Department of Veterans Affairs

Memorandum

Date: **October 5, 2012**

From: Under Secretary for Benefits (20)

Subj: Request Waiver For VBA Challenge Session 2013-1 Training in FY 2013 (VAIQ #7285494)

Thru: Chief of Staff

Thru: Deputy Secretary

To: Secretary

1. In accordance with the VA Chief of Staff guidance dated September 26, 2012, the Veterans Benefits Administration requests your approval of a waiver to conduct centralized, face-to-face Challenge training classes in October – December 2012. The Challenge training session will cost in excess of the maximum allowable expense of $500,000.

2. Purpose: Challenge training is a critical element of providing employees the skill sets necessary to achieve the standards of delivering compensation benefits to Veterans. Challenge training accelerates by six months the achievement of journey-level status of Challenge graduates. It is a key initiative in the transformation of VBA and a critical component in achieving our transformation goals for improved service delivery. The Challenge program is a national technical training curriculum that provides new Veterans Service Center employees with the skills they need to function effectively in their positions as Veterans Service Representatives (VSRs) or Rating Veterans Service Representatives (RVSRs). Challenge provides hands-on training with computer applications and advances the new employees through progressively more challenging practice claims. All new employees handle practice claims and actual "live" claims just as they will when they return to their home stations.

3. Goals and Objectives: Upon the conclusion of the resident portion of Challenge training:

- Newly hired Veterans Service Representatives will develop 1.5 cases per day at 94% accuracy, or will promulgate 3.0 cases per day at 94% accuracy;
- Newly hired Rating Veterans Service Representatives will demonstrate mastery by rating at least one simple (one-to-two issue) claim per day at 90% accuracy;
- Employees serving as instructors gain valuable teaching and mentoring experience that improves training within regional offices, and raises the standard of excellence among journey-level employees.

4. Justification

a. **Challenge training accelerates proficiency in new employees.**

(1) Challenge training is a proven program designed to establish in eight weeks employee skill levels that previously took six to eight months to achieve. On completion of Challenge training, employees complete 150 percent more claims per day in their first six months, with a 30 percent increase in accuracy, when compared to early student performance under the previous program. These curricula were instituted in July 2011 and evaluated for student success during the ensuing five sessions.

(2) VBA has reviewed and piloted the use of technology for one Challenge curriculum (Post-Determination VSR) in FY 2012. The training proved to be ineffective, and VBA continues to assess how technology can be applied to future sessions of Challenge to assure students achieve the training goals and objectives. During Challenge 2013-1, VBA will initiate a new pilot that delivers prerequisite training and knowledge-based, lecture-oriented lessons using technology for virtual delivery. The pilot will involve approximately 22 newly hired Rating Veterans Service Representatives. If assessments of student knowledge and evaluation of the training method prove effective, the students will attend four weeks of resident training. The quantity and accuracy of their work during training will be compared to the results of the centralized training model to determine if a partially virtual training solution is feasible in FY 2013.

(3) VBA normally conducts this training in a centralized model. Challenge 2013-1 is proposed in a distributed model to increase training capacity and constrain costs while preserving the emphasis on building proficiency.

b. **Face-to-face Challenge training is required for effective student and instructor interaction.**

(1) Challenge training emphasizes evaluation of student learning through pre- and post-tests; introductory skill practices using mock cases; closely supervised, actual work using live cases; and immediate feedback from experienced instructors. Challenge training has achieved dramatic results due to the adult learning principles built into the training methods. Challenge training builds teamwork among learners and instructors, and enhances standardization across the 56 regional offices.

(2) Students from geographically dispersed regional offices benefit from direct, face-to-face interaction as they learn, because the students are seeking the same skill sets and enter training at similar skill levels. Additionally, the students benefit from direct, face-to-face interaction with their instructors, who also hail from different regional offices. Student questions frequently spark discussion that reinforces learning. Practical application with live cases is integrated throughout the curricula. During practical application, a separate instructor is assigned to each team of five students so each student can receive appropriate mentoring and rapid response to

his/her questions. This interaction supports development of fast, effective work habits that students will carry back to their regional offices. The students' work is reviewed and feedback is provided by nationally standardized instructors immediately after completion, so students become accustomed to having their work critiqued to assure accuracy. The classroom environment invites seminar discussion of particularly difficult claims so that all participants can learn from the cases.

(3) The personnel selected as instructors are highly experienced, journey-level employees who have been recommended by their regional office leaders and prepared with standardized training provided by Compensation Service. The instructors at a training site are usually from multiple regional offices. In the face-to-face Challenge training environment, the instructors gain substantial practice in teaching difficult topics and guiding the work effort of others. Their direct interaction with instructors from other regional offices improves standardization, provides a grass-roots opportunity to collaborate on complex issues and to learn techniques they might otherwise never learn. The instructors' face-to-face interaction with the students benefits their regional offices because the instructors carry their skills back to their home stations, where they can be used to continue the training of other employees. Their face-to-face interaction with other instructors further benefits VBA by improving consistency across regional offices.

Face-to-face Challenge training is required to achieve the interaction described above, and because it is proven to achieve the desired performance results.

5. Business Case Analysis

a. **Challenge costs are effectively constrained.**

(1) VBA conducted an analysis of the student population, and the availability and suitability of training facilities. VBA has successfully implemented Challenge training at satellite locations in the past, while assuring standardization of training because we travel nationally standardized instructors to the satellite locations, and provide close oversight by Compensation Service course managers. The analysis revealed:

- The student population for Challenge 2013-1 is spread across 41 regional offices. The student population requires training in one of three curricula.
- There were seven regional offices with relatively large student populations.

(2) Our analysis of suitable and available training facilities revealed that non-travel costs can be significantly constrained by using the seven available and suitable government facilities as training sites (Veterans Benefits Academy and classrooms at six regional offices). Use of existing government facilities, rather than commercial training facilities, leverages sunk costs of existing facilities. The classrooms are outfitted with suitable classroom equipment including computers connected to the VBA network and already loaded with relevant computer applications. Our analysis of the

student population revealed that travel costs can be constrained by synchronizing training sites with high regional office populations of students awaiting training. In several regional offices, high student population coincided with available classrooms. Our plan is, to the maximum extent possible, to assign students from those six locations to attend Challenge training in their regional office classrooms to avoid student travel costs. Initial planning has 143 students attending Challenge training at their own regional offices without travel costs, and an additional 20 students participating in a virtual training pilot, resulting in approximately $943,000 savings in travel costs.

(3) Some of the classrooms at those six satellite locations have additional capacity. Our plan is to fill those classrooms by assigning students from other regional offices in the same geographical area. Currently, 63 students will travel to satellite locations to attend Challenge training. This method generates no significant travel savings, but does leverage the sunk costs of established classrooms while keeping students closer to home.

(4) Beyond the capacity of the six satellite training locations, our plan assigns all remaining students (309 students) to two increments of classes at the Veterans Benefits Academy in Baltimore, MD. The Academy is our premier Challenge training location because of the benefits of scale and the experienced support infrastructure at the Academy. Approximately 200 Challenge students can be accommodated simultaneously, and instructor standardization oversight can be accomplished across multiple classrooms by a single course manager for each curriculum. Using the Academy leverages the sunk costs of our established training facility.

b. **Challenge training provides substantial return on the investment.**

(1) The productivity of a Challenge graduate in their first six months is 50% higher when compared against graduates of the earlier training programs. Challenge 2013-1 will train 536 students. Conducting Challenge Training presents a cost avoidance opportunity. Assuming the level of performance described above, these 536 students will perform in their first six months at a rate equivalent to ~ 800 new employees (1.5 x 536). This productivity for 6 months represents an additional 134 non-Challenge trained employees. Using a cost factor of $73K per FTE (fully burdened), VBA would be faced with a cost of ~ $9.8M to hire 134 FTE.

(2) As indicated in paragraph 4, other versions of this training – including shorter, in-person classes and a piloted, web-based class – have not proven to effectively meet the training goals and objectives based on measured production and accuracy results. Face-to-face Challenge training provides substantial return on the investment.

The distributed model for face-to-face training in Challenge 2013-1 effectively constrains costs and provides substantial return on the investment.

6. The proposed dates and locations for the FY 2013 Challenge training sessions are:

	TIME	POTENTIAL LOCATIONS
1	October 9 - December 20 2012	Veterans Benefits Academy, Baltimore; San Diego RO; Philadelphia RO; Seattle RO; Winston-Salem RO; Muskogee RO; St. Louis RO

The Challenge 2013-1 training session will occur simultaneously at multiple sites with:

- 639 participants
  - 536 students, 89 instructors, 7 course managers, 7 claims support staff
- 476 participants will travel (373 students and 103 instructors/support staff)
  - 309 students will travel to Veterans Benefits Academy for training
  - 64 students will travel to San Diego RO or Winston-Salem RO for training
- 163 students will not travel (143 training at home station; 20 virtual students)

7. VBA is using only government facilities and support staff for this event. Expected costs are for student, instructor, and support staff travel, and for classroom supplies. Hotel costs include only lodging rates, and will be equal to or less than the GSA rate for the cities where training will occur. The preponderance of traveling participants will train in Baltimore where a waiver of hotel taxes has been established. Estimated airfares, local transportation costs and supplies are included in the estimate. No "logo" or SWAG items will be purchased.

Total Cost Breakdown for Average Cost per Participant (Students/Instructors/Support)

	Trainees	Instructors & Support	Travel Cost	Non-travel Cost (Supplies)	Total Cost	Avg. Cost per Participant for 639 Participants
Challenge 2013-1	536	103	$3.162M	$0.040M	$3.202M	$5,010

Total Cost Breakdown for Student Cost per Day

Challenge 2013-1 Total Cost	Estimated Lodging Costs	Estimated M&IE Costs	Estimated Local Transportation Costs	Estimated Airfare Costs	Estimated Supply Costs	Avg. Cost per Student per Day 536 Students
$3.202M	$1.391M	$1.392M	$0.158M	$0.221M	$0.040M	$216.48

8. Both the **VA Hosted or Co-Hosted Conference Proposed Checklist for Conference Certifying Officials** and **Department of Veterans Affairs Hosted or Co-Hosted Conference Request Guidance** were used in the planning of this event. The Administration Conference Certifying Official (CCO) has reviewed and signed off on the attached Conference Certification Form prior to my signature below.

9. I am available at (202) 461-9300 should you wish to further discuss this proposed Challenge training event.

Allison A. Hickey

Recommend: Approve / Disapprove

John R. Gingrich
Chief of Staff

10/10/12
Date

Recommend: Approve / Disapprove

W. Scott Gould
Deputy Secretary

10/15/12
Date

Approve/Disapprove

Eric K. Shinseki

10/15/2012
Date

Department of Veterans Affairs

Memorandum

Date: October 23, 2012

From: Assistant Secretary for Office of Operations, Security, and Preparedness (007)

Subj: Request Waiver for VA Basic Police Officer Course (VAIQ#7291236)

To: Secretary (00)

Thru: Chief of Staff (00A)
Deputy Secretary (001)

1. In accordance with the VA Chief of Staff guidance dated September 26, 2012, the Veterans Affairs Law Enforcement Training Center (LETC), requests your approval of a waiver to conduct the VA Basic Police Officer Course (BPOC) Class Number 1301, in-residence October - December 2012. The VA BPOC will cost in excess of the maximum allowable expense of $500,000.00.

2. Purpose: The VA BPOC training is critical to preparing newly hired police officers to serve at our medical centers nationwide. VA police officers are expected to provide professional law enforcement services in a VA healthcare environment. The VA LETC is the only Federal provider for that type of specialized law enforcement training. The VA BPOC includes dynamic, intense, scenario and role play based training which must be delivered face-to-face. Subjects include small arms training and qualification, defensive tactics, ground defense, expandable straight baton, chemical weapon (Oleo Capsicum Resin) and a myriad of other subjects which rely on physical skills. Of great importance is the 40 hours of behavioral science training VA Police officers receive which teach officers how to use verbal communications skills to de-escalate violent situations. Moreover, the VA LETC is highly regarded as it received Federal Law Enforcement accreditation in November 2011 from the Federal Law Enforcement Training Accreditation board (FLETA). LETC was praised by FLETA for an intense behavioral curriculum.

3. Goals and Objectives: Upon graduation from the VA BPOC newly assigned police officers will:

a. Have completed certification requirements to be appointed and serve as a VA Police Officer in accordance with Federal law, Title 38, Section 902.

b. Respond to and control various calls for service such as, active shooter, workplace violence, disturbances, customer service/assistance, etc.

4. Justification:

a. Face to face, performance based skills training is necessary for the complex skills required as a police officer.

(1) VA Police Officers are required by Title 38, U.S.C., Section 902, to receive specialized training with particular emphasis on dealing in situations involving patients

and other training as prescribed by SECVA. The VA LETC is the authorized provider of this specialized training.

(2) The 320 hour (8 week) BPOC provides VA police officers with specialized training in federal law enforcement and prepares them with the ability to deal with veterans inflicted by TBI, PTSD, suicidal/homicidal ideations, and other critical crisis intervention and verbal de-escalation skills and techniques unique to a healthcare environment.

(3) Weapons and physical skills training and certification cannot be delivered through any other method. Weapon and physical skills training include but are not limited to: firearms, straight baton, OC spray, Ground Defense and Recovery, Defensive Tactics, and Graded Practical (Scenario Based) Exercises.

b. Face to face training at the LETC ensures quality training by certified instructors, who deliver material developed by SMEs.

(1) The LETC Behavioral Sciences curricula was developed in concert with leading VA experts in TBI, PTSD and dealing with suicidal/homicidal veterans.

(2) VA LETC instructors undergo a formal instructor development course for initial and recurring certification.

(3) VA LETC instructors regularly attend technical and professional enhancement training as part of their annual Individual Development Plan. This training is specific to the skills and advanced knowledge required of our specialties in a healthcare environment.

5. Business Case Analysis:

a. VA BPOC costs are effectively constrained.

(1) The VA LETC is a Franchise Fund Enterprise Center which is commissioned to provide services to federal customers. No other federal training center has a program tailored to the unique needs of law enforcement in a healthcare environment.

(2) The tuition for the BPOC includes all meals and lodging. The LETC contracts meals with vendors and houses BPOC students on-station, at a 45% reduction as compared to local lodging and per-diem rates. Specifically, our lodging and meal cost per-student is $4,539 for 56 nights. At local GSA rates the per-student cost would be $8,171. The overall savings is $217,920.00 per class.

(3) Our facility is located on the grounds of the Central Arkansas Veterans Heathcare System (CAVHS) and we have an agreement with CAVHS at a cost of $6.68 per square foot versus the average GSA space lease of $16.00 to $30.00 per square foot, annually. This results in an approximate annual savings of over $1.4M annually.

b. VA BPOC provides substantial return on the investment.

(1) All VA Police Officers must successfully complete the BPOC before receiving their badge and credentials or being certified / authorized to perform any law enforcement duties. The knowledge, skills and abilities of a VA BPOC graduate are significantly increased when compared against a newly hired Police Officer who has not attended the course. A newly hired and untrained police officer in the GS 083 job series costs VHA tens of thousands of dollars in overtime (OT), salaries and benefits, as the department cannot use the untrained officer to protect VA persons and properties, or

perform any type of law enforcement duties until they successfully complete BPOC. The high quality, specialized training VA BPOC graduates receive allows them to provide professional law enforcement and security services to protect and support the Veterans, staff, visitors, and infrastructures on Department of Veterans Affairs' property.

(2) As indicated in paragraph 4, face to face, performance based skills training is necessary for the complex skills required as a police officer. The VA BPOC training provides a unique, cost effective, and substantial return on the investment.

c. Impact on VHA & LETC if classes are not held.

(1) As a Franchise Fund Enterprise Center, the LETC receives no appropriated budget and rely on our training services and administrative product lines to meet expenses.

(2) VHA would not be able to ensure a safe and secure environment for veterans, employees, contractors, and visitors at VHA healthcare facilities.

(3) If we are unable to continue to provide these services, we face the possibility of having to: (a) Discontinue sending instructors to certification or other professional enhancement training. (b) Cancel efforts to attain/maintain FLETA accreditation for programs or academy. (This effort requires travel funds to support required processes) (c) Initiate a Reduction in Force (RIF), if unable to meet salary obligations. (d) Potential of violating support contracts required to provide services and maintain facilities.

6. The proposed dates and location for VA BPOC Class Number 1301 is:

No.	Date	Location of Training
1	October 29, 2012 to December 21, 2012	VA Law Enforcement Training Center 2200 Fort Roots Dr. North Little Rock, AR 72114

The VA BPOC Class Number 1301 will have:

- 77 participants
  - 60 students and
  - 14 instructors, 2 OSLE employees and 1 SES to Graduate Class = 17

Total Cost = $751,500

7. All are VA employees and all training is conducted on government property.

Total Cost Breakdown for Average Cost per Participant (Students/Instructors/Support)

VA BPOC Class # 1301	Students	Instructors & Support (all costs captured in tuition) 14 + 3 **(3 OSLE employees traveling)**	Estimated Travel Cost	Non-Travel Cost (Supply costs are captured in tuition)	Tuition (Includes all meals/lodging/staff salaries/facilities and ground transportation)	Avg. Cost per Student 60 = Students plus 3 OSLE employees
	60	17	$1,500 per student	$300	$10,950	**$12,450**

should be cents

Total Cost Breakdown for Student Cost **per day** (All Costs are Captured in Tuition)

VA BPOC Class # 1301	Estimated Lodging Costs	Estimated Meal Costs	Estimated Local Transportation Costs	Overhead Costs (includes all LETC operating expenses)	Estimated Supply Costs	Avg. Cost per Student per day for 60 Students
60 Students	$51.00	$29.40	$1.20	$108.50	$5.44	$195.54

8. Both the VA Hosted or Co-Hosted Conference Proposed Checklist for Conference Certifying Officials and Department of Veterans Affairs Hosted or Co-hosted Conference Request Guidance were used in the planning of this training event. The Administration Conference Certifying Official (CCO) has reviewed and signed off on the attached Conference Certification Form prior to my signature below.

9. I am available at (202) 461-4939 should you wish to further discuss this proposed training event

Jose D. Riojas

Attachments: 9 (binder)

Recommend Approve / Disapprove

John R. Gingrich
Chief of Staff

10/24/12
Date

Recommend Approve / Disapprove

W. Scott Gould
Deputy Secretary

10/25/12
Date

Recommend Approve / Disapprove

Eric K. Shinseki
Secretary

10/25/2012
Date

Department of Veterans Affairs

Memorandum

Date: November 30, 2012

From: Assistant Secretary for Office of Operations, Security, and Preparedness (OSP) (007)

Subj: Request Waiver for VA Basic Police Officer Course (VAIQ#7307709)

To: Secretary (00)

Thru: Chief of Staff (00A)
Deputy Secretary (001)

1. In accordance with existing VA policies and guidelines, and all applicable statutes and regulations, OSP, requests your approval of a waiver to conduct the VA Basic Police Officer Course (BPOC) Class Number 1302, in-residence January - March 2013. The VA BPOC will cost in excess of the maximum allowable expense of $500,000.00.

2. Purpose: The VA BPOC training is critical to preparing newly hired police officers to serve at our medical centers nationwide. VA police officers are expected to provide professional law enforcement services in a VA health care environment. The VA Law Enforcement Training Center (LETC) is the only Federal provider for that type of specialized law enforcement training. The VA BPOC includes dynamic, intense, scenario and role play-based training which must be delivered face-to-face. Subjects include small arms training and qualification, defensive tactics, ground defense, expandable straight baton, chemical weapon (Oleo Capsicum Resin) and a myriad of other subjects which rely on physical skills. Of great importance is the 40 hours of behavioral science training VA police officers receive which teach officers how to use verbal communications skills to de-escalate violent situations. Moreover, the VA LETC is highly regarded as it received Federal Law Enforcement accreditation in November 2011 from the Federal Law Enforcement Training Accreditation board (FLETA). LETC was praised by FLETA for its intense behavioral curriculum.

3. Goals and Objectives: Upon graduation from the VA BPOC newly assigned police officers will:

a. Have completed certification requirements to be appointed and serve as a VA police officer in accordance with Federal law, Title 38, U.S.C., Section 902.

b. Respond to and control various calls for service such as, active shooter, workplace violence, disturbances, customer service/assistance, etc.

4. Justification:

a. Face-to-face, performance based skills training is necessary for the complex skills required as a police officer.

(1) VA police officers are required by Title 38, U.S.C., Section 902, to receive specialized training with particular emphasis on dealing in situations involving patients

and other training as prescribed by the Secretary. The VA LETC is the authorized provider of this specialized training.

(2) The 320-hour (8 week) BPOC provides VA police officers with specialized training in Federal law enforcement and prepares them with the ability to deal with Veterans inflicted by traumatic brain injury (TBI), Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), suicidal/homicidal ideations, and other critical crisis intervention and verbal de-escalation skills and techniques unique to a health care environment.

(3) Weapons and physical skills training and certification cannot be delivered through any other method. Weapon and physical skills training include but are not limited to: firearms, straight baton, OC spray, ground defense and recovery, defensive tactics, and graded practical (scenario-based) exercises.

b. Face-to-face training at the LETC ensures quality training by certified instructors, who deliver material developed by subject matter experts.

(1) The LETC behavioral sciences curricula was developed in concert with leading VA experts in TBI, PTSD and dealing with suicidal/homicidal Veterans.

(2) VA LETC instructors undergo a formal instructor development course for initial and recurring certification.

(3) VA LETC instructors regularly attend technical and professional enhancement training as part of their annual individual development plan. This training is specific to the skills and advanced knowledge required of our specialties in a health care environment.

5. Business Case Analysis:

a. VA BPOC costs are effectively constrained.

(1) The VA LETC is a franchise fund enterprise center which is commissioned to provide services to Federal customers. No other Federal training center has a program tailored to the unique needs of law enforcement in a health care environment.

(2) The tuition for the BPOC includes all meals and lodging. The LETC contracts meals with vendors and houses BPOC students on-station, at a 45 percent reduction as compared to local lodging and per-diem rates. Specifically, our lodging and meal cost per-student is $4,539 for 56 nights. At local GSA rates the per-student cost would be $8,171. The overall savings is $217,920.00 per class.

(3) Our facility is located on the grounds of the Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System (CAVHS) and we have an agreement with CAVHS at a cost of $6.68 per square foot versus the average GSA space lease of $16.00 to $30.00 per square foot, annually. This results in an approximate annual savings of over $1.4M annually.

b. VA BPOC provides substantial return on the investment.

(1) All VA police officers must successfully complete the BPOC before receiving their badge and credentials or being certified/authorized to perform any law enforcement duties. The knowledge, skills and abilities of a VA BPOC graduate are significantly increased when compared against a newly hired police officer who has not attended the course. A newly hired and untrained police officer in the GS 083 job series costs VHA tens of thousands of dollars in overtime, salaries and benefits, as the department cannot use the untrained officer to protect VA persons and properties, or perform any type of law

enforcement duties until they successfully complete BPOC. The high quality, perform any type of specialized training VA BPOC graduates receive, allows them to provide professional law enforcement and security services to protect and support the Veterans, staff, visitors, and infrastructures on VA property.

(2) As indicated in paragraph 4, face-to-face, performance-based skills training is necessary for the complex skills required as a police officer. The VA BPOC training provides a unique, cost effective, and substantial return on the investment.

c. **Impact on VHA & LETC if classes are not held.**

(1) As a franchise fund enterprise center, the LETC receives no appropriated budget and rely on our training services and administrative product lines to meet expenses.

(2) VHA would not be able to ensure a safe and secure environment for Veterans, employees, contractors, and visitors at VHA health care facilities.

(3) If we are unable to continue to provide these services, we face the possibility of having to: (a) Discontinue sending instructors to certification or other professional enhancement training; (b) Cancel efforts to attain/maintain FLETA accreditation for programs or academy (This effort requires travel funds to support required processes); (c) Initiate a reduction in force, if unable to meet salary obligations; and (d) Potential of violating support contracts required to provide services and maintain facilities.

6. The proposed dates and location for VA BPOC Class Number 1302 is:

No.	Date	Location of Training
1	January 7, 2013 to March 1, 2013	VA Law Enforcement Training Center 2200 Fort Roots Dr. North Little Rock, AR 72114

The VA BPOC Class Number 1302 will have:

- 77 participants
  - 60 students and
  - 14 instructors, 2 OSLE employees and 1 SES to Graduate Class = 17

Total Cost = $751,500

7. All are VA employees and all training is conducted on government property.

Total cost breakdown for average cost per participant (students/instructors/support)

VA BPOC Class # 1302	Students	Instructors & Support (all costs captured in tuition) 14 + 3 (3 OSLE employees traveling)	Estimated Travel Cost	Non-Travel Cost (Supply costs are captured in tuition)	Tuition (Includes all meals/lodging/staff salaries/facilities and ground transportation)	Avg. Cost per Student 60 = Students plus 3 OSLE employees
	60	17	$1,500 per student	$300	$10,950	$12,450

Total Cost Breakdown for Student Cost **per day** (All costs are captured in tuition)

VA BPOC Class # 1302	Estimated Lodging Costs	Estimated Meal Costs	Estimated Local Transportation Costs	Overhead Costs (Includes all LETC operating expenses)	Estimated Supply Costs	Avg. Cost per Student per day for 60 Students
60 Students	$51.00	$29.40	$1.20	$108.50	$5.44	$195.54

8. Both the VA Hosted or Co-Hosted Conference Proposed Checklist for Conference Certifying Officials and Department of Veterans Affairs Hosted or Co-hosted Conference Request Guidance were used in the planning of this training event. The Administration Conference Certifying Official (CCO) has reviewed and signed off on the attached Conference Certification Form prior to my signature below.

9. I am available at (202) 461-4939 should you wish to further discuss this proposed training event

Jose D. Riojas

Attachments: 9 (binder)

Recommend: Approve / Disapprove

John R. Gingrich
Chief of Staff

12/20/12
Date

Recommend: Approve / Disapprove

W. Scott Gould
Deputy Secretary

12/20/12
Date

Recommend: Approve / Disapprove

Eric K. Shinseki
Secretary

12/20/12
Date

Department of Veterans Affairs

Memorandum

Date:

From: Under Secretary for Benefits (20)

Subj: Request Waiver for VBA Challenge Session 2013-2 Training in FY 2013 (VAIQ # 7310883)

Thru: Chief of Staff

Thru: Deputy Secretary

To: Secretary

1. In accordance with the existing Department of Veterans Affairs Conference policies and guidelines, and all applicable statutes and regulations, the Veterans Benefits Administration requests your approval of a waiver to implement centralized, face-to-face Challenge training classes in January – March 2013. The Challenge training session will cost in excess of the maximum allowable expense of $500,000.

2. Purpose: Challenge training is a critical element of providing employees the skill sets necessary to achieve the standards of delivering compensation benefits to Veterans. Challenge training accelerates by six months the achievement of journey-level status of Challenge graduates. It is a key initiative in the transformation of VBA and a critical component in achieving our transformation goals for improved service delivery. The Challenge program is a national technical training curriculum that provides new Veterans Service Center employees with the skills they need to function effectively in their positions as Veterans Service Representatives (VSRs) or Rating Veterans Service Representatives (RVSRs). Challenge provides hands-on training with computer applications and advances the new employees through progressively more challenging practice claims. All new employees handle practice claims and actual "live" claims just as they will when they return to their home stations.

3. Goals and Objectives: Upon the conclusion of the resident portion of Challenge training:

- Newly hired Veterans Service Representatives will develop 1.5 cases per day at 94% accuracy, or will promulgate 3.0 cases per day at 94% accuracy;
- Newly hired Rating Veterans Service Representatives will demonstrate mastery by rating at least one simple (one-to-two issue) claim per day at 90% accuracy;
- Employees serving as instructors gain valuable teaching and mentoring experience that improves training within regional offices, and raises the standard of excellence among journey-level employees.

4. Justification

a. **Challenge training accelerates proficiency in new employees.**

(1) Challenge training is a proven program designed to establish in eight weeks employee skill levels that previously took six to eight months to achieve. On completion of Challenge training, employees complete 150 percent more claims per day in their first six months, with a 30 percent increase in accuracy, when compared to early student performance under the previous program. These curricula were instituted in July 2011 and evaluated for student success during the ensuing five sessions.

(2) VBA has reviewed and piloted the use of technology for one Challenge curriculum (Post-Determination VSR) in FY 2012. The training proved to be ineffective, and VBA continues to assess how technology can be applied to future sessions of Challenge to assure students achieve the training goals and objectives. During first quarter of FY 2013, VBA initiated a new pilot to deliver prerequisite training and knowledge-based, lecture-oriented lessons using technology for virtual delivery for 16 newly hired Rating Veterans Service Representatives. These students are scheduled to attend four weeks of resident training beginning January 2013. The quantity and accuracy of their work during training will be compared to the results of the centralized training model to determine if a partially virtual training solution is feasible in FY 2013.

(3) VBA normally conducts this training in a centralized model. Challenge 2013-2 is proposed in a distributed model to increase training capacity and constrain costs while preserving the emphasis on building proficiency.

b. **Face-to-face Challenge training is required for effective student and instructor interaction.**

(1) Challenge training emphasizes evaluation of student learning through pre- and post-tests; introductory skill practices using mock cases; closely supervised, actual work using live cases; and immediate feedback from experienced instructors. Challenge training has achieved dramatic results due to the adult learning principles built into the training methods. Challenge training builds teamwork among learners and instructors, and enhances standardization across the 56 regional offices.

(2) Students from geographically dispersed regional offices benefit from direct, face-to-face interaction as they learn, because the students are seeking the same skill sets and enter training at similar skill levels. Additionally, the students benefit from direct, face-to-face interaction with their instructors, who also hail from different regional offices. Student questions frequently spark discussion that reinforces learning. Practical application with live cases is integrated throughout the curricula. During practical application, a separate instructor is assigned to each team of five students so each student can receive appropriate mentoring and rapid response to

his/her questions. This interaction supports development of fast, effective work habits that students will carry back to their regional offices. The students' work is reviewed and feedback is provided by nationally standardized instructors immediately after completion, so students become accustomed to having their work critiqued to assure accuracy. The classroom environment invites seminar discussion of particularly difficult claims so that all participants can learn from the cases.

(3) The personnel selected as instructors are highly experienced, journey-level employees who have been recommended by their regional office leaders and prepared with standardized training provided by Compensation Service. The instructors at a training site are usually from multiple regional offices. In the face-to-face Challenge training environment, the instructors gain substantial practice in teaching difficult topics and guiding the work effort of others. Their direct interaction with instructors from other regional offices improves standardization, provides a grass-roots opportunity to collaborate on complex issues and to learn techniques they might otherwise never learn. The instructors' face-to-face interaction with the students benefits their regional offices because the instructors carry their skills back to their home stations, where they can be used to continue the training of other employees. Their face-to-face interaction with other instructors further benefits VBA by improving consistency across regional offices.

Face-to-face Challenge training is required to achieve the interaction described above, and because it is proven to achieve the desired performance results.

5. Business Case Analysis

a. **Challenge costs are effectively constrained.**

(1) VBA conducted an analysis of the student population, and the availability and suitability of training facilities. VBA has successfully implemented Challenge training at satellite locations in the past, while assuring standardization of training because we travel nationally standardized instructors to the satellite locations, and provide close oversight by Compensation Service course managers. The analysis revealed:

- The student population for Challenge 2013-2 is spread across 36 regional offices. The student population requires training in one of two curricula.
- There were six regional offices with relatively large student populations.

(2) Our analysis of suitable and available training facilities revealed that non-travel costs can be significantly constrained by using six available and suitable government facilities as training sites (Veterans Benefits Academy and classrooms at five regional offices). Use of existing government facilities, rather than commercial training facilities, leverages sunk costs of existing facilities. The classrooms are outfitted with suitable classroom equipment including computers connected to the VBA network and already loaded with relevant computer applications. Our analysis of the

student population revealed that travel costs can be constrained by synchronizing training sites with high regional office populations of students awaiting training. In several regional offices, high student population coincided with available classrooms. Our plan is, to the maximum extent possible, to assign students from those five locations to attend Challenge training in their regional office classrooms to avoid student travel costs. Initial planning has 62 students attending Challenge training at local offices without travel costs resulting in approximately $689,000 savings in travel costs.

(3) Some of the classrooms at those five satellite locations have additional capacity. Our plan is to fill those classrooms by assigning students from other regional offices in the same geographical area. Currently, 122 students will travel to satellite locations to attend Challenge training. This method generates no significant travel savings, but does leverage the sunk costs of established classrooms while keeping students closer to home.

(4) Beyond the capacity of the five satellite training locations, our plan assigns all remaining students (189 students) to two increments of classes at the Veterans Benefits Academy in Baltimore, MD. The Academy is our premier Challenge training location because of the benefits of scale and the experienced support infrastructure at the Academy. Approximately 200 Challenge students can be accommodated simultaneously, and instructor standardization oversight can be accomplished across multiple classrooms by a single course manager for each curriculum. Using the Academy leverages the sunk costs of our established training facility.

b. **Challenge training provides substantial return on the investment.**

(1) The productivity of a Challenge graduate in their first six months is 50% higher when compared against graduates of the earlier training programs. Challenge 2013-2 will train 373 students. Conducting Challenge Training presents a cost avoidance opportunity. Assuming the level of performance described above, these 373 students will perform in their first six months at a rate equivalent to ~ 560 new employees (1.5 x 373). This productivity for 6 months represents an additional 93 non-Challenge trained employees. Using a cost factor of $73K per FTE (fully burdened), VBA would be faced with a cost of ~ $6.8M to hire 93 FTE.

(2) As indicated in paragraph 4, other versions of this training – including shorter, in-person classes and a piloted, web-based class – have not proven to effectively meet the training goals and objectives based on measured production and accuracy results. Face-to-face Challenge training provides substantial return on the investment.

The distributed model for face-to-face training in Challenge 2013-2 effectively constrains costs and provides substantial return on the investment.

6. The proposed dates and locations for the FY 2013 Challenge training sessions are:

	TIME	POTENTIAL LOCATIONS
1	January 29, 2013, to March 29, 2013	Veterans Benefits Academy, Baltimore; Philadelphia RO; Seattle RO; Louisville RO; San Diego RO

The Challenge 2013-2 training session will occur simultaneously at multiple sites with:

- 522 participants
  - 315 students, 184 instructors, 14 course managers, 9 claims support staff
- 456 participants will travel (249 students and 207 instructors/support staff)
  - 19 participants will travel to the Louisville RO, 287 participants will travel to the VBA Training Academy in Baltimore, MD, 100 participants will travel to the San Diego RO, 32 participants will travel to the Philadelphia RO, and 18 participants will travel to the Seattle RO for training
- 66 students will train at their home station and/or not require travel
  - 4 students from the Baltimore RO will train at the Veterans Benefits Academy and do not require travel

7. VBA is using only government facilities and support staff for this event. Expected costs are for student, instructor, and support staff travel, and for classroom supplies. Hotel costs include only lodging rates, and will be equal to or less than the GSA rate for the cities where training will occur. The preponderance of traveling participants will train in Baltimore where a waiver of hotel taxes has been established. Estimated airfares, local transportation costs and supplies are included in the estimate. No "logo" or swag items will be purchased.

Total Cost Breakdown for Average Cost per Participant (Students/Instructors/Support)

	Trainees	Instructors & Support	Travel Cost	Non-travel Cost (Supplies)	Total Cost	Avg. Cost per Participant for 522 Participants
Challenge 2013-2	315	207	$5.47M	$0.044M	$5.514M	$10,563.64

Total Cost Breakdown for Student Cost per Day

Challenge 2013-2 Total Cost	Estimated Lodging Costs	Estimated M&IE Costs	Estimated Local Transportation Costs	Estimated Airfare Costs	Estimated Supply Costs	Avg. Cost per Student per Day 315 Students
$5.514M	$3.471M	$1.469M	$0.200M	$0.340M	$0.044M	$301.80

8. Both the **VA Hosted or Co-Hosted Conference Proposed Checklist for Conference Certifying Officials** and **Department of Veterans Affairs Hosted or Co-Hosted Conference Request Guidance** were used in the planning of this event. The Administration Conference Certifying Official (CCO) has reviewed and signed off on the attached Conference Certification Form prior to my signature below.

9. I am available at (202) 461-9300 should you wish to further discuss this proposed Challenge training event.

Under Secretary for Benefits — Date: 1/17/13

Recommend: Approve / Disapprove

John R. Gingrich
Chief of Staff — Date: 1/25/13

Recommend: Approve / Disapprove

W. Scott Gould
Deputy Secretary — Date: 1/27/13

Approve / Disapprove

Eric K. Shinseki
Secretary — Date: 1/28/2013

Attachments
1. Conference Certification Form (appendix E)
2. Sample Venue Cost Estimate, (appendix J, VA Form 10008a)
3. Site Cost Comparison Chart, (appendix K, VA Form 10008b)
4. Conference Request (appendix L, VA Form 10008c)

Department of Veterans Affairs

Memorandum

Date: January 25, 2013

From: Assistant Secretary for Office of Operations, Security, and Preparedness (OSP) (007)

Subj: Request Waiver for VA Basic Police Officer Course (VAIQ# 7319648)

To: Secretary (00)

Thru: Chief of Staff (00A)
Deputy Secretary (001)

1. In accordance with existing VA policies and guidelines, and all applicable statutes and regulations, OSP, requests your approval of a waiver to conduct the VA Basic Police Officer Course (BPOC) Class Number 1303, in-residence March 4, 2013 - April 26, 2013. The VA BPOC will cost in excess of the maximum allowable expense of $500,000.00.

2. Purpose: The VA BPOC training is critical to preparing newly hired police officers to serve at our medical centers nationwide. VA police officers are expected to provide professional law enforcement services in a VA healthcare environment. The VA Law Enforcement Training Center (LETC) is the only Federal provider for that type of specialized law enforcement training. The VA BPOC includes dynamic, intense, scenario and role play-based training which must be delivered face-to-face. Subjects include small arms training and qualification, defensive tactics, ground defense, expandable straight baton, chemical weapon (Oleo Capsicum Resin) and a myriad of other subjects which rely on physical skills. Of great importance is the 40 hours of behavioral science training VA Police officers receive which teach officers how to use verbal communications skills to de-escalate violent situations. Moreover, the VA LETC is highly regarded as it received Federal Law Enforcement accreditation in November 2011 from the Federal Law Enforcement Training Accreditation board (FLETA). LETC was praised by FLETA for an intense behavioral curriculum.

3. Goals and Objectives: Upon graduation from the VA BPOC newly assigned police officers will:

a. Have completed certification requirements to be appointed and serve as a VA Police Officer in accordance with Federal law, Title 38, U.S.C., Section 902.

b. Respond to and control various calls for service such as, active shooter, workplace violence, disturbances, customer service/assistance, etc.

c. The training includes demonstration/performance training objectives as well as lecture.

- The event is being conducted on government property which will eliminate the cost of training space and reduce lodging costs.
- There are no outside presenters; all training is provided by LETC faculty.
- This is strictly a training event with no entertainment, etc.

2. **VAIQ 7319648**

- No food or refreshments are being provided.
- There are no expenses for SWAG of any kind. This is a training event, not a conference.
- There are no non-VA employees attending this training.
- Actual total costs will be reported within 15 days of completion of the training event.

An after Action Report (AAR) will be provided after the conclusion of the training event.

4. Justification:

a. **Face to face, performance based skills training is necessary for the complex skills required as a police officer.**

(1) VA Police Officers are required by Title 38, U.S.C., Section 902, to receive specialized training with particular emphasis on dealing in situations involving patients and other training as prescribed by SECVA. The VA LETC is the authorized provider of this specialized training.

(2) The 320 hour (8 week) BPOC provides VA police officers with specialized training in Federal law enforcement and prepares them with the ability to deal with Veterans inflicted by traumatic brain injury (TBI), Post-traumatic Stress disorder (PTSD), suicidal/homicidal ideations, and other critical crisis intervention and verbal de-escalation skills and techniques unique to a healthcare environment.

(3) Weapons and physical skills training and certification cannot be delivered through any other method. Weapon and physical skills training include but are not limited to: firearms, straight baton, OC spray, ground defense and recovery, defensive tactics, and graded practical (scenario-based) exercises.

b. **Face to face training at the LETC ensures quality training by certified instructors, who deliver material developed by subject matter experts.**

(1) The LETC Behavioral Sciences curricula was developed in concert with leading VA experts in TBI, PTSD and dealing with suicidal/homicidal veterans.

(2) VA LETC instructors undergo a formal instructor development course for initial and recurring certification.

(3) VA LETC instructors regularly attend technical and professional enhancement training as part of their annual Individual Development Plan. This training is specific to the skills and advanced knowledge required of our specialties in a healthcare environment.

5. Business Case Analysis:

a. **VA BPOC costs are effectively constrained.**

(1) The VA LETC is a franchise fund enterprise center which is commissioned to provide services to Federal customers. No other Federal training center has a program tailored

3. **VAIQ 7319648**

(2) The tuition for the BPOC includes all meals and lodging. The LETC contracts meals with vendors and houses BPOC students on-station, at a 45 percent reduction as compared to local lodging and per-diem rates. Specifically, our lodging and meal cost per-student is $4,539 for 56 nights. At local GSA rates the per-student cost would be $8,171. The overall savings is $217,920.00 per class.

(3) Our facility is located on the grounds of the Central Arkansas Veterans Heathcare System (CAVHS) and we have an agreement with CAVHS at a cost of $6.68 per square foot versus the average GSA space lease of $16.00 to $30.00 per square foot, annually. This results in an approximate annual savings of over $1.4M annually.

b. **VA BPOC provides substantial return on the investment.**

(1) All VA Police Officers must successfully complete the BPOC before receiving their badge and credentials or being certified/authorized to perform any law enforcement duties. The knowledge, skills and abilities of a VA BPOC graduate are significantly increased when compared against a newly hired Police Officer who has not attended the course. A newly hired and untrained police officer in the GS 083 job series costs VHA tens of thousands of dollars in overtime, salaries and benefits, as the department cannot use the untrained officer to protect VA persons and properties, or perform any type of law enforcement duties until they successfully complete BPOC. The high quality, specialized training VA BPOC graduates receive, allows them to provide professional law enforcement and security services to protect and support the Veterans, staff, visitors, and infrastructures on VA property.

(2) As indicated in paragraph 4, face to face, performance-based skills training is necessary for the complex skills required as a police officer. The VA BPOC training provides a unique, cost effective, and substantial return on the investment.

c. **Impact on VHA & LETC if classes are not held.**

(1) As a franchise fund enterprise center, the LETC receives no appropriated budget and rely on our training services and administrative product lines to meet expenses.

(2) VHA would not be able to ensure a safe and secure environment for Veterans, employees, contractors, and visitors at VHA healthcare facilities.

(3) If we are unable to continue to provide these services, we face the possibility of having to: (a) Discontinue sending instructors to certification or other professional enhancement training; (b) Cancel efforts to attain/maintain FLETA accreditation for programs or academy (This effort requires travel funds to support required processes); (c) Initiate a reduction in force, if unable to meet salary obligations; and (d) Potential of violating support contracts required to provide services and maintain facilities.

6. The proposed dates and location for VA BPOC Class Number 1303 is:

No.	Date	Location of Training
1	March 4, 2013 to April 26, 2013	VA Law Enforcement Training Center 2200 Fort Roots Dr. North Little Rock, AR 72114

The VA BPOC Class Number 1303 will have:

- 77 participants
  60 students and

4. **VAIQ 7319648**

Total Cost = $751,500

7. All are VA employees and all training is conducted on government property.
Total Cost Breakdown for Average Cost per Participant (Students/Instructors/Support)

VA BPOC Class # 1303	Students	Instructors & Support (all costs captured in tuition) 14 + 3 (3 OSLE employees traveling)	Estimated Travel Cost	Non-Travel Cost (Supply costs are captured in tuition)	Tuition (Includes all meals/lodging/staff salaries/facilities and ground transportation)	Avg. Cost per Student 60 = Students plus 3 OSLE employees
	60	17	$1,500 per student	$300	$10,950	$12,450

Total Cost Breakdown for Student Cost **per day** (All Costs are Captured in Tuition)

VA BPOC Class # 1302	Estimated Lodging Costs	Estimated Meal Costs	Estimated Local Transportation Costs	Overhead Costs (includes all LETC operating expenses)	Estimated Supply Costs	Avg. Cost per Student per day for 60 Students
60 Students	$51.00	$29.40	$1.20	$108.50	$5.44	$195.54

8. Both the VA Hosted or Co-Hosted Conference Proposed Checklist for Conference Certifying Officials and Department of Veterans Affairs Hosted or Co-hosted Conference Request Guidance were used in the planning of this training event. The Administration Conference Certifying Official (CCO) has reviewed and signed off on the attached Conference Certification Form prior to my signature below.

9. I am available at (202) 461-4939 should you wish to further discuss this proposed training event

Jose D. Riojas

1/25/2013
Date

Attachments: 9 (binder)

Recommend: Approve / Disapprove

John R. Gingrich
Chief of Staff

2/6/13
Date

Recommend: Approve / Disapprove

W. Scott Gould
Deputy Secretary

2/24/13
Date

~~Recommend~~: Approve / Disapprove

Eric K. Shinseki
Secretary

2/24/13
Date

Department of Veterans Affairs

Memorandum

Date: FEB 2 8 2013

From: Under Secretary for Benefits (20)

Subj: Request Waiver for VBA Challenge Session 2013-3 Training in FY 2013 (VAIQ # 7322767)

Thru: Chief of Staff

Thru: Deputy Secretary

To: Secretary

1. In accordance with the existing Department of Veterans Affairs Conference policies and guidelines, and all applicable statutes and regulations, the Veterans Benefits Administration requests your approval of a waiver to implement centralized, face-to-face Challenge training classes in March-May 2013. The Challenge training session will cost in excess of the maximum allowable expense of $500,000.

2. Purpose: Challenge training is a critical element of providing employees the skill sets necessary to achieve the standards of delivering compensation benefits to Veterans. Challenge training accelerates by six months the achievement of journey-level status of Challenge graduates. It is a key initiative in the transformation of VBA and a critical component in achieving our transformation goals for improved service delivery. The Challenge program is a national technical training curriculum that provides new Veterans Service Center employees with the skills they need to function effectively in their positions as Veterans Service Representatives (VSRs) or Rating Veterans Service Representatives (RVSRs). Challenge provides hands-on training with computer applications and advances the new employees through progressively more challenging practice claims. All new employees handle practice claims and actual "live" claims just as they will when they return to their home stations.

3. Goals and Objectives: Upon the conclusion of the resident portion of Challenge training:

   - Newly hired Veterans Service Representatives will develop 1.5 cases per day at 94% accuracy, or will promulgate 3.0 cases per day at 94% accuracy;
   - Newly hired Rating Veterans Service Representatives will demonstrate mastery by rating at least one simple (one-to-two issue) claim per day at 90% accuracy;
   - Employees serving as instructors gain valuable teaching and mentoring experience that improves training within regional offices, and raises the standard of excellence among journey-level employees.

4. Justification

a. **Challenge training accelerates proficiency in new employees.**

(1) Challenge training is a proven program designed to establish in eight weeks employee skill levels that previously took six to eight months to achieve. On completion of Challenge training, employees complete 150 percent more claims per day in their first six months, with a 30 percent increase in accuracy, when compared to early student performance under the previous program. These curricula were instituted in July 2011 and evaluated for student success during the ensuing five sessions.

(2) VBA has reviewed and piloted the use of technology for one Challenge curriculum (Post-Determination VSR) in FY 2012. The training proved to be ineffective, and VBA continues to assess how technology can be applied to future sessions of Challenge to assure students achieve the training goals and objectives. During first quarter of FY 2013, VBA initiated a new pilot to deliver prerequisite training and knowledge-based, lecture-oriented lessons using technology for virtual delivery for 16 newly hired Rating Veterans Service Representatives. These students attended four weeks of resident training beginning January 2013. The quantity and accuracy of their work during training will be compared to the results of the centralized training model to determine if a partially virtual training solution is feasible in FY 2013.

(3) VBA normally conducts this training in a centralized model. Challenge 2013-3 is proposed in a distributed model to increase training capacity and constrain costs while preserving the emphasis on building proficiency.

b. **Face-to-face Challenge training is required for effective student and instructor interaction.**

(1) Challenge training emphasizes evaluation of student learning through pre- and post-tests; introductory skill practices using mock cases; closely supervised, actual work using live cases; and immediate feedback from experienced instructors. Challenge training has achieved dramatic results due to the adult learning principles built into the training methods. Challenge training builds teamwork among learners and instructors, and enhances standardization across the 56 regional offices.

(2) Students from geographically dispersed regional offices benefit from direct, face-to-face interaction as they learn; because the students are seeking the same skill sets and enter training at similar skill levels. Additionally, the students benefit from direct, face-to-face interaction with their instructors, who also hail from different regional offices. Student questions frequently spark discussion that reinforces learning. Practical application with live cases is integrated throughout the curricula. During practical application, a separate instructor is assigned to each team of five students so each student can receive appropriate mentoring and rapid response to

his/her questions. This interaction supports development of fast, effective work habits that students will carry back to their regional offices. The students' work is reviewed and nationally standardized instructors provide feedback immediately after completion, so students become accustomed to having their work critiqued to assure accuracy. The classroom environment invites seminar discussion of particularly difficult claims so that all participants can learn from the cases.

(3) The personnel selected as instructors are highly experienced, journey-level employees who have been recommended by their regional office leaders and prepared with standardized training provided by Compensation Service. The instructors at a training site are usually from multiple regional offices. In the face-to-face Challenge training environment, the instructors gain substantial practice in teaching difficult topics and guiding the work effort of others. Their direct interaction with instructors from other regional offices improves standardization, provides a grass roots opportunity to collaborate on complex issues and to learn techniques they might otherwise never learn. The instructors' face-to-face interaction with the students benefits their regional offices because the instructors carry their skills back to their home stations, where they can be used to continue the training of other employees. Their face-to-face interaction with other instructors further benefits VBA by improving consistency across regional offices.

Face-to-face Challenge training is required to achieve the interaction described above, and because it is proven to achieve the desired performance results.

5. Business Case Analysis

a. **Challenge costs are effectively constrained.**

(1) VBA conducted an analysis of the student population, and the availability and suitability of training facilities. VBA has successfully implemented Challenge training at the VBA training academy in the past, while assuring standardization of training because we travel nationally standardized instructors to the academy, and provide close oversight by Compensation Service course managers. The analysis revealed:

- The student population for Challenge 2013-3 is spread across several regional offices. The student population requires training in one of two curricula.
- Sending all employees to a VBA facility significantly decreases costs associated with training space as the VBA facility can adequately accommodate the number of trainees and support staff.

(2) Use of existing government facilities, rather than commercial training facilities, leverages sunk costs of existing facilities. The classrooms are outfitted with suitable classroom equipment including computers connected to the VBA network and already loaded with relevant computer applications.

(3) The Academy is our premier Challenge training location because of the benefits of scale and the experienced support infrastructure at the Academy.

Approximately 200 Challenge students can be accommodated simultaneously, and instructor standardization oversight can be accomplished across multiple classrooms by a single course manager for each curriculum. Using the Academy leverages the sunk costs of our established training facility

b. **Challenge training provides substantial return on the investment.**

(1) The productivity of a Challenge graduate in their first six months is 50% higher when compared against graduates of the earlier training programs. Challenge 2013-3 will train 200 students. Conducting Challenge Training presents a cost avoidance opportunity. Assuming the level of performance described above, these 373 students will perform in their first six months at a rate equivalent to ~ 560 new employees (1.5 x 373). This productivity for 6 months represents an additional 93 non-Challenge trained employees. Using a cost factor of $73K per FTE (fully burdened), VBA would be faced with a cost of ~ $6.8M to hire 93 FTE.

(2) As indicated in paragraph 4, other versions of this training – including shorter, in-person classes and a piloted, web-based class – have not proven to effectively meet the training goals and objectives based on measured production and accuracy results. Face-to-face Challenge training provides substantial return on the investment.

The distributed model for face-to-face training in Challenge 2013-3 effectively constrains costs and provides substantial return on the investment.

6. The proposed dates and location for the FY 2013-3 Challenge training session is:

	TIME	POTENTIAL LOCATIONS
1	March 26, 2013 to May 24, 2013	Veterans Benefits Academy, Baltimore, MD.

The Challenge 2013-3 training session will occur with:

- 255 participants
  - 200 students, 40 instructors, 2 course managers, 12 claims support staff and 1 supervisor
- 255 participants will travel (200 students and 55 instructors/support staff) to the Veterans Benefits Academy for training

7. VBA is using only government facilities and support staff for this event. Expected costs are for student, instructor, and support staff travel, and for classroom supplies. Hotel costs include only lodging rates, and will be equal to or less than the GSA rate for the cities where training will occur. The traveling participants will train in Baltimore where a waiver of hotel taxes has been established. Estimated airfares, local transportation costs and supplies are included in the estimate. No "logo" or swag items will be purchased.

Total Cost Breakdown for Average Cost per Participant (Students/Instructors/Support)

	Trainees	Instructors & Support	Travel Cost	Non-travel Cost (Supplies)	Total Cost	Avg. Cost per Participant for 255 Participants
Challenge 2013-3	200	55	$3.567M	$0.013M	$3.581 M	$14,043.15

Total Cost Breakdown for Student Cost per Day

Challenge 2013-3 Total Cost	Estimated Lodging Costs	Estimated M&IE Costs	Estimated LocalTransportation Costs	Estimated Airfare Costs	Estimated Supply Costs	Avg. Cost per Student per Day 200 Students
$3.581M	$2.218M	$1.086M	$0.017M	$0.191M	$0.013M	$248.41

8. Both the **VA Hosted or Co-Hosted Conference Proposed Checklist for Conference Certifying Officials** and **Department of Veterans Affairs Hosted or Co-Hosted Conference Request Guidance** were used in the planning of this event. The Administration Conference Certifying Official (CCO) has reviewed and signed off on the attached Conference Certification Form prior to my signature below.

9. I am available at (202) 461-9300 should you wish to further discuss this proposed Challenge training event.

Under Secretary for Benefits

FEB 25 2013
Date

Recommend: Approve / Disapprove

John R. Gingrich
Chief of Staff

3/18/13
Date

Recommend: Approve / Disapprove

W. Scott Gould
Deputy Secretary

3/22/13
Date

Approve / Disapprove

Eric K. Shinseki
Secretary

3/22/2013
Date

Attachments
1. Conference Certification Form (Attachment C)
2. Sample Venue Cost Estimate, (Appendix D, VA Form 10008a)
3. Site Cost Comparison Chart, (Appendix E, VA Form 10008b)
4. Conference Request (Appendix F, VA Form 10008c)

Department of Veterans Affairs

Memorandum

Date: MAR 0 1 2013

From: Assistant Secretary for Office of Operations, Security, and Preparedness (OSP) (007)

Subj: Request Waiver for VA Basic Police Officer Course (VAIQ# 7331400)

To: Secretary (00)

Thru: Chief of Staff (00A)
Deputy Secretary (001)

1. In accordance with existing VA policies and guidelines, and all applicable statutes and regulations, OSP, requests your approval of a waiver to conduct the VA Basic Police Officer Course (BPOC) Class Number 1304, In-residence April 29 - June 21, 2013. The VA BPOC will cost in excess of the maximum allowable expense of $500,000.00.

2. Purpose: The VA BPOC training is critical to preparing newly hired police officers to serve at our medical centers nationwide. VA police officers are expected to provide professional law enforcement services in a VA healthcare environment. The VA Law Enforcement Training Center (LETC) is the only Federal provider for that type of specialized law enforcement training. The VA BPOC includes dynamic, intense, scenario and role play-based training which must be delivered face-to-face. Subjects include small arms training and qualification, defensive tactics, ground defense, expandable straight baton, chemical weapon (Oleo Capsicum Resin) and a myriad of other subjects which rely on physical skills. Of great importance is the 40 hours of behavioral science training VA Police officers receive which teach officers how to use verbal communications skills to de-escalate violent situations. Moreover, the VA LETC is highly regarded as it received Federal Law Enforcement accreditation in November 2011 from the Federal Law Enforcement Training Accreditation board (FLETA). LETC was praised by FLETA for an intense behavioral curriculum.

3. Goals and Objectives: Upon graduation from the VA BPOC newly assigned police officers will:

a. Have completed certification requirements to be appointed and serve as a VA Police Officer in accordance with Federal law, Title 38, U.S.C., Section 902.

b. Respond to and control various calls for service such as: active shooter, workplace violence, disturbances, customer service/assistance, etc.

c. The training includes demonstration/performance training objectives as well as lecture.

- The event is being conducted on government property which will eliminate the cost of training space and reduce lodging costs.
- There are no outside presenters; all training is provided by LETC faculty.
- This is strictly a training event with no entertainment, etc.
- No food or refreshments are being provided.
- There are no expenses for SWAG of any kind. This is a training event, ~~not a conference.~~
- There are no non-VA employees attending this training.

PLA 02

- Actual total costs will be reported within 15 days of completion of the training event.
- An After Action Report (AAR) will be provided after the conclusion of the training event.

4. Justification:

a. **Face to face, performance based skills training is necessary for the complex skills required as a police officer.**

(1) VA Police Officers are required by Title 38, U.S.C., Section 902, to receive specialized training with particular emphasis on dealing in situations involving patients and other training as prescribed by SECVA. The VA LETC is the authorized provider of this specialized training.

(2) The 320 hour (8 week) BPOC provides VA police officers with specialized training in Federal law enforcement and prepares them with the ability to deal with Veterans inflicted by traumatic brain injury (TBI), Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), suicidal/homicidal ideations, and other critical crisis intervention and verbal de-escalation skills and techniques unique to a healthcare environment.

(3) Weapons and physical skills training and certification cannot be delivered through any other method. Weapon and physical skills training include but are not limited to: firearms, straight baton, OC spray, ground defense and recovery, defensive tactics, and graded practical (scenario-based) exercises.

b. **Face-to-face training at the LETC ensures quality training by certified instructors, who deliver material developed by subject matter experts.**

(1) The LETC Behavioral Sciences curricula was developed in concert with leading VA experts in TBI, PTSD and dealing with suicidal/homicidal veterans.

(2) VA LETC instructors undergo a formal instructor development course for initial and recurring certification.

(3) VA LETC instructors regularly attend technical and professional enhancement training as part of their annual Individual Development Plan. This training is specific to the skills and advanced knowledge required of our specialties in a healthcare environment.

5. Business Case Analysis:

a. **VA BPOC costs are effectively constrained.**

(1) The VA LETC is a franchise fund enterprise center which is commissioned to provide services to Federal customers. No other Federal training center has a program tailored to the unique needs of law enforcement in a healthcare environment.

(2) The tuition for the BPOC includes all meals and lodging. The LETC contracts meals with vendors and houses BPOC students on-station, at a 46 percent reduction as compared to local lodging and per-diem rates. Specifically, our lodging and meal cost per-student is $4,539 for 56 nights. At local GSA rates the per-student cost would be $8,171. The overall savings is $217,920.00 per class.

(3) Our facility is located on the grounds of the Central Arkansas Veterans Heathcare System (CAVHS) and we have an agreement with CAVHS at a cost of $6.68 per square foot versus the average GSA space lease of $16.00 to $30.00 per square foot, annually. This results in an approximate annual savings of over $1.4M.

b. VA BPOC provides substantial return on the investment.

(1) All VA Police Officers must successfully complete the BPOC before receiving their badge and credentials or being certified/authorized to perform any law enforcement duties. The knowledge, skills and abilities of a VA BPOC graduate are significantly increased when compared against a newly hired VA Police officer who has not attended the course. A newly hired and untrained VA Police officer in the GS-0083 job series costs VHA tens of thousands of dollars in overtime, salaries and benefits, as the department cannot use the untrained officer to protect VA persons and properties, or perform any type of law enforcement duties until they successfully complete BPOC. The high quality, specialized training VA BPOC graduates receive, allows them to provide professional law enforcement and security services to protect and support the Veterans, staff, visitors, and infrastructures on VA property.

(2) As indicated in paragraph 4, face to face, performance-based skills training is necessary for the complex skills required as a police officer. The VA BPOC training provides a unique, cost effective, and substantial return on the investment.

c. Impact on VHA & LETC if classes are not held.

(1) As a franchise fund enterprise center, the LETC receives no appropriated budget and rely on our training services and administrative product lines to meet expenses.

(2) VHA would not be able to ensure a safe and secure environment for Veterans, employees, contractors, and visitors at VHA healthcare facilities.

(3) If we are unable to continue to provide these services, we face the possibility of having to: (a) Discontinue sending instructors to certification or other professional enhancement training; (b) Cancel efforts to attain/maintain FLETA accreditation for programs or academy (This effort requires travel funds to support required processes); (c) Initiate a reduction in force, if unable to meet salary obligations; and (d) Potential of violating support contracts required to provide services and maintain facilities.

6. The proposed dates and location for VA BPOC Class Number 1304 is:

No.	Date	Location of Training
1	April 29, 2013 to June 21, 2013	VA Law Enforcement Training Center 2200 Fort Roots Dr. North Little Rock, AR 72114

The VA BPOC Class Number 1304 will have:

- 77 participants
  - 60 students and
  - 14 instructors, 2 OSLE employees and 1 SES to Graduate Class = 17

Total Cost = $751,500

7. All are VA employees and all training is conducted on government property.

Request Waiver for VA Basic Police Officer Course (VAIQ# 7331400)

Total Cost Breakdown for Average Cost per Participant (Students/Instructors/Support)

VA BPOC Class # 1304	Participants (60 Students and 3 OSLE)	Instructors & Support (all costs captured in tuition)	Estimated Travel Cost	Non-Travel Cost (Supply costs are captured in tuition)	Tuition (Includes all meals/lodging/staff salaries/facilities and ground transportation)	Avg. Cost per Participant 63
	63	14	$1,500 per student	$300	$10,950	$11,928.57

Total Cost Breakdown for Student Cost per day (All Costs are Captured in Tuition)

VA BPOC Class # 1304	Estimated Lodging Costs	Estimated Meal Costs	Estimated Local Transportation Costs	Overhead Costs (Includes all LETC operating expenses)	Estimated Supply Costs	Avg. Cost per Student per day for 60 Students
60 Students	$51.00	$29.40	$1.20	$108.50	$5.44	$195.54

8. Both the VA Hosted or Co-Hosted Conference Proposed Checklist for Conference Certifying Officials and Department of Veterans Affairs Hosted or Co-hosted Conference Request Guidance were used in the planning of this training event. The Administration Conference Certifying Official (CCO) has reviewed and signed off on the attached Conference Certification Form prior to my signature below.

9. I am available at (202) 461-4980 should you wish to further discuss this proposed training event

Jose D. Riojas

3/1/13
Date

Attachments: 9 (binder)

Recommend: Approve / Disapprove

John R. Gingrich
Chief of Staff

3/6/13
Date

Recommend: Approve / Disapprove

W. Scott Gould
Deputy Secretary

3/5/13
Date

Recommend: Approve / Disapprove

Eric K. Shinseki
Secretary

3/12/2013
Date

Department of Veterans Affairs

Memorandum

Date:

From: Under Secretary for Benefits (20)

Subj: Request Waiver for VBA Challenge Session 2013-4 Training in FY 2013 (VAIQ #7322769)

Thru: Acting Chief of Staff

Thru: Deputy Secretary

To: Secretary

1. In accordance with the existing Department of Veterans Affairs Conference policies and guidelines, and all applicable statutes and regulations, the Veterans Benefits Administration requests your approval of a waiver to implement centralized, face-to-face Challenge training classes in May-August 2013. The Challenge training session will cost in excess of the maximum allowable expense of $500,000.

2. Purpose: Challenge training is a critical element of providing employees the skill sets necessary to achieve the standards of delivering compensation benefits to Veterans. Challenge training accelerates by six months the achievement of journey-level status of Challenge graduates. It is a key initiative in the transformation of VBA and a critical component in achieving our transformation goals for improved service delivery. The Challenge program is a national technical training curriculum that provides new Veterans Service Center employees with the skills they need to function effectively in their positions as Veterans Service Representatives (VSRs) or Rating Veterans Service Representatives (RVSRs). Challenge provides hands-on training with computer applications and advances the new employees through progressively more challenging practice claims. All new employees handle practice claims and actual "live" claims just as they will when they return to their home stations.

3. Goals and Objectives: Upon the conclusion of the resident portion of Challenge training:

   - Newly hired Veterans Service Representatives will develop 1.5 cases per day at 94% accuracy, or will promulgate 3.0 cases per day at 94% accuracy;
   - Newly hired Rating Veterans Service Representatives will demonstrate mastery by rating at least one simple (one-to-two issue) claim per day at 90% accuracy;
   - Employees serving as instructors gain valuable teaching and mentoring experience that improves training within regional offices, and raises the standard of excellence among journey-level employees.

4. Justification

a. **Challenge training accelerates proficiency in new employees.**

(1) Challenge training is a proven program designed to establish in eight weeks employee skill levels that previously took six to eight months to achieve. On completion of Challenge training, employees complete 150 percent more claims per day in their first six months, with a 30 percent increase in accuracy, when compared to early student performance under the previous program. These curricula were instituted in July 2011 and evaluated for student success during the ensuing five sessions.

(2) VBA has reviewed and piloted the use of technology for one Challenge curriculum (Post-Determination VSR) in FY 2012. The training proved to be ineffective, and VBA continues to assess how technology can be applied to future sessions of Challenge to assure students achieve the training goals and objectives. During first quarter of FY 2013, VBA initiated a new pilot to deliver prerequisite training and knowledge-based, lecture-oriented lessons using technology for virtual delivery for 16 newly hired Rating Veterans Service Representatives. These students attended four weeks of resident training beginning January 2013. The quantity and accuracy of their work during training will be compared to the results of the centralized training model to determine if a partially virtual training solution is feasible in FY 2013.

(3) VBA normally conducts this training in a centralized model. Challenge 2013-4 is proposed in a distributed model to increase training capacity and constrain costs while preserving the emphasis on building proficiency.

b. **Face-to-face Challenge training is required for effective student and instructor interaction.**

(1) Challenge training emphasizes evaluation of student learning through pre- and post-tests; introductory skill practices using mock cases; closely supervised, actual work using live cases; and immediate feedback from experienced instructors. Challenge training has achieved dramatic results due to the adult learning principles built into the training methods. Challenge training builds teamwork among learners and instructors, and enhances standardization across the 56 regional offices.

(2) Students from geographically dispersed regional offices benefit from direct, face-to-face interaction as they learn; because the students are seeking the same skill sets and enter training at similar skill levels. Additionally, the students benefit from direct, face-to-face interaction with their instructors, who also hail from different regional offices. Student questions frequently spark discussion that reinforces learning. Practical application with live cases is integrated throughout the curricula. During practical application, a separate instructor is assigned to each team of five students so each student can receive appropriate mentoring and rapid response to

Approximately 200 Challenge students can be accommodated simultaneously, and instructor standardization oversight can be accomplished across multiple classrooms by a single course manager for each curriculum. Using the Academy leverages the sunk costs of our established training facility

b. **Challenge training provides substantial return on the investment.**

(1) The productivity of a Challenge graduate in their first six months is 50% higher when compared against graduates of the earlier training programs. Challenge 2013-4 will train 200 students. Conducting Challenge Training presents a cost avoidance opportunity. Assuming the level of performance described above, these 373 students will perform in their first six months at a rate equivalent to ~ 560 new employees (1.5 x 373). This productivity for 6 months represents an additional 93 non-Challenge trained employees. Using a cost factor of $73K per FTE (fully burdened), VBA would be faced with a cost of ~ $6.8M to hire 93 FTE.

(2) As indicated in paragraph 4, other versions of this training – including shorter, in-person classes and a piloted, web-based class – have not proven to effectively meet the training goals and objectives based on measured production and accuracy results. Face-to-face Challenge training provides substantial return on the investment.

The distributed model for face-to-face training in Challenge 2013-4 effectively constrains costs and provides substantial return on the investment.

6. The proposed dates and location for the FY 2013-4 Challenge training session is:

	TIME	POTENTIAL LOCATIONS
1	May 28, 2013 to August 2, 2013	Veterans Benefits Academy, Baltimore, MD.

The Challenge 2013-4 training session will occur with:

- 255 participants
  - 200 students, 40 instructors, 2 course managers, 12 claims support staff and 1 supervisor
- 255 participants will travel (200 students and 55 instructors/support staff) to the Veterans Benefits Academy for training

7. VBA is using only government facilities and support staff for this event. Expected costs are for student, instructor, and support staff travel, and for classroom supplies. Hotel costs include only lodging rates, and will be equal to or less than the GSA rate for the cities where training will occur. The traveling participants will train in Baltimore where a waiver of hotel taxes has been established. Estimated airfares, local transportation costs and supplies are included in the estimate. No "logo" or swag items will be purchased.

8. Both the **VA Hosted or Co-Hosted Conference Proposed Checklist for Conference Certifying Officials** and **Department of Veterans Affairs Hosted or Co-Hosted Conference Request Guidance** were used in the planning of this event. The Administration Conference Certifying Official (CCO) has reviewed and signed off on the attached Conference Certification Form prior to my signature below.

9. I am available at (202) 461-9300 should you wish to further discuss this proposed Challenge training event.

Under Secretary for Benefits — Date 4/15/13

Recommend: Approve / ~~Disapprove~~

Jose D. Riojas
Acting Chief of Staff — Date 4/15/13

Recommend: Approve / Disapprove

W. Scott Gould
Deputy Secretary — Date 4/16/13

Approve / Disapprove

Eric K. Shinseki
Secretary — Date 4/17/13

Department of Veterans Affairs

Memorandum

Date:

From: Under Secretary for Benefits (20)

Subj: Request Waiver for VBA Challenge Session 2013-5 Training in FY 2013 (VAIQ #7322771)

Thru: Acting Chief of Staff

Thru: Deputy Secretary

To: Secretary

1. In accordance with the existing Department of Veterans Affairs Conference policies and guidelines, and all applicable statutes and regulations, the Veterans Benefits Administration requests your approval of a waiver to implement centralized, face-to-face Challenge training classes in July-September 2013. The Challenge training session will cost in excess of the maximum allowable expense of $500,000.

2. Purpose: Challenge training is a critical element of providing employees the skill sets necessary to achieve the standards of delivering compensation benefits to Veterans. Challenge training accelerates by six months the achievement of journey-level status of Challenge graduates. It is a key initiative in the transformation of VBA and a critical component in achieving our transformation goals for improved service delivery. The Challenge program is a national technical training curriculum that provides new Veterans Service Center employees with the skills they need to function effectively in their positions as Veterans Service Representatives (VSRs) or Rating Veterans Service Representatives (RVSRs). Challenge provides hands-on training with computer applications and advances the new employees through progressively more challenging practice claims. All new employees handle practice claims and actual "live" claims just as they will when they return to their home stations.

3. Goals and Objectives: Upon the conclusion of the resident portion of Challenge training:

   - Newly hired Veterans Service Representatives will develop 1.5 cases per day at 94% accuracy, or will promulgate 3.0 cases per day at 94% accuracy;
   - Newly hired Rating Veterans Service Representatives will demonstrate mastery by rating at least one simple (one-to-two issue) claim per day at 90% accuracy;
   - Employees serving as instructors gain valuable teaching and mentoring experience that improves training within regional offices, and raises the standard of excellence among journey-level employees.

4. Justification

a. **Challenge training accelerates proficiency in new employees.**

(1) Challenge training is a proven program designed to establish in eight weeks employee skill levels that previously took six to eight months to achieve. On completion of Challenge training, employees complete 150 percent more claims per day in their first six months, with a 30 percent increase in accuracy, when compared to early student performance under the previous program. These curricula were instituted in July 2011 and evaluated for student success during the ensuing five sessions.

(2) VBA has reviewed and piloted the use of technology for one Challenge curriculum (Post-Determination VSR) in FY 2012. The training proved to be ineffective, and VBA continues to assess how technology can be applied to future sessions of Challenge to assure students achieve the training goals and objectives. During first quarter of FY 2013, VBA initiated a new pilot to deliver prerequisite training and knowledge-based, lecture-oriented lessons using technology for virtual delivery for 16 newly hired Rating Veterans Service Representatives. These students attended four weeks of resident training beginning January 2013. The quantity and accuracy of their work during training will be compared to the results of the centralized training model to determine if a partially virtual training solution is feasible in FY 2013.

(3) VBA normally conducts this training in a centralized model. Challenge 2013-3 is proposed in a distributed model to increase training capacity and constrain costs while preserving the emphasis on building proficiency.

b. **Face-to-face Challenge training is required for effective student and instructor interaction.**

(1) Challenge training emphasizes evaluation of student learning through pre- and post-tests; introductory skill practices using mock cases; closely supervised, actual work using live cases; and immediate feedback from experienced instructors. Challenge training has achieved dramatic results due to the adult learning principles built into the training methods. Challenge training builds teamwork among learners and instructors, and enhances standardization across the 56 regional offices.

(2) Students from geographically dispersed regional offices benefit from direct, face-to-face interaction as they learn; because the students are seeking the same skill sets and enter training at similar skill levels. Additionally, the students benefit from direct, face-to-face interaction with their instructors, who also hail from different regional offices. Student questions frequently spark discussion that reinforces learning. Practical application with live cases is integrated throughout the curricula. During practical application, a separate instructor is assigned to each team of five students so each student can receive appropriate mentoring and rapid response to

his/her questions. This interaction supports development of fast, effective work habits that students will carry back to their regional offices. The students' work is reviewed and nationally standardized instructors provide feedback immediately after completion, so students become accustomed to having their work critiqued to assure accuracy. The classroom environment invites seminar discussion of particularly difficult claims so that all participants can learn from the cases.

(3) The personnel selected as instructors are highly experienced, journey-level employees who have been recommended by their regional office leaders and prepared with standardized training provided by Compensation Service. The instructors at a training site are usually from multiple regional offices. In the face-to-face Challenge training environment, the instructors gain substantial practice in teaching difficult topics and guiding the work effort of others. Their direct interaction with instructors from other regional offices improves standardization, provides a grass roots opportunity to collaborate on complex issues and to learn techniques they might otherwise never learn. The instructors' face-to-face interaction with the students benefits their regional offices because the instructors carry their skills back to their home stations, where they can be used to continue the training of other employees. Their face-to-face interaction with other instructors further benefits VBA by improving consistency across regional offices.

Face-to-face Challenge training is required to achieve the interaction described above, and because it is proven to achieve the desired performance results.

5. Business Case Analysis

a. **Challenge costs are effectively constrained.**

(1) VBA conducted an analysis of the student population, and the availability and suitability of training facilities. VBA has successfully implemented Challenge training at the VBA training academy in the past, while assuring standardization of training because we travel nationally standardized instructors to the academy, and provide close oversight by Compensation Service course managers. The analysis revealed:

- The student population for Challenge 2013-5 is spread across several regional offices. The student population requires training in one of two curricula.
- Sending all employees to a VBA facility significantly decreases costs associated with training space as the VBA facility can adequately accommodate the number of trainees and support staff.

(2) Use of existing government facilities, rather than commercial training facilities, leverages sunk costs of existing facilities. The classrooms are outfitted with suitable classroom equipment including computers connected to the VBA network and already loaded with relevant computer applications.

(3) The Academy is our premier Challenge training location because of the benefits of scale and the experienced support infrastructure at the Academy.

Approximately 200 Challenge students can be accommodated simultaneously, and instructor standardization oversight can be accomplished across multiple classrooms by a single course manager for each curriculum. Using the Academy leverages the sunk costs of our established training facility

b. **Challenge training provides substantial return on the investment.**

(1) The productivity of a Challenge graduate in their first six months is 50% higher when compared against graduates of the earlier training programs. Challenge 2013-5 will train 200 students. Conducting Challenge Training presents a cost avoidance opportunity. Assuming the level of performance described above, these 373 students will perform in their first six months at a rate equivalent to ~ 560 new employees (1.5 x 373). This productivity for 6 months represents an additional 93 non-Challenge trained employees. Using a cost factor of $73K per FTE (fully burdened), VBA would be faced with a cost of ~ $6.8M to hire 93 FTE.

(2) As indicated in paragraph 4, other versions of this training – including shorter, in-person classes and a piloted, web-based class – have not proven to effectively meet the training goals and objectives based on measured production and accuracy results. Face-to-face Challenge training provides substantial return on the investment.

The distributed model for face-to-face training in Challenge 2013-5 effectively constrains costs and provides substantial return on the investment.

6. The proposed dates and location for the FY 2013-5 Challenge training session is:

	TIME	POTENTIAL LOCATIONS
1	July 30, 2013 to September 27, 2013	Veterans Benefits Academy, Baltimore, MD.

The Challenge 2013-5 training session will occur with:

- 255 participants
  - 200 students, 40 instructors, 2 course managers, 12 claims support staff and 1 supervisor
- 255 participants will travel (200 students and 55 instructors/support staff) to the Veterans Benefits Academy for training

7. VBA is using only government facilities and support staff for this event. Expected costs are for student, instructor, and support staff travel, and for classroom supplies. Hotel costs include only lodging rates, and will be equal to or less than the GSA rate for the cities where training will occur. The traveling participants will train in Baltimore where a waiver of hotel taxes has been established. Estimated airfares, local transportation costs and supplies are included in the estimate. No "logo" or swag items will be purchased.

Total Cost Breakdown for Average Cost per Participant (Students/Instructors/Support)

	Trainees	Instructors & Support	Travel Cost	Non-travel Cost (Supplies)	Total Cost	Avg. Cost per Participant for 255 Participants
Challenge 2013-4	200	55	$3.567M	$0.013M	$3.581 M	$14,043.15

Total Cost Breakdown for Student Cost per Day

Challenge 2013-4 Total Cost	Estimated Lodging Costs	Estimated M&IE Costs	Estimated LocalTransportation Costs	Estimated Airfare Costs	Estimated Supply Costs	Avg. Cost per Student per Day 200 Students
$3.581M	$2.518M	$1.086M	$0.017M	$0.191M	$0.013M	$248.41

8. Both the **VA Hosted or Co-Hosted Conference Proposed Checklist for Conference Certifying Officials** and **Department of Veterans Affairs Hosted or Co-Hosted Conference Request Guidance** were used in the planning of this event. The Administration Conference Certifying Official (CCO) has reviewed and signed off on the attached Conference Certification Form prior to my signature below.

9. I am available at (202) 461-9300 should you wish to further discuss this proposed Challenge training event.

Under Secretary for Benefits — Date 4/5/13

Recommend: Approve / Disapprove

Jose D. Riojas
Acting Chief of Staff — Date 4/15/13

Recommend: Approve / Disapprove

W. Scott Gould
Deputy Secretary — Date 4/16/13

Approve / Disapprove

Eric K. Shinseki
Secretary — Date 4/17/13

Department of Veterans Affairs

Memorandum

Date: April 20, 2013

From: Thomas J. Leney, Executive Director

Subj: Request Waiver For National Veterans Small Business Conference 2013 (VAIQ #7318434)

Thru: Jose D. Riojas, Interim Chief of Staff

Thru: W. Scott Gould, Deputy Secretary

To: Honorable Eric K. Shinseki, Secretary

1. In accordance with existing Department of Veterans Affairs Conference policies and guidelines, and all applicable statutes and regulations, the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) requests your waiver to conduct a National Veterans Small Business Conference (NVSBC) in St Louis, MO August 6-8, 2013. In order to conduct initial site analysis, OSDBU received a waiver from Chief of Staff John Gingrich to conduct site visits to Chicago and St. Louis (*See Attachment 5: Site Comparison and Waiver for Expenditures for Site Selection*).

   a. **Purpose:** The National Veterans Small Business Conference 2013 is the third in a series of annual events hosted by VA since 2011, that directly connects Veteran-Owned small business (VOSB) owners with Procurement Decision Makers (PDM) from the Department of Veterans Affairs and other federal and state agencies, as well as from large firms with small business needs, so that VOSB can build the relationships necessary to create business opportunities. The conference also enables VA PDMs to engage a large number of VOSB in a short period, facilitating market research in support of meeting VA socioeconomic goals.

   The National Veterans Small Business Conference is part of VA outreach to Veteran-Owned small businesses in accordance with Public Law 95-507, the Small Business Investment Act of 1958, was established in each agency having procurement powers. The Small Business Act directs that small businesses receive a fair portion of Federal procurement through vigorous action on the part of Federal departments and agencies. Under the authority of the Act, the VA provides vendor counseling sessions; participates in conferences targeting the small business community; and other training and business development outreach to small business owners.

Public Law 106-50, the Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999, expanded existing programs and provided new assistance programs for Veterans who own or operate small businesses. The law mandated that agencies provide information to Veteran-Owned firms on what each agency is purchasing or could purchase. The Small Business Administration (SBA), the Association of Small Business Development, and VA are directed to expand outreach to educate Veterans not yet in business about self-employment opportunities.

b. **Goals and Objectives:** The ultimate goal of the NVSBC is to enable Veteran-owned small businesses (VOSB) to add value to the mission of the VA by obtaining contracting opportunities. The conference provides an opportunity for VOSB to discuss potential opportunities directly with a large number of federal Procurement Decision Makers (PDMs) as well as with small and large business partners. A survey of Veteran businesses that participated at the 2011 National Veterans Small Business Conference held in New Orleans, Louisiana, revealed that more than 23% of respondents received a procurement award as a direct result of connections that were made. Direct connection of VOSB with VA PDM is a critical factor enabling VOSB to add value to VA mission and support VA efforts to meet its socioeconomic goals.

c. **Measurable Outcomes:** The NVSBC will provide measurable outcomes for each of the elements. See *Attachment 11: Expected Measures Performance Outcomes* for the specific proposed metrics.

2. **Justification:**

a. In order for VA to meet its socioeconomic procurement goals, VA PDM's must be aware of VOSB that can add value to VA missions, have access to VOSB in order to understand their capabilities, and connect with them in order to become more confident that the risks of doing business with VOSB will not create an unacceptable level of risk.

b. While other alternatives are used to promote awareness, past experience has shown that there is no substitute for direct access and the development of a relationship between VOSB and PDM in order to provide real opportunities for VOSB to demonstrate that they can add value to VA requirements. A face to face event facilitates awareness and access of a large number of VOSB with a large number of PDMs by enabling exchange of information and collaboration, while promoting synergy and building the knowledge and relationships necessary to reduce the perceived risks associated with contracting with VOSB.

c. The Small Business Conference offers VOSB and PDMs a platform to meet a large number of potential partners in a short time, and to explore, network, and gain a better understanding of VA business opportunities and

expectations. The conference is the premier Government event for helping Veteran-Owned Small Businesses maximize opportunities to compete for and win federal contracts. Alternative methods were considered, and were incorporated to support helping VOSB to become procurement ready, but they do not provide the face to face interactions that promote relationship building. No other event provides businesses with the opportunity for VOSB to get up close and personal with a large number of Government PDM in a short period of time, and enables a PDM to see a large number of VOSB. The agenda provides multiple opportunities for VOSB to connect with a large number of PDMs.

d. Procurement Decision Makers will discuss acquisition forecasts, as well as the specific needs, vision and direction of their offices during business requirement breakout sessions. Networking roundtables, *Dining with Decision Maker* luncheons, networking breakfasts, and mingling at receptions or in the exposition hall will enable VOSB to meet, dine, network, share ideas, discuss business requirements, forecast contract needs and understand program requirements.

e. An estimated 3,000 VOSB will be able to take advantage of more than 200 Business Requirements Sessions with government and private sector PDMs, as well as roundtables with VA senior leaders and receptions to enhance informal engagement. The NVSBC will provide more than 1,200 networking roundtables where VOSB will be able to discuss their capabilities with more than 300 PDMs. In addition to opportunities for direct connections, VOSB will be able to choose from more than 100 training sessions designed to enhance their procurement readiness.

f. The 2013 NVSBC will expand on the success of the Industry Day in 2012 where the three major automobile companies (GM, Ford, and Chrysler) participated in the conference and provided small business owners with the opportunity to meet their buyers. We will refine the use of technology that enabled participants to connect effectively with the maximum number of contacts. In 2012, participants recorded more than 100,000 connections, and downloaded participant profile information, enabling more effective follow up to create future business opportunities.

3. **Business Case Analysis**

a. The total cost of the 2012 NVSBC was $1,807,976. The estimate for total costs of 2013 NVSBC is $1,499,572. A summary of 2012 costs and an estimate of 2013 costs are provided in paragraph 7 and outlined in more detail in *Attachment 4:* Conference *Cost Estimate*. Upon planning approval we will refine the cost estimates in an effort to find additional cost savings, as part of the planning and will request final budget approval no later than May 8, 2013, 90 days prior to the event. All expenditures are legally permissible in support of VA mandated mission to conduct outreach in support of VOSB. All

expenditures comply with *Volume XIV Chapter 10, VA Financial Policies and Procedures, Conference Planning.*

b. **Cost Justification:** The costs of the NVSBC declined slightly from 2012, as we have reduced the number of VA staff attending. In order to increase return on investment, we are focusing attendance on those Procurement Decision Makers (PDM) who have regional or enterprise requirements. These PDM will be of relevance to the largest number of VOSB. Costs for the NVSVBC come from a fixed price planning contract that supports planning for both the NVSBC. The contract includes marketing, a web site, registration, support for agenda development, and support to the Executive Steering Committee. Since the actual execution is a no cost contract, the remainder of the costs is borne by registration and booth fees paid by participants, to include VA attendees.

c. **Number and type of Attendees:** By bringing more than 3,000 VOSB together with 380 VA officials, it enables VA to achieve returns to scale as participants will be exposed to a large number of opportunities in a short time. PDM will be able to conduct extensive market research, consistent with the Federal Acquisition Regulations, more quickly and efficiently than if they met with individual firms on an ad hoc basis over an extended period of time. Although the number of VA attendees cannot be reduced through virtual attendance due to the nature of the outreach event, we have reduced the VA PDM participation while increasing return on investment by focusing VA staff attendance on those PDM who have requirements that span the enterprise or are applicable to firms across a wide geographic area; VOSB will avoid the high cost of travel to multiple VA locations; and will enable VA to attract a larger number of relevant firms, promoting more competition, which in turn promotes cost reductions. We will eliminate those PDM with only local requirements, as we will connect them to local vendors at local events that will not require travel.

d. **Duration:** The Small Business Conference will last three days to enable participants to engage in multiple contacts and to reduce the marginal cost of making effective connections. In view of the large number of participants, the conference will offer training for VOSB over three days at no cost to the VA. Training for VA participants will also be offered as the marginal costs of adding training to the schedule for VA staff that will already be in attendance enables VA to increase the return on the investment of fixed travel costs. The length of the conference enables VA PDM to meet enough VOSB to determine if procurements set-asides will be cost-effective. The NVSBC enables VOSB an unprecedented opportunity to meet multiple PDM at one location in a short amount of time. To reduce conference and travel costs, we reduced the length of the NVSBC by one day but redesigned the conference framework so that we do not lose any benefits.

e. **Proposed Agenda:** See *Attachment 6: Conference and Travel Request and Agenda Framework* for overview of NVSBC activities.

1. Capacity Building Sessions for VOSB
2. Government Business Requirements Sessions
3. Networking Receptions
4. Commercial Industry Requirements Sessions
5. Exhibits
6. Dining with Decision Makers at Plenary Sessions
7. Networking Roundtables
8. Senior Leader Roundtables

4. **Cost Mitigation Efforts:**

a. **No cost contract for Small Business Conference:**

The use of a no cost contract for the Small Business Conference will reduce costs to VA. Event expenses covered under the no cost contract are funded by registration fees paid by all participants. As a result, VA costs for the NVSBC are limited to fixed price planning costs, travel of VA participants, registration fees for VA participants, and booth fees for VA organizations hosting booths. No VA funding is provided for non-VA speakers and training will be provided to VOSB at no cost to VA.

1. **SWAG:** Although this is a no cost contract, the contractor has been notified that there will be no SWAG or promotional items provided to VA employees with funds associated with any of the events.

2. **Per Diem:** All federal government participants will be notified that they may not claim per diem for meals provided to them at the National Veterans Small Business Conference.

3. **Food and Beverage:** The NVSBC contractor has been informed that all provision of food and light refreshments will be in compliance with policy and regulations.

4. **Entertainment:** There is no entertainment activities (videos, music, motivational speakers, etc.) included in the National Veterans Small Business Conference.

b. **Presentations:** All presentations provided by VA at the NVSBC are intended to provide VOSB with information on how to do business with the VA and to outline procurement opportunities in order to facilitate market research and identification of possible sources of supplies and services.

c. **Location Chosen to Maximize Return on Investment:** A total of 15 cities were considered as possible sites for the 2013 National Veterans Small Business Conference. The major cost factors driving the recommendation include: venue costs, per diem costs, room rates, and travel costs for both

VA employees and Veterans. We also considered Veteran demographics, to include Veteran population, unemployment, and demographic overlap with 2012 NVSBC. We also evaluated venues based on proximity to VA facilities (See Attachment 5 for list of factors).

5. **Risk Assessment:** The major risk to the NVSBC is lack of attendance by VOSB. Based on experience in 2011 and 2012, we believe the risk is small if we identify and market attendance of PDM early.

6. **Proposed dates and locations:** Based on the analysis reflected in Attachment 5, we propose St. Louis, MO as the site for the 2013 NVSBC.

Date	Location	Cost (estimated)
August 6-8, 2013	St Louis, MO	$1,499,572

7. **The overall proposed cost estimate** is provided below in Table 1.

8. **Budget Reviews and AAR**: All NVVSBC budgets will be briefed to the Executive Steering Committee (to include CCO and RCE) monthly prior to the NVSBC and actual conference costs will be briefed by program managers as part of the After Action Report (AAR), along with an assessment of the extent to which the NVSBC accomplished their purposes.

Table 1: Cost Estimate for 2013 National Veterans Small Business Conference

Activity	Number of VA Staff	Contract Support Staff	Non-Travel Costs	Travel Cost (VA Staff))	Contract Costs	Total Cost 2013	Total Cost 2012	Cost per Participant 2013 (1)
Small Business	380	15	$230,000 (4)	$417,438	$793,562	**$1,441,000**	$1,526,976	$1,610
VACO (2)	15	0	$37,500 (3)	$21,072	$0	**$58,572**	$281,000	$1,610
NVSBC Totals	**395**	**15**	**$267,500**	**$438,510**	**$793,562**	**$1,499,572**	$1,807,976	

Notes:

(1) Participant costs are a blended rate that includes: air fare, 4 hotel nights at per diem rate plus taxes, parking, and ground transportation and rounded to the nearest $10. Registration fees are included.

(2) These costs include staff from OCLA, OPIA, OSVA, OSP, and OIT, who provide overall support to NVSBC. See note 3 for OPIA marketing costs..

(3) Includes Registration fees ($7,500) for VACO staff , and costs ($10,000) for marketing, advertising, and media engagement and ($20,000) for OSVA support.

(4) Includes Registration Fee ($190,000) and VA Booths ($40,000) at NVSBC

9. **Participation of VA Senior Leaders:** We propose that The Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (SECVA); the Chief of Staff (COSVA); and the Undersecretary of Veterans Health Administration (VHA), will attend to show senior leadership commitment to this important outreach effort.

10. **The VA Hosted or Co-Hosted Conference Proposed Checklist** for Conference Certifying Officials and Department of Veterans Affairs Hosted or Co-Hosted Conference Request Guidance was used in the planning of this event. The Conference Certifying Official (CCO) has reviewed and signed off on the attached Conference Certification Forms prior to my signature below. Given the size and complexity of the National Veterans Events, a special governance structure was developed. See *Attachment 9: Approved Governance Structure,* for the approved governance structure

I am available at (202)-461-4300, should you wish to further discuss this proposed NVE event.

Thomas J. Leney _____ Date: 4/20/2013

Executive Director

Jose D. Riojas _____ Date 4/23/13

Interim Chief of Staff

Recommend: Approve / ~~Disapprove~~

W. Scott Gould _____ Date 4/25/13

Deputy Secretary

Recommend: Approve / ~~Disapprove~~

Eric K. Shinseki _____ Date 4/25/2013

Secretary

Recommend: Approve / Disapprove

Department of Veterans Affairs

Memorandum

Date: May 16, 2013

From: Assistant Secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs

Subj: Request Approval to Implement the 33rd National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Tampa, Florida July 13 – 18, 2013

Thru: Chief of Staff

Thru: Deputy Secretary

To: Secretary

1. In accordance with existing Department of Veterans Affairs Conference policies and guidelines, and all applicable statutes and regulations, the Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs requests your waiver to implement the 33rd National Veterans Wheelchair Games (NVWG) in fiscal year (FY) 2013.

2. Purpose: The 33rd National Veterans Wheelchair Games is an annual rehabilitative wheelchair sports program co-presented by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Paralyzed Veterans of America. The partnership is defined in a Memorandum of Understanding, "MOU between the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Paralyzed Veterans of America – National Veterans Wheelchair Games" with the latest MOU revision occurring in June 2010. Through sports and recreation opportunities, the NVWG improves the independence and quality of life for Veterans with spinal cord injuries, amputations, multiple sclerosis and other neurological impairments. Veterans who are newly injured, and those who are recently returning from overseas deployments, are exposed to a variety of wheelchair sports opportunities that reinforce the essential values of accomplishment, community involvement and camaraderie necessary for a full integration, adjustment, and a healthy life.

3. Goals and Objectives: The VHA Mission of honoring America's Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being is a core principle of the National Veterans Wheelchair Games. Through participation in this event, the values of "what can I do" versus "what are my limitations" are reinforced in each Veteran. The NVWG represents a commitment to improving the health and independence of our Nation's most disabled Veterans that is unmatched by any other health care system.

a. The goals of the 33rd National Veterans Wheelchair Games are directly reflective of VHA's Vision of Care that is delivered by engaged, collaborative teams in an integrated environment that supports learning, discovery and continuous improvement. As part of the rehabilitative process in VA Medical Facilities across the country, VA rehabilitative therapists (Recreational Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Physical

However, these functional skills (examples: strength, coordination, flexibility, adaptation, creativity, adjustment) transcend beyond sports and are essential attributes that disabled Veterans require to live a more functional, better adjusted and effective lives.

b. A pre and post assessment is being conducted with the "novice" Veterans outlining the goals and the impact of their participation in the NVWG. This outcome information will be summarized and published in an annual report. This information will be used to expand rehabilitation programs for Veterans across the country as well as to make refinements in the NVWG to better serve Veterans in the future.

c. Consistent with the VHA strategic plan relating to providing Veterans personalized, proactive and patient driven health care, the NVWG have evolved over the years to include opportunities that further the promotion of wellness, health and disease prevention beyond the NVWG. A Health Fair and Expo and educational seminars for Veterans and VA employees are offered throughout the week. Examples of these offerings include: Women's Athlete Forum, Regional and Community Sports Program, Expanding VA Rehabilitation Programs and a Caregivers Forum. The 2013 NVWG will highlight the long term collaboration between VA and PVA at this event. The NVWG will also include job training for Veterans with disabilities. For the first time at a VA national adaptive sports event, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) will participate in the 2013 NVWG; they will give presentations and describe OPM services and other services available in the Federal government to help Veterans gain meaningful employment. The principle objectives of the NVWG are:

(1) Improve the independence and quality of life of disabled Veterans through sports and recreation.

(2) Assist VA's care and treatment of Veterans with physical disabilities by partnering with VA's rehabilitation professionals.

(3) Provide an introductory and competitive wheelchair sports experience while exposing the Veteran to the organizations and pathways for opportunities available nationwide.

(4) Increase the community awareness of the capabilities and strengths of Veterans with disabilities.

(5) Conduct outreach to Veterans by demonstrating the outstanding quality of VA rehabilitation programs and the commitment to serving our Nation's Veterans.

4. Justification: The goals of the NVWG are reinforced by the direct interaction between the estimated 600 Veterans, VA staff, PVA, sponsors and 3000 volunteers participating in the event. This rehabilitative experience for each Veteran involved in the NVWG is dynamic and it begins with the preparation for the event and continues with the execution and transition following the event. The NVWG is unique and serves the broad

range of these Veterans' interests and capabilities. Alternative programs are promoted to encourage Veterans to incorporate wheelchair sports into their lifestyles at home.

5. Business Case Analysis: Extensive planning for the 33rd National Veterans Wheelchair Games has been underway since October 2010, involving countless internal and external VA stakeholders. The James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital, Florida Gulf Coast PVA Chapter and Tampa Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) developed and submitted a comprehensive bid package. The CVB and James A. Haley VA Medical Center demonstrated they possessed the necessary elements and resources (venues, hotel space, transportation, fundraising opportunities, volunteers and community support) as outlined by VA policy to conduct an event of this size and scope. After a thorough review by the national site selection committee, the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital was awarded the 33rd NVWG by a VA Memorandum dated April 1, 2011 by Under Secretary for Health Robert A. Petzel, M.D. Significant efforts to reduce the cost of the 2013 NVWG have been implemented and these have resulted in significant cost savings compared to the 2012 NVWG; 34% reduction in VA employees on travel; 30% reduction in the NVWG budget; and a 53% reduction of local VA employees to plan the event. We also expanded the Paralympic sport opportunities from 11 to 14 for this year's NVWG.

6. The proposed dates and location is:

TIME	POTENTIAL LOCATIONS
July 13 – 18, 2013	**Tampa, Florida**

7. The overall proposed per event cost estimate is provided below:

	Number of employees	Support Staff	Non-Travel Cost	Travel Cost	Contractor Support	Total Cost	Cost per Participant
2013 NVWG	#VA Staff: 205* #Vets: 600** **Total = 805**	0	$436,942	$223,303	$0	$660,245	Cost per Veteran: $1,100 Cost per VA Employee: $1,519

* 205 represents (147) VA employees on travel status; (58) local organizing VA staff on Authorized Absence & no travel cost.
** Estimated # of Veterans based on the past three years attendance trends for the NVWG. Exact numbers available 6/1/2013.

8. Both the **VA Hosted or Co-Hosted Conference Proposed Checklist for Conference Certifying Officials** and **Department of Veterans Affairs Hosted or Co-Hosted Conference Request Guidance** were used in the planning of this event. The

Administration Conference Certifying Official (COO) has reviewed and signed off on the attached Conference Certification Form prior to my signature below.

9. I am available at (202) 461-6790 should you wish to further discuss this proposed 33rd National Veterans Wheelchair Games.

Dr. Tommy Sowers
Assistant Secretary,
Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs

5-16-13
Date

Approve / ~~Disapprove~~

Jose D. Riojas
Interim Chief of Staff

6/3/13
Date

Approve / Disapprove

Eric K. Shinseki
Secretary

6/3/2013
Date

Department of Veterans Affairs

Memorandum

Date: JUN 19 2013

From: Assistant Secretary for Office of Operations, Security, and Preparedness (OSP) (007)

Subj: Request Waiver for VA Basic Police Officer Course (VAIQ# 7368402)

To: Secretary (00)

Thru: Interim Chief of Staff (00A)

1. In accordance with existing VA policies and guidelines, and all applicable statutes and regulations, OSP, requests your approval of a waiver to conduct the VA Basic Police Officer Course (BPOC) Class Number 1306, in-residence July 29 – September 20, 2013. The VA BPOC will cost in excess of the maximum allowable expense of $500,000.00.

2. **Purpose:** The VA BPOC training is critical to preparing newly hired VA Police officers to serve at our medical centers nationwide. VA Police officers are expected to provide professional law enforcement services in a VA healthcare environment. The VA Law Enforcement Training Center (LETC) is the only Federal provider for that type of specialized law enforcement training. The VA BPOC includes dynamic, intense, scenario and role play-based training which must be delivered face-to-face. Subjects include small arms training and qualification, defensive tactics, ground defense, expandable straight baton, chemical weapon Oleo Capsicum Resin (OC) and a myriad of other subjects which rely on physical skills. Of great importance is the 40 hours of behavioral science training VA Police officers receive which teach officers how to use verbal communications skills to de-escalate violent situations. Moreover, the VA LETC is highly regarded as it received Federal Law Enforcement accreditation in November 2011 from the Federal Law Enforcement Training Accreditation board (FLETA). LETC was praised by FLETA for an intense behavioral curriculum.

3. **Goals and Objectives:** Upon graduation from the VA BPOC newly assigned VA Police officers will:

a. Have completed certification requirements to be appointed and serve as a VA Police officer in accordance with Federal law, Title 38, U.S.C., Section 902.

b. Respond to and control various calls for service such as, active shooter, workplace violence, disturbances, customer service/assistance, etc.

c. The training includes demonstration/performance training objectives as well as lecture.

- The event is being conducted on government property which will eliminate the cost of training space and reduce lodging costs.
- There are no outside presenters; all training is provided by LETC faculty.
- This is strictly a training event with no entertainments, etc.
- No food or refreshments are being provided.
- There no expenses for SWAG of any kind. This is a training event.
- There are no non-VA employees attending this training.

Subj: Request Waiver for VA Basic Police Officer Course (VAIQ# 7368402)

- Actual total costs will be reported within 15 days of completion of the training event.
- An After Action Report (AAR) will be provided after the conclusion of the training event.

4. **Justification:**

a. **Face-to-face, performance based skills training is necessary for the complex skills required as a VA Police officer.**

(1) VA Police officers are required by Title 38, U.S.C., Section 902, to receive specialized training with particular emphasis on dealing in situations involving patients and other training as prescribed by SECVA. The VA LETC is the authorized provider of this specialized training.

(2) The 320 hour (8 week) BPOC provides VA Police officers with specialized training in Federal law enforcement and prepares them with the ability to deal with Veterans inflicted by traumatic brain injury (TBI), Post-traumatic Stress disorder (PTSD), suicidal/homicidal ideations, and other critical crisis intervention and verbal de-escalation skills and techniques unique to a healthcare environment.

(3) Weapons and physical skills training and certification cannot be delivered through any other method. Weapon and physical skills training include but are not limited to: firearms, straight baton, OC spray, ground defense and recovery, defensive tactics, and graded practical (scenario-based) exercises.

b. **Face-to-face training at the LETC ensures quality training by certified instructors, who deliver material developed by subject matter experts.**

(1) The LETC Behavioral Sciences curricula was developed in concert with leading VA experts in TBI, PTSD and dealing with suicidal/homicidal veterans.

(2) VA LETC instructors undergo a formal instructor development course for initial and recurring certification.

(3) VA LETC instructors regularly attend technical and professional enhancement training as part of their annual Individual Development Plan. This training is specific to the skills and advanced knowledge required of our specialties in a healthcare environment.

5. **Business Case Analysis:**

a. **VA BPOC costs are effectively constrained.**

(1) The VA LETC is a franchise fund enterprise center which is commissioned to provide services to Federal customers. No other Federal training center has a program tailored to the unique needs of law enforcement in a healthcare environment.

(2) The tuition for the BPOC includes all meals and lodging. The LETC contracts meals with vendors and houses BPOC students on-station, at a 45 percent reduction as compared to local lodging and per-diem rates. Specifically, our lodging and meal cost per-student is $4,539 for 56 nights. At local GSA rates the per-student cost would be $8,171. The overall savings is $217,920.00 per class.

Subj: Request Waiver for VA Basic Police Officer Course (VAIQ# 7368402)

(3) Our facility is located on the grounds of the Central Arkansas Veterans Heathcare System (CAVHS) and we have an agreement with CAVHS at a cost of $6.68 per square foot versus the average GSA space lease of $16.00 to $30.00 per square foot, annually. This results in an approximate annual savings of over $1.4M annually.

b. VA BPOC provides substantial return on the investment.

(1) All VA Police officers must successfully complete the BPOC before receiving their badge and credentials or being certified/authorized to perform any law enforcement duties. The knowledge, skills and abilities of a VA BPOC graduate are significantly increased when compared against a newly hired VA Police officer who has not attended the course. A newly hired and untrained VA Police officer in the GS-0083 job series costs VHA tens of thousands of dollars in overtime, salaries and benefits, as the department cannot use the untrained officer to protect VA persons and properties, or perform any type of law enforcement duties until they successfully complete BPOC. The high quality, specialized training VA BPOC graduates receive, allows them to provide professional law enforcement and security services to protect and support the Veterans, staff, visitors, and infrastructures on VA property.

(2) As indicated in paragraph 4, face to face, performance-based skills training is necessary for the complex skills required as a VA Police officer. The VA BPOC training provides a unique, cost effective, and substantial return on the investment.

c. Impact on VHA & LETC if classes are not held.

(1) As a franchise fund enterprise center, the LETC receives no appropriated budget and rely on our training services and administrative product lines to meet expenses.

(2) VHA would not be able to ensure a safe and secure environment for Veterans, employees, contractors, and visitors at VHA healthcare facilities.

(3) If we are unable to continue to provide these services, we face the possibility of having to: (a) Discontinue sending instructors to certification or other professional enhancement training; (b) Cancel efforts to attain/maintain FLETA accreditation for programs or academy (This effort requires travel funds to support required processes); (c) Initiate a reduction in force, if unable to meet salary obligations; and (d) Potential of violating support contracts required to provide services and maintain facilities.

6. The proposed dates and location for VA BPOC Class Number 1306 is:

No.	Date	Location of Training
1	July 29, 2013 to September 20, 2013	VA Law Enforcement Training Center 2200 Fort Roots Dr. North Little Rock, AR 72114

The VA BPOC Class Number 1306 will have:

- 77 participants
  - 60 students and
  - 14 instructors, 2 OSLE employees and 1 SES to Graduate Class = 17

Total Cost = $751,500

7. All are VA employees and all training is conducted on government property.

Subj: Request Waiver for VA Basic Police Officer Course (VAIQ# 7368402)

Total Cost Breakdown for Average Cost per Participant (Students/Instructors/Support)

VA BPOC Class # 1306	Participants (60 Students and 3 OSLE)	Instructors & Support (all costs captured in tuition)	Estimated Travel Cost	Non-Travel Cost (Supply costs are captured in tuition)	Tuition (Includes all meals/lodging/staff salaries/facilities and ground transportation)	Avg. Cost per Student 60
	63	14	$1,500 per participants	$462	$10,950	$12,450.00

Total Cost Breakdown for Student Cost **per day** (All Costs are Captured in Tuition)

VA BPOC Class # 1306	Estimated Lodging Costs	Estimated Meal Costs	Estimated Local Transportation Costs	Overhead Costs (includes all LETC operating expenses)	Estimated Supply Costs	Avg. Cost per Student per day for 60 Students
60 Students	$51.00	$29.40	$1.20	$108.50	$8.26	$198.36

8. Both the VA Hosted or Co-Hosted Conference Proposed Checklist for Conference Certifying Officials and Department of Veterans Affairs Hosted or Co-Hosted Conference Request Guidance were used in the planning of this training event. The Administration Conference Certifying Official (CCO) has reviewed and signed off on the attached Conference Certification Form prior to my signature below.

9. I am available at (202) 461-4939 should you wish to further discuss this proposed training event

Kevin T. Hanretta
for Jose D. Riojas

6/19/2013
Date

Attachments: 9 (binder)

Recommend: Approve / ~~Disapprove~~

Jose D. Riojas

7/2/13
Date

Jose D. Riojas
Interim Chief of Staff

Approve / Disapprove

Eric K. Shinseki

7/3/2013
Date

Eric K. Shinseki
Secretary

Department of Veterans Affairs

Memorandum

Date: AUG 30 2013

From: Acting Assistant Secretary for Office of Operations, Security, and Preparedness (OSP) (007)

Subj: Request Waiver for VA Basic Police Officer Course, Class Number 1401 in-residence October 14 - December 6, 2013 (VAIQ 7388944)

To: Secretary (00)

Thru: Chief of Staff (00A)

1. In accordance with existing VA policies and guidelines, and all applicable statutes and regulations, OSP, requests your approval of a waiver to conduct the VA Basic Police Officer Course (BPOC) Class Number 1401, in-residence October 14 – December 6, 2013. The VA BPOC will cost in excess of the maximum allowable expense of $500,000.00.

2. Purpose: The VA BPOC training is critical to preparing newly hired VA Police officers to serve at our medical centers nationwide. VA Police officers are expected to provide professional law enforcement services in a VA healthcare environment. The VA Law Enforcement Training Center (LETC) is the only Federal provider for that type of specialized law enforcement training. The VA BPOC includes dynamic, intense, scenario and role play-based training which must be delivered face-to-face. Subjects include small arms training and qualification, defensive tactics, ground defense, expandable straight baton, chemical weapon (Oleo Capsicum Resin) and a myriad of other subjects which rely on physical skills. Of great importance is the 40 hours of behavioral science training VA Police officers receive which teach officers how to use verbal communications skills to de-escalate violent situations. Moreover, the VA LETC is highly regarded as it received Federal Law Enforcement accreditation in November 2011 from the Federal Law Enforcement Training Accreditation board (FLETA). LETC was praised by FLETA for an intense behavioral curriculum.

3. Goals and Objectives: Upon graduation from the VA BPOC newly assigned VA Police officers will:

a. Have completed certification requirements to be appointed and serve as a VA Police officer in accordance with Federal law, Title 38, U.S.C., Section 902.

b. Respond to and control various calls for service such as, active shooter, workplace violence, disturbances, customer service/assistance, etc.

c. The training includes demonstration/performance training objectives as well as lecture.

- The event is being conducted on government property which will eliminate the cost of training space and reduce lodging costs.
- There are no outside presenters; all training is provided by LETC faculty.
- This is strictly a training event with no entertainments, etc.
- No food or refreshments are being provided.
- There are no expenses for SWAG of any kind. This is a training event.
- There are no non-VA employees attending this training.

- Actual total costs will be reported within 15 days of completion of the training event.
- An After Action Report (AAR) will be provided after the conclusion of the training event.

4. Justification:

a. **Face-to-face, performance-based skills training is necessary for the complex skills required as a VA Police officer.**

(1) VA Police Officers are required by Title 38, U.S.C., Section 902, to receive specialized training with particular emphasis on dealing in situations involving patients and other training as prescribed by SECVA. The VA LETC is the authorized provider of this specialized training.

(2) The 320 hour (8 weeks) BPOC provides VA Police officers with specialized training in Federal law enforcement and prepares them with the ability to deal with Veterans inflicted by traumatic brain injury (TBI), Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), suicidal/homicidal ideations, and other critical crisis intervention and verbal de-escalation skills and techniques unique to a healthcare environment.

(3) Weapons and physical skills training and certification cannot be delivered through any other method. Weapon and physical skills training include but are not limited to: firearms, straight baton, OC spray, ground defense and recovery, defensive tactics, and graded practical (scenario-based) exercises.

b. **Face-to-face training at the LETC ensures quality training by certified instructors, who deliver material developed by subject matter experts.**

(1) The LETC Behavioral Sciences curricula was developed in concert with leading VA experts in TBI, PTSD and dealing with suicidal/homicidal Veterans.

(2) VA LETC instructors undergo a formal instructor development course for initial and recurring certification.

(3) VA LETC instructors regularly attend technical and professional enhancement training as part of their annual Individual Development Plan. This training is specific to the skills and advanced knowledge required of our specialties in a healthcare environment.

5. Business Case Analysis:

a. **VA BPOC costs are effectively constrained.**

(1) The VA LETC is a franchise fund enterprise center which is commissioned to provide services to Federal customers. No other Federal training center has a program tailored to the unique needs of law enforcement in a healthcare environment.

(2) The tuition for the BPOC includes all meals and lodging. The LETC contracts meals with vendors and houses BPOC students on-station, at a 45 percent reduction as compared to local lodging and per-diem rates. Specifically, our lodging and meal cost per-student is $4,539 for 56 nights. At local GSA rates, the per-student cost would be $8,171. The overall savings is $261,504.00 per class.

(3) Our facility is located on the grounds of the Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System (CAVHS), and an agreement with CAVHS at a cost of $6.68 per square foot versus the average GSA space lease of $16.00 to $30.00 per square foot, annually. This results in an approximate annual savings of over $1.4M annually.

b. VA BPOC provides substantial return on the investment.

(1) All VA Police officers must successfully complete the BPOC before receiving their badge and credentials or being certified/authorized to perform any law enforcement duties. The knowledge, skills and abilities of a VA BPOC graduate are significantly increased when compared against a newly hired VA Police officer who has not attended the course. A newly hired and untrained VA Police officer in the GS-0083 job series costs VHA tens of thousands of dollars in overtime, salaries and benefits, as the department cannot use the untrained officer to protect VA persons and properties, or perform any type of law enforcement duties until they successfully complete BPOC. The high quality, specialized training VA BPOC graduates receive, allows them to provide professional law enforcement and security services to protect and support the Veterans, staff, visitors, and infrastructures on VA property.

(2) As indicated in paragraph 4, face-to-face, performance-based skills training is necessary for the complex skills required as a VA Police officer. The VA BPOC training provides a unique, cost effective, and substantial return on the investment.

c. Impact on VHA & LETC if classes are not held.

(1) As a franchise fund enterprise center, the LETC receives no appropriated budget and rely on our training services and administrative product lines to meet expenses.

(2) VHA would not be able to ensure a safe and secure environment for Veterans, employees, contractors, and visitors at VHA healthcare facilities.

(3) If we are unable to continue to provide these services, we face the possibility of having to: (a) Discontinue sending instructors to certification or other professional enhancement training; (b) Cancel efforts to attain/maintain FLETA accreditation for programs or academy (This effort requires travel funds to support required processes); (c) Initiate a reduction in force, if unable to meet salary obligations; and (d) Potential of violating support contracts required to provide services and maintain facilities.

6. The proposed dates and location for VA BPOC Class Number 1401 is:

No.	Date	Location of Training
1	October 14, 2013 to December 6, 2013	VA Law Enforcement Training Center 2200 Fort Roots Dr. North Little Rock, AR 72114

The VA BPOC Class Number 1401 will have:

- 89 participants
  - 72 students and
  - 14 instructors, 2 OSLE employees and 1 SES to Graduate Class = 17

Total Cost = $900,900

7. All are VA employees and all training is conducted on government property.

Request Waiver for VA Basic Police Officer Course, Class Number 1401 in-residence October 14 - December 6, 2013 (VAIQ 7388944)

Total Cost Breakdown for Average Cost per Participant (Students/Instructors/Support)

VA BPOC Class # 1401	Participants (72 Students and 3 OSLE)	Instructors & Support (all costs captured in tuition)	Estimated Travel Cost	Non-Travel Cost (Supply costs are captured in tuition)	Tuition (includes all meals/lodging/staff salaries/facilities and ground transportation)	Avg. Cost per Participant 83
	75	14	$1,500 per student	$300	$10,950	$12,012

Total Cost Breakdown for Student Cost per day (All Costs are Captured in Tuition)

VA BPOC Class # 1401	Estimated Lodging Costs	Estimated Meal Costs	Estimated Local Transportation Costs	Overhead Costs (includes all LETC operating expenses)	Estimated Supply Costs	Avg. Cost per Student per day for 80 Students
75 Students	$51.00	$29.40	$1.20	$105.68	$8.26	$195.54

8. Both the VA Hosted or Co-Hosted Conference Proposed Checklist for Conference Certifying Officials and Department of Veterans Affairs Hosted or Co-hosted Conference Request Guidance were used in the planning of this training event. The Administration Conference Certifying Official (CCO) has reviewed and signed off on the attached Conference Certification Form prior to my signature below.

9. I am available at (202) 461-4980 if you wish to further discuss this proposed training event.

Kevin T Hanretta
Kevin Hanretta
Acting Assistant Secretary - OSP

8/30/2013
Date

Attachments: 9 (binder)

Recommend: Approve / ~~Disapprove~~

Jose D. Riojas
Jose D. Riojas
Chief of Staff

9/12/13
Date

Approve / Disapprove

Eric K. Shinseki
Eric K. Shinseki
Secretary

9/17/2013
Date