

# Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E)



National Association of Veterans Program  
Administrators (NAVPA) 2015 Conference  
October 6, 2015

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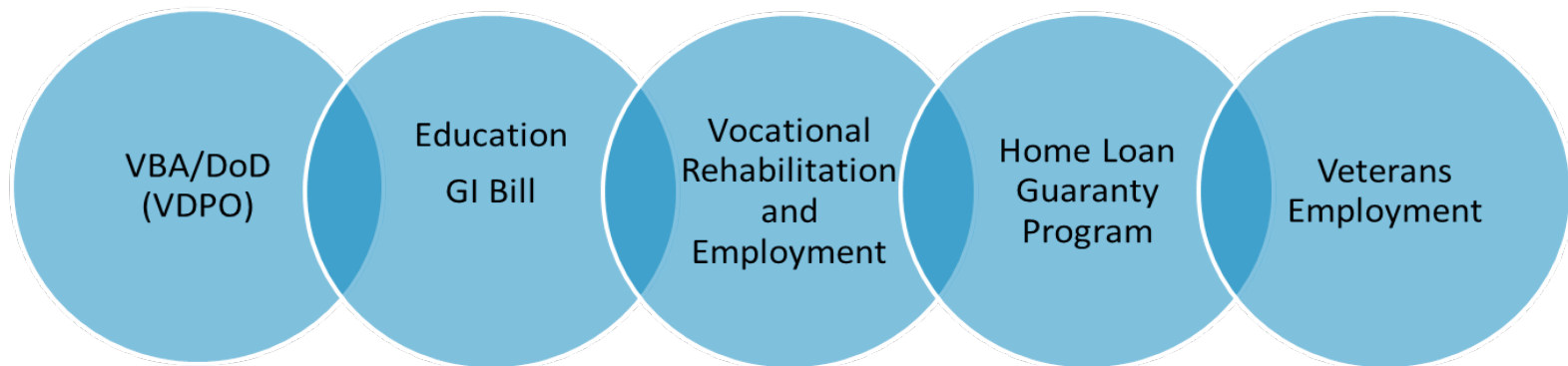


U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs



# Office of Economic Opportunity

*“Helping Veterans Attain Personal and Economic Success”*



**Strategic Goal #1: Promote employment opportunities for Veterans**

**Strategic Goal #2: Enhance opportunities for Veterans to obtain knowledge and skills**

**Strategic Goal #3: Provide opportunities for Veterans to obtain, retain and adapt a home**

**Strategic Goal #4: Enable effective transition for Servicemembers**



# Mission

The mission of Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) is to help Veterans with service-connected disabilities and an employment handicap prepare for, find, and maintain suitable careers

For Veterans with service-connected disabilities so severe that they cannot immediately consider work, VR&E provides services to improve their ability to live as independently as possible



## Key Services Provided

- VR&E employs nearly 1,000 professional vocational rehabilitation counselors and delivers services through a network of nearly 400 office locations
- Our service delivery model works to support Veterans where they are located, and includes operations at 56 regional offices, the National Capital Region Benefits Office, approximately 165 out-based offices, 71 Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) installations, and 94 VetSuccess on Campus (VSOC) schools/sites
- VSOC
  - We have collaborated with 94 schools across the country to provide educational and vocational counseling and other on-site services to nearly 78,000 student Veterans on campus
- IDES
  - We have expanded early intervention counseling and other available services for transitioning Servicemembers at 71 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 to accommodate 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



# VetSuccess on Campus (VSOC) Mission

The VetSuccess on Campus (VSOC) program provides Veterans seamless access to VA benefits and services; supports their successful integration into college and university campuses; and supports their individualized educational goals so they may graduate, improve their life circumstances, and successfully live and thrive in the career field and community of their choice.

With our team of 79 assigned VSOC counselors, VR&E continues to leverage our partnership with 94 schools across the country to provide educational and vocational counseling and other on-site services to approximately 78,000 Veteran students on campus under the VSOC program.

VA is committed to the VSOC program, and continues to evaluate schools for potential future participation.





# Educational and Career Counseling Program (Chapter 36)

The VSOC program operates under the VA's education and career counseling program (Chapter 36 authority)

Chapter 36 benefits offer a wide range of educational and vocational counseling services to Servicemembers, Veterans, and dependents who are eligible for one of the VA's educational benefit programs

- These services are designed to provide Servicemembers and Veterans with personalized counseling and support to help guide career paths, ensure the most effective use of VA benefits, and achieve educational and career goals

## Eligibility:

- Transitioning Servicemembers within 6 months prior to discharge
- Veterans within one year following discharge from active duty
- Any Servicemember/Veteran currently eligible for a VA education benefit
- All current VA education beneficiaries



# Educational and Career Counseling Program (Chapter 36) (con't)

## Services for Servicemembers/Veterans:

- Career Choice - understand the best career options for them based on their interests and capabilities
- Educational Counseling – guidance on reducing the effect of environmental and institutional barriers that impede academic success
- Benefits Coaching - guidance on the effective use of their VA benefits and/or other resources to achieve their education and career goals
- Personalized Support - adjustment counseling and personalized support to help remove any barriers to success





# Election of alternate subsistence allowance under Public Law 111-377

Public Law 111-377, Section 205 amended Title 38 of the United States Code, Section 3108(b), effective August 1, 2011. This change in the law authorizes VA to allow a Veteran, entitled to both a Chapter 31 subsistence allowance and Post 9/11 GI Bill Chapter 33 educational assistance, to elect to receive a payment in an alternate amount instead of the regular Chapter 31 subsistence allowance

- The alternate payment will be based on the military basic allowance for housing (BAH) for an E-5 with dependents residing in the zip code of the training facility. Training in foreign institutions and training that is solely on-line or in-home will be based on the national average BAH
- The Department of Defense (DoD) sets BAH rates each calendar year



# VR&E TeleCounseling Initiative

VR&E has collaborated with the Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) Telehealth program to effectively use secure video teleconferencing technology to supplement face-to-face counseling, improve counselors' ability to reach Veterans in remote areas, and reduce travel time and costs for both Veterans and VR&E staff.

- VR&E Counselors has successfully scheduled over 800 Tele-counseling appointments since it's March 18, 2015 release.
- VBA is in the initial stages of negotiating the use of video teleconferencing capabilities at Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs). The partnership will allow Veterans in rural areas without access to high speed internet take advantage of game changing technology.

Phase II will include utilization of TeleCounseling in the delivery of benefits under Chapter 36, VSOC, and the IDES programs.



# VR&E Payments and Invoicing

VR&E Service has presented in five school conferences within the last year. School Certifying Officials (SCO) have increasingly voiced a number of concerns regarding the VR&E program and payments.

## The top concerns expressed:

1. School payment delays
2. Response times (call backs) from VRCs and/or supervisors when they go up the chain to try to resolve issues
3. Inconsistencies with requirements among VRCs within the same office
4. SCOs not knowing when VR&E staff or POC changes at local offices



# VR&E Payments and Invoicing

To address these concerns, VR&E Service initiated the following actions:

- Support services guidance to the field with policy for invoicing and payments was released on July 27<sup>th</sup>
- Collaboration with EDU on business requirements on new systems to alleviate some invoicing concerns
- Clarification of the prompt payment act and other school/training guidance in VR&E policy
- Director of VR&E briefed VBA field leadership in tandem with the Deputy Under Secretary for Field Operations



# VR&E Payments and Invoicing

To ensure consistency across VR&E Offices regarding invoicing requirements and payments, detailed guidance has been disseminated to our Finance divisions and VR&E field offices.

VA must adhere to the Prompt Payment Rule (5 CFR 1315.4 (b)) that ensures Federal agencies pay vendors in a timely manner.

Invoices at a minimum must include:

- Name of vendor, invoice date, invoice number, Vendor point of contact (name, title, and telephone number), Veteran's name with clearly delineated costs per Veteran, description of service (tuition, fees, supplies, etc.), date or time period services/goods were provided to Veteran.



# VR&E Payments and Invoicing

## Recommendations :

### < Communication

- SCO's should request and maintain an updated regional office staffing list of Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors or designated POC
- 28-1905, Authorization for Services
  - Ensure 28-1905 has VRC name and contact information
- Please contact the local VR&E manager if unable to resolve with the VRC and/or designated POC
- Please contact 202-461-9600 if payment issues remain unresolved



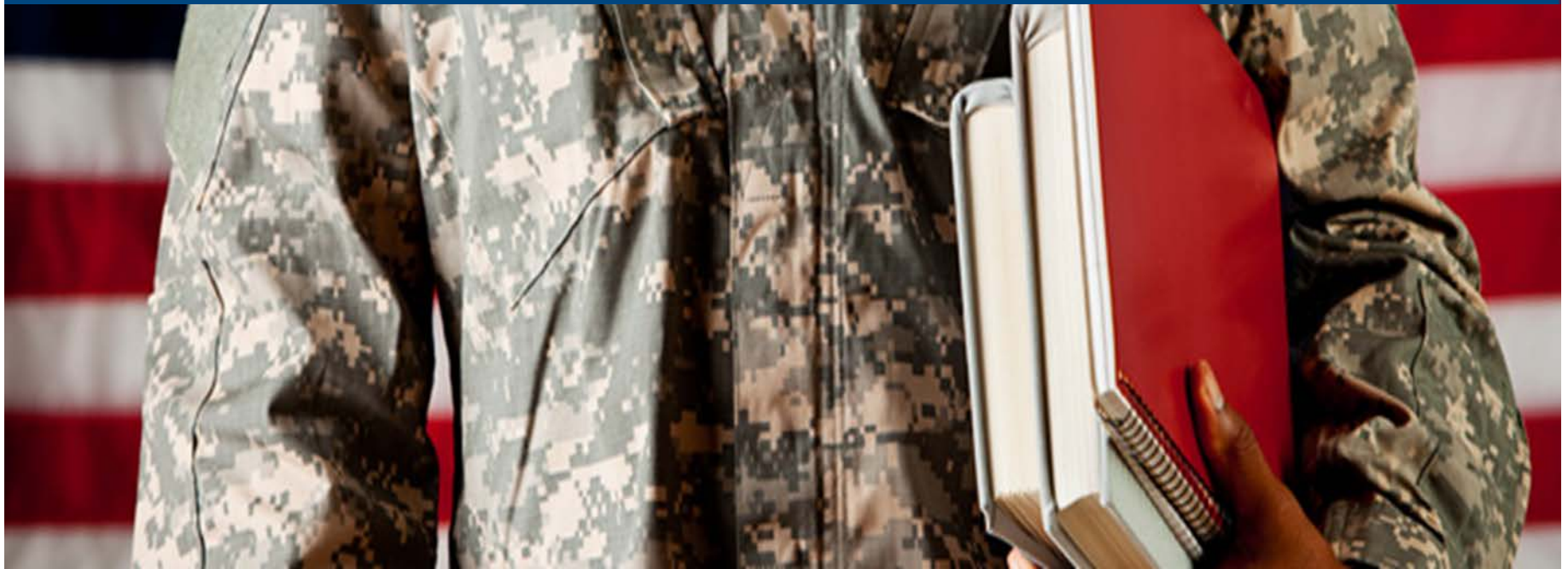


# Additional Information and Resources

- **Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Information**
  - Informational overview documents (PDF)  
[http://www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/links\\_resources.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/links_resources.asp)
  - VetSuccess on Campus (VSOC) program: <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/vsoc>
  - VetSuccess on Campus (VSOC) program:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWLCIB5TX\\_k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWLCIB5TX_k) &  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bSkspOd\\_uo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bSkspOd_uo)
  - Chapter 36 Educational/Vocational Counseling Application: VA Form 28-8832:  
[http://www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/edu\\_voc\\_counseling.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/edu_voc_counseling.asp)
  - Principles of Excellence: [http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/principles\\_of\\_excellence.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/principles_of_excellence.asp)
- **VR&E YouTube Videos**
  - VR&E Career Day: My Dad, My Hero: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ASPqtJWJ-KU>
  - VR&E Rolling Up My Sleeves: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ykc6Q3PHfDw>
  - VR&E VetSuccess on Campus: John Luque:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mdDWdgCISPY>
  - VetSuccess on Campus: Mr. Curtis L. Coy, VA Deputy Undersecretary for Economic Opportunity: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GdoqPObM8dg>
  - Curt Coy on VetSuccess on Campus & VA's Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment benefits: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RXxfkxTtNvM>



# Questions



VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION



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