

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS



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

Between The Undersigned VSO
And VA Office of Information and Technology

DOCUMENT CONTROL CHANGE SHEET

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1 Introduction

This Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) explains the new equipment provisioning procedures for accredited Veteran Service Organization (VSO) associates employed by or volunteering with National VSOs. It establishes the agreement, background, terms, who qualifies, exclusions, requirements for VSOs, how to request the equipment, agreement duration/renewal, and special considerations. This agreement will be entered into by the VSO and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and formally establishes expectations of both parties.

1.1 Background

VA values our partnership with VSOs and their diligent outreach to Veterans. Historically, VA has provided space to VSO employees and volunteers. These employees and volunteers often work within in VA facilities and have access to VA benefits systems, network accounts, Personal Identity Verification (PIV) cards, and locally stored government furnished equipment (GFE) computers, in support of enabling VSO outreach to Veterans interested in learning about their benefits or in the process of submitting their benefits claims/appealing claims for decisions.

Given the longstanding value of this relationship to Veterans, which supports millions of Veterans seeking benefits annually, Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) and VSO leadership have determined there is additional value in making access to VA systems and resources more accessible to those most vulnerable Veterans. Additional VSO accessibility will help ensure effective outreach to rural, vulnerable, and underserved Veterans, and enable VSOs to better support outreach events and meetings with Veterans away from VA facilities. 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

Business Integration and Outcomes Service Benefits, Appeals, Memorials, and Veterans Experience (BIOS BAMVE)- the portfolio that serves as the liaisons and partnership brokers between Veterans Benefits Administration, National Cemetery Administration, Board of Veterans Appeals, Veterans Experience, and Office of Information and Technology.

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.

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 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, Executive Leadership of End User Services decided that the VA will start issuing 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 only National and State VSO organizations is the strong history of National and State VSOs operating in a co-located environment in VBA Regional Offices, where VA has historically provided GFE. This history enables VA to swap this historically provisioned GFE with more flexible equipment 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. For staff of applicable VSOs to request GFE, they must have a VA network account 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

This does not include private attorneys, claims agents, or county VSO organizations as well as any class of accredited or non-accredited representative with non-organizational user status. Because of its history of providing on-site GFE to collocated VSOs, VA is limiting access in alignment with that precedence, except for issuing mobile GFE to county VSOs because of volume and availability of equipment. 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 Benefits, Appeals, Memorials, and Veterans Experience 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 must ensure they can and will comply with this agreement before signing it. A copy of the signed MOA will need to be uploaded by VSO representatives in each request they submit for a system.

3.2 What the VA will Provide

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 printers within VA facilities. If monitors, keyboards, mice, speakers, headphones, etc. are required, the VSO will procure and provide their own.

VA will provide standard GFE IT support for the equipment issued. This includes maintenance and repair, helpdesk access, life cycle replacement, etc. This is why it is important the VSO representative is aware of where their nearest VA facility is when submitting their requests for GFE. VSOs will be responsible for physically delivering

the GFE to this VA facility of record when requested by the VA local IT representatives. If the VSO representative will be unable to perform this responsibility, 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 must 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 if the representative intends move to a new location and will have a new VA facility servicing their needs. This notification should be provided by email 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 property and safeguard property against loss or damage. Lost or damaged systems will be replaced by the VSO through VA formal processes as directed by VA local IT support. VSO representatives must ensure they are following their 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 is rampant and we collectively have a responsibility to protect the privileged information our Veterans trust us with. VSO representatives must 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 only allowed to be explicitly used for supporting Veterans with their claims 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 will need to submit tickets into YourIT to request their new systems. This link can be found here: [Request My Laptop](#). The representative will 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> <div>Please enter the phone number using 10 or 11 digits.</div> <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> <div>-- None --</div>	— Choose the option for Non-VA Personnel
<p>Requesting Service Line</p> <input type="text"/>	— The name of the national VSO
<p>* Type of Request: ⓘ</p> <div>Replacement Equipment</div>	— Choose the Replacement Equipment option
<p>* Requested Install Date: ⓘ</p> <p>▼ More information</p> <div>Actual installation dates will be scheduled by local IT staff based on equipment availability and priority after all required approval have been received.</div> <input type="text"/>	— Allow minimum 10 business days for install
<p>Initiative</p> <div>-- None --</div>	
<p>* Please enter the Name, EE Number and/or hostname of the system you are replacing ⓘ</p> <input type="text"/>	— If current device has VA property tag, enter here If not, enter device serial number

If the representative currently holds a VSO-issued device with a VA image on the device, the representative will 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 the VA pertaining to having a VA Baseline Image on VSO-procured systems. The storage drive will 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, it is expected that OIT staff will validate the “qualifying” criteria for the VSO presented in the request prior to approving the request for fulfillment. Once approved by the local OIT Area Manager or designee, the laptop provisioned can be any standard approved make/model that is three (3) years old or less and MS Windows 11 capable. Laptops that are being replaced and excessed by ongoing lifecycle refresh activities are not appropriate for this effort.

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 BIOS BAM representatives through either the agents this agreement was agreed upon with or by coordinating through local IT representation. 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

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.

Michael Taylor

Acting Deputy Chief Information Officer for Benefits, Appeals, Memorials, and Veterans Experience

Business Integration and Outcomes Service, Office of Information and Technology

X_____ Date: November 20, 2024

Michael S. Figlioli

Director, National Veterans Service (NVS)

Veterans of Foreign Wars

X _____ Date: November 19, 2024