

## **Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA) Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. What is VERA?**

The Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA) is a management tool used for downsizing or to restructure the workforce to meet mission objectives. Reasons for approving VERA include substantial delayering, reduction in force (RIF), reorganization, or transfer of function (TOF). VERA may be based on occupational series or grade; skills, knowledge, or other factors related to a position; organizational, geographical, nonpersonal and objective factors; or a combination of these factors. [Back to top](#)

### **2. Who can authorize the use of VERA?**

Title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.), Section 9902(i), provides authority for the Secretary of Defense to establish a permanent downsizing and restructuring Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA) program. This authority was redelegated to the Heads of the DoD Components for positions up to the GS-15 level (and equivalent) and authorizes further delegation to the lowest practicable level, but not lower than the local installation commander or activity head.

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### **3. Are Senior Executive Service (SES) members and equivalent employees eligible for VERA?**

SES members and equivalent employees (e.g. Senior Level (SL), Scientific and Technical (ST), Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service (DISES), Defense Intelligence Senior Level (DISL)), those in payband positions above the GS-15 level, and NAF executives in payband NF-6 are not eligible for buyouts, unless the Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness) (PDUSD(P&R)) approves the voluntary early retirement to avoid RIF action or to restructure the workforce. Approval requests concerning DISES and DISL employees must be coordinated with the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence (USD(I)) before being submitted for PDUSD(P&R) approval.

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### **4. What are the basic age and service requirements for VERA?**

To be eligible for VERA, an employee must be either age 50 with 20 years of creditable service or have 25 years of total creditable service at any age. It is important to note that if an employee covered by the Civil Service Retirement System takes a VERA, he or she will face a 2 percent reduction in annuity per each year he or she is under the age of 55. There is no reduction for employees covered by the Federal Employee Retirement System. [Back to top](#)

### **5. If I meet the age and service requirements, are there any other restrictions that could prevent me from retiring under VERA?**

Yes. Employees on time-limited-appointments (i.e., temporary or term appointments), and those who have not been continuously employed by DoD for more than 30 days before the date on which the determination to conduct a workforce reduction or restructuring action has been approved, are ineligible to receive a VERA. In addition, employees in receipt of a decision of involuntary separation for misconduct or unsatisfactory performance are not eligible for VERA. [Back to top](#)

**6. One of the VERA requirements is that employees must have been on the rolls for more than 30 days when the decision to conduct a workforce reduction or restructuring is approved. How is this date determined**

For early retirements due to workforce reductions, the key is the documented date that the appropriate management official approves the use of reduction in force. For workforce restructuring actions, it is the documented date that the appropriate management official determines that a position or positions should be restructured to meet mission objectives. All VERA announcements must include the date from which employees must be continuously employed in order to be eligible (i.e., 30 days prior to the date the necessary determination was made). If you are interested in receiving VSIP in conjunction with VERA, you must also keep in mind that according to DoD policy, employees must have been employed by the Department for a continuous period of at least 12 months in order to separate with a buyout. [Back to top](#)

**7. I meet all of the eligibility requirements. When can I apply for VERA?**

VERA is not an employee entitlement and must always be based on management requirements related to workforce downsizing or restructuring. Each DoD installation using VERA must determine and publicize the maximum number of local VERA approvals and the anticipated number of opportunity periods (windows) required. Positions may be targeted by occupational series or grade; skills, knowledge, or other factors related to the position; organizational, geographical, nonpersonal and objective factors; or any combination of these factors. In the event that approved nonpersonal factors other than service computation date are used to determine eligibility, these factors must be included in the announcement. You may apply for a VERA if you are eligible and your position is in the targeted group of positions. [Back to top](#)

**8. What are some examples of “nonpersonal and objective factors” that may be used to target VERA to a particular segment of the workforce?**

In addition to the factors already listed (i.e., occupational series and/or grade; skills, knowledge or other factors related to the position; as well as organizational, or geographical factors) other nonpersonal factors could include offering VERA based on the specific VERA window period(s) or receipt of a specified number of applications for retirement within that window. [Back to top](#)

**9. After a VERA window is opened, can management change the number of available VERAs, the targeted positions for which it is being offered, the deadline for applying, or the date by which employees must retire if their applications are approved?**

Yes. If the downsizing and/or restructuring needs change, management may subsequently revise the closing date for receipt of VERA applications or the effective date for VERA retirements, or reduce or increase the number of early retirement applications it will accept. [Back to top](#)

**10. Can VERA be offered to employees who have received RIF separation notices?**

No. Once an employee is issued a RIF separation notice, that employee is no longer eligible for VERA. VERA is a voluntary action; receipt of a separation notice makes any following action involuntary. [Back to top](#)

**11.If I accept VERA, when will my retirement be effective?**

If you also accept a downsizing VSIP, or “buyout,” you must be off the rolls by the reduction in force effective date. VERA recipients may not be retained in a duty status for any reason after this date. However, when VERA is not used in conjunction with a buyout, the effective date of the early retirement may be extended beyond the RIF effective date to allow the employee to use annual leave to establish initial eligibility for the early retirement. [Back to top](#)

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