

**Department of Veterans Affairs**  
**Organizational**  
**Briefing Book**

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b><u>PAGE</u></b>
Overview of the Department of Veterans Affairs	1
The Veteran	2
Budget Summary	3
Organizations of the Department of Veterans Affairs	4
<b>ADMINISTRATIONS</b>	
Veterans Health Administration	7
Veterans Benefits Administration	11
National Cemetery Administration	17
<b>ASSISTANT SECRETARIES</b>	
Assistant Secretary for Management	18
Office of Budget	18
Office of Finance	18
Office of Asset Enterprise Management	19
Office of Business Oversight	20
FLITE Program Office	21
Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology	22
Office of Information and Technology	22
Office of Quality, Performance, and Oversight	23
Office for Information Protection and Risk Management	23
Office for IT Enterprise Strategy, Policy, Plans and Programs	23
Office of Information Technology Resource Management	24
Office for Enterprise Development	24
Office for Enterprise Operations and Field Development	24
Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning	25
VA/DoD Collaboration Service	25
Office of Policy	26
Office of Planning and Evaluation	26
Assistant Secretary for Operations, Security, and Preparedness	28
Office of Emergency Management	28
Office of Security and Law Enforcement	29
Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration	30
Office of Administration	30
Office of Human Resources Management	31
Office of Diversity and Inclusion	31
Office of Resolution Management	32
Office of Labor-Management Relations	32

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>ASSISTANT SECRETARIES (Cont.)</b>	<b><u>PAGE</u></b>
Assistant Secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs	34
Office of Public Affairs	34
Office of Intergovernmental Affairs	35
Office of National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events	37
Office of White House Liaison	37
Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Legislative Affairs	38
Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs	38
Office of Congressional Reports and Correspondence	38
Office of Congressional Liaison	38
<b>STAFF OFFICES</b>	
General Counsel	39
Inspector General	41
Board of Veterans' Appeals	42
Office of Acquisition, Logistics and Construction	43
Veterans Service Organizations Liaison	45
Center for Minority Veterans	46
Center for Women Veterans	47
Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships	48
Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization	49
Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication	51
Office of Advisory Committee Management	52
Office of Survivors Assistance	53
Federal Recovery Coordination Program	54
NGO Gateway Initiative Office	55



## OVERVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), established as an independent agency under the President by Executive Order 5398 on July 21, 1930, was elevated to Cabinet level on March 15, 1989 (Public Law No. 100-527).

The Department's mission is to serve America's Veterans and their families with dignity and compassion and to be their principal advocate in ensuring that they receive medical care, benefits, social support, and lasting memorials promoting the health, welfare, and dignity of all Veterans in recognition of their service to this Nation.

VA is the second largest Federal department and has over 278,000 employees. Among the many professions represented in the vast VA workforce are physicians, nurses, counselors, statisticians, architects, computer specialists, and attorneys. As advocates for Veterans and their families, the VA community is committed to providing the very best services with an attitude of caring and courtesy.

VA comprises a Central Office (VACO), which is located in Washington, DC, and field facilities throughout the Nation administered by its three major line organizations: Veterans Health Administration, Veterans Benefits Administration, and National Cemetery Administration.

Services and benefits are provided through a nationwide network of 153 hospitals, 995 outpatient clinics, 135 community living centers, 49 domiciliary residential rehabilitation treatment programs, 232 Vet centers, 57 Veterans benefits regional offices, and 128 national cemeteries.

The Secretary identified five broad strategic goals for VA to focus on as the means to improve services to Veterans and their families and to improve management in the Department. These goals are the components of the VA Strategic Plan:

- Restore the capability of Veterans with disabilities to the greatest extent possible, and improve the quality of their lives and that of their families.
- Ensure a smooth transition for Veterans from active military service to civilian life.
- Honor and serve Veterans in life, and memorialize them in death for their sacrifices on behalf of the Nation.
- Contribute to the public health, emergency management, socioeconomic well-being, and history of the Nation.
- Deliver world-class service to Veterans and their families through effective communication and management of people, technology, business processes, and financial resources.

## THE VETERAN

**NUMBERS:** The estimated total Veteran population was 23,816,000 as of September 30, 2007. This included 7,884,000 Vietnam era Veterans, representing the single largest period-of-service component of the Veteran population. Gulf War era Veterans now comprise the second largest component, numbering 4,996,000. World War II Veterans numbered 2,912,000, while Korean conflict Veterans totaled 2,961,000. Veterans serving only in peacetime numbered 6,077,000, about one-in-four Veterans. *(NOTE: The sum of the numbers by period does NOT add to the total because the period categories shown here are not mutually exclusive: an estimated 785,000 Veterans served in two war periods and 99,000 Veterans served in three or more; these Veterans are counted in ALL the periods in which they served.)*

**AGE:** As of September 30, 2007, the median age of all Veterans was 60 years. Veterans under the age of 45 constituted 20 percent of the total, while those aged 45 to 64 represented 41 percent, and those 65 or older were 39 percent of the total.

**SEX:** Female Veterans numbered 1,780,000 million, representing 7.5 percent of the total Veteran population. Roughly one-in-five resident U.S. males 18 years of age or older is a Veteran.

**FUTURE POPULATION:** The Veteran population (23.8 million in 2007) is projected to decline to 22.7 million by the year 2010, under currently expected armed forces strength and mortality rates. The population of Veterans aged 65 or older peaked at 10.0 million in 2000. It is projected to decline to 9.2 million in 2010 but rise again to about 9.6 million in 2013 as the Vietnam era cohort ages. The number of Veterans aged 85 or older is projected to increase by 14 percent between 2007 and 2010 from 1,219,000 to nearly 1.4 million.

**EDUCATION:** Data from the American Community Survey (ACS) of 2006 shows that among the civilian U.S. population 25 years and over, Veterans had a higher percent completing high school or having some college, or an associates degree as the highest level attained than non-Veterans, while non-Veterans had a higher percent completing a bachelors or higher degree as well as a higher percent who were less than a high school graduate.

**INCOME:** Data from the 2006 ACS shows that among the civilian population 18 years and over with income in the past 12 months, Veterans in general had higher personal income than non-Veterans. Specifically, the median personal income of Veterans overall was \$34,000 compared to \$24,000 for non-Veterans. The median for male Veterans was \$35,100 compared to \$30,900 for male non-Veterans, and was \$27,100 for female Veterans compared to \$19,200 for female non-Veterans of that age.

*(SOURCE: VA Office of Policy and Planning. VetPop2007.)*

## BUDGET SUMMARY

The Department's budget for FY 2009 was enacted on September 30, 2008. VA was funded under Public Law No. 110-329, Consolidated Security, disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act, 2009. VA's funding for FY 2009 is \$7 billion above the FY 2008 enacted level. The following is a breakdown of the enacted FY 2009 appropriations as compared to the FY 2008 enacted level:

(\$ in Thousands)

Program	2008 Enacted	2009 Enacted
Medical *	\$39,615,220	\$43,502,903
Benefit	\$45,969,823	\$48,367,257
Memorial	\$ 195,000	\$ 230,000
Construction	\$ 1,904,135	\$ 1,881,916
IT	\$ 1,966,465	\$ 2,489,391
All Other	\$ 358,499	\$ 423,590
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$90,009,142</b>	<b>\$96,895,057</b>

\* *Includes Medical Care Collections.*

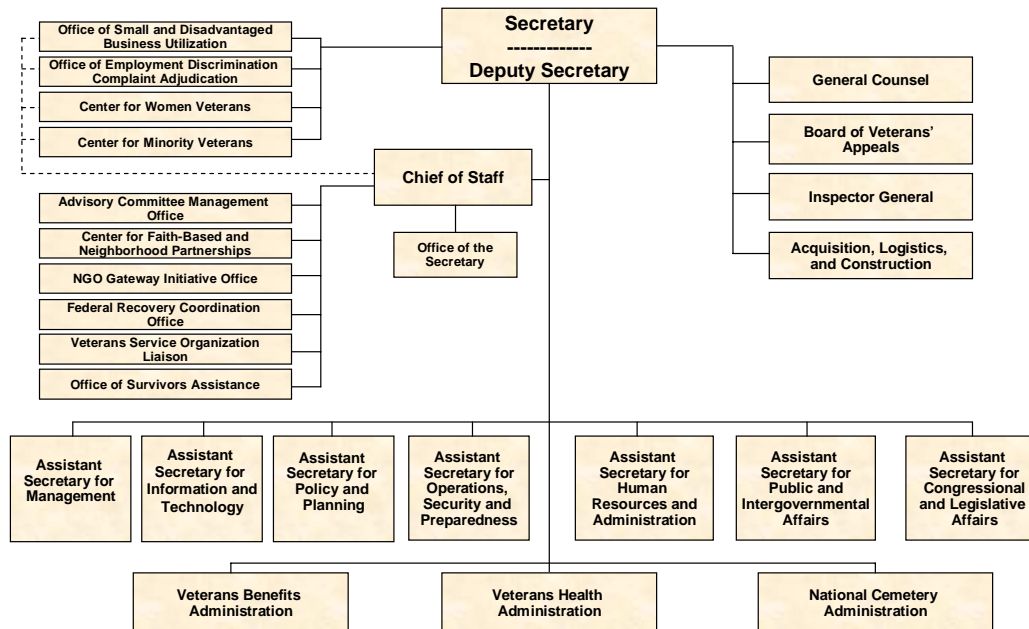
As enacted in 2009, annual appropriations are funding the Veterans Health Administration through an account structure comprised of four accounts: Medical Services, Medical Support and Compliance, Medical Facilities, and Medical and Prosthetic Research.

Monetary benefits, memorial programs, and construction have separate appropriations. Remaining staff functions are funded out of the General Operating Expenses appropriation, with the exception of the Office of the Inspector General, which has its own appropriation.

Close to half of the VA budget, \$46.9 billion, goes out in the form of checks to Veterans and their families (disability payments, income support, etc.).

The remaining \$50.2 billion is "discretionary". Most of these funds (\$43.5 billion out of \$50.2 billion) support the medical care system.

## ORGANIZATIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS



The **Secretary of Veterans Affairs** is a member of the President's cabinet, serving as the chief advisor to the President on Veterans' affairs. As the head of the Federal government's second largest department, the Secretary is responsible for a \$96 billion budget used to provide a nationwide system of health care services, benefits programs, and national cemeteries for America's Veterans. The Secretary sets policies governing the Department's operations, defines its basic organizational structure, and maintains favorable relations with organizations, groups, and individuals interested in Veterans' affairs.

The **Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs** is second in command, serving as the Department's Chief Operating Officer. The Deputy Secretary directs the policy and operations of the Department and provides broad direction to the Department's 278,000 employees through the administrations and staff offices, ensuring coordinated action and conformance with the Secretary's directives. The Deputy Secretary chairs the Department's governance process through the Strategic Management Council and leads the Business Oversight Board and Capital Investment Board.

**Administrations and Staff Offices:** The Department includes 3 administrations that provide for the delivery of services and benefits, 7 assistant secretaries who advise and support the Secretary and the administrations, and 14 staff offices that provide specific assistance to the Secretary.

The three administrations are **Veterans Health Administration, Veterans Benefits Administration, and National Cemetery Administration**. The head of each administration reports to the Secretary through the Deputy Secretary. These administrations give centralized program direction to field facilities that provide diverse program services to Veterans and their families. Further, each administration has Central Office components that support the administration's operations. This organizational structure reflects a basic management approach of centralized policy direction, complemented by consistent decentralized execution.

The seven assistant secretaries serve as the principal staff advisors to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary and oversee or administer programs in their respective areas of responsibility.

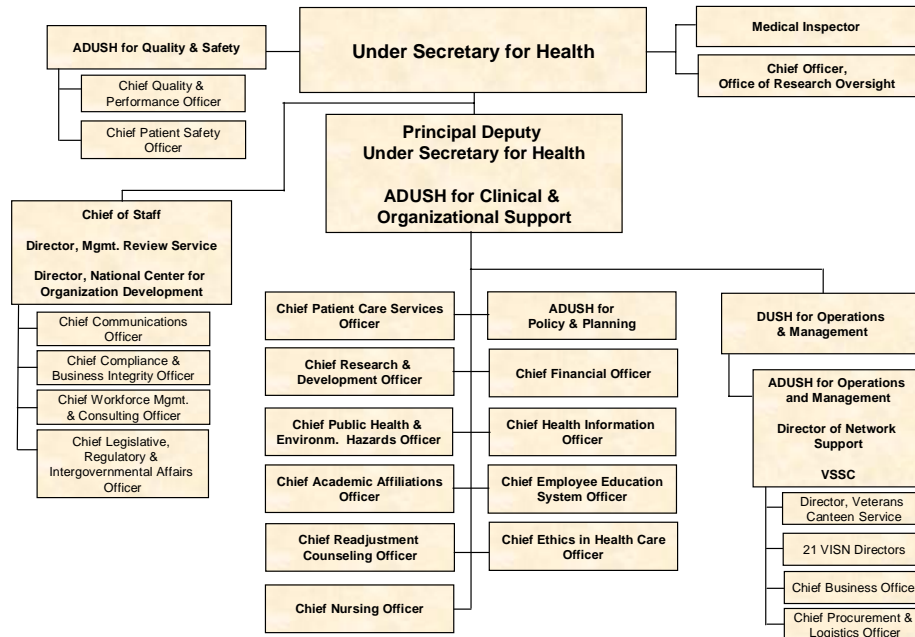
- The **Assistant Secretary for Management** serves as the Department's Chief Budget Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Senior Real Property Officer, and Senior Official for Environment, Energy, and Transportation. The Assistant Secretary is responsible for financial management, budget administration, and resources planning, and serves as the Department's principal advisor for budget, fiscal, and capital policy. The Assistant Secretary also supports the Strategic Management Council with regard to implementing the capital asset planning process.
- The **Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology** serves as the Chief Information Officer (CIO) for the Department. As the CIO, the Assistant Secretary is the principal advisor to the Secretary on matters relating to information and technology management in the Department as delineated in Public Law No. 104-106, the Clinger-Cohen Act; the Paperwork Reduction Act, Chapter 35 of Title 44 United States Code; and any other associated legislated or regulatory media.
- The **Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning** is responsible for the Secretary's policy analysis and planning processes and their integration into the Department's Strategic Management Process. The Assistant Secretary's functions entail responsibility for performing Department-level policy analyses and development, program evaluations, strategic planning, quality improvement, actuarial studies and assessments, Veterans' demographics, VA/Department of Defense (DoD) coordination services, and statistical analyses. The Assistant Secretary is responsible for the Nation's official estimates and projections of the Veteran population and the National Survey of Veterans, Active Duty Service Members, Activated National Guard and Reserve Members, Family Members, and Survivors.
- The **Assistant Secretary for Operations, Security, and Preparedness** is the principal advisor to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary on VA's capability and readiness to continue services to Veterans and their families, respond to contingency support missions to the DoD and other Federal agencies engaged in emergency response activities and respond effectively during national emergencies.
- The **Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration** is responsible for providing VA-wide responsibilities to such programs as human resources management, diversity and inclusion, discrimination complaint resolution, labor-management relations, and general administrative support (primarily services to VACO). The Assistant Secretary serves as the Department's Designated Agency Safety and Health Official and is responsible for administering the Occupational Safety and Health and Workers' Compensation programs. The Assistant Secretary also serves as the Department's Chief Human Capital Officer, advising and assisting the Secretary in carrying out VA's responsibilities for selecting, developing, training, and managing a high quality workforce in accordance with merit systems principles.



- The **Assistant Secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs** is responsible for the coordination and dissemination of VA-related information to various audiences, specifically Veterans and associated service organizations, and to the general public through the news media. The Assistant Secretary manages and directs the Department's intergovernmental, consumer affairs, and homeless programs. The office supports Veterans-specific interest groups, special events, and program activities to meet the needs of several audiences – first and foremost Veterans.
- The **Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Legislative Affairs** serves as the principal advisor to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary concerning all legislative and congressional liaison matters and has overall responsibility for the plans, policies, goals, and direction of the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs. The Assistant Secretary is the principal coordinator of VA's legislative program development, ensures departmental compliances with congressionally mandated reports and serves as the point-of-contact with the Government Accountability Office.

The 14 staff offices that report directly to the Secretary or Deputy Secretary include: **General Counsel; Inspector General; Board of Veterans' Appeals; Veterans Service Organizations Liaison; Center for Minority Veterans; Center for Women Veterans; Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships; NGO Gateway Initiative Office; Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization; Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication; Office of Advisory Committee Management; Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construction; Office of Survivors' Assistance; and the Federal Recovery Coordination Program.**

## VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION



In 2008, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) provided health care for 5.6 million Veterans. It is among the largest providers of health professional training in the world; operates one of the largest and most effective research organizations in the United States; is a principal federal asset for providing medical assistance in major disasters; and serves as the largest direct-care provider for homeless citizens in the United States.

Today's VHA provides care at more than 1,400 sites throughout the country, employs a staff of 235,000, and maintains affiliations with 107 academic health systems. More than 65 percent of all physicians in the U.S. today have trained in VA facilities.

A dozen years ago, VHA began the difficult and ongoing task of reinventing itself into a model health care system. In 2009, following 14 years of breathtaking change, that task continues. VHA's unprecedented transformation began with fundamental changes to our management and structure. In 1995, VHA established 22 regional networks (now 21) and charged each one with conducting daily operations and decisions affecting hospitals, clinics, nursing homes and Vet centers located within their regions. These regional networks (called Veterans Integrated Service Networks, or VISNs) remain our fundamental units for managing funding and ensuring accountability.

VISNs were a bold move to decentralize VHA's bureaucracy, eliminating layers of administration and bringing staff closer to patient care. Since 1995, VHA has moved from an inpatient model of care, characterized by a limited number of specialized facilities that often were far from a veteran's home, to an outpatient model in which more than 1,400 sites provide care in communities throughout the United States.

Fundamentally, VHA transformed itself from a collection of “safety net” hospitals to a health system focused on health promotion and disease prevention. More than 600 new community-based outpatient clinics have been established since 1995, bringing the total number of community and facility based outpatient clinics to 919 as of October 2008. Since 2008, we have added 118 new community-based outpatient clinics. The ratio of outpatient visits to inpatient admissions in 1995 was 29 to 1; it now exceeds 100 to 1 - and we now have more than one million ambulatory care encounters each week.

Restructuring our organization was just the beginning. We needed a way to hold ourselves accountable for making quality and safety non-negotiable standards for Veterans’ care. So we began to quantify care delivery with an aggressive use of performance measurements for field and headquarters managers. These measurements have led to a consistent application of evidence-based guidelines that systemize the best practices in government and private-sector care.

Measuring performance has challenged VHA to deliver excellent health care. Information technology supports that challenge. We use technology to more readily and accurately process and make decisions based on clinical and administrative information, to automate processes formerly done manually, to deliver care across long distances, to train staff, and to improve quality and reduce errors.

In 2004, President Bush cited our system as a model for the entire health care industry in moving towards his goal of providing most Americans with computerized health records within the next ten years. The Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture (VistA) is a single, integrated system for health care providers serving all VA hospitals, nursing homes, outpatient clinics and Vet centers. The Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS) is VistA's flagship and allows providers to update a patient’s medical history, review any test results, submit orders, and access patient health information from any VA medical center or clinic. The system is accessible across all settings – inpatient, outpatient, operating rooms, emergency rooms, long-term care, and even for home care providers.

VistA has virtually eliminated medical errors caused by illegible handwriting. Automated allergy alerts and other error checks prevent potentially dangerous treatments from being ordered. The use of bar code technology on all medications and on the patient’s wristband ensures that the right patient receives the right medication, in the right dosage, administered by the right person, at the right time.

VistA imaging, another component of VistA, gives us the ability to capture and display a wide variety of medical images as part of the patient’s electronic health record. VistA imaging produces a multimedia, online patient record integrating traditional medical chart information with medical images of all kinds, including x-rays, pathology slides, video views, scanned documents, cardiology exam results, wound photos, dental images, and endoscopies. Like all components of VistA, this technology is available at every VA hospital.

One focus for VHA's new technologies is improving the coordination of patient care, so that care is delivered seamlessly across all environments, from hospital to outpatient to home. Another focus is to support patients' ability to successfully age and manage disease in their own homes. And an additional focus is to make care accessible for rural and disabled patients who can't easily visit clinics. VHA conducts more than 400,000 consultations annually via telemedicine. This technology also is being used in radiology, mental health, cardiology, pathology, dermatology, and in-home care teleconsultations for spinal cord injury patients and for patients with other chronic conditions.

Guided by our mission of providing exceptional health care that improves Veterans' health and well-being, VHA also has become a leader in patient safety. Our system's guiding principles are voluntary participation, confidentiality protection, and non-punitive reporting. In short, the premise is that a safer system requires a learning organization, where weakness is identified, understood, and corrected.

Through our affiliations with University Schools of Medicine, every year nearly 34,000 medical residents and 19,000 medical students receive training at VHA. VHA's robust training program is critical to our ability to recruit and retain the highest quality staff. It enables new health professionals throughout our nation to receive training in state-of-the-art care, including patient safety programs, quality measurement and electronic health records.

VHA's long tradition of path-breaking research has given the world many breakthroughs, such as the cardiac pacemaker, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), computed tomography (CT) scanner, liver transplantation, and the nicotine patch. Recently, we have added to this scientific legacy through achievements including a vaccine that significantly reduced the incidence of shingles in clinical trials; research suggesting a natural byproduct of glucose metabolism may halt brain damage after diabetic coma; and the establishment of a new center to adapt technologies for the special needs of Veterans with spinal cord injury and limb loss. Ongoing studies include deep brain stimulation for Parkinson's patients, robotic arm for stroke rehabilitation, a brain computer interface for patients with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), and new treatments for post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury.

Throughout the years, VHA has established special programs and centers to focus on emerging research and clinical needs, such as our National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorders and our Blind Rehabilitation Service. In 2009, a major concern for VHA is providing care for servicemen and women returning from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) - especially those with multiple, major injuries. In 2005, VHA established the Polytrauma System of Care. Four Polytrauma Centers throughout the country serve as regional flagship facilities for the system to bring together expertise and provide multidisciplinary recovery and rehabilitation services for service members and Veterans who were badly injured in our Nation's newest war. A fifth center is planned for San Antonio, Texas.

Polytrauma is one of several "signature injuries" with which Veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan are returning home. While the most common health problems of these Veterans are musculoskeletal ailments, principally joint and back disorders; since FY 2002 through the Forth Quarter of FY 2008, 45 percent of the OEF/OIF Veterans VA has seen received preliminary diagnosis of a mental health condition, and 23 percent received a preliminary diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder. VA now screens all returning Veterans for post-traumatic stress disorder, and for mild traumatic brain injuries, or concussions, as well. Today, approximately 5 percent of the patients who receive VA health care are Veterans of the current conflict.

VHA is aggressively preparing, not only for today, but for tomorrow. First, we are creating models that put the patient at the center of care and seamlessly coordinate that care beyond the hospital and clinic to the patient's home, workplace, and community. Through our continuum of care model, important populations, including aging Veterans and Veterans with chronic illnesses, will receive preventive care on all levels – from monitoring blood pressure to early intervention when symptoms increase.

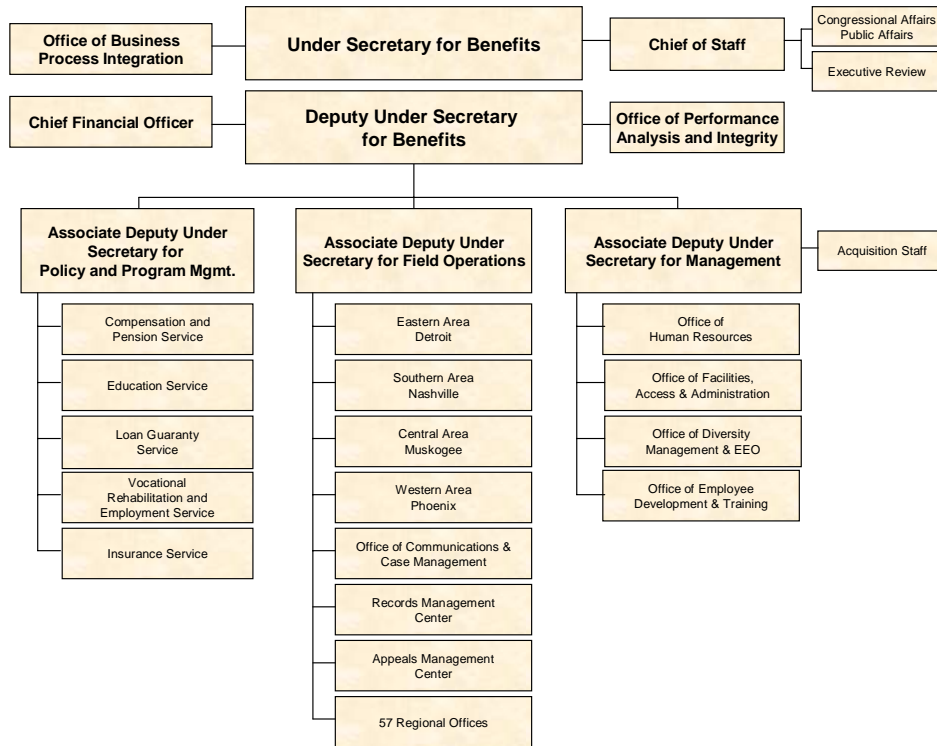
Our greater understanding of various illnesses also will contribute to moving care out of the hospitals. For example, our belief that Veterans can, in fact, recover from mental illnesses informs our belief that many can live within their communities and achieve independence, even while they continue to seek treatment.

Second, to reinforce the continuum of care model, we are developing training models for the 21<sup>st</sup> century that cultivate a new role for physicians, that of a team player involved in many relationships with non-physician health professionals, as well with other physicians. New training models also address the need to develop a system that encourages optimal care and establishes new rules and ways of relating for health professionals within the system. For example, VHA's patient safety training promotes prevention and early reporting of risks, not punishment for errors. These new education models also emphasize continuous, rather than periodic, learning through the Internet and other information channels.

Third, VHA continues to work on new technologies, such as medical devices that enhance current capabilities by directly inputting information from medical tests into computer-based records. And VHA is investigating the potential of genomic medicine to anticipate health needs and outcomes and to provide truly personalized health care.

VA's Under Secretary for Health has established four essential priorities for the future: to make caring for patients our first priority; to practice progressive leadership throughout our organization; to promote improved business processes; and to produce meaningful performance measures.

## VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION



The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) is responsible for administering the Department's programs that provide financial and other forms of assistance to Veterans, their dependents, and survivors. Major benefits include Veterans' compensation, Veterans' pension, survivors' benefits, rehabilitation and employment assistance, education assistance, home loan guaranties, and life insurance coverage.

### VBA MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

The following summarizes the organizational elements and functions within VBA Headquarters.

The **Associate Deputy Under Secretary for Policy and Program Management (ADUSPPM)** has oversight responsibility for the management of VBA's five core business lines: Compensation and Pension, Education, Loan Guaranty, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment, and Insurance. (For program descriptions, see "VBA Benefit Programs" on Page 13.)

The **Associate Deputy Under Secretary for Field Operations (ADUSFO)** has oversight responsibility for the management of the field organization, the Records Management Center (RMC), and the Appeals Management Center (AMC). Within the field, 57 regional offices administer VBA's benefit programs to include Compensation and Pension, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Loan Guaranty, Education, and Insurance. These regional offices are aligned under four Area Directors who report directly to the ADUSFO.

The **Associate Deputy Under Secretary for Management (ADUSM)** has oversight responsibility for five staff offices that manage, coordinate and integrate programs to support VBA business lines and regional office operations.

- The Office of Human Resources has responsibility for human resource functions within VBA headquarters. These include labor relations, employee relations, employee compensation and benefits, recruitment and classification, and human resources policy and planning. The office is also responsible for overall policy and directions governing human resources functions administered at the four Human Resource Centers and the regional offices.
- The Office of Diversity Management and Equal Employment Opportunity is responsible for EEO programs and functions, which include diversity management and affirmative employment, employee discrimination complaint processing, and complaint investigations for Federally Assisted Programs.
- The Office of Facilities, Access and Administration is responsible for facilities management, access management, emergency preparedness, and administrative functions. These responsibilities include providing access services to by Veterans and their families, physical facilities development and planning, comprehensive emergency management, Web management, and nationwide administrative support functions.
- The Office of Employee Development and Training is responsible for establishing VBA training policies, providing leadership development programs, and coordinating headquarters activities for the preparation, delivery, and evaluation of technical and non-technical training throughout VBA. Functions include development of the VBA Strategic Training Plan, synchronization of VBA and departmental training initiatives, management of the strategic technical training delivery system TPSS (Technical and Performance Support System) in support of the business lines, and the administration of nationwide training programs via instructor-led resident classes and lessons delivered via satellite, computer desktop delivery, and video teleconferencing.
- The Acquisition Liaison Staff is responsible for performing necessary actions to support the acquisition of goods and services for all VBA services, staffs, and regional offices. The staff also provides liaison and coordination support to Federal oversight agencies such as Congress, General Accountability Office, and the Office of Management and Budget.

The **Chief Financial Officer (CFO)** is fully responsible for all aspects of the formulation, presentation, defense, and execution of VBA's benefits and general operating expense budgets, totaling over \$55 billion in obligations. This responsibility includes managing and directing VBA's financial accounting and reporting, as well as policy and systems development.

The Office of Business Process Integration (OBPI) is responsible for ensuring VBA's strategic business needs and requirements are properly documented, integrated, and communicated both internally and externally. OBPI facilitates the design, development, and implementation of business systems and information technology to enhance claims processing within VBA.

The Office of Performance Analysis and Integrity (OPA&I) is responsible for conducting data analyses and studies leading to improved processes and systems for benefits delivery.

## VBA BENEFIT PROGRAMS

**Compensation and Pension Programs** provide direct payments to Veterans, dependents, and survivors as a result of the veteran's service-connected disability or because of financial need.

- Disability Compensation is a monetary benefit paid to Veterans with disabilities that are the result of a disease or injury incurred or aggravated during active military service. The benefit amount is graduated according to the degree of the veteran's disability on a scale from 10 percent to 100 percent (in increments of 10 percent).
- Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) benefits are generally payable to the survivors of servicemembers who died while on active duty or survivors of Veterans who died from their service-connected disabilities.
- Pension programs are designed to provide income support to Veterans with wartime service and their families for a nonservice-connected disability or death. These programs are for low-income Veterans and survivors.
- Burial and Interment Allowances are payable for certain Veterans. A higher rate of burial allowance applies if the Veteran's death is service-connected.
- Spina Bifida Monthly Allowance under 38 U.S.C. 1805 is provided for children born with Spina Bifida who are children of individuals who served in the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam Era or served in or near the demilitarization zone in Korea during the period September 1, 1967, through August 31, 1971. Payment is made at one of three levels and is based on degree of disability suffered by the child.
- Children of Women Vietnam Veterans Born with Certain Defects This program provides a monetary allowance, healthcare, and vocational training benefits to eligible children born to women who served in the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on February 28, 1961, and ending May 7, 1975, if they suffer from certain covered birth defects. VA identifies the birth defects as those that are associated with the service of the mother in Vietnam and result in permanent physical or mental disability.

**Education Programs** provide resources to Veterans, servicepersons, reservists, and certain Veterans' dependents to help with readjustment and restore educational opportunities lost because of service to the country, to extend benefits of higher education to qualified persons who may not otherwise be able to afford it, to aid in military recruitment and the retention of highly qualified personnel, to encourage membership in the Selected Reserve, and to enhance the national workforce. Details may be found at [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov).

- Post-Vietnam Era Veterans Educational Assistance Program (VEAP) is available for eligible Veterans who entered active duty between January 1, 1977, and June 30, 1985. Benefits and entitlement are determined by the contributions paid while on active duty and Veterans have 10 years after separation in which to use the benefit.
- Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty (MGIB) provides a program of education benefits that may be used while on active duty or after separation. There are several distinct eligibility categories. Generally a Veteran will receive 36 months of entitlement and has 10 years after separation to use the benefit.



- Montgomery GI Bill – Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR) is a program funded and managed by the Department of Defense (DoD) and is available to members of the Selected Reserve. VA administers this program but DoD determines the member's eligibility. Generally a qualified member of the Reserve will receive 36 months of entitlement and will have 14 years in which to use the benefit.
- Reservists Educational Assistance Program (REAP) is a program funded and managed by DoD and is available to members of the Selected or Ready Reserve who are called to active duty to support contingency operations. VA administers this program but DoD determines the member's eligibility. Generally a qualified member of the Selected or Ready Reserve will receive 36 months of entitlement and will be able to use the benefit as long as he or she remains in the Selected or Ready Reserve.
- National Call to Service is a program of education benefits that may be used while on active duty or after separation. The person must have enlisted on or after October 1, 2003, under the National Call to Service program and selected one of the two education incentives provided by that program. A Veteran will receive education benefits based on the education initiative selected. These are either (1) education benefits of up to 12 months of MGIB benefits (the 3-year rate) or (2) education benefits of up to 36 months of the MGIB benefits (half the 2-year rate).
- Dependents Educational Assistance Program (DEA) is designed to assist dependents of Veterans who (1) have been determined to be 100 percent permanently and totally disabled due to a service connected condition, (2) died due to a service-connected condition, or (3) died while on active duty. Dependents typically receive 45 months of eligibility. The criteria for using this benefit is shown below:
  - ✓ Children have 8 years to use this benefit.
  - ✓ A spouse of a living Veteran has 10 years to use this benefit.
  - ✓ A surviving spouse of a Veteran who died with a 100 percent service-connected condition has 10 years to use this benefit.
  - ✓ A surviving spouse of a Veteran who died on active duty has 20 years to use this benefit.
- Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program (Post 9/11-GI Bill) is a new education assistance program for certain individuals with a qualifying period of active duty service after September 10, 2001. Individuals will be eligible for educational assistance in the form of tuition and fees, a monthly housing allowance, and a books and supplies stipend. The new program also provides certain individuals the opportunity to transfer unused educational benefits to their spouses and children. The new program is effective August 1, 2009.

The **Loan Guaranty Program** provides assistance to Veterans, certain spouses, and servicemembers to enable them to buy and retain homes. Assistance is provided through VA's partial guaranty of loans made by private lenders in lieu of the substantial down payment and private mortgage insurance required in conventional mortgage transactions. This protection means that in most cases qualified Veterans can obtain a loan without making a down payment. Also, the Loan Guaranty Program offers the following:

- Specially Adapted Housing Grants (SAH) are available to Veterans that have specific service-connected disabilities for the purpose of constructing an adapted dwelling or modifying an existing dwelling to meet the Veterans needs. The goal of the SAH Program is to provide a barrier-free living environment that affords the Veterans a level of independent living he or she may not have otherwise enjoyed.
- Native American Direct Home Loans are available to eligible Native American Veterans and, in certain circumstances, a spouse who wish to purchase or construct a home on trust lands. These loans are direct loans made by the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Servicing Assistance provides help for borrowers having difficulty in making their loan payments. The assistance can take several forms but the goal is to try and keep the Veteran in the property and avoid foreclosure.

The **Insurance Programs** were created to provide life insurance at a “standard” premium rate to members of the armed forces who are exposed to the extra hazards of military service. Veterans are eligible to maintain their VA life insurance following discharge. In general, a new program was created for each wartime period since World War I. There are four life insurance programs that still issue coverage as well as a program of traumatic injury coverage:

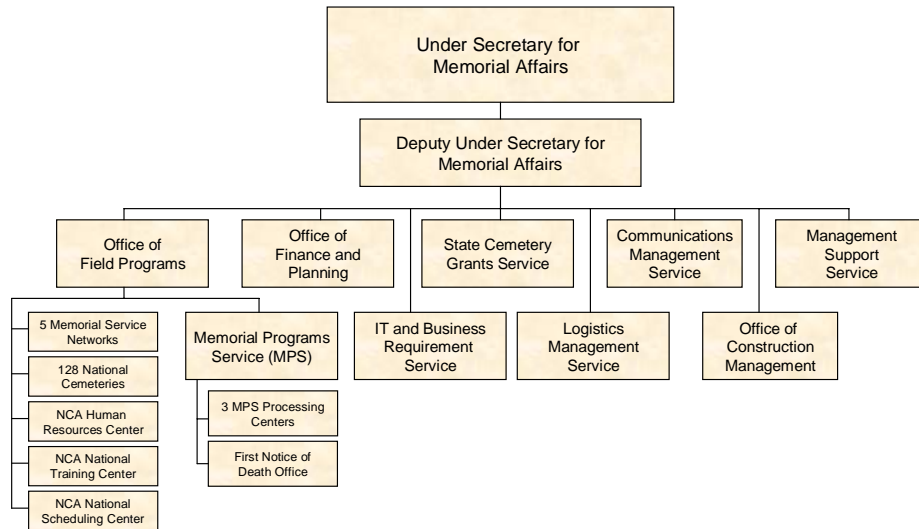
- **Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI)** – Provides up to \$400,000 of life insurance coverage to active-duty members of the Uniformed Services and members of the Reserves, cadets and midshipmen of the four service academies, members of the Reserve Officer Training Corps, and members who volunteer for assignment to a mobilization category in the Individual Ready Reserve. SGLI also offers Family Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (FSGLI) for up to \$100,000 in coverage for a servicemember's spouse, if the servicemember is on active duty or a member of the Ready Reserve of a uniformed service. All dependent children are automatically insured for \$10,000 at no charge.
- **Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI)** – Individuals who separate from service with SGLI coverage can convert their coverage to VGLI, regardless of health, by submitting an application with the first month's premium within 120 days of discharge. After 120 days, the individual may still be granted VGLI provided evidence of insurability is submitted within one-year of the end of the 120-day period.
- **Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance (SDVI)** – A Veteran who has a VA service-connected disability rating but is otherwise in good health may apply for life insurance coverage of up to \$10,000 within two years from the date of being notified by VA of the service-connected status. This insurance is limited to Veterans who left service after April 24, 1951. If the Veteran is totally disabled, they may apply for an additional \$20,000 of coverage under this program.
- **Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance (VMLI)** – Mortgage life insurance protection for up to \$90,000 is available to severely disabled Veterans who receive a SAH Grant.

- Servicemembers' Traumatic Injury Protection (TSGLI) - is a rider to the SGLI policies and provides automatic traumatic injury coverage to all servicemembers under SGLI, effective December 1, 2005. It provides for payment between \$25,000 and \$100,000 (depending on the type of injury) to SGLI members who sustain a traumatic injury that results in certain severe losses. The benefit is retroactive to October 7, 2001, if the loss was a direct result of injuries incurred in Operations Enduring Freedom or Iraqi Freedom.

The **Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Program** helps servicemembers and Veterans with service-connected disabilities prepare for, find, and keep suitable jobs. For Veterans with service-connected disabilities so severe that they cannot immediately consider work, VR&E offers services to improve their ability to live as independently as possible. Vocational rehabilitation services include a vocational evaluation (i.e. assessment of interests, aptitudes, and abilities), vocational counseling and planning, employment services (i.e. job seeking skills and job placement assistance), training for suitable employment, supportive rehabilitation services, and independent living services. Generally, a Veteran must complete a program of rehabilitation services within 12 years from the date of VA notification of entitlement to service-connected disability compensation. This period may be deferred or extended if a medical condition prevents the Veteran from pursuing rehabilitation services for a period of time, or if the Veteran has a serious employment handicap.

**Vocational and Educational Counseling** - VR&E can also provide a wide range of vocational and educational counseling services to servicemembers still on active duty, as well as Veterans and dependents who are eligible for one of VA's educational benefit programs. These services are designed to help an individual choose a vocational direction and determine the course needed to achieve the chosen goal. Assistance may include interest and aptitude testing, occupational exploration, setting occupational goals, locating the right type of training program, and exploring educational or training facilities which might be utilized to achieve a vocational goal.

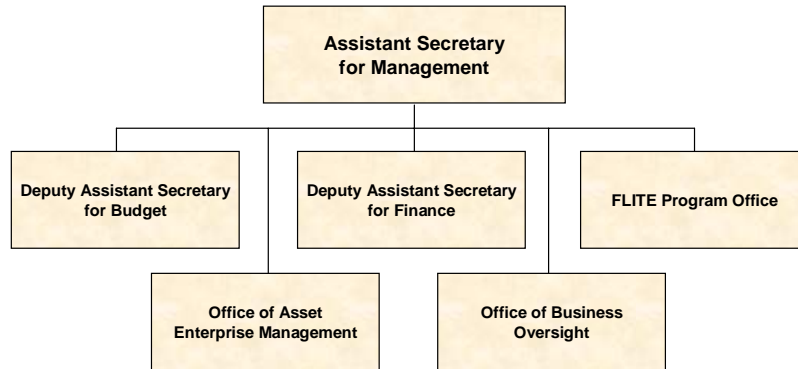
## NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION



The National Cemetery Administration (NCA) operates 128 national cemeteries in the United States and Puerto Rico, together with oversight/management of 33 soldiers' lots, confederate cemeteries, and monument sites. NCA's mission is to honor our Nation's Veterans with a final resting place in national shrines with lasting tribute that commemorate their service to our Nation. This mission is accomplished through four major program areas:

- Providing for the interment of eligible service members, Veterans, reservists, National Guard members, and eligible family members in national cemeteries. More than 103,000 Veterans and eligible family members were buried in national cemeteries in FY 2008. More than 3.5 million Veterans, spouses, and dependents are buried in the system's nearly 7,600 acres of developed land. NCA maintains national cemeteries as national shrines.
- Furnishing headstones and markers for the graves of Veterans throughout the United States and the world. In FY 2008, NCA furnished more than 360,000 headstones, markers, and inscriptions as lasting memorials to our Nation's Veterans. NCA furnishes headstones and markers for the graves of veterans in national, state, and private cemeteries at no cost to the Veteran.
- Administering the State Cemetery Grants Program, which provides grants to states and tribal governments for establishing, expanding, and improving state Veterans' cemeteries. Since the program was established in 1978, 172 grants have been made, totaling over \$344 million through FY 2008. The program provides Federal funding up to 100 percent of the cost of establishing, expanding, or improving state or tribal government Veterans cemeteries that complement NCA. There are currently 73 state Veterans cemeteries in 38 states throughout the Nation, including Guam and Saipan. In FY 2008, nearly 25,000 Veterans and dependents were buried in these cemeteries.
- Providing Presidential Memorial Certificates to Veterans' loved ones to honor the service of honorably discharged deceased service members or Veterans. In FY 2008, NCA issued more than 511,000 Presidential Memorial Certificates on behalf of the President.

## ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR MANAGEMENT



The Assistant Secretary for Management oversees all resource requirements, development and implementation of agency performance measures, and financial management activities relating to VA programs and operations. Responsibility also includes a Departmental accounting and financial management system that provides for management, cost, budgeting, and accounting information. In addition, the office oversees the Department's capital asset management activities and business oversight activities, including development and implementation of policies and regulations.

### OFFICE OF BUDGET

The Office of Budget is responsible for overseeing VA budget formulation, analyzing resource requirements, preparing and justifying budget submissions, and representing VA in budget deliberations with Congress and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). This office monitors the financial execution of the budget, and the development and implementation of performance measures as defined in the Chief Financial Officers Act as well as the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993. This includes examining actual expenditures and performance with the approved operating budget plan. This office also prepares and submits the Department's annual performance and accountability report to the President, members of Congress, and OMB. The Deputy Assistant Secretary for Budget serves as VA's Performance Improvement Officer and coordinates the performance management activities of the Department.

### OFFICE OF FINANCE

The Office of Finance is responsible for continually improving the quality of the Department's financial services. The office maintains stewardship of Departmental resources and provides financial information on appropriations and general, revolving, special, and deposit funds for cost and obligation accounting. The Office of Finance establishes financial policy, systems and operating procedures for all Department financial entities, provides guidance on all aspects of financial management, provides audit readiness and remediation services, and directs and manages the Department's financial operations and systems support.

The office is responsible for the continued maintenance and update of VA's central payroll and human resources system (Personnel and Accounting Integrated Data or PAID) and implementation of legislative and other mandated changes. The office leads VA's efforts to implement high-quality, cost-effective and operational improvements to PAID and related self-service applications. The office also maintains and updates VA's corporate core accounting system, the Financial Management System (FMS).

The office leads VA's efforts on payroll modernization (e-Payroll). This effort standardizes, consolidates, and integrates Federal civilian payroll services and procedures. As a result of the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) alignment of VA with the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS), the Office of Finance, as VA's primary liaison, works with all VA offices, DFAS, OPM, and OMB on plans for accomplishing the planned migration of VA's payroll servicing. The office completed VA's implementation of a new Web-based electronic travel system in concert with the Federal government's E-Gov Travel Program in December 2007, and oversees system and program service enhancements.

The Office of Finance is responsible for issuing VA's quarterly and annual consolidated financial statements and providing external departmental financial reports to the Department of the Treasury, OMB, and Congress. It also establishes departmentwide standards and policies in financial management and reporting, cost accounting, cash management, debt collection, payroll and management controls.

The Office of Finance also directs and manages the departmentwide travel and purchase card programs, and analyzes and oversees the performance and effectiveness of trusts established under VA's enhanced-use leasing program. It is also responsible for VA financial operations at Central Office and the Financial Services Center in Austin, Texas, and debt collection operations provided by VA's Debt Management Center in St. Paul, Minnesota.

The Office of Finance also oversees the management and direction of VA's Franchise Fund through its Franchise and Trust Fund Oversight Office. The Fund is comprised of the following business lines (Enterprise Centers): Austin Information Technology Center, Debt Management Center, Financial Services Center, Law Enforcement Training Center, Security and Investigations Center, and VA Records Center and Vault. These centers are authorized to sell common administrative services to VA and other Government agencies. The Enterprise Centers operate entirely on revenues earned from customers and receive no appropriated funding.

### **OFFICE OF ASSET ENTERPRISE MANAGEMENT**

The Office of Asset Enterprise Management (OAEM) is the corporate capital asset planning and portfolio management office for the Department. OAEM is a principal policy office and business advisor to the Assistant Secretary for Management and the Secretary, providing objective oversight and advice regarding the acquisition, management, and disposal of VA capital assets. OAEM also functions as the Energy, Environment, and Transportation senior agency official and the Real Property Officer on behalf of the Assistant Secretary for Management. The office oversees capital asset activities to ensure (1) a consistent and cohesive departmental approach and (2) effective portfolio and asset performance management throughout the entire asset lifecycle. OAEM has primary responsibility for developing and promulgating the governance policies and principles, processes, decision-making and performance measurement systems related to the Department's capital asset management. OAEM coordinates the Department's capital investment planning process and chairs the VA Capital Investment Panel. The office provides guidance, standards, and technical expertise with respect to individual investments, infrastructure-related programs, and initiatives. OAEM is also responsible for budget formulation, compiling and producing VA's 5-year Capital Plan for Major and Minor Construction programs; Asset Management Plan; Annual Energy Plan; and 5-Year Disposal Plan.

The size, scope, and complexity of OAEM's responsibilities continue to expand. This office collaborates with VA's administrations on setting budgetary priorities to reflect both legislative intent and the strategic goals of the Department, coordinating the budget and planning process for construction programs. OAEM is responsible for oversight of VA's enhanced-use leasing program and for leadership in major reuse initiatives such as the Site Review Initiative, Transitional Housing, Mission Driven Housing for Homeless Veterans, and market-driven public/private partnerships. OAEM integrates and oversees VA's energy, environment, and transportation/fleet management policies and programs, and chairs the VA Energy Management Task Force, Green Buildings Council, Environmental Task Force, and Fleet Management Task Force. The office serves on the Federal Real Property Council and its subgroups, chairs the VA Real Property Group, and participates on the OMB Real Property Performance Team. OAEM is responsible for cross-organizational initiatives internal and external to the Department, performance monitoring and benchmarking and reporting for improved real property/capital asset/portfolio management. OAEM is responsible for integrating asset management and governance at multiple levels, improving financial and analytic capability, and enabling better-informed decision-making.

Federal reporting requirements have increased, and OAEM has responded aggressively to meet additional mandates in the areas of real property, environment, transportation/fleet, and energy management, including energy costs and consumption. OAEM is responsible for the OMB/President's Management Agenda reporting on real property, energy, transportation and environment.

### **OFFICE OF BUSINESS OVERSIGHT**

The Office of Business Oversight (OBO) has oversight responsibility for audit and review of the Department's finance, acquisition, logistics, and capital asset management activities. The goals of the organization include improving internal audit coverage of field activities, ensuring consistent application of policy, procedures, and regulations, and ensuring the security and integrity of VA financial operations. The director's office is located in Washington, DC, and three supporting services -- Management Quality Assurance Service, Internal Controls Service, and Systems Quality Assurance Service -- are located in Austin, Texas.

The Management Quality Assurance Service performs internal audit reviews of the Department's financial, acquisition, logistics, and capital asset management activities and conducts financial analysis, monitoring, risk assessment and advisory services for VA's CFO. The Internal Controls Service coordinates reviews of internal controls over financial reporting required by Appendix A of OMB Circular A-123, *Management's Responsibility for Internal Control*, and system reviews required under OMB Circular A-127, *Financial Management Systems*. These reviews include internal control assessments, remediation activities, and the preparation of the Department's annual statement of assurance related to internal controls over financial reporting. The Systems Quality Assurance Service provides independent verification and validation of VA software development, specifically systems quality assurance and systems integration testing for enterprise financial systems; this enables managers to ensure the security and integrity of VA financial operations. The Systems Quality Assurance Service is organizationally assigned to the Office of Information and Technology but works for OBO and the Assistant Secretary for Management under an agreement between the CFO and the CIO.

OBO also established VA's Finance and Logistics Council. This council consists of the VA CFO and Deputy CFO; Director of the Office of Asset Enterprise Management; Executive Director of the Office of Acquisition, Logistics and Construction; the VHA, VBA, and NCA CFOs; VHA Chief Business Officer; and a Chief Logistics Officer from VHA, VBA, and NCA. In addition to addressing general financial management, acquisition, logistics, capital asset management, and budget issues, the council manages OBO's oversight and field assistance activities.

### **FINANCIAL AND LOGISTICS INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY ENTERPRISE (FLITE) PROGRAM OFFICE**

The FLITE Program Office is responsible for the enterprise-wide financial and asset management integration program to standardize functional processes and modernize the information technology environment supporting financial and asset management within VA. The program has two primary elements, an asset management component referred to as the Strategic Asset Management (SAM) project, and a financial component referred to as the Integrated Financial Accounting System (IFAS).

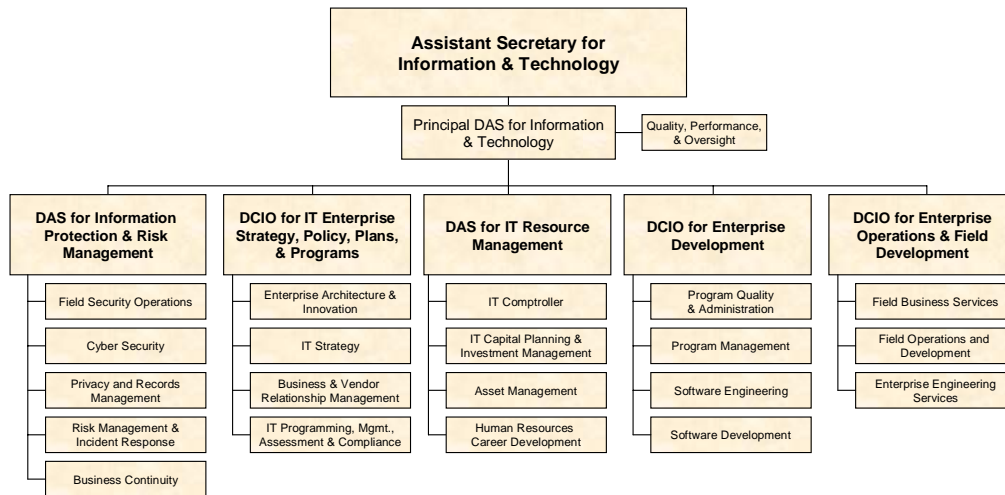
The FLITE Program Office oversees and coordinates all aspects of the program, including systems engineering, organizational change management, training, program management, communications, and risk and investment management, and directs multi-disciplinary efforts of VA and contractor personnel to accomplish various tasks.

The FLITE Program Office is also responsible for implementing VA's new Financial Reporting Data Warehouse, a key component of VA remediation efforts associated with the material weakness, "financial management system functionality."

The objectives of the FLITE initiative are to improve service to those who serve our Veterans by providing timely, consistent and reliable financial, asset management, budget, and related information for management decisions, improve VA's accountability while eliminating the material weaknesses cited above, and improve insight, understanding, and information data exchange.



## ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY



The Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology (AS/IT) is the Chief Information Officer (CIO) for the Department of Veterans Affairs and is the principal advisor to the Secretary on all matters relating to the management of VA's information and technology (IT). The AS/IT is the single leadership authority for IT in VA. The Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology (PDAS/IT) facilitates IT activities in the Department to improve the effectiveness of program operations and to assist line and staff organizations in the performance of their missions. The PDAS/IT is the senior advisor to the Assistant Secretary for all Department-wide information technology, security and privacy matters including policy/budget formulation, planning, assessment of Department business requirements, acquisition, execution and oversight; internal and external coordination; and development and analysis of department level program data.

The office is composed of six major organizational elements: Quality, Performance, and Oversight; Information Protection and Risk Management; IT Enterprise Strategy, Policy, Plans, and Programs; IT Resource Management; Enterprise Development; and Enterprise Operations and Field Development.

### OFFICE OF INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY

The Office of Information and Technology (OI&T) is the steward of VA's IT assets and resources, and is responsible for ensuring the efficient and effective operation of VA's IT Management System to meet mission requirements of the Secretary, under secretaries, assistant secretaries, and other key officials. The mission of OI&T is to enable and sustain secure delivery of services and benefits to the Veteran in partnership with the business lines of VA's IT program internally and externally to Congress, Office of Management and Budget (OMB), General Accountability Office (GAO), Office of Inspector General (OIG), Federal agencies, and interested parties. The role of IT is defined in OMB Circular A-130 which implements the Clinger-Cohen Act.

The office advises and assists the AS/IT on matters relating to departmentwide IT responsibilities and functions, including policy/budget formulation, planning, acquisition, execution, and oversight; internal and external coordination; development and analysis of Department-level program data; and assessment of Department IT requirements. IT's role is defined in OMB Circular A-130 which implements the Clinger-Cohen Act.

## **OFFICE OF QUALITY, PERFORMANCE, AND OVERSIGHT**

The Office of Quality, Performance, and Oversight (QP&O) leads OI&T's performance management and process improvement efforts. The office facilitates the establishment of performance measures and metrics related to the full range of IT program responsibilities and strategic objectives and manages associated measurement, reporting, and improvement efforts. The office links IT business objectives to strategic goals, drives standards, validates requirements, and integrates expectations into all IT processes, programs, and initiatives while maintaining a culture of quality performance and continuous improvement. The office serves as adviser to the AS/IT on a wide range of complex and sensitive issues which cross organizational boundaries within the Department, and interfaces with external agencies such as OMB, GAO, OIG, and Congress. QP&O is also charged with department-wide compliance in the areas of privacy, records management, information physical security, and cyber security as well as conformance to the IT organization's policies and procedures. The office ensures compliance with the Federal Information Security Management Act of 2002 and works collaboratively with VA administrations to proactively identify weaknesses, improve their processes, and eliminate significant vulnerabilities.

## **OFFICE OF INFORMATION PROTECTION AND RISK MANAGEMENT**

The Office of Information Protection and Risk Management (IPRM) serves our Veterans, their beneficiaries, employees and all VA stakeholders by ensuring the confidentiality, integrity and availability of VA sensitive information and information systems. IPRM develops and executes strategy, governance, policies, and procedures for information protection initiatives, in the areas of cyber security, risk management, incident response, business continuity, critical infrastructure protection, privacy, FOIA, records management and training. IPRM ensures VA compliance with related federal and legislative mandates in the areas of information security, privacy, FOIA, and records management. IPRM continuously measures performance, assesses risk, and mitigates threats to enable VA's business operations and support our mission of honoring America's Veterans.

## **OFFICE OF IT ENTERPRISE STRATEGY, POLICY, PLANS, AND PROGRAMS**

The Office of IT Enterprise Strategy, Policy, Plans and Programs advises and assists the AS/IT in overseeing and directing the areas of IT strategy, plans, and programs for the Department. The office develops the Enterprise Architecture and IT Strategic Plan which addresses short and long-term IT goals, objectives, and performance measures necessary to support VA business lines. The office develops the IT Multi-Year Program which identifies major business initiatives that require IT support, as well as IT infrastructure needs over a two to four year time-frame. The office develops IT Program Management policies and standards; and through the conduct of Program Management Reviews, Milestone Reviews, and Operational Analysis, the office monitors compliance with cost, schedule, and performance goals for major IT initiatives. The office is charged with linking VA business lines to identify evolving business needs that require IT support, identifying service level standards on ongoing support, and resolving issues regarding IT support to VA businesses.

## OFFICE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The Office of Information Technology Resource Management (ITRM) advises the AS/IT and other senior OI&T officials on OI&T resource requirements. The office is responsible for the executive-level management of all IT resources and directs the financial management, human capital management, IT asset management, and acquisition/financial systems support activities of OI&T. The office also has the primary responsibility for linking the budgeting process with IT programs and is responsible for directing fiscal activities related to linking the budget process to all established IT operations and management initiatives enterprise-wide.

## OFFICE OF ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

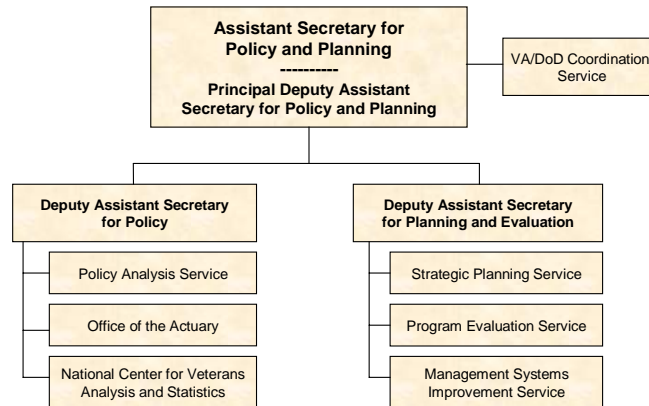
The Office of Enterprise Development (OED) is responsible for all software application development activities within the Department. Development consists of planning, developing or acquiring, and testing software applications to meet business requirements. OED provides day-to-day direction over all solutions developed by OI&T for VA business units. OED's four main organizational arms are:

- **Administration and Quality Control**, responsible for sustaining the organization and managing process improvement, quality performance and communications.
- **Program Management**, responsible for establishing and overseeing development initiatives through their entire life cycle.
- **Software Engineering**, responsible for developing and maintaining architectural standards and ensuring applications are appropriately architected to those standards.
- **Software Development**, responsible for developing or acquiring and testing software solutions.

## OFFICE OF ENTERPRISE OPERATIONS AND FIELD DEVELOPMENT

The Office of Enterprise Operations & Field Development (EOFD) directs all operational and maintenance activities associated with VA's IT environment on behalf of the AS/IT. EOFD is the largest OI&T organizational unit, with an annual budget of \$700M+ and 5,000 IT professionals and support staff spread across three primary organizational units – Field Business Services, Field Operations and Development and Enterprise Engineering Services. EOFD is responsible for budget and resource management, capital planning, help desk support, system administration, field-based software development, network management, systems implementation, telecommunications, release and configuration management and standardization and optimization from the earliest stages of system design. EOFD provides system architecture services for existing and new IT systems and manages the delivery of operations services to all VA geographic locations.

## ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR POLICY AND PLANNING



The Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning (OP&P) provides comprehensive advice, counsel, plans, and reports for the Secretary and other VA senior leaders in the areas of corporate policy, strategic planning and management, VA/Department of Defense (DoD) coordination services, and management improvement to support VA's endeavors to provide benefits and services to our Nation's veterans in an effective and efficient manner. OP&P provides expert guidance and support for the Department's strategic planning process and implementation of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA); supports the development, analysis, and review of issues affecting Veterans' programs; provides quantitative and actuarial analysis to the Department in support of major policy deliberations; serves as the Department's focal point for access to and availability of official data; coordinates the independent evaluation of program performance focusing on program outcomes, service quality, customer satisfaction, and management efficiencies; coordinates and supports VA and DoD activities, councils, and partnerships; and fosters the adoption of management systems improvement initiatives, including the use of such quality engineering/management tools as business process reengineering across VA.

### VA/DOD COLLABORATION SERVICE

The VA/DoD Collaboration Service provides oversight for the implementation of joint VA/DoD governance and strategic planning, and conceptual and analytical information to support VA/DoD joint identification and analysis of policy and program issues that affect VA's responsibilities in the continuum of care from the disabling wound, injury or illness of a Service member to return to active duty or transition to Veteran status. The principal functions of the VA/DoD Collaboration Service include:

- Coordinating VA's collaborative efforts with DoD under the VA/DoD Joint Executive Council (JEC) and the VA/DoD Wounded, Ill and Injured Senior Oversight Committee (WII-SOC).
- Coordinating VA responses to joint and combined VA/DoD policy mandates created by Acts of Congress and public laws, including joint and combined VA/DoD policy development.
- Provide staff support for the VA/DoD Joint Executive Council and the VA/DoD Wounded, Ill and Injured Senior Oversight Committee.
- Coordinate and facilitate a departmental-wide perspective in pursuing all VA/DoD collaboration activities and initiatives.

## OFFICE OF POLICY

The Office of Policy provides independent, responsive analyses of Veterans' policies and programs to the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and other VA policy and decision makers. The Office of Policy consists of the Policy Analysis Service, the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, and the Office of the Actuary. The principal functions of the Office of Policy include:

- Administering the National Survey of Veterans and National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics data functions to support continual enhancement of policies, programs, benefits, and services to Veterans with emphasis on Veteran cohorts including Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Guard and Reserve Veterans, women Veterans, minority Veterans, aging Veterans, and other specialized Veteran groups.
- Coordinating, facilitating, and leading the Department's development, analysis, and reviews of policies affecting Veterans programs.
- Supporting the Offices of the Secretary and Deputy Secretary by reviewing and analyzing internal and external policy issues and legislative initiatives; participating in the development of the Department's legislative proposals and associated cost estimates; and facilitating cooperative and collaborative data gathering and analysis across the Department.
- Providing support to a wide range of internal and intergovernmental efforts, including advisory committees, working groups, and task forces.
- Managing and directing survey research including national surveys.
- Serving as a central clearing house for the collection, analysis, and dissemination of information and data about Veterans and Veterans programs and services.
- Conducting a wide range of actuarial estimates and projections.
- Developing, validating, and disseminating official Veteran population estimates and projections.

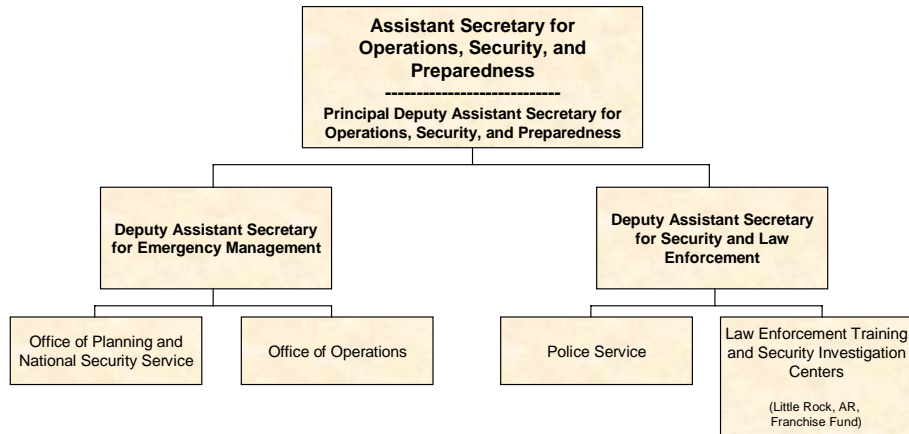
## OFFICE OF PLANNING AND EVALUATION

The Office of Planning and Evaluation oversees implementation of the Department's integrated strategic planning, program evaluation, and management systems improvement processes. The Office directly supports the Secretary in developing the VA Strategic Plan, and One-VA Employee Strategic Plan; manages independent and comprehensive evaluation of programs; conducts organizational and functional studies on behalf of the Secretary; coordinates the Department's implementation of Competitive Sourcing and Business Process Reengineering studies; coordinates the Secretary's Performance Excellence Program; and works with all organizational elements to identify and implement improvement initiatives that will enhance delivery of benefits and services to Veterans.

The Office of Planning and Evaluation has responsibility for:

- Overseeing the implementation of VA's governance and strategic planning processes, which includes development of the VA Strategic Plan. These documents provide conceptual and analytical information to support program officials collaborating on the identification and analysis of environmental factors and strategic issues that affect VA and its ability to deliver benefits and services to Veterans and their families.
- Managing the Program Evaluation process required under GPRA to measure the effectiveness of Federal programs against outcomes, conducting special studies for the Secretary, and designing research studies in response to Congressional requests.
- Coordinating the Department's implementation of Competitive Sourcing and Business Process Reengineering studies; leading and overseeing management improvement initiatives, organizational assessments and transformation; leading and overseeing the Secretary's Robert W. Carey Performance Excellence awards; and advising the Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning regarding quality engineering/management best practices.
- Serving as the Department's internal coordinator and external liaison regarding strategic planning.

## ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR OPERATIONS, SECURITY, AND PREPAREDNESS



The Assistant Secretary for Operations, Security, and Preparedness (OSP) coordinates VA's emergency management, preparedness, security, and law enforcement activities to ensure the Department can continue to perform the mission essential functions under all circumstances across the spectrum of threats. OSP directs and provides oversight for VA's planning, response, and security and law enforcement programs in support of the National Response Plan and VA overall operations. OSP has primary responsibility for:

- Coordinating the implementation of VA's Strategic Objective 4.1, "Improve the Nation's preparedness for response to war, terrorism, national emergencies, and natural disasters by developing plans and taking actions to ensure continued service to Veterans as well as support to national, state, and local emergency management and homeland security offices."
- Ensuring that VA environments for care and administration are safe, secure, and as free as possible from the threat of physical danger or property loss.

### OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is responsible for developing, coordinating, and implementing policy and programs to ensure VA has an integrated Comprehensive Emergency Management Program. OEM has two organizational units: Operations Service and Planning and National Security. In addition, OEM is responsible for:

- Coordinating and developing departmental policies relating to the Comprehensive Emergency Management Program in accordance with executive orders, Presidential management directives, regulations and guidance.
- Serving as principal point of contact with the Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and other departments and agencies pertaining to emergency management, continuity of operations, domestic incident management, and national security emergency programs.
- Managing the Presidential and departmental line of succession programs.

- Managing the departmental Readiness Operations Center (ROC). The ROC is staffed around-the-clock and serves as the collection and dissemination point for information to support VA's Comprehensive Emergency Management Program.
- Coordinating emergency preparedness and crisis response activities both VA-wide and with other Federal, state, and local agencies.
- Developing training and exercises that enhance VA's preparedness programs.
- Maintaining VA's emergency relocation sites.
- Developing policies and managing the Information Security Program (classified documents) to ensure compliance with Executive Order 12958, as amended, and Information Security Oversight Office (ISOO) directives.
- In coordination with the Office of Security and Law Enforcement (OSLE), establish policies and procedures for implementing the Personnel Security and Suitability Program in accordance with applicable executive orders, laws and regulations.

### **OFFICE OF SECURITY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT**

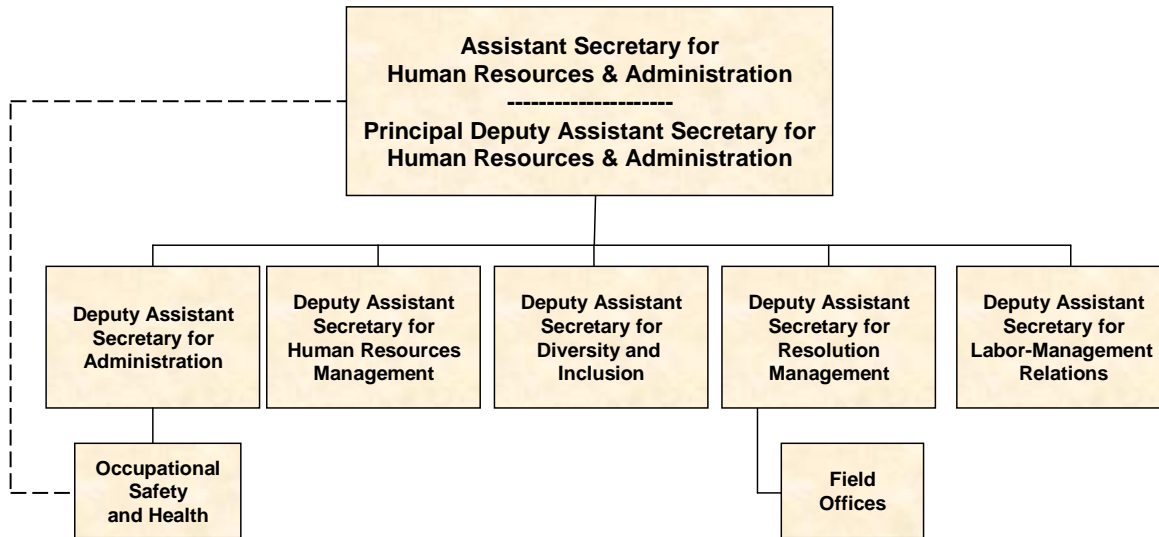
OSLE is responsible for developing policies, procedures and standards that govern the implementation of physical security measures designed to protect personnel (Veterans and visitors), facilities and property in VA. OSLE is also responsible for:

- Developing and implementing training requirements and standards for VA police officers.
- Protecting the Secretary and Deputy Secretary.
- Developing and implementing VA's weapons management program.
- Managing the Law Enforcement Training Center and the Security Investigation Center.
- Representing VA on interagency committees and maintaining effective working relationships with VA's Office of Inspector General and other law enforcement entities.

OSLE is composed of three units: Police Service, Security and Investigations Center, and the Law Enforcement Training Center. The Security and Investigations Center and the Law Enforcement Training Center are enterprise activities. Their budget and staffing levels are based on revenue generated by reimbursable services provided by the Centers.



## ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR HUMAN RESOURCES AND ADMINISTRATION



The Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration (HR&A) provides direction and oversight to five major program areas headed by the Deputy Assistant Secretaries for Administration, Human Resources Management, Diversity and Inclusion, Resolution Management, and Labor-Management Relations. With the assistance of these officials, the Assistant Secretary is responsible for directing both policy and operational functions in these program areas. The Assistant Secretary serves as the Department's Designated Agency Safety and Health Official and is responsible for administering the Occupational Safety and Health and Workers' Compensation programs. The Assistant Secretary also serves as the Department's Chief Human Capital Officer, advising and assisting the Secretary in carrying out VA's responsibilities for selecting, developing, training, and managing a high quality workforce in accordance with merit systems principles.

### OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATION

The Office of Administration (O/A) provides a wide range of support services, primarily to VACO. Local services include audiovisuals, transportation, personal property, space management, mail, and operation of the VACO building as well as administrative support to all VACO employees in satellite locations. Nationwide, O/A oversees the Department's Occupational Safety and Health, and Workers' Compensation programs; provides guidance and assistance to facilities in their audiovisual needs; the oversight and responsibility of the transit benefit program; the processing of executive correspondence (White House bulk mail), and protocol matters affecting the Department.

The office serves as departmental liaison to GSA concerning space acquisition and other support functions within the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. The office manages the VACO space inventory, and is responsible for alterations and renovation projects, and serves as the facility site manager for 11 Washington area locations.

## OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) is responsible for advising the Secretary on personnel matters and consulting with other VACO and field officials to meet the established mission, goals, and objectives of the Department through a strategically aligned and customer-focused human resources program.

This office is focused on policy development, workforce planning initiatives, human resources development, legislative changes, and civil service reform. This includes the fundamental human resources functions of staffing (recruitment and retention); classification; compensation; executive resources; workforce planning; employee relations; employee work-life and benefits; career transition, oversight and effectiveness; and employee development within the human resources community.

The functions of OHRM also include liaison with the Office of Personnel Management, and representing VA before Congress, Office of Management and Budget, and other Federal agencies on human resources issues.

## OFFICE OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) advises and supports the Assistant Secretary for HR&A and other key officials in workforce diversity and inclusion matters. ODI provides leadership and guidance in creating a diverse workforce and inclusive work environment that ensures equal opportunity through national policy development, workforce analysis, outreach, retention, and education to best serve our Nation's Veterans. ODI supports VA's strategic objective of "recruiting, developing, and retaining a competent, committed, and diverse workforce" through three functionality aligned teams:

- **Workforce Analysis:** Performs analysis and evaluation of the demographic composition of the Department's workforce in comparison with the Relevant Civilian Labor Force to identify and eliminate potential barriers to equal employment opportunity. Prepares statistical and accompanying narrative reports in response to internal and external federally mandated reports in the area of workforce diversity and equal employment opportunity (EEO). Identifies workforce trends, triggers, and potential barriers to support agency workforce and succession planning through a state of the art standardized workforce analysis system.
- **Outreach and Retention:** Develops recruitment outreach and workforce retention programs, models, and tools to create and sustain a diverse and inclusive workforce throughout the VA. Develops and provides technical assistance and training for National Special Emphasis Programs to increase awareness and enhance outreach and retention of historically underrepresented groups in the workforce. Performs on-site technical assistance reviews of Central Office and field facilities to evaluate EEO programs and the status of workforce diversity initiatives VA-wide. Develops internal and external partnerships with public, private, and non-profit organizations, educational institutions, and affinity groups to support workforce diversity and inclusion through internship and mentoring programs.

- **Training and Communications:** Maintains accountability for diversity and inclusion objectives by developing national policies, performance standards, and Department-wide training programs relating to workforce diversity and EEO. Promotes effective communications through a variety of vehicles to increase awareness, education, and accountability for diversity and inclusion matters, and to gauge the organizational climate with respect to diversity issues. Administer the VA Diversity Advisory Council to serve as an advisory body to the Secretary and a leadership forum on diversity and inclusion matters.

ODI's vision is to create and sustain a high performing workforce by leveraging diversity and empowering all employees to achieve superior results in service to our Veterans.

### OFFICE OF RESOLUTION MANAGEMENT

The Office of Resolution Management (ORM) is responsible for addressing workplace disputes and allegations of employment discrimination in VA through the use of prevention techniques, early intervention, alternative dispute resolution (ADR), counseling and investigations. ORM uses a variety of services and programs to accomplish these responsibilities in a timely and high quality manner. These services and programs fall under four key measures:

- **Prevention.** ORM offers prevention programs that ensure employees and managers understand the characteristics of a healthy work environment and have the tools to manage conflict.
- **Early Resolution.** ORM oversees VA's Workplace ADR Program, providing coaching, facilitation, and mediation services and training. These services are delivered through a network of hundreds of administration ADR coordinators and VA certified mediators.
- **Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Complaint Processing.** ORM has developed programs to improve the overall management of Equal Employment Opportunity discrimination complaint processing services within VA. ORM provides EEO discrimination complaint processing services to VA employees, applicants for employment, and former employees. These services include counseling, investigation, and procedural final agency decisions. ADR is encouraged through all phases of the complaint process. These services are provided through a nationwide network of field and satellite offices located throughout the United States. ORM provides compliance oversight functions on final decisions, appellate reviews, matters relating to settlements including breach of settlement agreements, and fully investigates claims for compensatory damages. ORM has oversight responsibility for the Department's External Civil Rights Program which ensures compliance with Title VI and Title IX of the Civil Rights Act.
- **High Quality ORM Workforce.** ORM recruits, develops, trains and retains a highly competent and diverse workforce by promoting a positive work environment.

### OFFICE OF LABOR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS

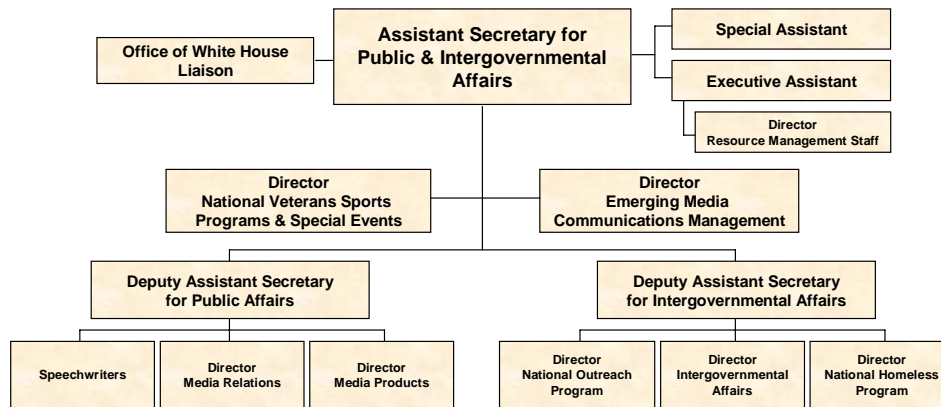
The Office of Labor-Management Relations (LMR) supports the VA's mission of providing world-class service to Veterans and their families by promoting cooperative labor-management relationships to ensure that the Department can effectively manage its workforce while creating a positive work environment for employees and meeting its labor relations obligations.

LMR facilitates effective communication between VA management and the Department's national labor unions; provides expert advice and counsel to management officials in VACO and field facilities; provides leadership for management negotiating teams at the national level to facilitate agreement and expedite implementation of Department initiatives; and assists VA's Office of General Counsel in representing the Department in national labor litigation matters.

LMR also provides training to include contract interpretation and implementation, rights and responsibilities under the labor statute, and labor-management cooperation.

Finally, LMR ensures that labor-management goals and objectives are linked to VA's Strategic Plan and that measures are developed to evaluate the effectiveness of the labor relations program as it relates to the mission of improving services and creating a positive work environment for employees.

## ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS



The Assistant Secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs manages all aspects of communications with Veterans, the general public, VA employees, and the news media; an array of special events geared to the needs and interests of Veterans and their families; and efforts by the agency to work with various state and local governments to better meet the needs of Veterans across the Nation. The responsibility includes coordination and distribution of the information VA communicates to its audiences, especially to the general public through the news media, and the provision of public affairs policy guidance for the Department. The Assistant Secretary also directs and manages the intergovernmental, international, homeless and consumer affairs, as well as the special events program office. The Office of the Assistant Secretary works to meet the needs of all VA audiences-first and foremost, Veterans.

### OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs is responsible for providing external and internal communications services and public affairs policy guidance to administration and other operating elements to create awareness of VA programs, services, and responsibilities.

The primary mission of the Office of Public Affairs (OPA) is to provide the Nation's Veterans, and their eligible dependents and survivors, information through news media channels about VA benefits and programs. Through the preparation and dissemination of various communications materials, the office provides essential information on program eligibility and operations to a variety of public entities. It maintains close liaison with media representatives and monitors print and broadcast news activity. It provides responses to inquiries concerning data and information about agency operations and policy. OPA provides assessments of public affairs issues to the Secretary and his staff, and assists VA field facilities in the formulation and execution of community affairs programs. OPA conducts public affairs training to enhance the ability of public affairs officers to communicate through the news media. It also communicates information on administration policy and priorities through a variety of means, including articles, speeches, and media interviews with agency officials. OPA provides timely advice, information, and counsel to public affairs officers based in field facilities maintained by the Veterans Health Administration, Veterans Benefits Administration, and National Cemetery Administration. The program is designed to provide the Department with the means by which program objectives can be enhanced through supportive communication activities.

OPA supports publicity activities surrounding numerous national special events such as the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, National Veterans Wheelchair Games, National Veterans Golden Age Games, National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, Memorial Day, and Veterans Day national ceremonies; publishes an annually updated handbook of federal Veterans benefits information in English and Spanish; and produces the Department's print and electronic internal communications media. The office maintains Internet access to the benefits booklet (in English and Spanish), news releases, fact sheets, video products, and other informational materials.

With personnel in Central Office and seven regional offices, OPA provides an array of public information and professional communications media services: news and feature releases, fact sheets, statistical summaries, radio and television materials, magazine articles, speeches, and official statements. The office also provides advice to the Secretary, administrations, and staff offices concerning public interest and reaction to VA policies and programs.

The office produces a number of media specifically aimed at VA's internal audiences - employees, volunteers, Veteran patients and clients, and other stakeholders. *Vanguard* is VA's employee magazine published six times a year and distributed nationally to all VA facilities. *VA News* is a weekly video newscast of events, activities, issues and achievements affecting VA employees. It is broadcast via satellite to all major VA facilities. The office sends via e-mail a daily message for all employees to inform them of VA achievements, initiatives and policy decisions and to recognize VA employees for their achievements. All of these products are posted on the OPA Website, as well. The office also uses the employee leave and earnings statement to send messages communicating management priorities and program initiatives.

The office produces a monthly video news magazine called "The American Veteran" which is broadcast to military personnel around the world on the Pentagon Channel and on domestic cable and satellite television systems.

### **OFFICE OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS**

The Deputy Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs serves as the Department liaison in all intergovernmental affairs matters and is the primary point of contact with Federal, state, and local government officials. The office coordinates VA's participation in intergovernmental affairs initiatives, including White House-sponsored activities and is responsible for the assessment of the issues and concerns of state and local officials and the impact of VA's action in their areas of jurisdiction. The office also facilitates continuous and bilateral communications between the states and VA to gain early knowledge of state actions and concerns, issues, and supporting programs.

The Office of Intergovernmental Affairs has a strategic planning component and an operational component: The strategic planning team is focused on the future, how best to build relationships with states, territories, and Native American tribal governments with special emphasis on those with the largest population of Veterans. The team advises the Assistant Secretary and Deputy Assistant Secretary about important upcoming special events, forums, and/or conferences where VA participation would be beneficial. The staff serves as the primary liaison to national intergovernmental organizations. The operational team will execute the Strategic Team's plan, which involves coordinating all VA field events and participation in non-VA activities and conventions. The team will travel to venues, engage media and message VA's focus on state and organizational partnerships. They operate as a rapid response team when needed, serving as field liaisons to the states, territories, and tribal governments.

The Office of Intergovernmental Affairs is responsible for developing, managing, and coordinating the Department's international programs. In coordination with the National Security Council (NSC), Department of Defense, and the State Department, the staff develops state visit programs and subject matter exchanges for representatives of foreign governments concerning Veterans' benefits. This provides a venue for the exchange of information on how best to assist countries in developing programs to better serve their Veterans and to help foster our bilateral relations with participating countries. The service is also responsible for coordinating with foreign governments all international commemorative events such as the anniversary of foreign wars, battles, and official recognition by foreign governments of our Veterans. A major responsibility of the service is to interface with the diplomatic community on all international matters concerning our Veterans and all foreign official travel.

The Homeless Veterans Programs office coordinates departmentwide efforts to assist our Nation's homeless Veterans. The staff is tasked with developing partnerships with other Federal agencies, state and local governments, national and local homeless service providers, Veterans service organizations, and Native American tribal governments to improve internal and external systems of assisting homeless Veterans. This office oversees all VA homeless programs and serves as the Department's coordinating office with the Interagency Council on Homelessness. In addition, this office coordinates the Department's Working Group on Homelessness which provides logistical support to the 15-member Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans. This office is a key internal partner to the loan guarantee for multifamily transitional housing for homeless Veterans' initiative. The Office coordinates VA involvement in the planning and participation in joint conferences with Federal departments that assist homeless Veterans; oversees VA participation with the Department of Labor's pilot to assist incarcerated Veterans; and participates as a key component of the Secretary's Task Force on access and availability of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.

The National Outreach Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the Department's outreach efforts, as well as developing and implementing administrative and operational policies for departmentwide application. The coordinator serves as the Department's primary point of contact and subject-matter expert on outreach and related activities that affect the nature and benefits of targeted groups of Veterans. The coordinator develops and implements departmentwide outreach policies and procedures, and oversees efforts with various communications offices to develop local, regional and national outreach communication plans. The coordinator liaisons VA's outreach efforts with the White House, Congress, and other Federal, state and local officials in the development of coordinated outreach efforts.

Consumer Affairs Service (CAS) is the Department's liaison with other Cabinet-level consumer affairs offices and acts as the department-level consumer complaint response office. CAS acts as a consultant and coordinator for other VA offices and field stations in establishing and maintaining their Internet-based customer response activities, as well as their ongoing customer service programs. CAS responds to inquiries from state and local government elected officials regarding individual Veterans' concerns.

## **OFFICE OF NATIONAL VETERANS SPORTS PROGRAMS AND SPECIAL EVENTS**

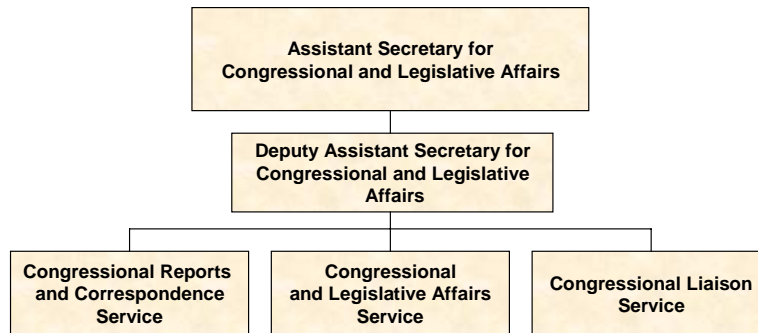
The Office of National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events coordinates VA activities related to commemorative Veterans programs, the six national rehabilitative special events for disabled Veterans, and VA's partnership with U.S. Paralympics, Inc. Such activities include the National Veterans Day Observance, National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, National Veterans Wheelchair Games, National Veterans Golden Age Games, National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic, National Veterans TEE Tournament, Paralympics grant program, Paralympics athlete assistance allowance, and other nationally recognized events. This office also directs the activities of the National Rehabilitative Special Events Management Group currently chaired by the Deputy Secretary and vice-chaired by the Assistant Secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs.

## **OFFICE OF WHITE HOUSE LIAISON**

The Office of White House Liaison advises the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and the Assistant Secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs on the placement of Senior-level non-career appointments in VA.



## ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR CONGRESSIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS



The Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Legislative Affairs is responsible for promoting the enactment of legislation authorizing improved Veterans benefits and services by coordinating the development of pro-Veteran legislation and advising the Secretary on legislative strategy; by maintaining healthy communications with Congress through constituent services, briefings, reports, hearings, and other informational exchanges; and by maintaining productive working relationships with congressional members/staff, congressional committees, and the General Accountability Office (GAO).

### OFFICE OF CONGRESSIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

The Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (OCLA) is responsible for advising senior Department officials on developing and maintaining VA's relationship with Members of Congress and congressional committees and on congressional interest in VA policy and program development and implementation, managing all congressional hearings, and ensuring that Congress receives pertinent and timely information about VA programs and policy issues. In addition, OCLA provides support and assistance with respect to specific legislative activity, monitors the status of pending legislation affecting VA, and works closely with the Legislative Advisor in developing the Department's annual legislative program.

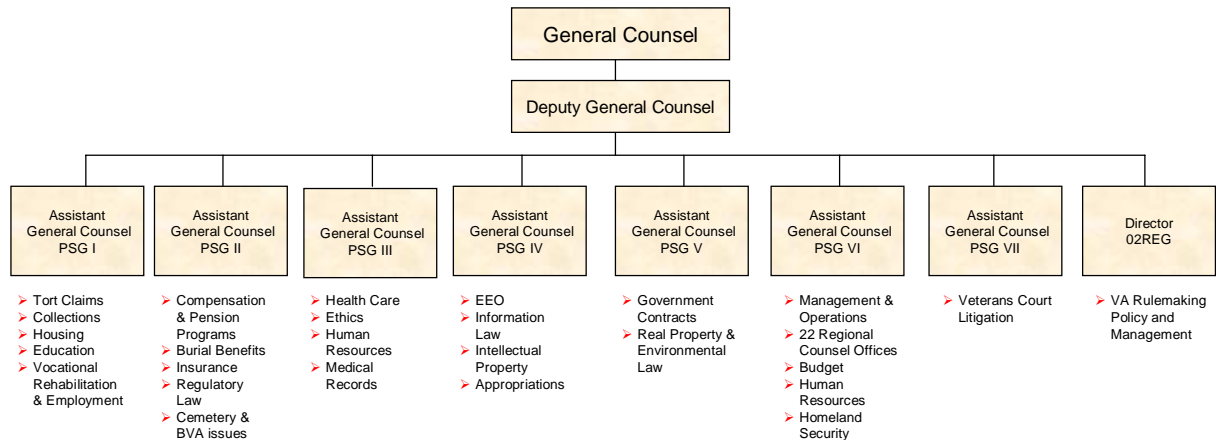
### OFFICE OF CONGRESSIONAL REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

The Office of Congressional Reports and Correspondence is responsible for ensuring that VA is compliant and timely in meeting congressional mandates for reports. In addition, the office maintains the Department's liaison function between VA and GAO, and coordinates meetings and reports due to the GAO. Responses to pre- and post-hearing questions associated with congressional hearings are managed by the office, as well as the office's internal correspondence function.

### OFFICE OF CONGRESSIONAL LIAISON

The Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs maintains two satellite offices located in the Russell Senate Office Building and the Rayburn House Office Building to provide constituent casework and related services, allowing for direct, face-to-face contact with Members of Congress and their staffs.

## GENERAL COUNSEL



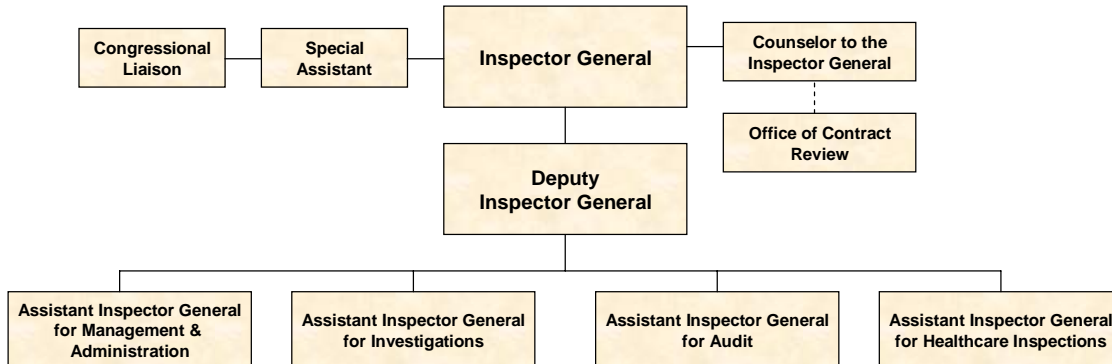
The Office of General Counsel (OGC) provides legal advice and services to the Secretary and all organizational components of the Department. The General Counsel is, by statute, the Department's chief legal officer. OGC interprets and advises Department officials regarding all laws, regulations, executive orders, and judicial precedents pertaining to the Department. It also serves as the final legal authority in issuing departmental regulations that have the force of law. OGC represents the Secretary in various administrative forums and works in close cooperation with the Department of Justice in defending legal actions brought against VA, as well as prosecuting affirmative claims, throughout the country. Further, OGC directly represents the Secretary in all cases litigated before the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. Working in close cooperation with Department officials, OGC prepares for the Secretary's approval draft bills and legislative testimony for presentation to Congress. Among its various other responsibilities, OGC manages the Department's ethics program.

At VACO, the responsibility for the full range of legal, litigation, legislative, and regulatory activities is distributed among seven Professional Staff Groups (PSG's), each headed by an Assistant General Counsel (AGC), and the Office of Regulation Policy and Management (02REG), headed by a Director. Each PSG has expertise in the specific subject matter areas noted in the chart above, and is responsible for providing legal advice to program officials, reviewing proposed regulations and directives, and handling litigation involving VA programs. The AGC for PSG III is VA's Designated Ethics Official. All PSGs draft bills in support of the Secretary's legislative agenda and as a technical service for congressional committees. The Director, 02REG, provides central management for VA rulemaking, regulatory impact analyses, and regulatory liaison with the Office of Management and Budget.

The AGC for PSG VI supervises OGC's field operations. OGC operates 22 field offices, which comprise two-thirds of OGC's workforce, each under the supervision of a Regional Counsel. Each Regional Counsel is responsible for providing legal advice and assistance to directors and other officials of all VA field facilities within the region. The responsibilities of a Regional Counsel include:

- Advising and representing management of VA facilities on issues relating to personnel and labor law.
- Performing legal review of administrative tort claims and providing legal support to the local U.S. Attorneys' Offices in tort litigation.
- Recovering funds owed the United States by various legal-collection remedies, to include litigation in Federal and state courts.
- Providing the full range of legal advice and assistance in local procurement matters.
- Initiating required court actions in guardianship commitment matters by appearing in state courts and furnishing legal assistance to appropriate elements of Veterans Benefits Administration and Veterans Health Administration.
- Providing necessary legal services in connection with the loan guaranty program.
- Providing training to employees of VA facilities within the assigned region.
- Maintaining liaison with state agencies and legislatures and with state and local bar associations.

## INSPECTOR GENERAL



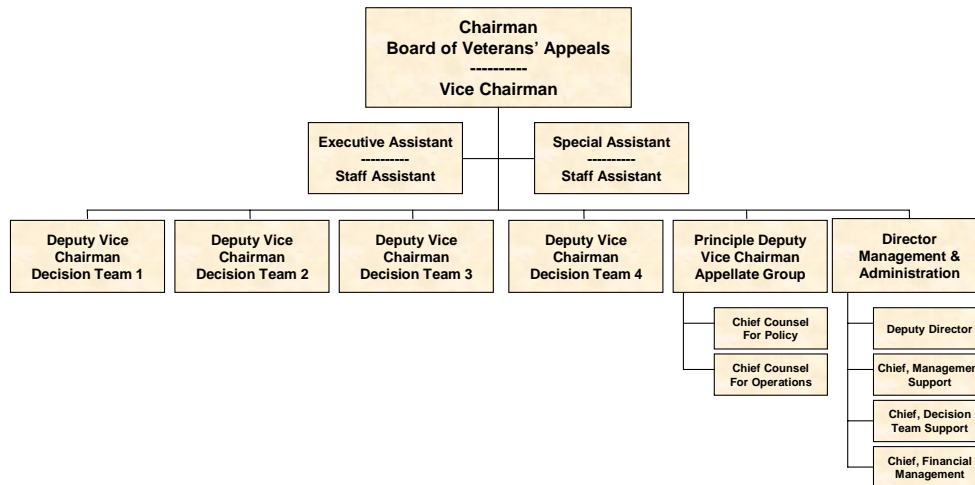
The Office of Inspector General (OIG) was administratively established in VA on January 1, 1978. The Inspector General Act of 1978 (Public Law No. 95-452), enacted in October 1978, statutorily established the OIG for the Department of Veterans Affairs. The Inspector General Amendments of 1988 (Public Law No. 100-504) established detailed reporting requirements on the resolution and implementation status of issued OIG reports. Public Law No. 100-322 expanded OIG activities to monitor and evaluate the Veterans Health Administration's Quality Assurance Programs and activities of the Medical Inspector. The Inspector General Reform Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-409) further enhanced OIG independence by considering each OIG office to be a separate Federal agency with annual budgetary submission requirements.

VA's OIG directs an independent and objective organization. The purpose of this organization is to conduct audits, investigations, and inspections of VA programs, operations, and other activities carried out or financed by VA; to recommend policies that promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness; and to prevent and detect criminal activity, waste, abuse, and mismanagement in VA.

Accomplishments of the office are described in semiannual reports required by the Inspector General Act. These reports are provided to the VA Secretary, Congress, Office of Management and Budget, and are published on OIG's Website.

Operations of the OIG are centrally managed in Washington, DC, and are divided among field offices established for audits, investigations, and health care inspections.

## BOARD OF VETERANS' APPEALS



The Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA), a statutory Board created in 1933, makes final decisions on appeals to the Secretary under laws affecting the provision of benefits by the Department to Veterans, their dependents, or their survivors. BVA conducts hearings in Washington, DC, and at VA regional offices. Hearings by videoconference are available at most regional offices. Final decisions of the Board may be appealed to the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. Appeals in insurance cases involving contracts may be taken into Federal courts after administrative remedies are exhausted.

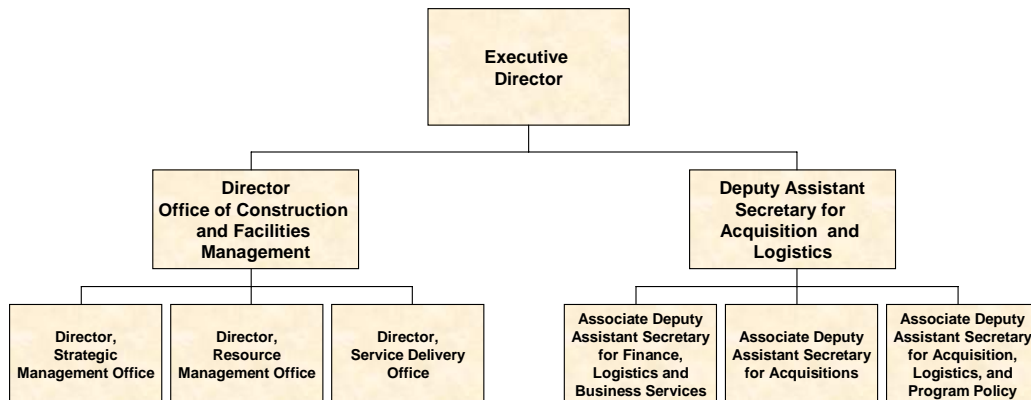
The Board consists of a Chairman, Vice Chairman, Senior Deputy Vice Chairman, four Deputy Vice Chairmen, and sufficient members to conduct hearings and decide appeals in a proper and timely manner. The Chairman serves at the Assistant Secretary level within the Department and is appointed by the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate, for a term of six years. The other members of the Board, including the Vice Chairman, are appointed by the Secretary, with the approval of the President, based upon recommendations of the Chairman. The Secretary designates one member of the Board as Vice Chairman.

The Board is organized into an Appellate Group, four Decision Teams, and a Management and Administration section. The Appellate Group, headed by the Senior Deputy Vice Chairman, provides counsel to the Chairman and serves as BVA's liaison with VA's Office of General Counsel, Veterans Health Administration, Veterans Benefits Administration, and other elements of the agency. The Appellate Group is also responsible for the Board's professional training and quality assurance programs, BVA's research center, the handling of Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act matters, regulation and handbook/directives drafting, and medical consultations and reviews by one medical advisor.

Each of BVA's decision teams is headed by a Deputy Vice Chairman, and is comprised of approximately 12 Veterans Law Judges (VLJ) and 72 attorney advisors. Decisions of the Board are rendered by individual VLJs or by panels of not less than three VLJs. Board counsel assist VLJs, review appeals, conduct research, and prepare tentative decisions. Each decision team decides cases from regional offices in one of four geographic regions.

BVA's Office of Management, Planning and Analysis is responsible for case management and tracking, docket control, hearing scheduling, correspondence, secretarial and transcription services, procurement, and liaison with parties outside BVA.

## OFFICE OF ACQUISITION, LOGISTICS, AND CONSTRUCTION



The Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construction (OALC) is a multifunctional organization responsible for directing the acquisition, logistics, construction, and leasing functions within the Department of Veterans Affairs. The Executive Director, OALC, is also the Chief Acquisition Officer (CAO) for the Department.

OALC has two fundamental roles. First, it has an operational role to provide acquisition, logistics, construction, and leasing support to the Department's administrations and staff offices so they can accomplish their missions. Second, it has oversight responsibility on behalf of the Secretary to ensure VA complies with laws, policies, and directions from executive branch partners, such as the Office of Management and Budget, Department of Treasury, General Services Administration, Government Accountability Office, and Congress.

OALC provides direct operational support to the Department's administrations and staff offices through its two major organizational components: the Office of Acquisition and Logistics (OAL) and the Office of Construction and Facilities Management (CFM). Each of these offices has staff in Washington, DC, as well as field sites across the Nation.

### OFFICE OF ACQUISITION AND LOGISTICS (OAL)

OAL is responsible for the acquisition of goods and services supporting VA's mission and provides support to other Federal agencies. OAL supports VA's mission by procuring drugs, medical supplies and equipment, critical patient care items, health care related services, non-perishable subsistence, "just-in-time" distribution services, and automated data processing equipment and services. In addition to its primary role of supporting VA's programs, OAL has a federal role in the supply management of medical supplies and non-perishable subsistence. OAL has also established the Acquisition Academy to train and certify VA's acquisition professionals. The following are the major organizational components of OAL.

- **Acquisitions.** The Acquisitions office is responsible for procuring goods and services for VA. It provides innovative solutions for VA's acquisition challenges. This office awards and administers cost-effective contracts to meet supply, service, and equipment needs of VA facilities and of many other government agencies. The Center for Acquisition Innovation, National Acquisition Center, Acquisition and Logistics Center, and the Technology Acquisition Center provide specialized acquisition support to VA and other government agencies.

- **Finance, Logistics, and Business Services.** The Office of Finance, Logistics, and Business Services is responsible for a full range of financial services including the administration of the Supply Fund, a revolving fund providing acquisition and logistical services to a broad range of VA and other government agency customers on a reimbursable basis. This office operates the VA Publications, Transportation, Human Resources, and Information and Technology Liaison offices for OAL. This office is also responsible for the distribution of interment flags, and the recovery and recycling of X-ray film.
- **Acquisition and Logistics Programs and Policy.** This office is responsible for overseeing VA's acquisition and logistics policies and programs to ensure Departmental compliance with acquisition laws and regulations. The office administers the Department's Acquisition Career Management Program, VA's Contracting Officer Certification Program, and warrants all VA contracting officers. To ensure the integrity of VA's acquisition program, this office conducts acquisition reviews of major contract actions and conducts the Department's Office of Management and Budget Circular A-123 acquisition review assessments.

### **OFFICE OF CONSTRUCTION AND FACILITIES MANAGEMENT (CFM)**

CFM is responsible for the planning, design, and construction of all major construction projects greater than \$10 million. In addition, CFM acquires real property for use by VA elements through the purchase of land and buildings, as well as long-term lease acquisitions. Through the construction and real property programs, CFM delivers to Veterans, high quality buildings, additions, large scale renovations, and structural enhancements. CFM also manages facility sustainability, seismic corrections, physical security, and historic preservation of VA's facilities. The following are the major organizational components of CFM.

- **Strategic Management Office.** The Strategic Management Office is the responsible office for strategic management issues concerning VA capital assets. This includes project planning, construction cost management, estimating, standards, guidelines and criteria, sustainability, seismic and physical security programs, State Nursing Home and Homeless Veterans Grant Programs, architect/engineer evaluation and selection, and historic preservation.
- **Resource Management Office.** The Resource Management Office is responsible for budget and financial management, technology application, historic preservation, human resource management, quality assurance, and other administrative and management activities.
- **Service Delivery Office.** The Service Delivery Office is responsible for VA's major construction and real property programs, as well as, architectural and engineering consulting programs/services. It is also accountable for the acquisition, disposal, and leasing of the property required to fulfill VA's needs.

## **SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY FOR VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS LIAISON**

The Veterans Service Organizations (VSO) Liaison is the VA Secretary's primary advisor on matters affecting VSOs and is responsible for the Department's day-to-day liaison with those organizations.

Liaison responsibilities include communicating regularly with VSO officials to ensure VA's responsiveness to the needs of the organizations and their members; attending the VSO Midwinter conferences and national conventions; and communicating with Veterans concerning issues they feel strongly about, including health care. The incumbent attends all National Commanders' testimony on Veteran's issues to the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees. Other responsibilities include articulating the Department's points of view on issues affecting America's Veterans; maintaining and publishing lists of VSOs and their representatives for use by VA and the public (<http://www1.va.gov/vso>); advising the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of VSO policy statements or specific positions on Veterans' issues; and assisting VSOs in their dealings with other Federal agencies.



## CENTER FOR MINORITY VETERANS

The Center for Minority Veterans (CMV) was established by Congress on November 2, 1994, to promote, evaluate and assess minority Veterans' use of VA programs and recommend solutions to better serve minority Veterans. Serving as a principal advisor to the VA Secretary, the CMV is charged with identifying barriers to service and health care access as well as increasing local awareness of minority Veteran-related issues by developing strategies for improving minority participation in existing VA benefits programs. Specifically, these Veterans include the following Veteran minority groups: African American, Hispanic, Asian American, Pacific Islander, and Native American, including American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian. Cultural, economic, and ethnic differences may hinder access to VA services by Veterans minority groups. Outreach activities, surveys, site visits, and direct contact with Veterans are some of the channels through which the CMV gathers information to identify opportunities for improvement. The CMV utilizes three major outreach initiatives to assist in identifying and addressing minority Veterans concerns:

- Members of the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans are recognized authorities in fields pertinent to the needs of the minority group they represent. This diverse committee advises the Secretary and Congress on VA's administration of benefits, provisions of health care, and services to minority Veterans. Additionally, they provide an annual report to Congress outlining recommendations, concerns, and observations on VA's delivery of services to minority Veterans.
- Approximately 300 Minority Veterans Program Coordinators (MVPC) are assigned throughout VA in each regional office, medical center, and national cemetery. MVPCs focus on the needs of minority Veterans in their respective local communities by educating them on VA benefits, services and programs, as well as advocating on behalf of these Veterans by identifying opportunities for improvement of services.
- Through established collaborative partnership efforts with Veteran stakeholders, both internal and external, the CMV conducts outreach to minority Veterans in rural and urban areas on VA benefits and services. These critical partnerships are developed and sustained through active participation in committee meetings, conferences, Federal, state, and local Veterans workshops/forums.

## CENTER FOR WOMEN VETERANS

The Center for Women Veterans (CWV) was established by Public Law No. 103-446 in November 1994 to oversee VA programs for women Veterans ([www.va.gov/womenvet](http://www.va.gov/womenvet)).

The Center's mission is to ensure that women Veterans receive benefits and services on par with male Veterans; VA programs are responsive to gender-specific needs of women Veterans; outreach is performed to improve women Veterans' awareness of services, benefits and eligibility criteria; and women Veterans are treated with dignity and respect. The CWV Director serves as the primary advisor to the Secretary on all matters related to policies, legislation, programs, issues, and initiatives affecting women Veterans.

The Center's goals are to work closely with VA's staff offices and the three administrations (Veterans Health Administration, Veterans Benefits Administration, and National Cemetery Administration) to identify policies, practices, programs, and related activities that may be unresponsive or insensitive to the needs of women Veterans and recommend changes, revisions, or new initiatives to address the identified deficiencies; foster communication among all elements of VA on the findings and assure the women Veterans' community that women Veteran's issues are incorporated into VA's strategic plan; promote and provide educational activities on women Veterans' issues for VA personnel and other appropriate individuals; encourage and develop collaborative relationships with Veterans service organizations, Federal, state, and community-based agencies to coordinate activities on issues related to women Veterans; coordinate outreach activities that enhance women Veterans' awareness of new and existing VA services and benefits; and promote research activities on women Veterans' issues.

The Center's activities include monitoring and assessing changes VA-wide and assessing the impact these changes may have on the women Veterans; monitoring VA briefings during Transition Assistance Programs to ensure that active duty women are provided access to information on the benefits and services available to them as Veterans prior to their release from active duty; facilitating joint training and networking among Women Veterans Program Managers and Coordinators across VA; providing women Veteran consumers the opportunity to share their concerns and issues with VA through community forums and gatherings, and regional/national summits; monitoring VA's research agenda to ensure that women Veterans and their issues are included in all VA studies; continuing outreach to the women Veterans' community; establishing and continuing relationships with state and county departments of Veterans affairs, National Veterans Service Organizations, and other Federal agencies responsible for providing services to women; and widely distributing the pocket guide, "Women Veterans – 25 Frequently Asked Questions."

The Center provides consultation and support to the Advisory Committee on Women Veterans. This statutory Committee provides advice and guidance to the Secretary on the administration of benefits and services by the Department for women Veterans, reports and studies pertaining to women Veterans, and the needs of women Veterans with respect to compensation, health care, rehabilitation, outreach, and other benefits and programs administered by the Department, including the CWV.

## CENTER FOR FAITH-BASED AND NEIGHBORHOOD PARTNERSHIPS

The Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives was established on June 1, 2004, by Executive Order 13342, to coordinate agency efforts to eliminate regulatory, contracting, and other programmatic obstacles to the participation of faith-based and other community organization in the provision of social and community services. It was renamed the Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships (CFBNP) in February 2009.

The Center's mission is to incorporate faith-based and other community organizations in VA programs and initiatives to the greatest extent possible. The CFBNP Director serves as the liaison and point of contact with the White House OFBNP.

The Center's responsibilities include:

- Coordinating a comprehensive agency effort to incorporate faith-based and other community organizations in agency programs and initiatives to the greatest extent possible.
- Proposing initiatives to remove barriers including but not limited to reform of regulations, procurement, and other internal policies and practices.
- Proposing the development of innovative pilot and demonstration programs to increase the participation of faith-based and other community organizations in Federal as well as state and local initiatives.
- Developing and coordinating agency outreach efforts to disseminate information more effectively to faith-based and other community organizations with respect to programming changes, contracting opportunities, and other agency initiatives.

The Center works closely with other VA offices that have organizational and programmatic responsibilities with faith-based and community groups. A Center Steering Committee provides consultation, sharing of information, and collaboration on all faith-based and community issues. CFBNP's Website, [www1.va.gov/fbcj](http://www1.va.gov/fbcj), provides updated information on faith-based and community initiatives activities, programs, and resources.

## OFFICE OF SMALL AND DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS UTILIZATION

The Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) consists of the Office of Small Business Programs and the Center for Veterans Enterprise (CVE). The OSDBU Director serves as the Department's advocate for the participation of service-disabled Veteran-owned small businesses (SDVOSB), Veteran-owned small businesses (VOSB), small business concerns (SBC), small disadvantaged businesses (SDB), women-owned small businesses (WOSB), and Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBZone) in VA contracts and subcontracts. This office plans, implements, and coordinates Department programs for small businesses as directed by statutes, Executive Orders, and applicable regulations. The OSDBU Director serves as the Department's principal liaison to the Small Business Administration. In matters relating to the Department's socioeconomic acquisition program, the Director is a liaison with the Department of Commerce, General Services Administration, and the Office of Federal Procurement Policy.

Established by statute in 1979, OSDBU works closely with VA program offices and contracting activities to ensure maximum practical opportunity for small businesses in the Department's procurements. Activities include conducting contract bundling reviews, training acquisition officials, counseling entrepreneurs, participating as small business experts at conferences, distributing informational materials that describe how to do business with the Department and sharing acquisition information with Veterans Service Organizations. This office negotiates, establishes, and maintains the departmentwide procurement goals, and reports on the progress toward accomplishing these goals. This office monitors the effectiveness of current policy, procedures, and plans for enhancing utilization of small businesses in future departmental requirements.

## CENTER FOR VETERANS ENTERPRISE

CVE promotes the formation and expansion of businesses owned by Veterans. The Census Bureau estimates there are approximately 3.2 million businesses owned by Veterans. VA's statutory duties include:

- Locating every business in the Nation owned by a Veteran or Veterans and annually offering help to that business.
- Maintaining a database of self-certified and VA verified Veteran and service-disabled Veteran-owned businesses. The Vendor Information Pages database is available at [www.VetBiz.gov](http://www.VetBiz.gov).
- Annually notifying Federal agencies of the products and services provided by SDVOSBs.
- Informing Veterans about how to locate Federal, state and local government procurement opportunities and corporate opportunities.
- Maintaining an electronic clearinghouse of assistance programs available to Veterans.
- Supporting the Secretary of Veterans Affairs in his capacity as an ex-officio member of the Board of Directors of the National Veterans Business Development Corporation.
- Cooperating with the Small Business Administration and the Department of Labor (DOL) to promote self-employment for disabled Veterans.

- Providing training and business coaching to Veterans. CVE maintains a national toll-free helpline (1-866-584-2344) for Veterans interested in starting or expanding a business. CVE staff provides one-on-one personalized advice, access to resources, professional referrals, and the latest in news and information to assist Veterans in business.
- Because VA does not have any financing programs for small businesses, we give referrals to organizations that can assist them in locating appropriate financing for their business needs.

By Executive Order 13360 (2004), the CVE assists Federal agencies in their efforts to increase utilization of SDVOSBs; verifies the accuracy of contractor databases that have information about VOSBs or SDVOSBs; and with DOL, promotes entrepreneurship in Transition Assistance Programs.

CVE's Website, [www.VetBiz.gov](http://www.VetBiz.gov), and its VIP database have been recognized by the Administrator of the Small Business Administration and the Administrator of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy, as the primary sourcing tool to locate Veterans in business.

In October 2006, readers of the Veterans Business Journal voted VA's CVE as the number one organization helping Veterans in business.

The Veterans Benefits, Healthcare, and Information Technology Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-461) created the "Veterans First" buying authority for VA only. It includes stronger provisions for SDVOSBs, new provisions for all other VOSBs, provisions for eligible surviving spouses, and the verification of the VIP database.

- Verify ownership and control of VOSBs; and verify the accuracy of other contractor databases that have VOSB/SDVOSB information.
- Priority for service disabled and other Veterans in procurement actions.

## OFFICE OF EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT ADJUDICATION

The Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication (OEDCA) began operations on February 19, 1998, pursuant to The Veterans Benefits Act of 1997. The OEDCA Director is required to:

- Issue final agency decisions and orders on the merits of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) complaints and on any relief that may be available.
- Report cases involving a finding of intentional discrimination or retaliation against employees asserting rights under an equal employment opportunity law to the Secretary or Deputy Secretary.

OEDCA is an independent office responsible for issuing final agency decisions and orders on the substantive merits of employment discrimination complaints filed by employees and applicants for employment. In order to avoid a conflict of interest, complaints alleging that the Secretary or Deputy Secretary personally made a decision directly related to the matters in dispute, or were otherwise personally involved in such matters, will be referred for decision-making to another Federal agency pursuant to a cost-reimbursable agreement. Such a referral will not be made, however, when the action complained of relates merely to routine, ministerial approval of selection recommendations submitted to the Secretary by Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, or other key officials.

Final agency decisions and orders are rendered in a fair and impartial manner and are based on evidence contained in the investigation report and, if applicable, the hearing transcript and exhibits provided by an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) appointed administrative judge. OEDCA is also responsible for determining equitable relief and issuing final agency decisions on a complainant's entitlement to compensatory damages, attorney fees, and costs where the complainant is a prevailing party. The Director's decisions are not subject to further review or appeal by any official within the Department. Complainants who are dissatisfied with a final agency decision or order may either appeal to the EEOC (or in some cases the Merit Systems Protection Board) or file a civil action in an appropriate United States District Court.

## OFFICE OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE MANAGEMENT

The Advisory Committee Management Office serves as the coordinating office for VA's 26 federal advisory committees. It is responsible for establishing clear goals, standards, and uniform procedures for advisory committee activities. It is also responsible for ensuring the VA advisory committee operations are in compliance with the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

Advisory committees are used extensively by VA to provide advice and guidance on a wide variety of programs that deliver benefits and services to our Nation's Veterans. Advisory committees operate as another component of the "people's voice" in our democratic form of government. Some of VA's advisory committees have been mandated by Congress to ensure that federal laws, as carried out by the executive branch, are meeting their intended goals. Other VA committees have been created by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to assess specific VA policies or programs.

Advisory committee members are generally acknowledged, by VA's leadership and members of the Veterans Affairs committees in Congress, as "consumer representatives" of those millions of beneficiaries whose lives are affected each year by VA programs. Advisory committee meetings at VA are generally open to the public, and notices of those meetings are published in the Federal Register.

## OFFICE OF SURVIVORS ASSISTANCE

The Office of Survivors Assistance was created by Public Law No. 110-389 in October 2008 to oversee VA programs for survivors and dependents of survivors.

The Office will ensure that the surviving spouses, children and parents of deceased Veterans have access to applicable benefits and services under the law and will advocate for their special needs in the policy and programmatic decision of the Department.

The Office serves as a primary advisor to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on all matters related to the policies, programs, outreach, legislative issues and other initiatives affecting survivors and dependents of survivors. The Office will also serve as the Department's liaison for inter- and intra-agency cooperation on survivor issues.

The Office's responsibilities include:

- Monitor the delivery of benefits and services.
- Provide internal policy guidance and oversight of benefits.
- Help design and oversee directed outreach.
- Seek input from a variety of outside individuals and organizations that deal with survivors.
- Track and suggest legislative issues.

Claim-specific inquiries will be referred to the relevant administrations and offices of the Department so that survivors receive all of the benefits and services for which they are eligible.



## FEDERAL RECOVERY COORDINATION PROGRAM

In 2007, the President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors recommended the creation of a comprehensive patient-centered recovery plan for every seriously wounded Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) service members or Veterans. In 2007, the Federal Recovery Coordination Program (FRCP) was created in response to this recommendation and was incorporated into law through the National Defense Authorization Act of 2008. The FRCP is operated as a joint program of the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs, with VA serving as administrative home.

The patient-centered recovery plan or Federal Individualized Recovery Plan (FIRP) is created by a Federal Recovery Coordinator (FRC) in collaboration with the service member or Veteran, their family members and members of their multidisciplinary treatment team. The FIRP identifies the benefits and services required to meet the service member or Veteran's listed personal and professional goals and is revised or updated as needed to track progress.

FRCs are located at various military treatment facilities and VA medical centers including: Walter Reed Army Medical Center, National Naval Medical Center, Brooke Army Medical Center, Naval Medical Center at San Diego, Eisenhower Army Medical Center, Rhode Island VAMC, and Michael E. DeBakey VAMC in Houston, Texas.

In order to meet its goal of providing assistance to recovering service members, Veterans and their families, the FRCP works and interacts with the following programs and staff:

- Department of Defense's Recovery Coordination Program;
- Military Treatment Facility Command, multidisciplinary staff and case managers;
- Services' Wounded Warrior Programs;
- VA's OEF/OIF teams;
- VA's polytrauma multidisciplinary staff and case managers;
- VA's system of health care management, medical teams and case managers; and
- Various other VA offices and programs.

In addition, the FRCP serves as VA's "business owner" of the National Resource Directory.

### **NGO GATEWAY INITIATIVE OFFICE**

The Non-Government Organization (NGO) Gateway Initiative Office assists NGOs in planning, improving, and carrying out their programs on behalf of Veterans, their families, and their survivors. Under the NGO Gateway Initiative, the Veterans Coalition Inc., a non-profit organization formed by several major national Veterans groups, assist NGOs in identifying the unmet needs of Veterans, families, and their survivors, working with VA to help minimize duplication of effort and confusion among NGOs with programs for Veterans. In addition, the program encourages continuous feedback from NGOs on issues such as physical and mental health, employment and satisfaction with government services and benefits affecting Veterans.