field (e.g. video/letter)

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# VBA Strategic Outlook 2009-2014

Our first President, George Washington, once said that “the willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified shall be directly proportional as to how they perceive the Veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their nation. “

Every Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) employee takes those words very seriously. We strive to keep that covenant with our Veterans everyday. The benefits we deliver to Veterans have long-lasting effects.

Since the inception of the GI Bill Education Program in 1944, nearly 22 million Veterans have received education and training benefits and gone on to be civilian leaders in their communities. We have seen more than 18.5 million Veterans use the VA Home Loan guaranty to make home ownership a reality and more than 3.6 million receive Compensation & Pension benefits every month.

We know that more than 100,000 Veterans have used VR&E services and found suitable employment while more than 7 million Veterans have used \$1 trillion in low cost VA insurance to secure their economic way of life.

We have always honored and rewarded those who have borne the battle on their behalf but the benefits and services a grateful nation offers its defenders must evolve to meet the needs of Veterans of every new conflict.

This year, President Obama joined us at VA Headquarters as we celebrated 20 years as a cabinet level agency. Speaking of our obligation to Veterans, he said, “that when our fellow citizens commit themselves to shed blood for us, that binds our fates with theirs in a way that nothing else can. And in the end, caring for those who have given their fullest measure of devotion to us – and for their families – is a matter of honor – as a Nation and as a people”. In his words and in his

budget, the President has made it clear that caring for our Veterans is one of his top priorities. He has asked Secretary Shinseki to transform VA into a 21<sup>st</sup> century organization.

As we seek to transform VA, we will continually challenge ourselves to find ways of working smarter and more efficiently. We will continue to aggressively leverage the world's best practices, our knowledge base and our emerging technology to increase and improve our capabilities to serve Veterans. It will require transforming VA into an agile, adaptive organization that is capable of leading change. As we focus on producing the best results for Veterans, we will always be forward looking, and centered on how we can do things better for Veterans.

At the end of each day, our true measure of success will be the timeliness, the quality and the consistency of the support we provide. As Under Secretary, my vision is to provide Veterans and their families with the highest quality 21<sup>st</sup> century benefits and services and to do so by adhering to the highest standards of compassion, commitment, excellence, professionalism, integrity, accountability, and stewardship.

We must strive each and every day to fulfill President Lincoln's promise, "*To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan*" by serving and honoring the men and women who are America's Veterans. There are many challenges that lie ahead for VBA. I am confident that with this strategic plan our employees can lead our Administration as we work toward Secretary Shinseki's goals of being: Veterans focused, Results driven and Forward looking.

Thank you for your dedication, professionalism and service as well as for the work you will do to help deliver benefits and services to our Veterans and their families.

The Honorable Patrick W. Dunne  
Under Secretary for Benefits  
Department of Veterans Affairs

### **Veteran Benefits Administration Mission Statement**

The mission of VBA, in partnership with VHA and NCA, is to provide benefits and services to the Veterans and their families in a responsive, timely and compassionate manner in recognition of their service to the Nation.

### **Under Secretary for Benefit's Vision Statement 2009-2014**

My vision for better service to Veterans is rooted in the mission we perform, the core values by which we work and in the higher calling of public service. In my vision for VBA:

- Veterans don't have to worry about the safety of their records or their personal information being compromised.
- Our outreach efforts are "second to none." All Veterans know about their benefits, are able to apply for them in the simplest ways possible, and receive their benefits in a timely, accurate manner.
- Our employees are provided with 21<sup>st</sup> century tools to do their work and receive the training needed to achieve success.
- We engage in sound business practices that encourage you, our talented professionals, to stay with VBA and encourage others with similar talents to join our team.
- When Veterans come home, they want to get on with their lives, their educations, and their jobs. They look to us for the benefits that will help them move forward and rebuild their lives.
- What we do each day can and does makes a positive difference in a Veteran's life.

#### **External Characteristics:**

- Outreach results... "second to none"
- Claims Process...21<sup>st</sup> century "expeditious"
- Accuracy... strive to establish the highest standards

#### **Internal Characteristics:**

- Recruiting...skilled people who share our core values
- Training...so we exceed requirements
- Retention...creating a VBA our employees want other professionals to join
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century IT Tools...enabling success at every level of operations
- Regional Offices...that evolve into centers of excellence

### **Veteran Benefits Administration Core Values**

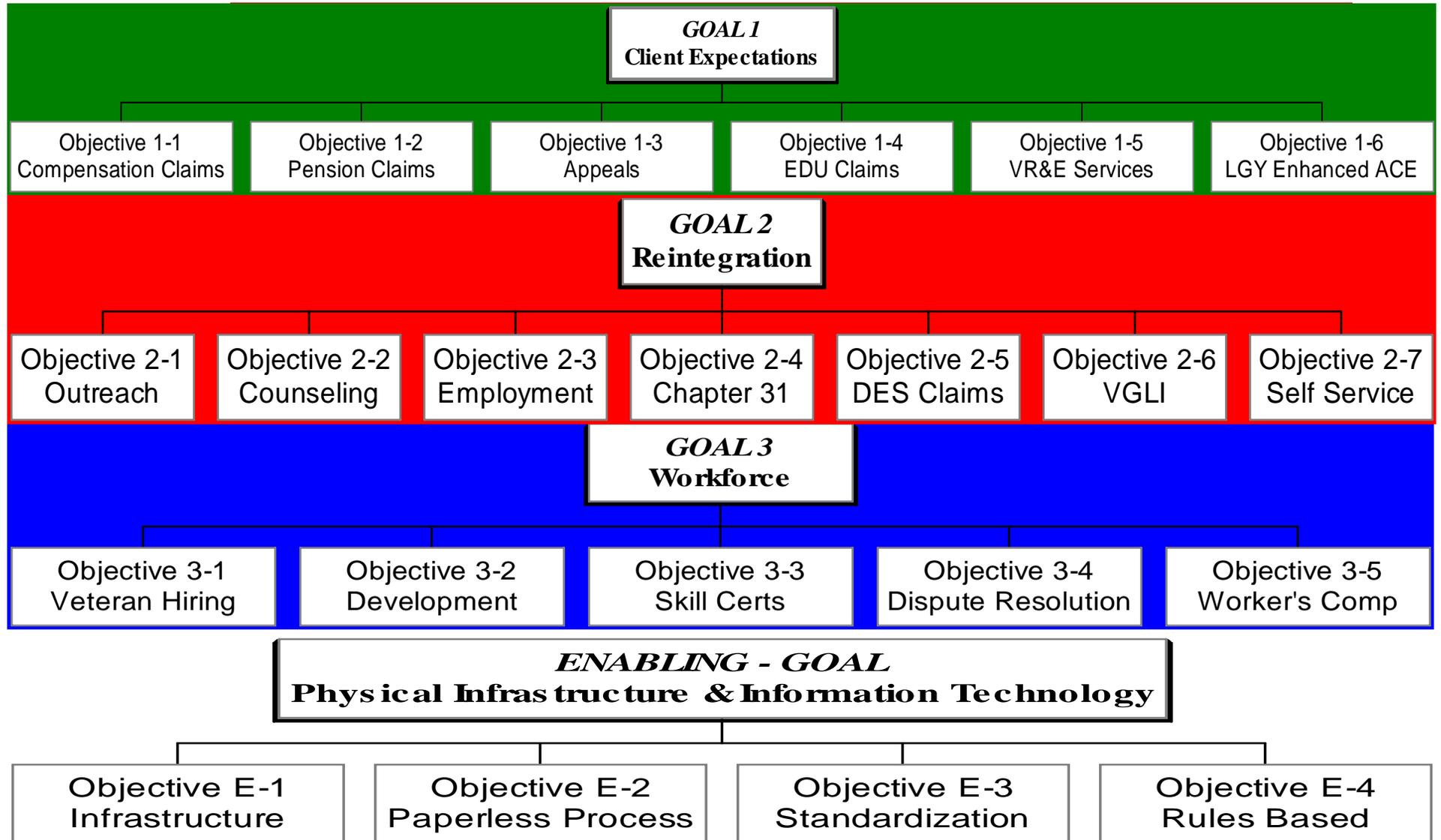
- We are a "can do" organization. Veterans have earned our respect and are our reason for being, our common purpose. All our efforts are directed toward meeting their needs.
- We are committed to communicating to our Veterans and among ourselves in a timely, thorough, accurate, understandable and respectful manner.
- We openly share our concerns and views and listen to those of Veterans in order to bring about improvements in benefits and services, and the climate in which they are provided.
- We value understandable business processes, which consistently produce positive results.
- We foster an environment to promote personal/corporate initiative, risk-taking & teamwork.
- We are open to change and flexible in our attitudes.
- Respect, integrity, trust and fairness are hallmarks of all our interactions.
- We value a culture where everyone is involved, accountable, respected and appreciated.
- We will always perform at the highest level of competence; taking pride in accomplishment.



# VBA GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## Overview

( 3 Aug 09 )



**GOAL 1: Achieve client expectations for timeliness, consistency, and accuracy in benefits delivery.**



**VBA GOALS & OBJECTIVES  
FY 2009-2014**

**NOTIONAL DASHBOARD**

GOAL 1 Client Expectations											
Objective 1-1 Compensation Claims		Objective 1-2 Pension Claims		Objective 1-3 Appeals		Objective 1-4 EDU Claims		Objective 1-5 VR&E Services		Objective 1-6 LGY Enhanced ACE	
1.1.1	<input type="radio"/>	1.2.1	<input type="radio"/>	1.3.1	<input type="radio"/>	1.4.1	<input type="radio"/>	1.5.1	<input type="radio"/>	1.6.1	<input type="radio"/>
1.1.2	<input type="radio"/>					1.4.2	<input type="radio"/>	1.5.2	<input type="radio"/>	1.6.2	<input type="radio"/>
1.1.3	<input type="radio"/>										
1.1.4	<input type="radio"/>										
1.1.5	<input type="radio"/>										
1.1.6	<input type="radio"/>										

**Objective 1.1: Improve disability compensation by processing claims in 125 days with a 93% accuracy rate by 2014.**

**Description:** The VA recognizes the impact of disability on a Veteran's life by providing monthly payments to those who have disabilities resulting from their military service. This objective aims to improve the program by delivering compensation benefits in a more expeditious manner and with a higher degree of accuracy and consistency.

**Action Item 1.1.1: VA/DoD Electronic Eligibility Record**

**Description:** The VBA currently obtains military service data from multiple DoD sources on Veterans who file claims for disability compensation. The future consolidation and receipt of eligibility, personnel, and medical data from all branches of service into common VA repositories such as Virtual VA and eventually into the Veterans Lifetime Electronic Record (VLER) will ensure real time availability of data for decision makers. This includes an interim goal to complete the deployment of the web-based Defense Personnel Records Information Retrieval System (DPRIS). The current claims processing wait times can be attributed to multiple factors but none more causal than the delays VA experiences in obtaining Veterans' military data. This initiative will significantly reduce the time it takes to process compensation claims. Ongoing budget allocations will be necessary to maintain progress.

**Reference:** Joint Executive Committee and various memorandums between VA and DoD.

**Timeframe:** August 2009-August 2014

**Owners:** Director, Office of Business Process Integration; Director, Compensation and Pension Service and ADUS Policy and Program Management

### **Action Item 1.1.2: Veteran-Centric Claims Processing Improvement**

**Description:** The VBA will strategically migrate to a Veteran-centric claims process that will meet client expectations for timeliness of benefits delivery. The current claims process will evolve into a paperless process driven by client preference, self service capabilities, integrated systems, and electronic data and services. As a part of this business transformation, a fully-electronic claims record with a secure means to authenticate the client will be implemented. The Veterans On-Line Applications (VONAPP) website, which allows clients to electronically file claims, will continue to be enhanced to meet the evolving needs of our clients. Claims processing speed will be further improved through rules-based applications that will be deployed for decision makers involved in the claims process.

**Reference:** VA awarded contract (2<sup>nd</sup> qtr 2009) to enhance claims processing

**Timeframe:** August 2009-August 2014

**Owners:** Director, Office of Business Process Integration and Director, Compensation and Pension Service

### **Action Item 1.1.3: VBA-VHA Disability Examination Integration**

**Description:** Future Compensation and Pension Records Interchange (CAPRI) enhancements will further automate the transmission of data between the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA). This action will improve efficiency and reduce human intervention in the collection of treatment data for the adjudication of veterans' claims for benefits. By improving the current CAPRI application, decision makers will have greater capabilities to access Veterans' and service members' medical records in a faster and more effective manner. Future enhancements will also allow VBA to transition completely to CAPRI. We will reduce our dependency on the legacy Automated Medical Information Exchange (AMIE) II system to a small number of vital reports that will also be transitioned with new automation. Additionally, VBA will work with VHA to modify treatment protocol so that ongoing treatment findings and symptoms can be used more effectively in the rating process. Integrating the examination process will also allow the Veteran to work through VHA to fulfill the C&P examination requirements, when appropriate.

**Reference:** Inter-departmental memorandums between VBA and VHA (2007-2008)

**Timeframe:** August 2009-August 2014

**Owners:** Director, Compensation and Pension Service and Director, Office of Business Process Integration

### **Action Item 1.1.4: Enhance National Quality Assurance Program**

**Description:** VBA will enhance the current National Quality Assurance Program by building a comprehensive program to identify root causes of variances and inconsistencies across regional offices. This initiative began with a two-part program that analyzes rating consistency across disabilities and inter-rater reliability. The lessons learned from that experience will be incorporated into our expansion and variance analysis initiative that will assist us in the transformation of our national quality assurance capability over the next five years.

**Reference:** Public Law 110-389, Sec. 104

**Timeframe:** August 2009-August 2014

**Owner:** Director, Compensation and Pension Service

**Action Item 1.1.5: VBA Digital Review Initiative**

**Description:** To ensure accurate processing of claims in a paperless environment, the digital review initiative will identify all of the statutory, regulatory, and procedural impediments that are required in order for VBA to implement a fully-electronic compensation and pension claims record. This initiative will also provide solutions to remove impediments as part of this comprehensive review. Special attention will be aimed at provisions related to the generation of paper documents or signatures, mailing or filing of documents, storage, maintenance or legal destruction of documents, access to claims records, and privacy issues.

**Reference:** 38 C.F.R. 3.150

**Timeframe:** August 2009-August 2012

**Owners:** Director, Compensation and Pension Service and Director, Office of Business Process Integration

**Action Item 1.1.6: VA Schedule For Rating Disabilities (VASRD) Modernization**

**Description:** VA will modernize the VASRD to improve claims processing accuracy and VA's ability to compensate Veterans for earnings loss due to service-connected disabilities. In this initiative, we plan to use resources that allow us to execute a comprehensive effort to update medical terminology and ensure proper classification of diagnostic codes and conditions. In conjunction with this effort, we will accomplish recurring studies of earnings and losses relationships to ensure the VASRD accurately compensates Veterans for average lost wages due to service-connected disabilities. In its efforts to modernize the VASRD, C&P Service will ensure that at least one body system per year is reviewed until all 14 body systems are completed.

**Reference:** VA VASRD studies and reports (2006-2008)

**Timeframe:** August 2009-August 2014

**Owner:** Director, Compensation and Pension Service

**Objective 1.2: Improve pension entitlement determinations by processing these cases in 90 days with a 95 % accuracy rate by 2014.**

**Description:** The VA recognizes its obligation to Veterans who defended the country by providing monthly payments to needy wartime Veterans who are disabled (permanently and totally), or are age 65 and older. This objective is designed to markedly improve the processing time and accuracy rates of pension entitlement determinations.

**Action Item 1.2.1: Pension Rules-Based Self Certification**

**Description:** This program will allow Veterans and family members to certify yearly income and net worth information with minimal involvement of VA decision makers. The creation of rules-based applications will also ensure efficient processing of the self-certification cases as well as those that require adjustment due to changes in income, net worth, dependency, etc.

**Reference:** VBA 2010 Budget submission

**Timeframe:** August 2009-August 2014

**Owner:** Director, Compensation and Pension Services

**Objective 1.3: Improve timeliness of appeals processing, in both the average days to issue a the Statement of the Case (SOC) after receiving a Notice of Disagreement (NOD), and average days to certify to the Board of Veterans Appeals by 10% by 2014.**

**Description:** This objective aims to reduce the waiting time for a final decision on claims under appeal.

**Action Item 1.3.1: Appeals Resource Center (ARC) Brokering Project**

**Description:** This initiative targets future resources to increase the staffing levels of the Appeals Resource Centers (ARC) in Waco and Seattle, as well as staffing at the Appeals Management Center (AMC); by 10% per station over the next five years. The AMC and ARCs are showing positive results. By dedicating more human resources to this mission, we will achieve even greater results.

**Reference:** Fast Letter 09-06, Appeals Resource Centers

**Timeframe:** December 2010 to August 2014

**Owner:** ADUS for Field Operations

**Objective 1.4: Significantly enhance education service delivery by reducing claims processing time (original/10 days, supplemental/ 7 days) and achieving a 97% accuracy rate by 2014.**

**Description:** The purpose of this objective is to significantly enhance the ability of Veterans and service members to achieve educational and career goals by providing timely and accurate decisions on education claims and continuing payments at accelerated levels.

**Action Item 1.4.1: Long-Term Solution for Processing Post-9/11 GI Bill Claims**

**Description:** The purpose of this initiative is to develop an end-to-end information technology (IT) solution as part of the long-term implementation of the Post-9/11 GI Bill. This long-term solution will utilize rules-based, industry-standard technologies to modernize the delivery of education benefits. The Post-9/11 GI Bill eligibility rules and benefit determinations will work well with rules-based technology that will require minimal human intervention. This will normalize our FTE levels and decrease claims processing time. Future resources required to achieve this action item include information technology and program management support. The high-level goals of the solution and its development are to provide a flexible architecture to support benefit changes, provide an efficient workflow, and provide a model and framework that support code reuse across future VA projects.

**Reference:** Public Law 110-252, Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008

**Timeframe:** August 2009-December 2010

**Owner:** Director, Education Service

**Action Item 1.4.2: Transforming Existing Training Modalities**

**Description:** The purpose of this initiative is to incorporate the new Post- 9/11 GI Bill Training and Performance Support System (TPSS) module into the existing modules for Veterans Claims Examiner (VCE) training. ED&T will assist with necessary modifications, updates, and testing of all lessons. This will ensure comprehensive, current, and accessible training that fully integrates eligibility and claims processing procedures for all education benefits to better aid VCEs in processing education claims. Accomplishing this initiative will help transform the way we train VCEs. This will decrease claims processing time and increase accuracy.

**Reference:** 5 USC 4103; Ex. Ord. No. 11348 (Further Training of Government Employees)

**Timeframe:** August 2009-January 2014

**Owner:** Director, Education Service

**Objective 1.5: Improve Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment services timeliness and quality by reducing days to entitlement to 40 days and improving EPRSA to 97% by 2014.**

**Description:** This objective focuses on performance measures linked to timeliness of entitlement decisions and overall accuracy of benefit delivery. The average number of days to entitlement reflects the length of time from application to notification of the entitlement decision. Evaluation, Planning, and Rehabilitation Services Accuracy reflects the overall quality of VR&E service delivery.

**Action Item 1.5.1: Business Process Reengineering (BPR)**

**Description:** VR&E will use BPR to streamline the initial evaluation and case management processes. The intent is to improve timeliness, quality, and increase efficiency. This initiative will also optimize a Veteran/counselor interaction and provision of services. This initiative will enable us to reengineer the Quality Assurance program and improve the case selection process, reduce redundancies, provide more immediate feedback, and a more direct link to training. The VR&E manual will be re-written to be consistent with the reengineering efforts as well.

**Reference:** 38 USC 3104 and 3115

**Timeline:** August 2009-August 2014

**Owner:** Director, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service

**Action Item 1.5.2: Eliminate reliance on Legacy System (BDN)**

**Description:** VR&E relies on BDN for creating the Chapter 31 master record and paying subsistence allowance. Corporate WINRS is the primary VR&E case management system used for all other aspects of the VR&E program. However, many case management processes must currently be duplicated in BDN. This use of duplicate systems creates inefficiencies, resulting in lengthier processing time during the initial evaluation, and errors in processing which affect overall quality. The migration from BDN will result in improved timeliness and accuracy of service delivery.

**Reference:** 38 USC 3104

**Timeline:** August 2009-August 2012

**Owners:** Director, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service and Director, Office of Business Process Integration

**Objective 1.6: Enhance the Automated Certificate of Eligibility (ACE) system to improve the success rate to 75% and establish self-service access with a 50% usage rate by 2014.**

**Description:** The purpose of this objective is to increase the number of successful eligibility determinations submitted via ACE and to enable Veterans and servicemembers to obtain a Certificate of Eligibility (COE) online. This objective tasks Loan Guaranty with: 1) identifying new data sources, cleaning up existing data to improve matches, adding new functionality and business logic to the ACE system, and optimizing our business rules and processes, 2) developing a self-service portal for use by Veterans and servicemembers to obtain a COE, and 3) creating and implementing an aggressive marketing campaign targeted to Veterans, servicemembers, and our partners in the mortgage lending community.

**Action Item 1.6.1: Enhanced Automated Certificate of Eligibility (ACE) program**

**Description:** This initiative identifies new data sources and cleans up existing data to improve matches. It also adds new functionality and business logic to the ACE system. If resourced and executed as planned, this initiative will be the catalyst for changing our business process.

**Reference:** 38 U.S.C. § 3702

**Timeline:** August 2009-August 2012

**Owners:** Director, Loan Guaranty Service and Director, Office of Business Process Integration

**Action Item 1.6.2: Certificate of Eligibility (COE) on demand**

**Description:** This strategic initiative tasks Loan Guaranty with 1) developing a self-service portal for use by Veterans and servicemembers to obtain a COE, and 2) creating and implementing an aggressive marketing campaign targeted to Veterans, servicemembers, and our partners in the mortgage lending community.

**Reference:** 38 U.S.C. § 3702

**Timeline:** August 2009- August 2014

**Owners:** Director, Loan Guaranty Service and Director, Office of Business Process Integration

**GOAL 2: Provide a comprehensive transition approach that assists in seamlessly reintegrating service members and Veterans into civilian life.**



**VBA GOALS & OBJECTIVES  
FY 2009-2014**

**NOTIONAL DASHBOARD**

GOAL 2 Reintegration													
Objective 2-1 Outreach		Objective 2-2 Counseling		Objective 2-3 Employment		Objective 2-4 Chapter 31		Objective 2-5 DES Claims		Objective 2-6 VGLI		Objective 2-7 Self Service	
2.1.1	<input type="radio"/>	2.2.1	<input type="radio"/>	2.3.1	<input type="radio"/>	2.4.1	<input type="radio"/>	2.5.1	<input type="radio"/>	2.6.1	<input type="radio"/>	2.7.1	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.2	<input type="radio"/>	2.2.2	<input type="radio"/>			2.4.2	<input type="radio"/>			2.6.2	<input type="radio"/>	2.7.2	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.3	<input type="radio"/>					2.4.3	<input type="radio"/>					2.7.3	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.4	<input type="radio"/>											2.7.4	<input type="radio"/>
												2.7.5	<input type="radio"/>
												2.7.6	<input type="radio"/>
												2.7.7	<input type="radio"/>
												2.7.8	<input type="radio"/>
												2.7.9	<input type="radio"/>
												2.7.10	<input type="radio"/>

**Objective 2.1: \* Enhance service members and Veterans knowledge on how to obtain information about and apply for VA benefits by 2014.**

(Asterisk = Baseline data for this measure will be collected within 6 months of Strategic Plan implementation and used to fine tune the objective.)

**Description:** This objective provides VBA with a customer-centered approach for outreach to servicemembers, Veterans, survivors, and dependents to assist them in using their benefits. This helps VBA meet the needs of our customers and achieve our mission of providing timely and accurate benefits.

**Action Item 2.1.1: Integrated National Marketing Campaign for Post-9/11 GI Bill**

**Description:** The purpose of this initiative is to contract with a professional marketing firm to conduct an integrated national marketing campaign for the Post-9/11 GI Bill. This will be a full-scale effort to inform all eligible participants of their entitlement and provide them with accurate information so they may determine which education program is best for them. Services will include: creative, media services, interactive/news media, account management, and updating and reformatting the current Post-9/11 GI Bill website. In addition, the marketing campaign will use metrics for measuring effectiveness of specific outreach initiatives.

**Reference:** P.L. 110-252.

**Timeframe:** August 2009-August 2010

**Owner:** Director, Education Service

**Action Item 2.1.2: Joint VA/DoD Enhanced Outreach to VA Clients**

**Description:** This coordinated initiative helps servicemembers, Veterans and their dependents understand how to access and apply for VA benefits and services. The Benefits Executive Council (BEC) Communicating VA/DoD Benefits work group is expanding efforts to disseminate information on VA benefits and services. VA and DoD will determine the best communication practices and utilize similar strategies for today's 21<sup>st</sup> century Veteran. The work group anticipates sending e-mails to servicemembers and Veterans and is gathering information on Internet usage as a mode to receive materials from the VA. By 2010, the National Survey of Veterans will be completed which will serve as a benchmark measure of Veterans awareness of VA benefits and services.

**Reference:** Public Law 108-136

**Timeframe:** August 2009-March 2011

**Owner:** ADUS for Policy and Program Management

**Action Item 2.1.3: VBA Outreach and Marketing Initiatives**

**Description:** VBA will transform our communication tactics to ensure our messages/products are geared for our total Veteran population. We will use 21<sup>st</sup> century technology tools to accomplish this effort. VBA will conduct an outreach assessment to evaluate effectiveness of current initiatives. Strategically, this campaign will initially target military members at the start of their service, follow them and pick up the rest of the military community at various stages of their career life cycle and post career life. This approach will ensure this targeted client group understands VA benefits and services throughout their life.

**Reference:** Title 38, Chapter 77, Chapter 63

**Timeframe:** August 2009-August 2014

**Owner:** ADUS for Policy and Program Management

**Action Item 2.1.4: VBA Homeless Interdiction Initiative**

**Description:** This effort supports and integrates the Secretary's strategy to end homelessness among Veterans within five years. VBA Regional Offices will develop a homeless interdiction plan specific to their area of jurisdiction that identifies the segment of Veteran homelessness they can best address, specific goals for their targeted clients, and the resources required to properly execute the plan. These plans will be completed within five years after implementation of VBA's Strategic Plan. VBA Central Office will provide oversight for this effort. This oversight includes leveraging our annual Leadership Conference to continually identify best practices and ensure that plans are modified as required.

**Reference:** 38 USC 2022

**Timeframe:** August 2009-August 2014

**Owners:** ADUS for Policy and Program Management and ADUS for Field Operations

**Objective 2.2: Increase the percentage of Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment eligible applicants provided initial career counseling to 75% by 2014.**

**Description:** This objective will focus resources to increase the number of Veterans who follow through after application for VR&E Services and complete at least the first career counseling appointment. In FY 2008, 65% of Veterans who applied for VR&E Services moved into Evaluation and Planning status after completing an initial counseling appointment.

**Action Item 2.2.1: Re-branding the VR&E Program**

**Description:** Many eligible Veterans and Servicemembers are not aware of benefits and services offered by VR&E. In order to improve outreach efforts to the current population of Veterans, it is necessary to market our program more effectively. This includes re-branding the VR&E program as "VetSuccess". VR&E is expanding the VetSuccess.gov website to make it more user friendly for Veterans, Servicemembers, and employers. An extensive job database, resume builder, job seeking skills information will be part of the website redesign and training will facilitate implementation. New marketing materials will reach Chapter 33 participants, transitioning Servicemembers, new Veterans, and stakeholders. Future resources must be committed to procurement of new marketing materials and for continued development of the VetSuccess.gov website.

**Reference:** 38 USC 3104

**Timeframe:** August 2009-October 2011

**Owners:** Director, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service and Director, Office of Business Process Integration

**Action Item 2.2.2: Modernize VR&E initial orientation**

**Description:** The orientation is VR&E's initial opportunity to engage the Veteran applicants, and sets expectations for what the program has to offer. The orientation will be further standardized to insure national consistency. This undertaking will result in the orientation becoming more relevant to the current population of returning Veterans, including modernizing the communication approach, media used, and information relayed. The intent of this redesign is to insure that the orientation provides Veterans with an understanding of what the VR&E program has to offer them and motivates them to take advantage of the program.

**Reference:** 38 USC 3104

**Timeframe:** August 2009-October 2012

**Owners:** Director, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service and Director, Office of Business Process Integration

**Objective 2.3: Increase the number of Veterans completing VR&E services and entering suitable employment 15% by 2014.**

**Description:** This objective will use resources to increase employment outcomes of VR&E participants. In FY 2008, approximately 8,800 Veterans entered suitable employment. This objective will target both service delivery and employer partnerships leading to an increase in Veterans achieving their career goals.

**Action Item 2.3.1: Increase employment opportunities for Veterans nationally**

**Description:** This initiative will develop effective employment strategies for Veterans to obtain marketable job skills and enter suitable employment. Training will focus on effective rehabilitation plan development, assistive technology, and other current modalities and strategies to achieve employment outcomes. Training on Supported Employment, Assistive Technology, and Self-Employment will occur in FY 2010. A comprehensive EPSS roll-out is planned as well. Training will include State Workforce Agencies, DOL/VETS and VR&E employees. DOL/VETS and VR&E will enhance our collaborate efforts and develop common performance measures to increase employment outcomes for Chapter 31 Veterans.

**Reference:** 38 USC 3104

**Timeline:** August 2009-October 2012

**Owner:** Director, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service

**Objective 2.4: Increase the number of eligible Veterans applying for Chapter 31 services 20% by 2014.**

**Description:** The purpose of this objective is to increase Veteran and Servicemember awareness of and participation in VR&E Services. This objective will include outreach through the Chapter 36 program. It will also include VR&E staff stationed at DoD facilities, conducting targeted outreach activities and participating in events like Yellow Ribbon, Post Deployment Health Reassessment Program (PDHRA) and the joint development of an enhanced Disabled Transition Assistance Program.

**Action Item 2.4.1: Increase VA Assistance Program (VAAP) sites**

**Description:** The VA Assistance Program (VAAP) is currently operational only in San Diego, CA. This program provides a comprehensive vocational assessment to Servicemembers transitioning from active duty to civilian life, using Chapter 36 Services. Two additional VAAP sites will be selected based on volume of exiting Servicemembers. Representation of multiple military branches will be considered as well.

**Reference:** 38 USC 3697a

**Timeframe:** August 2009- September 2011

**Owners:** Director, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service and ADUS for Field Operations

**Action Item 2.4.2: Enhance VR&E outreach efforts**

**Description:** Outreach efforts to transitioning Servicemembers and Veterans will be enhanced by increasing VR&E presence at military installations, military treatment facilities, VA Medical Centers, Community Based Healthcare Organizations, Yellow Ribbon Reintegration events, Post-Deployment Health Reassessment (PDHRA) events, and other Coming Home events. Servicemembers and Veterans will be educated about the VR&E VetSuccess program and encouraged to apply for services. Outreach efforts will also be enhanced via the use of multiple media/web outlets such as YouTube, Facebook, and other methods of reaching a younger generation of Veterans. Support of travel costs and overtime will be required for field outreach staff.

**Reference:** 38 USC 3697a

**Timeframe:** August 2009-August 2014

**Owners:** Director, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service, ADUS for Field Operations and ADUS for Policy and Program Management

**Action Item 2.4.3: Redesign the Disabled Transition Assistance Program (DTAP)**

**Description:** The DTAP program will be redesigned to include multiple media outlets and will incorporate different approaches to reach various generations of exiting Servicemembers. The Integrated Project Team (IPT) for the DTAP redesign is scheduled in 2009.

**Reference:** 38 USC 3697a

**Timeframe:** August 2009-September 2011

**Owner:** Director, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service

**Objective 2.5: Reduce Disability Evaluation System claims processing time to less than 30 days from date of military discharge by 2014.**

**Description:** The Disability Evaluation System modernizes the process by which potentially unfit wounded, ill and injured service members are evaluated and awarded severance, retirement and VA disability compensation. VA will continue to work with DoD to expand this program while improving processing time to less than 30 days from date of military discharge.

**Action Item 2.5.1: Joint VA/DoD Disability Evaluation System (DES) Pilot Program**

**Description:** The DES program modernizes the process by which potentially unfit wounded, ill and injured service members are evaluated and awarded severance, retirement and VA disability compensation. The joint VA/DoD DES Pilot demonstrates our ability to pay VA disability compensation benefits within 30 days of military discharge. Full worldwide implementation of the DES pilot process will meet the objective of payment of VA disability compensation benefits within 30 days of military discharge.

**Reference:** P.L. 110-181

**Timeframe:** August 2009-August 2014

**Owners:** Director, Compensation and Pension Service, ADUS for Field Operations and ADUS for Policy and Program Management

**Objective 2.6: \* Convert 50% of separating service members, with a military disability rating of \*50% or higher, to Veterans' Group Life Insurance, by 2014.**

(Asterisk = Specific percentage may change based upon OMB required study under the PART Review, specifically designed to identify the proper targets, which is currently underway and scheduled to be completed by December 2009.)

**Description:** The purpose of this objective is to ensure separating service members with a disability rating of 50% or higher are made aware of their conversion privilege to VGLI without needing to meet health requirements. The objective seeks to have 50% of the target group convert their SGLI coverage to VGLI.

**Action Item 2.6.1: Improve Insurance Outreach**

**Description:** The efforts in this initiative will enhance the process of identifying the appropriate audience for outreach to increase the percentage of disabled recently separated service members that convert their Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance to Veterans' Group Life Insurance. By enhancing the current process, we will help ensure the audience that would most benefit from VGLI is empowered. This effort will require cooperation and coordination with the Department of Defense and VBA's Compensation and Pension Service for data mining. This effort may also require future resources to ensure success.

**Reference:** P.L. 109-233; 38 USC 1977

**Timeframe:** August 2009-September 2011

**Owners:** Director, Insurance Service and ADUS for Policy and Program Management

**Action Item 2.6.2: Transform the VGLI Program**

**Description:** Transforming the VGLI program will occur by developing a variety of possible options to broaden VGLI's appeal to disabled, recently separated service members. This effort will in turn enable us to increase the number of Veterans who are able to provide financial security to their families by converting their SGLI to VGLI. Some program changes may require additional resources in order to ensure successful legislative changes.

**Reference:** P.L. 109-233; 38 USC 1977

**Timeframe:** August 2009-September 2014

**Owner:** Director, Insurance Service

**Objective 2.7: Create a dynamic comprehensive multi-channel communications experience to access benefits and services driven by legitimate client preferences, expanded usability testing (10% letter/forms, 100% websites) and the standards outlined in the American Customer Service Index Surveys (ACSI), by 2014.**

**Description:** The purpose of this objective is to expand VBA's communication infrastructure. This objective will focus resources towards permitting Veterans the opportunity to receive information 24-7 with improved efficiency and customer service. These channels establish the front end of Veterans' paperless claims processing and assist in the baseline for electronic records management and Veteran self-service

**Action Item 2.7.1: Accelerated fielding of the Veterans Benefits Reference System (VBRS)**

**Description:** This action will implement VBRS 2.0. It will also allow Veterans to accomplish self-service inquiries on the WEB by providing accurate benefits information for all VA business lines. This supports the Customer Relations Management (CRM) vision in facilitating better self-service Knowledge Management tools to our stakeholders.

**Reference:** Customer Relations Management

**Timeframe:** August 2009-September 2011

**Owners:** Director, Facilities Access and Administration and all Service/Program Directors

**Action Item 2.7.2: Field an eBenefits Portal**

**Description:** The focus of this effort is to develop and field an online portal that will provide self-service capability to seriously wounded Veterans. The portal will provide personalization, links to other sites to apply for benefits, and customer support via email and phone. The development and fielding of this capability will be contracted and involve future resources.

**Reference:** Dole-Shalala Commission 2006

**Timeframe:** August 2009-August 2011

**Owners:** Director, Facilities Access and Administration and Director, Office of Business Process Integration

**Action Item 2.7.3: Re-design the National Automated Response System (NARS)**

**Description:** This initiative was created to re-design the NARS interactive voice response system. This action will promote self-service. NARS system will be integrated with the VA knowledge systems and web portals to provide similar functionality and to ease the internal maintenance by having one source of information for both web and voice. Our customers' ease of use will be improved significantly with natural speech capability and text to speech capability. Interfaces with VA systems for caller identification and self-service will be implemented.

**Reference:** Customer Relations Management

**Timeframe:** August 2009-June 2011

**Owners:** Director, Facilities Access and Administration

**Action Item 2.7.4: Call Center Improvement Initiative (Call Recording)**

**Description:** The purpose of this strategic action item is to incorporate call recording equipment into facilitates tracking and monitoring while assisting in functionalities such as quality reviews, training and inquiry trending.

**Reference:** Customer Relations Management

**Timeframe:** August 2009-December 2010

**Owners:** Director, Facilities Access and Administration and ADUS for Field Operations

**Action Item 2.7.5: Call Center Improvement Initiative (Workforce Management Tools)**

**Description:** By incorporating workforce management tools into the tools and information that our employees use we will become a more productive force. In short, this initiative will allow us to efficiently manage call center resources and meet performance and service level targets.

**Reference:** Customer Relations Management

**Timeframe:** August 2009-August 2010

**Owners:** Director, Facilities Access and Administration and ADUS for Field Operations

**Action Item 2.7.6: Call Center Improvement Initiative (Unified desktop)**

**Description:** This strategic initiative will focus our efforts on implementing a commercial off the shelf (COTS) unified desktop integration. The unified desktop we implement will utilize Computer Telephony Integration (CTI). This capability will provide automated delivery of Veteran's information from VA data systems to the call agent's desktop. In practice, this will provide client contact information and history to our call center agents. This will also enhance our ability to transfer the same information between call centers and agents. The resulting improvements will improve our client contact experience and significantly decrease our call handling time.

**Reference:** Customer Relations Management

**Timeframe:** August 2009-December 2014

**Owners:** Director Facilities Access and Administration; ADUS for Field Operations; Director, Office of Business Process Integration and all Service/Program Directors

**Action Item 2.7.7: Call Center Improvement (Computer Telephony Integration (CTI) Pilot**

**Description:** This initiative supports Phase I of the long-term CRM project. The Inquiry Routing Information System Project Team is supporting the effort of Education Service to bring CTI to the Muskogee Call center as a proof-of-concept study. The CTI will enable education call agents to pull up a Veteran's education master record data before the caller is connected to the call agent. Agents will be more prepared to answer the caller's questions at the time of connection.

**Reference:** Customer Relations Management

**Timeframe:** August 2009-December 2014

**Owners:** Director, Facilities Access and Administration; ADUS for Field Operations; Director, Office of Business Process Integration and all Service/Program Directors

**Action Item 2.7.8: Web Improvement and Presence Initiative (VBA Internet Template Implementation Project)**

**Description:** This project will develop and implement Internet site templates for VBA regional offices and business lines. The templates will improve consistency of content, ease of navigation, compliance with federal and agency mandates, and reduce the number of Web pages.

**Reference:** Customer Relations Management

**Timeframe:** September 2009-September 2013

**Owners:** Director, Facilities Access and Administration and ADUS for Policy and Program Management

**Action Item 2.7.9:** Web Improvement and Presence Initiative (American Customer Satisfaction Survey / Web Survey)

**Description:** VBA must prepare over time to begin to apply the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) survey on VBA Internet Web pages. The survey in this initiative will provide information about key site audiences, performance of individual site components, satisfaction, and future behaviors. The results will allow VBA to identify and implement site improvements.

**Reference:** Customer Relations Management

**Timeframe:** August 2009-July 2013

**Owners:** Director, Facilities Access and Administration and ADUS for Policy and Program Management

**Action Item 2.7.10:** Web Improvement and Presence Initiative (Social Media & One-VA Collaboration)

**Description:** If VBA intends to communicate to a 21<sup>st</sup> century audience then we must use resources to establish a presence on external social media sites. Currently, VBA has a presence on YouTube. Our leadership team will continue to determine which sites are most effective and appropriate for VBA. In addition, content will be coordinated with the Office of Policy and Program Management and VBA lines of business. The American Customer Satisfaction Index survey will provide valuable user feedback that will enable VBA to determine content that is relevant and Veteran-focused.

**Reference:** Customer Relations Management

**Timeframe:** August 2009-September 2010

**Owner:** ADUS for Policy and Program Management

**GOAL 3: Recruit, develop and retain a highly qualified diverse workforce.**



**VBA GOALS & OBJECTIVES**

**FY 2009-2014**

**NOTIONAL DASHBOARD**

GOAL 3 Workforce									
Objective 3-1 Vet Hiring		Objective 3-2 Development		Objective 3-3 Skill Certs		Objective 3-4 Dispute Resolution		Objective 3-5 Worker's Comp	
3.1.1	<input type="radio"/>	3.2.1	<input type="radio"/>	3.3.1	<input type="radio"/>	3.4.1	<input type="radio"/>	3.5.1	<input type="radio"/>
						3.4.2	<input type="radio"/>	3.5.2	<input type="radio"/>
								3.5.3	<input type="radio"/>

**Objective 3.1: Increase VBA-wide Veteran hiring rates (5% above FY-08 levels), by 2014.**

**Description:** As an organization dedicated to providing service to Veterans and their families, this objective aims to increase the number of Veteran employees.

**Action Item 3.1.1: Increase Marketing of VBA Career Opportunities to Expand the Pool of Veteran Applicants**

**Description:** The purpose of this initiative is to increase marketing and publicizing of VBA career opportunities to Veterans at career fairs, reserve units, military installations and colleges/universities. Marketing of VBA positions and career opportunities should include utilizations of various media outlets such as web casts, radio and military publications (e.g Navy Times, Army Times, etc.) and effective coordination with VA Regional Veteran Employment Coordinator and other Veteran organizations. The VBA could explore possible contracting with private marketing firms to widen the scope of advertising and reduce need for internal resources.

**Reference:** VA Directive 5005

**Timeframe:** October 2009-December 2014

**Owner:** Director for Human Resources

**Objective 3.2: Establish entry level and advanced training linked to job skill competencies for 100% of nationally-standardized positions by 2014.**

**Description:** VBA will define detailed competencies for nationally-standardized positions so that employees and their supervisors can readily identify the “gap” areas for each employee where training should be focused, based upon the competencies required for specific positions. The continuing action is for the VBA to develop nationally-standardized training materials for each competency at entry- and advanced-levels to establish a training continuum for employees as their experience increases.

**Action Item 3.2.1: Establish job position skill competencies for nationally-standardized positions with journey-level training products for each competency.**

**Description:** To best support productivity and accuracy, entry-level and continuing training are properly focused on filling gaps in employees’ skills or proficiency. A necessary first step is to identify the job competencies of full-performance level positions and input them to VA-LMS. The second step is to identify or create training products for each competency. Using VA-LMS, supervisors can identify the competency gaps of their employees and assign relevant training products. This action will use existing task analyses and SME focus-groups to identify competencies for C&P service (VSRs, DROs, and LIEs), for VR&E (Counselor and Coordinators), for Education Service (VCEs, Clerks, and Coordinators), for Insurance Service (Examiners, Specialist) and Loan Guaranty (Appraisers, LP, LS, ES, LALS, and SAH Agents).

**Reference:** 5 USC 4103; EO. No. 11348 (Further Training of Government Employees)

**Timeframe:** November 2009 – August 2013

**Owners:** Director, Employee Development and Training and all Service Program Directors

**Objective 3.3: Establish skill certification for 100% of VBA employee positions in the five business lines that are tasked with making key decisions on benefit claims, by 2014.**

**Description:** This objective ensures that core decision-makers are competent, proficient, and qualified to perform their assigned tasks. This effort links job proficiency to pay grade and raises the skill level of core decision-makers which produces consistency in decision making. As a result, it helps VBA deliver timely and accurate benefits.

**Action Item 3.3.1: Skills Certification Program and Career Ladder Position Accreditation**

**Description:** The purpose of the action item is to improve organizational performance and professionalism for claims personnel. This comprehensive position-specific training program will ensure that Veteran’s Claims Examiners and Insurance Specialist possess all of the required knowledge and skills they need for decision making. A codified procedure will be in place to ensure that employees in career ladder positions meet performance requirements for promotion to the next grade. Claims Examiners and Insurance Specialists will be required to pass each module of the training program with a designated minimum score. This will give VBA the highly qualified workforce that is needed to process claims.

**Reference:** 5 USC 4103

**Timeframe:** August 2009-August 2014

**Owners:** ADUS for Policy and Program Management; Director, Employee Education and Training and all Service/Program Directors

**Objective 3.4: Increase Alternative Dispute Resolution rate to 55% by 2014.**

**Description:** This objective will focus the collective capabilities of VBA employees on the Alternative Dispute Resolution approach in order to enhance resolution opportunities early in the workplace. VBA policy mandates that Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) be utilized to resolve Equal Employment Opportunity workplace disputes. Mediation and other resolution methods will be offered to VBA employees to assist them in resolving disputes as early as possible. These tools help parties reach mutually agreeable resolutions by facilitating better communication and helping explore possible solutions. The effective use of mediation results in timelier, less costly resolutions, and reduces the possibility of litigation.

**Action Item 3.4.1: Implement the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Pilot.**

**Description:** This initiative incorporates the VA "Strategic Plan for Managing Workplace Disputes". During the lifecycle of this pilot, VA ADR Subject Matter Experts will work closely with management and employees at selected offices to proactively change the organizational culture when dealing with workplace disputes. The primary intent of the pilot is to further increase awareness and utilization of the ADR approach to resolve disputes before discrimination is alleged and complaints filed. Our focus is to reengineer the role of EEO Managers to become Workplace Dispute Resolution Specialists. The pilot will stress the importance of attaining successful collaboration amongst management, union, and employees in the ADR process; senior leader commitment; and using best training practices in mediation and facilitation skills. A comprehensive evaluation to include a climate survey will be conducted at the conclusion of the pilot to measure its effectiveness before implementation nationwide.

**Reference:** Equal Employment Opportunity commission MD715

**Timeframe:** September 2009 – October 2010

**Owner:** ADUS for Management

**Action Item 3.4.2: VBA Employee Satisfaction Survey**

**Description:** The purpose of this initiative is to focus resources on conducting an employee climate survey. The survey will provide an organizational assessment of VBA's workplace culture and employee satisfaction. Feedback will provide relevant data to establish baselines and set strategic targets.

**Reference:** Equal Employment Opportunity Commission MD715

**Timeframe:** Sep 2010-Sep 2014

**Owner:** ADUS for Management

**Objective 3.5: Improve management of VBA's Workers' Compensation Program (WCP) by increasing program awareness and cost-effectiveness; by achieving a 5% cost reduction (below the 2008 chargeback costs) by 2014.**

**Description:** The purpose of this objective is to improve management of VBA's Workers' Compensation Program (WCP). Effective program management reduces the negative impact on VBA's ability to carry out its mission by reducing lost production days and compensation costs. Through increased program awareness and education, VBA managers, HR professionals, and employees gain a greater understanding of their WCP roles and responsibilities. This will consequently result in improved timeliness of filing and processing claims, aggressive case management to facilitate employee recovery by promoting return to suitable employment, and an overall cost-effective program. Ultimately, the underlying intent of this objective is to promote a productive and healthy workforce that is prepared to serve our nation's Veterans.

**Action Item 3.5.1: Advanced Forms Processing Initiative**

**Description:** The purpose of this initiative is to focus resources on processing 90% of forms CA-1 & CA-2 filed within 14 calendar days of receipt by 2012. Through the use of the Workers' Compensation Management Information System (WC/MIS), transmission of forms CA-1 & CA-2 will be made electronically to the Department of Labor. These changes should reduce processing time, eliminate the loss of documents, and enable better tracking of claims. This will ensure the employee receives timely and appropriate medical care and compensation.

**Reference:** Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA)

**Timeframe:** August 2009 – January 2012

**Owner:** Director for Human Resources

**Action Item 3.5.2: Enhanced Management of OWCP VBA Cases**

**Description:** The purpose of this initiative is to focus resources on enhanced reviewing and management of 100% of active WC cases and intervene at the appropriate time to assist injured employees to return to suitable employment. Through assertive monitoring of medical evidence and dispute of questionable claims, HR Practitioners can better determine which cases should be discussed with the Department of Labor to initiate returning partially-injured and ill employees to suitable employment. Due to the nature of types of cases, reviews may be necessary monthly, quarterly, annually, or as needed. This will facilitate employee recovery and reduce compensation costs by promoting return to suitable employment.

**Reference:** Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA)

**Timeframe:** August 2009 – January 2012

**Owner:** Director for Human Resources

**Action Item 3.5.3: Enhance Training & Education for VBA Leadership, HR Practitioners, and Employees**

**Description:** Enhance training and education of VBA Leaders and HR Practitioners on how to properly manage and administer VBA's Workers' Compensation Program, as well as educate VBA employees on their legal rights and obligations when injured on the job. All will be educated and kept current on policy changes through formal training, VBA guidance letters, pamphlets, group/office meetings with local HR practitioners, one-on-one counseling, and/or via OHR website postings of important WC information. As stewards and beneficiaries of the program, this will ensure proper investigation, documentation, reporting, and administration of the WCP.

**Reference:** Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA)

**Timeframe:** August 2009 – January 2012

**Owner:** Director for Human Resources

**ENABLING GOAL:** Improve VBA Infrastructure and Information Technology (systems, processes) to enable employees/operations to provide timely and accurate service



**VBA GOALS & OBJECTIVES**

**FY 2009-2014**

**NOTIONAL DASHBOARD**

<b>ENABLING - GOAL</b> <b>Physical Infrastructure &amp; Information Technology</b>							
Objective E-1 Infrastructure		Objective E-2 Paperless Process		Objective E-3 Standardization		Objective E-4 Rules Based	
E 1.1	<input type="radio"/>	E 2.1	<input type="radio"/>	E 3.1	<input type="radio"/>	E 4.1	<input type="radio"/>
E 1.2	<input type="radio"/>						
E 1.3	<input type="radio"/>						
E 1.4	<input type="radio"/>						

**Objective E 1:** Sustain a 5% physical infrastructure upgrade rate (per year) in order to enhance our ability to support highly efficient modern claims processes.

**Description:** The purpose of this objective is to focus resources on the comprehensive facilities infrastructure upgrade program. This program will improve service and access for Veterans, emphasize paperless and geographically moveable claims processing, 21<sup>st</sup> century operational efficiency, reduce rent/operating costs, and lead the VA in the sustainable building initiatives.

**Action Item E 1.1:** Continuity of Operations (COOP) and Emergency Management Site Visits

**Description:** This initiative is intended to focus resources on conducting five annual survey visits to review the facility safety and security deficiencies, evaluate COOP Plans, and perform training exercises. Areas of focus will include all functions and duties at the regional office, as well as the supporting functions performed by the staff.

**Reference:** Federal Continuity Directive 1

**Timeframe:** August 2009-July 2014

**Owner:** Director, Facilities Access and Administration

**Action Item E 1.2: Facility Condition Assessment (FCA)**

**Description:** The purpose of this initiative is to conduct FCAs at 2 VBA owned stations per year. The FCA provides a snap shot of the condition of each owned facility and a plan of action to correct deficiencies to maintain an environment that is functional and efficient. The FCA report includes a building description, site survey findings, condition assessment, a five-year maintenance plan, a utility review, and an energy audit. The FCA evaluates infrastructure and system deficiencies by architectural, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and transport categories.

**Reference:** Executive Order 13327, Federal Real Property Asset Management and Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriation

**Timeframe:** October 2010-October 2014

**Owner:** Director, Facilities Access and Administration

**Action Item E 1.3: Regional Office Relocations/Renovations**

**Description:** VBA will consolidate its efforts to relocate Regional Offices to lease new or renovate existing facilities. There are facilities that require significant investment for near term renovation and upgrade. Relocating to new facilities and upgrading existing facilities will permit a modernized environment to efficiently and effectively improve business processes. In addition, this initiative will provide a safe and healthy work environment for our employees and Veterans.

**Reference:** Executive Order 13327, Federal Real Property Asset Management and Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriation

**Timeframe:** October 2009-September 2013

**Owners:** Director, Facilities Access and Administration and ADUS for Field Operations

**Action Item E 1.4: American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Green Solutions**

**Description:** The purpose of Green Solutions is to ensure future resources focus on the functional and environmental sound solutions in GSA Federal buildings in Portland, San Juan, and St. Paul. These facilities will be undergoing infrastructure repairs and alterations to enhance long-term growth in energy-efficient technologies, alternative energy solutions and green building solutions.

**Reference:** American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009

**Timeframe:** October 2009-January 2012

**Owners:** Director, Facilities Access and Administration and ADUS for Field Operations

**Objective E 2: \* Migrate strategically from VBA's paper-intensive claims process to an integrated claims process supported with electronic data and services by 2014; with substantive delivery of core C&P claims processing capabilities by 2012.**

*(Asterisk: Baseline will be established within 6 months, pending assessment under Business Transformation contract VBA acceptance of Lead Systems Integrator's transition and sequencing plan).*

**Description:** VA's current benefits claims process is based on the compilation, movement and storage of paper documents, which support Veterans' claims for benefits. This process is inefficient and costly, and puts sensitive Veteran data at risk as paper files are physically moved throughout the process. VBA's vision of successfully developing and implementing the Paperless Delivery of Veterans Benefits initiative is dependent on the successful incorporation of appropriate IT tools within a transformed business process. Exploiting these technologies will support our efforts to effectively manage claims processing workload without the need to physically move paper files.

**Action Item E 2.1: Implementation of Paperless Capabilities**

**Description:** This action will develop multiple release technical data packages (TDP) for the Paperless Initiative. VA will acquire Application Developer Contractor(s) (ADC) for the build portion of the program as defined by each TDP. Capability modules will be tested and implemented as defined by VBA Leadership.

**Reference:** Memorandum from the Acting Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs, November 8, 2007

**Timeframe:** August 2009 – August 2014

**Owner:** Director, Office of Business Process Integration

**Objective E 3: \* Improve ease of use, consistency, and reliability of VBA business applications through integration and standardization of common services by 2014.**

*(Asterisk: Baseline will be established within 6 months, pending VBA identification and concurrence on processes affected by this objective)*

**Description:** VBA's current set of core business software applications and systems, which support Veterans benefits delivery by the five lines of business, is composed of a vast array of systems which were developed and deployed over a 30 year period. Due to the significant differences in technical platforms and obsolescence, the maintenance of these systems has increasingly become more expensive and resource intensive. For investment management purposes, as well as a desire for transformation of VBA business processes, VBA seeks to strategically improve ease of use, consistency, and reliability of VBA business applications through integration and standardization of common services by 2014.

**Action Item E 3.1: Integration and Standardization of Common Services**

**Description:** This action will incorporate an end-to-end examination of VBA business applications and services which will: (a) determine which applications are Core Business Applications for each line of business, (b) review life cycle status of each software application, and (c) develop an integrated investment strategy and schedule. A transition and sequencing plan will guide the re-hosting of core VBA business applications and services. Upon completion of re-hosting, an integrated deployment plan will be implemented to test and release these applications and services into production.

**Reference:** VA Enterprise Architecture

**Timeframe:** August 2009 - July 2014

**Owner:** Director, Office of Business Process Integration

**Objective E 4: Transition to a rules-based processing solution for educational assistance programs by 2014.**

**Description:** The purpose of this objective is to transition education claims processing to a rules-based processing solution. Rules-based processing is a modern Information Technology solution that processes a significant number of benefit claims without human intervention. While the benefits are many, rules-based processing provides the single biggest impact towards reaching goals established for timeliness and accuracy.

**Action Item E 4.1: Rules Based Information Technology (IT) Solution**

**Description:** The purpose of this action item is to develop an automated education payment system to process claims for all education programs. This system will succeed The Education Expert System and be able to process claims for education benefits under the Post-9/11 GI Bill and all other education programs. Development of an end-to-end information technology solution that utilizes rules-based industry standard technology for the processing and delivery of education benefits by 2014 will require future program management and information technology support.

**Reference:** P.L. 110-252.

**Timeframe:** August 2009-January 2014

**Owner:** Director, Education Service

## **APPENDIX 1: Glossary of Strategic Planning Terms**

**Strategic Plan:** a course of action that blends the leader's vision with the employees' thought leadership, commitment and compromise. At the same time, the plan is a catalyst for enhancing an organizations' capability to accomplish its mission.

**Vision:** a vivid description of the preferred future of the organization.

**Mission:** a statement of the overall purpose of an organization.

**Values:** general guidelines that set the foundation for how an organization will operate.

**Themes:** distinct, recurring, and unifying qualities or ideas that supports the vision.

**Goals:** broad, long-term aims that define accomplishment of the Vision.

**Goal Verbs:** words that evoke positive achievement like...Engage, Achieve, Attain, Be, Lead, Maximize, Maintain, Provide, Promote, etc.

**Objectives:** are specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, timely targets that assist in quantifying the accomplishment of a goal over a specified period.

**Objective Verbs:** words that evoke measurement like...Increase, Reduce, Achieve, Maintain, Have, Limit, etc.

**Action Item:** a strategic initiative that is multi-year, requires future resources, and not an on going / routine requirement. An action item must be critical to accomplish the strategic objective. Implementing an action item may require significant thought leadership, time, money, human capital and risk. The action item format is: title, description (the purpose), reference (by what authority), timeframe (what interval) and owner (the resource advocate).

## APPENDIX 2: VBA Strategic Plan Governance

The VBA Strategic Plan will be governed by the following guidelines:

- A. Strategic Planning Board:** The VBA strategic plan will be governed by the Strategic Planning Board (SPB). The SPB is responsible for oversight. The SPB is expected to provide the USB periodic recommendations.
- B. Board Members:** The SPB consist of the USB, DUSB, CoS, Service/Program Directors (and deputies), Area Directors and the Lead Strategic Planner.
- C. SPB Progress Reviews:** The SPB will meet once every 90-120 days to review the strategic action items. At the conclusion of this meeting, the SPB will provide USB with recommendations and a dashboard.
- D. SPB Leadership Vector Check:** The SPB will conduct a leadership vector check once a year to review the plan's objectives. At the conclusion of this meeting, the SPB will provide USB with recommendations and a dashboard.
- E. SPB Strategic Planning Work Shop:** The SPB will conduct a biennial strategic planning workshop (i.e. every two years). The purpose of this one day, offsite workshop, will be to revisit the strategic plan's goals and objectives; modifying them to enhance the plan. At the conclusion of this workshop, the SPB will provide the USB with recommendations.
- F. Action Item Owners:** Owners are the lead SPB member(s) assigned to provide oversight of a specific action item. The owner(s) will determine the best course of action to complete their action item and its dashboard status.
- G. VBA Lead Strategic Planner:** Jeff "Boomer" Moragne, Office of the USB
- H. Dashboard:** The dashboard color definitions are:

-  **Green:** The strategic goal, objective or action item is "on track" and should achieve its planned end state.
-  **Yellow:** The strategic goal, objective or action item is "at risk" of not achieving its planned end state.
-  **Red:** The strategic goal, objective or action item is "off track" and is unlikely to achieve its planned end state.
-  **Clear:** The strategic goal, objective or action item has not sufficiently matured to the point where it can be responsibly measured.

# APPENDIX 3: VBA Strategic Plan Dashboard



## VBA GOALS & OBJECTIVES FY 2009-2014 NOTIONAL DASHBOARD

GOAL 1 Client Expectations											
Objective 1-1 Compensation Claims		Objective 1-2 Pension Claims		Objective 1-3 Appeals		Objective 1-4 EDU Claims		Objective 1-5 VR&E Services		Objective 1-6 LGY Enhanced ACE	
1.1.1	<input type="radio"/>	1.2.1	<input type="radio"/>	1.3.1	<input type="radio"/>	1.4.1	<input type="radio"/>	1.5.1	<input type="radio"/>	1.6.1	<input type="radio"/>
1.1.2	<input type="radio"/>					1.4.2	<input type="radio"/>	1.5.2	<input type="radio"/>	1.6.2	<input type="radio"/>
1.1.3	<input type="radio"/>					1.4.3	<input type="radio"/>				
1.1.4	<input type="radio"/>										
1.1.5	<input type="radio"/>										
1.1.6	<input type="radio"/>										



## VBA GOALS & OBJECTIVES FY 2009-2014 NOTIONAL DASHBOARD

GOAL 2 Reintegration													
Objective 2-1 Outreach		Objective 2-2 Counseling		Objective 2-3 Employment		Objective 2-4 Chapter 31		Objective 2-5 DES Claims		Objective 2-6 VGLI		Objective 2-7 Self Service	
2.1.1	<input type="radio"/>	2.2.1	<input type="radio"/>	2.3.1	<input type="radio"/>	2.4.1	<input type="radio"/>	2.5.1	<input type="radio"/>	2.6.1	<input type="radio"/>	2.7.1	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.2	<input type="radio"/>	2.2.2	<input type="radio"/>			2.4.2	<input type="radio"/>			2.6.2	<input type="radio"/>	2.7.2	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.3	<input type="radio"/>					2.4.3	<input type="radio"/>					2.7.3	<input type="radio"/>
2.1.4	<input type="radio"/>											2.7.4	<input type="radio"/>
												2.7.5	<input type="radio"/>
												2.7.6	<input type="radio"/>
												2.7.7	<input type="radio"/>
												2.7.8	<input type="radio"/>
												2.7.9	<input type="radio"/>
												2.7.10	<input type="radio"/>

# APPENDIX 3:

# VBA Strategic Plan Dashboard (cont.)



## VBA GOALS & OBJECTIVES

FY 2009-2014

NOTIONAL DASHBOARD

GOAL 3 Workforce									
Objective 3-1 Vet Hiring		Objective 3-2 Development		Objective 3-3 Skill Certs		Objective 3-4 Dispute Resolution		Objective 3-5 Worker's Comp	
3.1.1	<input type="radio"/>	3.2.1	<input type="radio"/>	3.3.1	<input type="radio"/>	3.4.1	<input type="radio"/>	3.5.1	<input type="radio"/>
						3.4.2	<input type="radio"/>	3.5.2	<input type="radio"/>
								3.5.3	<input type="radio"/>



## VBA GOALS & OBJECTIVES

FY 2009-2014

NOTIONAL DASHBOARD

### ENABLING - GOAL Physical Infrastructure & Information Technology

Objective E-1 Infrastructure		Objective E-2 Paperless Process		Objective E-3 Standardization		Objective E-4 Rules Based	
E 1.1	<input type="radio"/>	E 2.1	<input type="radio"/>	E 3.1	<input type="radio"/>	E 4.1	<input type="radio"/>
E 1.2	<input type="radio"/>						
E 1.3	<input type="radio"/>						
E 1.4	<input type="radio"/>						

## **APPENDIX 4: Quick Reference Guide**

**GOAL 1: Achieve client expectations for timeliness, consistency, and accuracy in benefits delivery.**

**Objective 1.1: Improve disability compensation by processing claims in 125 days with a 93% accuracy rate by 2014.**

Action Item 1.1.1: VA/DoD Electronic Eligibility Record

Action Item 1.1.2: Veteran-Centric Claims Processing Improvement

Action Item 1.1.3: VBA-VHA Disability Examination Integration

Action Item 1.1.4: Enhance National Quality Assurance Program

Action Item 1.1.5: VBA Digital Review Initiative

Action Item 1.1.6: VA Schedule For Rating Disabilities (VASRD) Modernization

**Objective 1.2: Improve pension entitlement determinations by processing these cases in 90 days with a 95 % accuracy rate by 2014.**

Action Item 1.2.1: Pension Rules-Based Self-Certification

**Objective 1.3: Improve timeliness of appeals processing, in both the average days to issue a the Statement of the Case (SOC) after receiving a Notice of Disagreement (NOD), and average days to certify to the Board of Veterans Appeals by 10% by 2014.**

Action Item 1.3.1: Appeals Resource Center (ARC) Brokering Project

**Objective 1.4: Significantly enhance education service delivery by reducing claims processing time (original/10 days, supplemental/ 7 days) and achieving a 97% accuracy rate by 2014.**

Action Item 1.4.1: Long-Term Solution for Processing Post-9/11 GI Bill Claims

Action Item 1.4.2: Transforming Existing Training Modalities

**Objective 1.5: Improve Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment services timeliness and quality by reducing days to entitlement to 40 days and improving EPRSA to 92% by 2014.**

Action Item 1.5.1: Business Process Reengineering (BPR)

Action Item 1.5.2: Eliminate reliance on Legacy System (BDN)

**Objective 1.6: Enhance the Automated Certificate of Eligibility (ACE) system to improve the success rate to 75% and establish self-service access with a 50% usage rate by 2014.**

Action Item 1.6.1: Enhanced Automated Certificate of Eligibility (ACE) program

Action Item 1.6.2: Certificate of Eligibility (COE) on demand

## Quick Reference Guide

**GOAL 2:** Provide a comprehensive transition approach that assists in seamlessly reintegrating service members and Veterans into civilian life.

**Objective 2.1:** \* Enhance service members and Veterans know how to obtain information about and apply for VA benefits by 2014.

Action Item 2.1.1: Integrated National Marketing Campaign for Post-9/11 GI Bill

Action Item 2.1.2: Joint VA/DoD Enhanced Outreach to VA Clients

Action Item 2.1.3: VBA Outreach and Marketing Initiatives

Action Item 2.1.4: VBA Homeless Interdiction Initiative

**Objective 2.2:** Increase the percentage of Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment eligible applicants provided initial career counseling to 75% by 2014.

Action Item 2.2.1: Re-branding the VR&E Program

Action Item 2.2.2: Modernize VR&E initial orientation

**Objective 2.3:** Increase the number of Veterans completing VR&E services and entering suitable employment 15% by 2014.

Action Item 2.3.1: Increase employment opportunities for Veterans nationally

**Objective 2.4:** Increase the eligible Veterans applying for Ch 31 services 20% by 2014.

Action Item 2.4.1: Increase VA Assistance Program (VAAP) sites

Action Item 2.4.2: Enhance VR&E outreach efforts

Action Item 2.4.3: Redesign the Disabled Transition Assistance Program (DTAP)

**Objective 2.5:** Reduce Disability Evaluation System claims processing time to less than 30 days from date of military discharge by 2014.

Action Item 2.5.1: Joint VA/DoD Disability Evaluation System (DES) Pilot Program

**Objective 2.6:** \* Convert 50% of separating service members, with a military disability rating of \*50% or higher, to Veterans' Group Life Insurance, by 2014.

Action Item 2.6.1: Improve Insurance Outreach

Action Item 2.6.2: Transform the VGLI Program

**Objective 2.7:** Create a dynamic comprehensive multi-channel communications experience to access benefits and services driven by legitimate client preferences, expanded usability testing (10% letter/forms, 100% websites) and the standards outlined in the American Customer Service Index Surveys (ACSI), by 2014.

Action Item 2.7.1: Accelerated fielding of the Veterans Benefits Reference System

Action Item 2.7.2: Field an eBenefits Portal

Action Item 2.7.3: Re-design the National Automated Response System (NARS)

Action Item 2.7.4: Call Center Improvement Initiative (Call Recording)

Action Item 2.7.5: Call Center Improvement Initiative (Workforce Management Tools)

Action Item 2.7.6: Call Center Improvement Initiative (Unified desktop)

Action Item 2.7.7: Call Center Improvement (Computer Telephony Integration (CTI) Pilot

Action Item 2.7.8: VBA Internet Template Implementation Project

Action Item 2.7.9: American Customer Satisfaction Survey / Web Survey

Action Item 2.7.10: Web Improvement and Presence Initiative (Social Media)

## Quick Reference Guide

**GOAL 3:** Recruit, develop and retain a highly qualified diverse workforce.

**Objective 3.1:** Increase VBA-wide Veteran hiring rates (5% above FY-08 levels), by 2014.

**Action Item 3.1.1:** Increase Marketing of VBA Career Opportunities to Expand the Pool of Veteran Applicants

**Objective 3.2:** Establish entry level and advanced training linked to job skill competencies for 100% of nationally standardized positions by 2014.

**Action Item 3.2.1:** Establish job position skill competencies for nationally standardized positions with journey-level training products for each competency.

**Objective 3.3:** Establish skill certification for 100% of VBA employee positions in the five business lines that are tasked with making key decisions on benefit claims, by 2014.

**Action Item 3.3.1:** Skills Certification Program and Career Ladder Position Accreditation

**Objective 3.4:** Increase VBA Alternative Dispute Resolution offer rate to 90% by 2014.

**Action Item 3.4.1** Implement the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Pilot

**Action Item 3.4.2:** VBA Employee Satisfaction Survey

**Objective 3.5:** Improve management of VBA's Workers' Compensation Program (WCP) by increasing program awareness and cost-effectiveness; through achieving a 5% cost reduction (below the 2008 chargeback costs) by 2014.

**Action Item 3.5.1:** Advanced Forms Processing Initiative

**Action Item 3.5.2:** Enhanced Management of OWCP VBA Cases

**Action Item 3.5.3:** Enhance Training & Education for VBA Employees

## Quick Reference Guide

**ENABLING GOAL:** Improve VBA Infrastructure and Information Technology (systems, processes) to enable employees/operations to provide timely and accurate service

**Objective E 1:** Sustain a 5% physical infrastructure upgrade rate (per year) in order to enhance our ability to support highly efficient modern claims processes.

Action Item E 1.1: Continuity of Operations and Emergency Management Site Visits

Action Item E 1.2: Facility Condition Assessment (FCA)

Action Item E 1.3: Regional Office Relocations/Renovations

Action Item E 1.4: American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Green Solutions

**Objective E 2:** \* Migrate strategically from VBA's paper-intensive claims process to an integrated claims process supported with electronic data and services by 2014; with substantive delivery of core C&P claims processing capabilities by 2012.

Action Item E 2.1: Implementation of Paperless Capabilities

**Objective E 3:** \* Improve ease of use, consistency, and reliability of VBA business applications through integration and standardization of common services by 2014.

Action Item E 3.1: Integration and Standardization of Common Services

**Objective E 4:** Transition to a rules-based processing solution for educational assistance programs by 2014.

Action Item E 4.1: Rules Based Information Technology (IT) Solution

## Quick Reference Guide



# VBA Strategic Plan “Action Items Across Time”

	1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year	5th Year	( <u>Single Owner / Joint Ownership</u> )
OBPI		2.2.1; <b>2.7.2</b>	1.5.2; 1.6.1; 2.2.2		1.1.1; <b>1.1.2</b> ; 1.1.3; 1.1.5; 1.6.2; 2.7.7; <b>E 2.1; E 3.1</b>	OBPI (2/11)
20P	<b>2.7.10</b>	<b>2.1.2</b>	2.4.2	2.7.8; 2.7.9	1.1.1; <b>2.1.3</b> ; 2.1.4; 2.5.1; 3.3.1;	20P (3/7)
C&P		2.6.1; 2.7.1	2.4.2	3.2.1	<b>1.1.1</b> ; 1.1.2, <b>1.1.3; 1.1.4; 1.1.5; 1.1.6</b> ; 1.1.7; <b>1.2.1; 2.5.1</b> ; 2.7.6; 2.7.7; 3.3.1	C&P (3/14)
LGY		2.7.1	<b>1.6.1</b> ; 2.4.2	3.2.1	<b>1.6.2</b> ; 2.7.6, 2.7.7; 3.3.1	LGY (0/9)
EDU		<b>1.4.1; 2.1.1</b> ; 2.7.1	2.4.2	3.2.1	<b>1.4.2</b> ; 2.7.6; 2.7.7; 3.3.1; <b>E 4.1</b>	EDU (4/7)
VRE		<b>2.2.1; 2.4.3</b> ; 2.7.1	<b>1.5.2; 2.2.2; 2.3.1;</b> <b>2.4.1; 2.4.2</b>	3.2.1	<b>1.5.1</b> ; 2.7.6; 2.7.7; 3.3.1	VRE (3/11)
INS		<b>2.6.1</b> ; 2.7.1	2.4.2	3.2.1	<b>2.6.2</b> ; 2.7.6, 2.7.7; 3.3.1	INS (1/8)
OFO	<b>1.3.1</b>	2.7.4; 2.7.5	2.4.1; 2.4.2; E 1.4	E 1.3	<b>2.1.4</b> ; 2.5.1; 2.7.6; 2.7.7	OFO (1/10)
20M	<b>3.4.1</b>				<b>3.4.2</b>	20M (2/0)
HR			<b>3.5.1; 3.5.2, 3.5.3</b>		<b>3.1.1</b>	HR (4/0)
FAA		<b>2.7.1; 2.7.2; 2.7.3;</b> <b>2.7.4; 2.7.5</b>	<b>E 1.4</b>	<b>2.7.8; 2.7.9; E 1.3</b>	<b>2.7.6; 2.7.7; E 1.1; E 1.2</b>	FAA (3/10)
EDT				<b>3.2.1</b>	<b>3.3.1</b>	EDT (0/3)
	<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26/53</b>

Color Key:  
**Blue** = Single Owner  
**Black** = Joint Owners  
**Green** = Lead Joint Owner