

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is to serve America's veterans and their family members by providing competent, compassionate, and consistent high-quality health care, benefits, and memorial services. The mission is clear and compelling, and guides the efforts of VA employees who are committed to ensuring that the mission is fulfilled.

VA operates in a dynamic environment, influenced by a host of factors that affect its programs and operations, and how services and benefits are delivered to the millions of men and women who have served this country with honor. Key among them are legislative mandates and advancements in technology. The E-Government Act of 2002 (Act) requires Federal agencies to expand the use of technology, particularly web-based Internet applications, to enhance access to and delivery of government information and services to the public, business partners, employees, and other entities.

This report documents VA's progress during FY 2008 in complying with the goals and provisions of the Act and using information technology to improve performance and enhance delivery of VA information and services to veterans and their families as well as to the public and other stakeholders. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) IT Strategic Plan FY 2006-2011 (The Plan) establishes the vision and direction necessary to guide, manage, and implement information technology (IT) operations and investments in support of its obligation to meet the needs of veterans and their families. When responding to mandates to improve the delivery of services and benefits to veterans and their families, the primary goal of the Office of Information and Technology (OI&T) is to be a leader among Federal IT organizations with regard to planning, developing, and supporting information technology solutions and services.

The Plan defines the strategy which will ensure that IT resources are optimally aligned with the business priorities of the Department, addresses the IT mission and vision, identifies key technological advances, and organizational and process changes that will allow the Department to achieve its mission. The Plan aligns IT strategic goals with CIO priorities (IT priorities) as well as with specific initiatives and performance measures. This alignment frames the outcomes that IT executives and managers are expected to meet when delivering services and solutions to veterans and their families.

OI&T is working to ensure that all IT systems and services are customer-focused and service oriented. To accomplish this, OI&T is architecting and institutionalizing standardized computer environments that will ensure that information and data used by the systems and services are shared and accessible to all users. In addition, OI&T is developing a storage-centric strategy that supports enterprise storage methods in order to facilitate efficient use and sharing of data by business stakeholders and applications across the Department. These actions will help simplify the architecture and ensure that the Department is able to more effectively use available IT funds to better serve veterans and business partners.

The following supports VA's compliance with the requirements of the E-Gov Act of 2002:

Section 1 – Implementation of Electronic Government Initiatives

This section of the FY 2008 E-Government Report provides information on implementation of an agency-specific E-Gov initiative. VA is providing information on the ExecVA Contact Management System.

A. Describe the initiative, the methodology for identification of the initiative, and how the initiative is transforming agency operations;

The ExecVA Contact Management System (ExecVA) is owned by the Office of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. It is a secure, intranet application that tracks calls from veterans that are placed to a VA call center. ExecVA provides a one-stop repository for veterans' calls. The details of the calls are recorded and assigned to field personnel within the system. Users throughout VA can collaborate on responses to veterans and other stakeholders, which results in improved accuracy, consistency, and timeliness of responses through shared data and knowledge management. In addition, it helps to prevent possible theft of veterans' personally identifiable information as information is stored in a controlled database. This process formerly consisted of handwriting the details of calls and emailing to field personnel for processing. Implementation of ExecVA has resulted in increased efficiency, productivity, customer satisfaction, and security. In addition, ExecVA creates the ability to generate automatic and custom reports on any data stored in the database.

This application was chosen because it illustrates VA's goal to operate as an integrated veteran-centric organization by enhancing workforce assets and internal processes, improving communications, and furthering a crosscutting approach to provide seamless service to veterans and their families.

B. Explain how your agency maintains an ongoing dialogue with interested parties to find innovative ways to use information technology for the initiative;

As VA Administrations see the usefulness of this truly *OneVA* system, they are beginning to increase use to communicate with each other and for tracking intra-agency tasks and issues. VA employees who access ExecVA are requested to provide comments and suggestions for improving and enhancing the application according to user preference.

C. Identify external partners (e.g., Federal, State, or local agencies, industry) who collaborate on the initiative;

ExecVA is an internal VA initiative. VA employees use the application to track and collaborate on responses to inquiries and requests for information from veterans and other stakeholders.

D. Identify improved performance (e.g., outcome measures quantifiable business impact) by tracking performance measures supporting agency objectives and strategic goals;

ExecVA supports the VA Enabling Goal, Objective E-3: Implement a One-VA information technology framework that supports integration of information across business lines and provides a source of consistent, reliable, accurate, and secure information to veterans and their families, employees, and stakeholders.

Improved Performance: Enhanced information integrity and information sharing for telephonic interaction; improved information tracking and report capabilities.

E. Quantify the cost savings and cost avoidance achieved through implementing the initiative (e.g., reducing or eliminating other investments in information technology);

N/A

F. Explain how this initiative ensures the availability of government information and services for those without access to the Internet and for those with disabilities;

ExecVA is 508 compliant. This is an internal VA system accessible only by VA employees. Veterans and other stakeholders who do not have access to the Internet continue to contact VA by phone and mail. VA responds via any contact methods preferable to veterans.

G. Explain how the project applies effective capital planning and investment control procedures; and

This project is a component of the One VA Contact Management System that uses the Capital Planning and Investment Control procedures.

H. Describe the established business process your agency has in place for the continued ongoing process of identification of initiatives

As directed by the CIO, the Office of Information and Technology (OI&T) delivers available adaptable, secure and cost effective technology services to VA and acts as a steward for all VA IT assets and resources. VA developed a framework that supports high-level strategies to improve electronic delivery of services to veterans, beneficiaries, and other major VA stakeholders. The framework provides a uniform approach for electronic forms management, Web-based applications, identification and authentication options, authorization and access control, electronic signature, security, and data

interchange that supports the Department's internal business processes and systems. The Office of Information and Technology will continuously exploit opportunities provided by emerging technologies

Section 2 – Agency Information Management Activities

This section of the FY 2008 E-Government Report provides the website links for VA's information management activities.

A. Your agency's Information Resource Management Strategic Plan and EA Transition Plan;

The VA IT Strategic Plan is available at:

http://www.itsegov.oit.va.gov/docs/it_strat_plan.pdf

The VA Enterprise Architecture (EA) Transition Plan is available at:

http://www.va.gov/oit/ea/4_3/products/tobe/COID-26327.html.

B. Final determinations, priorities, and schedules. Also include your agency's information dissemination product catalogs, directories, inventories, and any other management tools used to improve the dissemination of and access to your agency's information by the public;

The electronic version of VA's final determinations, priorities, and schedules, and Information dissemination product catalogs, directories, and inventories is available at: <http://www1.va.gov/webinventory>. Public comments may be made via VA's on-line Inquiry Routing and Information System (<https://iris.va.gov/>). VA's Inquiry Routing and Information System (IRIS) (<https://iris.va.gov/>) provides a link by which the public can communicate electronically with VA. Incoming inquiries are routed to the appropriate VA office and that office is responsible for providing accurate and timely information. The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) provides a direct link to a query system in order to allow public access to resource materials relative to VBA. This site is available at: <http://www.warms.vba.va.gov/vbahome3bk.htm>. A web-content working group has been created to address current content and future changes to VA websites to ensure adequate dissemination of information to the public.

C. Your agency's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) handbook, the link of your agency's primary FOIA website, and the website link where frequent requests for records are made available to the public;

VA's Office of Records Management Service maintains and manages VA's FOIA program. VA's FOIA Handbook; Frequently Asked Questions; annual reports; FOIA regulations; FOIA frequent requests for records; FOIA/Privacy Act Offices; Electronic Reading Room, and the FOIA implementation improvement plan are available at: <http://www.foia.va.gov/>. VA is currently revising the FOIA handbook to align with a revision to its FOIA regulations, which is also under way. The updated guidance will

provide FOIA offices with consistency in how the Department should process and release information to the public.

D. A list of your agency's public websites disseminating research and development (R&D) information to the public, and whether or not each website provides the public information about federally funded R&D activities and/or provides the results of Federal research;

The Office of Research and Development (R&D) aspires to discover knowledge, develop VA researchers and health care leaders, and create innovations that advance health care for our veterans and the nation. The electronic version of VA's R&D information to the public is located at: <http://www.research.va.gov/>. The Center for Information Dissemination and Education Resources (CIDER) is a VA Health Services Research and Development Service (HSR&D) national resource center. Established in June 2004, CIDER's mission is to improve the health and care of veterans by disseminating important HSR&D findings and information to policy makers, managers, clinicians, and researchers throughout VA and the broader health care community. The CIDER website is available at: <http://www.cider.research.va.gov/>.

E. An inventory of formal agency agreements (e.g., contracts, memoranda of understanding, partnerships) with external entities (e.g., State and local governments, public libraries, industry and commercial search engines) complementing your agency's information dissemination program, with a brief explanation of how each agreement improves the access to and dissemination of government information to the public;

There is no centralized inventory of VA's formal agency agreements. VA Administrations and staff offices maintain their respective agreements.

F. An inventory that describes your agency's NARA-approved records schedules(s) or the link to the publicly-posted records schedules(s), and a brief explanation of your agency's progress to implement NARA Bulletin 2006-02. For the brief explanation please report the number of systems for which a record schedule was submitted to NARA in FY 2008 and the number of systems still requiring records schedules.

VA currently has a decentralized Records Management Program in which each Administration and Staff office maintain their own record schedules. The oversight of this process resides with VA's Records Management Service within the Office of Information and Technology.

The following VA Record Control Schedules (RCS) have been approved by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA):

Veterans Health Administration, RCS 10-1 which is available at VA's Intranet:
<http://vaww1.va.gov/vhapublications/rcs10/rcs10-1.pdf>

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Veterans Benefit Administration RCS VB-1, Part I and Part II which is available at:

<http://www.warms.vba.va.gov/vbahome3bk.htm>

National Cemetery Administration RCS which is available at VA's Intranet:

http://vaww.nca.va.gov/mgmt_supp/mgmt_recmgmt.asp

OM/ Office of Finance RCS which is contained in MP-4, part X, which is available at:

<http://www.va.gov/publ/direc/finance/M4P10.htm>

Handbook 6300.1, Records Management procedures Appendix A: which is contained in OI-1 Appendix A, which is available at:

http://www1.va.gov/vapubs/viewPublication.asp?Pub_ID=19&FType=2

VA's Records Management Service has disseminated NARA bulletin 2006-02 to all applicable VA organizations for their respective implementation actions. To date, no systems requiring an approved RCS have been submitted to NARA.