

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS



MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT FOR
VETERAN SERVICE ORGANIZATION (VSO)
LAPTOP ISSUANCE

Between The Undersigned VSO
And the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of
Information and Technology

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DOCUMENT CONTROL CHANGE SHEET

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1 Introduction

This Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of Information and Technology (OIT) and approved Veteran Service Organizations (VSO) formally establishes new equipment provisioning procedures for accredited Veteran Service Officers employed by or volunteering with the VSOs. It establishes the agreement, background, terms, who qualifies, exclusions, requirements for VSOs, how to request the equipment, agreement duration/renewal, and special considerations.

1.1 Background

VA values our partnership with VSOs and their diligent outreach to Veterans. Historically, VA has provided space within its facilities to VSO employees and volunteers to perform outreach to Veterans and assist with the process of filing for VA benefits or appealing benefits decisions. These employees and volunteers often have access to VA benefits systems, network accounts, Personal Identity Verification (PIV) cards, and government furnished equipment (GFE) computers.

VA's longstanding relationship with and empowerment of VSOs supports annually millions of Veterans filing applications for benefits. In their efforts to effectively perform outreach to Veterans outside of VA facilities, Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) VSO Liaison and VSO leadership have determined there is additional value in making access to VA systems and resources more mobile for VSOs. Additional VSO mobility will help ensure effective outreach to rural, vulnerable, and significantly disabled Veterans, and enable VSOs to better support outreach events and meetings with Veterans closer to where they are. Although today, VSOs are granted access to Citrix Access Gateway (CAG) to connect to VA systems when not onsite at the VA facility, this solution is not always ideal for situations where internet access and bandwidth are insufficient, such as rural outreach. Additionally, switching between CAG's virtual environment and local resources can at times prove challenging. Given these limitations, OIT will support VBA's requirement for improved VSO mobility and has approved the issuance of laptop GFE for VSOs.

1.2 Key Terms & Concepts

Citrix Access Gateway (CAG)- A virtual desktop infrastructure tool that allows for containerized remote desktops where individuals with approved access can perform work as if they are on a locally-provided VA desktop.

End User Services (EUS)- The VA OIT team responsible for issuing, maintaining, troubleshooting, tracking, and supporting all VA-issued computers.

Government Furnished Equipment (GFE)- Equipment procured with government funding and provided by the governmental agency.

Information Systems Security Officer (ISSO)- This is a VA employee who is responsible for cybersecurity and related policies at respective locations.

Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)- Formal agreement between stakeholders that outlines what each stakeholder will do.

Office of Information and Technology (OIT)- The organization within the VA responsible for supporting VA's IT needs and strategy.

Personal Identity Verification Card (PIV)- This is a smart card issued by the VA or other Federal Agency that allows the possessor to authenticate into VA IT infrastructure.

Veteran Service Officer- Credentialed, accredited representatives are any VSO employee or volunteer who has a VA network account in good standing with a PIV-card.

Veteran Service Organization (VSO)- These are VA-Office of General Counsel-accredited external organizations that support Veterans with a variety of different services often focusing on VA benefits.

Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)- This is the organization within VA that is responsible for administering VA benefit programs.

2 Who Qualifies and Exclusions

2.1 Who Qualifies

In collaboration with VBA and VSOs, OIT's End User Services has determined they can support the issuance of laptops to the staff of Nationally or State-accredited VSOs who have entered into this agreement with VA. The principal basis for VA's provisioning of laptops to National and State VSOs is the strong history of National and State VSOs responsibly operating in a co-located environment within VBA Regional Offices, where VA has historically provided GFE. This history of responsible equipment usage has given VA confidence that it can reissue VSOs with more flexible equipment in place of the currently issued desktop hardware at most facilities. VA is pursuing this equipment reissuance without further expanding or creating a right to GFE for provision to other classes of accredited representatives.

Limited VA resources, as well as custodial considerations (frequency of appearance onsite at VA facilities, frequency of VA contact) preclude a broader base of issuance. VA also cannot guarantee, subject to availability of funds and available equipment, provision of flexible resources to VSOs party to this MOA. For staff of applicable VSOs to request GFE, they must have a VA network account in good standing with a PIV-card. We feel this will be a major step forward in ensuring the VA and our VSOs can continue to proudly serve our Nation's Veterans.

2.2 Exclusions

At this juncture, because of resource constraints, VA is not including private attorneys, claims agents, or county VSO organizations within this program. VA may revisit issuance to county VSO organizations later, provided staff representing those organizations have traditionally been collocated at VA facilities.

3 Requirements of VSOs

3.1 Signed MOA

A signed MOA is required between the Deputy Chief Information Officer of End User Services and the Obligating Agent (e.g. National Director, President, Director of National Services, etc.) of the VSO. This agreement is legally binding, and the VSOs shall ensure they can and will comply with this agreement before signing it. VSO representatives shall each review this agreement before requesting GFE and a copy of the signed MOA shall be uploaded by VSO representatives in each request they submit for a system.

3.2 What the VA will Provide

Pending equipment availability, VA will provide a GFE laptop and accompanying docking station (when available) to the VSO representatives requesting the equipment. VA will not provide above baseline software or peripherals (keyboards, mice, monitors, multifunction devices (MFDs), scanners, printers, etc.). VSOs shall not request this additional equipment. If MFDs/printers/scanners are required, VSOs will be able to utilize network MFDs within VA facilities. If monitors, keyboards, mice, speakers, headphones, etc. are required, the VSO will procure their own.

VA will provide standard GFE IT support for the equipment issued. This includes maintenance and repair, helpdesk access, life cycle replacement, etc. It is important the VSO representative is aware of their nearest VA facility when submitting requests for GFE. VSOs shall physically retrieve and deliver GFE to this VA facility of record when requested by VA. VSOs shall also adhere to any site-specific IT policies and procedures for equipment issuance that would apply to any VA employee (this includes,

but is not limited to documentation, training, etc.). If the VSO representative will be unable to perform these responsibilities, the VSO shall not request GFE for the representative.

3.3 Transferring or Departing Employees/Volunteers

Equipment is individually issued to the VSO representative and not to the overall VSO. When a representative leaves the VSO, or is no longer in need of the GFE, the representative shall return the device to their VA local IT representatives, even when the VSO intends to backfill the representative. Devices that are improperly transferred between VSO representatives will be considered in violation of this agreement and will result in the MOA being revoked.

It is the responsibility of the VSO representative to notify the current VA local IT representatives and complete any requisite property transfer procedures that any VA employee would be expected to complete, if the representative intends move to a new location and will have a new VA facility servicing their needs. This notification shall be provided by email and acknowledged by VA local IT representatives at least 90 days out from the intended move date. Failure to report the move will result in the representative being required to commute to the former facility for IT support and property accountability requirements.

3.4 Responsibility for Property Accountability and Loss

VSOs who enter into this agreement with VA are acknowledging the VSO responsibility to secure and safeguard property against loss, theft, damage, and unauthorized access. Lost or damaged systems shall be replaced by the VSO through VA formal processes as directed by VA local IT support. VSO representatives shall ensure they complete the annual VA Privacy and Information Security Awareness and Rules of Behavior training found on TMS. Lost or stolen systems must be immediately reported to the supporting Information Systems Security Officer (ISSO) and IT representatives at your designated VA facility.

3.5 Responsibility to Ensure Only Authorized Individuals Have Access.

Veteran data is sensitive, and VA is expected to protect that data. Identity theft and fraud are rampant and we collectively have a responsibility to protect the privileged information our Veterans trust us with. VSO representatives shall ensure they understand and are following the VA Privacy and Information Security Awareness and Rules of Behavior when using GFE. This means not allowing unauthorized access to the systems, ensuring the systems are properly locked and stowed away when not in use and not in the immediate area, etc. For those who are not certain of all expectations,

they should complete their training again. If they still have questions, the local ISSO can be consulted with to clarify any points of confusion.

GFE that is utilized by VSOs is explicitly only allowed to be used for supporting Veterans with their claims, benefits understanding, and official correspondence with VA. At no point should the GFE be used to conduct personal business, VSO business not pertaining to supporting the Veteran with VA functions, entertainment, social media, etc. Utilizing the GFE for purposes other than what was explicitly outlined will result in the GFE being disabled and can result in the revocation of this agreement for that VSO. As such, the VSO must ensure they are training their representatives and auditing usage.

4 How to Request

Applicable VSO representatives shall submit tickets into YourIT to request their new systems. This link can be found here: [Request My Laptop](#). The representative shall upload a signed copy of their respective VSO's MOA into the request and should follow the directions in the figures below. The VSO will also need to include in their justification, "For enabling better outreach support of our Nation's most vulnerable Veterans." Failure to follow these directions will likely result in a denial of the request.

<p>* Requested For ⓘ</p> <input type="text"/>	— The first-name last-name of VSO staffer
<p>* Requested For Phone Number ⓘ</p> <p>▼ More Information</p> <p>Please enter the phone number using 10 or 11 digits.</p> <input type="text"/>	— VSO staffer phone number – edit if needed
<p>* Requested For Email Address ⓘ</p> <input type="text"/>	— VSO staffer VA email address
<p>* Requested For Location ⓘ</p> <input type="text"/>	— Name of VA facility supporting VSO staffer
<p>* Requested For Employee Type ⓘ</p> <p>-- None -- ▼</p>	— Choose the option for Non-VA Personnel
<p>Requesting Service Line</p> <input type="text"/>	— The name of the national VSO

The screenshot shows a web form with the following fields and annotations:

- Type of Request:** A dropdown menu with "Replacement Equipment" selected. A red line points to this field with the annotation: "Choose the Replacement Equipment option".
- Requested Install Date:** A date picker field. A red line points to this field with the annotation: "Allow minimum 10 business days for install". A blue tooltip box above the field states: "Actual installation dates will be scheduled by local IT staff based on equipment availability and priority after all required approval have been received."
- Initiative:** A dropdown menu with "-- None --" selected.
- System Identification:** A text input field. A red line points to this field with the annotation: "If current device has VA property tag, enter here. If not, enter device serial number". Above the field is a red asterisk and the text: "Please enter the Name, EE Number and/or hostname of the system you are replacing".

If the representative currently holds a VSO-issued device with a VA image on the device, the representative shall be required to surrender the storage drive from the device prior to VA-provided GFE issuance. Surrendering the storage drive satisfies previously established agreements between the VSO and VA pertaining to having a VA Baseline Image on VSO-procured systems. The storage drive shall be dispositioned following OIT standard media sanitization and disposal policy and procedures, and the VSO-issued device without storage drive will be returned to the VSO representative for return to the VSO.

When a request is received by the local OIT Area Manager or designee, OIT staff will validate the “qualifying” criteria for the VSO presented in the request prior to approving the request for fulfillment.

5 Agreement Duration and Renewal Terms

This agreement is valid for a period of two years (730 days) from the date of final signature. If the VSO intends to renew this agreement with VA, the VSO should start the process of renewal within 90 calendar days by contacting EUS representatives through either the agents this agreement was agreed upon with or by coordinating through their VBA VSO Liaison. Failure to renew the agreement will result in an expiration of the agreement and can require all devices be returned to VA. The VSO is responsible for managing this agreement and ensuring currency of it. An expiration of the MOA may result in the discontinuance of issuing GFE, not the recovery of previously deployed devices. A revocation of the MOA will result in an immediate requirement to return all issued GFE within 30 calendar days of the revocation.

6 Special Considerations

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This process is new and some logistics are still being worked out in order to most effectively support our VSO partners. As with any new processes, this new process will take a little longer in the beginning, but this timeline will decrease as we move forward, and this becomes more standardized and stabilized. For now, VSOs should expect receipt of their VA-issued laptops to take approximately 60 days from the date of the submission of the YourIT ticket. Additionally, requests are approved subject to availability of equipment. If there are no available devices at the National-level to support your teams, VA will capture a list of those denied and approach the VSO once systems are available again. VA appreciates everyone's patience and support and we welcome feedback as we move forward with executing this new endeavor. Thank you for always advocating for our Nation's Veterans. Together, we seek to improve the Veteran Experience and ensure our Veterans are fully supported.

Signatories

We, the undersigned, mutually agree to the terms of this Memorandum of Agreement.

Jeff VanBemmel

Acting-Deputy Chief Information Officer for End User Services, Office of Information and Technology

Department of Veterans Affairs

X _____ Date: _____

Dan West

Adjutant General

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