



**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
RECOVERY ACT PROGRAM-SPECIFIC PLAN**

**VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION
HIRING TEMPORARY CLAIMS PROCESSORS**

JUNE 2010

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Funding Table.....	3
2. Objectives	3
3. Activities	3
4. Characteristics	4
5. Delivery Schedule	4
6. Environmental Review Compliance.....	4
7. Measures.....	4
8. Monitoring/Evaluation.....	8
9. Transparency.....	9
10. Accountability.....	9
11. Barriers to Effective Implementation.....	9
12. Federal Infrastructure Investments	9
Appendix.....	10
General Operating Expenses – Claims Processors Funding Table	10
Table 1A – Account Summary	10
Table 1B – Obligations/Gross Outlays – January 2009 through December 2010	10

1. Funding Table

A full funding description is provided in the Appendix.

2. Objectives

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA or Recovery Act) provides \$150 million for the hiring and training of temporary surge claims processors through FY 2010. In 2009, VBA met its original goal of hiring 2,293 Compensation, Pension, and Education claims processors, of whom 1,865 were dedicated to processing compensation and pensions claims and 428 were dedicated to processing increased workload associated with the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

Due to efficiencies, funds originally budgeted for space will be applied to the hiring of more claims processors. VBA's revised plan includes the hiring of approximately 400 more claims processors, resulting in a total of 2,700. These employees will help to maintain claims processing timeliness in the Compensation and Pension (C&P) and Education programs in the face of historic increases in VBA's inventory. These increases are a result of the new Post-9/11 GI Bill, several years of disability claims workload growth in excess of 11 percent, the influx of new Agent Orange presumptive claims, and aggressive outreach efforts.

The estimated performance impact as a result of increased staffing for the C&P Program and Education Program supports VA's High Priority Goals to "Implement a 21st Century paperless claims processing system by 2012 to ultimately reduce the average disability claims processing time to 125 days" and to "Build and deploy an automated GI Bill benefits system to speed tuition and housing payments for all eligible Veterans by December 2010." In addition, these efforts support Integrated Objective 1: Make it easier for Veterans and their families to receive the right benefits, meeting their expectations for quality, timeliness and responsiveness and Integrated Strategy A: Improve and integrate services across VA to increase reliability, speed, and accuracy of delivery.

3. Activities

Claims processing employees hired on a term basis were trained at their duty stations to assist in claims processing functions, allowing fully-trained employees to focus on the core elements of claims processing. Permanent employees received VBA's new employee training curriculum and will be retained as other permanent employees attrite. Supervisory training was also given to approximately 150 existing Compensation and Pension employees who directly supervise the new staff.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Funding Administrative Costs for Temporary Surge Claims Processors (dollars in thousands)			
	2009	2010	Total Obligations
Total FTE Levels	455	2,401	
Obligations			
Payroll	\$23,297	\$116,821	\$140,118
Non-Payroll	\$3,503	\$6,379	\$9,882
Total Obligation	\$26,800	\$123,200	\$150,000

4. Characteristics

There are no financial awards associated with the hiring of term surge claims processors. All hiring and training are performed in-house.

5. Delivery Schedule

Hiring of term surge claims processors began in April 2009. Terms for the employees who will not be retained full-time will expire in September 2010. Approximately 2,300 employees were on board by the end of FY 2009. A monthly hiring plan is available on VA's Recovery web site.

6. Environmental Review Compliance

Not applicable

7. Measures

VBA uses five performance measures to assess the impact of ARRA funding. Of the five performance measures, four are existing.

Measure #1

Compensation and Pension Rating-related Actions - Average Days Pending

Performance Table

Results			Target	Actuals		Targets		
2006	2007	2008	2009	2009		2010		2011
				Approp.	ARRA	Approp.	ARRA	
130	132	121	116	116	116	107	105	N/A

Other Required Information

New or Existing Measure	Results Data Collection Frequency	Public Accessibility Modality	Results Calculation	Results Data Source	Integrated Objective Link	Integrated Strategy Link
Existing	Monthly	PAR and/or http://www.va.gov/recovery	The results are calculated by counting the number of days for all pending compensation claims that require a rating decision from the date each claim is received through the current reporting date. The total number of days is divided by the total number of pending claims	Benefits Delivery Network and VETSNET	IO 1: Make it easier for Veterans and their families to receive the right benefits, meeting their expectations for quality, timeliness, and responsiveness	IS A: Improve and integrate services across VA to increase reliability, speed, and accuracy of delivery

Impact of ARRA on Performance

VA is employing approximately 2,300 Compensation and Pension claims processors with ARRA funding. They assume responsibilities that allow trained employees to focus on the core elements of claims processing, thus speeding completion of claims determinations. The performance impact will be felt in FY 2010, as the new hires assist with maintaining the average numbers of days pending for rating-related claims at an estimated 105 days.

Measure #2

Compensation and Pension Rating-related Actions - Average Days to Complete

Performance Table

Results			Target	Actuals		Targets		
2006	2007	2008	2009	2009		2010		2011
				Approp.	ARRA	Request	ARRA	
177	183	179	168	161	161	165	165	N/A

Other Required Information

New or Existing Measure	Results Data Collection Frequency	Public Accessibility Modality	Results Calculation	Results Data Source	Integrated Objective Link	Integrated Strategy Link
Existing	Monthly	PAR and/or http://www.va.gov/recovery	The average elapsed time (in days) it takes to complete compensation and pension claims that require a rating decision is measured from the date the claim is received by VA to the date the decision is completed	Benefits Delivery Network and VETSNET	IO 1: Make it easier for Veterans and their families to receive the right benefits, meeting their expectations for quality, timeliness, and responsiveness	IS A: Improve and integrate services across VA to increase reliability, speed, and accuracy of delivery

Impact of ARRA on Performance

VA employs approximately 2,300 Compensation and Pension claims processors with ARRA funding. These new hires assume responsibilities that allow trained employees to focus on the core elements of claims processing, thus speeding completion of claims determinations. The performance impact will be felt in FY 2010, as the new hires assist with maintaining the average numbers of days to complete a claim at an estimated 165 days. The increase in 2010 claims processing timeliness is expected as a result of historic increases in VBA's disability claims inventory due to several years of growth in excess of 11 percent, the influx of new Agent Orange presumptive claims, and aggressive outreach efforts.

Measure #3

Education - Average Days to Complete Original Claims

Performance Table

Results			Target	Actuals		Targets		
2006	2007	2008	2009	2009		2010		2011
				Approp.	ARRA	Request	ARRA	
40	32	19	26	26	26	24	24	N/A

Other Required Information

New or Existing Measure	Results Data Collection Frequency	Public Accessibility Modality	Results Calculation	Results Data Source	Integrated Objective Link	Integrated Strategy Link
Existing	Monthly	PAR and/or http://www.va.gov/recovery	The average elapsed time (in days) it takes to complete education claims that require eligibility determinations is measured from the date the claim is received by VA to the date the determination is completed	DOOR	IO 1: Make it easier for Veterans and their families to receive the right benefits, meeting their expectations for quality, timeliness, and responsiveness	IS A: Improve and integrate services across VA to increase reliability, speed, and accuracy of delivery

Impact of ARRA on Performance

VA employed 428 Education claims examiners with ARRA funding. The new hires assist with the implementation of the Chapter 33, Post-9/11 GI Bill and in maintaining the estimated 24-day claim processing goal.

Measure #4

Education - Average Days to Complete Supplemental Claims

Performance Table

Results			Target	Actuals		Targets		
2006	2007	2008	2009	2009		2010		2011
				Approp.	ARRA	Request	ARRA	
20	13	9	13	13	13	10	10	N/A

Other Required Information

New or Existing Measure	Results Data Collection Frequency	Public Accessibility Modality	Results Calculation	Results Data Source	Integrated Objective Link	Integrated Strategy Link
Existing	Monthly	PAR and/or http://www.va.gov/recovery	The average elapsed time (in days) it takes to complete education claims that require eligibility determinations is measured	DOOR	IO 1: Make it easier for Veterans and their families to receive the right benefits, meeting their expectations for quality, timeliness, and	IS A: Improve and integrate services across VA to increase reliability, speed, and accuracy of delivery

			from the date the claim is received by VA to the date the determination is completed		responsive-ness	
--	--	--	--	--	-----------------	--

Impact of ARRA on Performance

VA employed 428 Education claims examiners with ARRA funding. The new hires assist with the implementation of the Chapter 33, Post-9/11 GI Bill and in maintaining the estimated 10-day supplemental claim processing goal.

Measure #5

The number of ARRA-funded claims processors hired

Performance Table

Results			Target	Actuals		Targets		
			2009	2009		2010		2011
2006	2007	2008		Approp.	ARRA	Request	ARRA	
N/A	N/A	N/A	1,500	N/A	2,293	N/A	2,700	N/A

Other Required Information

New or Existing Measure	Results Data Collection Frequency	Public Accessibility Modality	Results Calculation	Results Data Source	Integrated Objective Link	Integrated Strategy Link
New	Monthly	PAR and/or http://www.va.gov/recovery	The number of ARRA-funded employees hired	Benefits Delivery Network, PAID, and DOOR	IO 1: Make it easier for Veterans and their families to receive the right benefits, meeting their expectations for quality, timeliness, and responsive-ness	IS A: Improve and integrate services across VA to increase reliability, speed, and accuracy of delivery

Impact of ARRA on Performance

VA is employing 2,700 claims processors with ARRA funding. VBA expects these employees to have a positive impact on performance in 2010 by helping to maintain claims processing timeliness in the C&P and Education programs.

8. Monitoring/Evaluation

VBA operations reports provide data on the average days to complete claims and production volume for work performed by all claims processors. Term employees will assist in claims processing functions, allowing fully-trained employees to focus on the core elements of claim processing, which will assist in maintaining claims processing timeliness targets. Reports are run monthly.

9. Transparency

There will be updates to VA's Recovery web site for information relating to the claims processors hired.

10. Accountability

VBA has set hiring goals for the claims processors which are monitored via bi-weekly pay period reports. If Regional Office (RO) Directors are unable to meet these goals, it will be reflected in their performance evaluation. If current claims processors are temporarily promoted to supervise the new hires, their new supervisory duties will be incorporated into their performance evaluations.

11. Barriers to Effective Implementation

There are no anticipated barriers to hiring the claims processors.

12. Federal Infrastructure Investments

Not applicable

General Operating Expenses – Claims Processors Funding Table

Table 1A – Account Summary

	TAFS (pick from dropdown)	Appropriated to TAFS (\$000s)	Program Allocations	
			BA Allocation (\$000s)	Program Name
One account funding one program	(36-0150 2009 \ 2011) General Operating Expenses	150,000	150,000	GOE Recovery Act

**Table 1B – Obligations/Gross Outlays – January 2009 through December 2010
(\$000)**

Funding Type	Funding Year	
Obligation	2009	\$26,800
Gross Outlay	2009	\$19,457
Obligation	2010	\$123,200
Gross Outlay	2010	\$130,543