



Performance Shortfall Analysis

Shown below (sorted by strategic goal) are brief explanations of the reasons for significant deviations between actual and planned performance for those measures where there were significant performance shortfalls. Also provided are resolution strategies being implemented to ensure goal achievement in the future.

Strategic Goal #1			
Restoration and Improved Quality of Life for Disabled Veterans			
	Measure	Target	Result
Appeals resolution time (Days) Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) (Joint measure with VBA)		600 days	657 days
Causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased workload and remands lengthened the appeals resolution time. 		
Resolution Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VA will work to reduce avoidable remands through joint training and information sharing between BVA and VBA field adjudication staff. VA expects improvement once BVA begins reaching cases on its docket that have been subject to VBA's efforts to reduce avoidable remands. 		
BVA Cycle Time		105 days	148 days
Causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By law, appeals generally are considered according to their order on the Board's docket. A docket number is assigned when the VA Form 9 (that is, the appeal) is received by the agency that made the initial VA benefits determination and is entered into BVA's computerized tracking system. <p>Under the law, cases that have earlier docket numbers or are assigned a higher priority must be considered before cases that may have been received earlier and have been physically present at the Board for a longer period of time. The delay in reviewing these earlier received cases is what increases the Board's cycle time.</p>		
Resolution Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BVA provided training to staff hired in 2006. Together with on-the-job experience, these employees will steadily become more productive in 2007 and beyond. 		



Strategic Goal #1		
Restoration and Improved Quality of Life for Disabled Veterans		
Measure	Target	Result

In this section of the performance shortfall analysis, the measures shown below have been grouped together because many of their activities are interrelated and deal with the processing of compensation and pension (C&P) claims. Thus, the causes and resolution strategies described are applicable to more than one measure.

Non-rating compensation actions – average days to process	58 days	76 days
Non-rating compensation actions – average days pending	95 days	116 days
Average days to process - DIC actions (Compensation)	120 days	136 days

Causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VA received a greater than expected number of claims in 2006. Through August 2006, we received more than 16,000 more claims (738,577) than we received through August 2005 (722,244). VA's concentration on the resolution of older claims increased the average number of days to process a claim. VA diverted resources to the training/development of new staff as a result of the attrition of experienced staff.
Resolution Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While trying to maintain a proper balance between compensation claims processing and other priorities, VBA plans to recruit additional staff nationwide over the next 2 years. Real progress will be realized as the number of trained staff increases. The measures will be included in the FY 2007 Regional Office Directors' Performance Standards. VA will also: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate current staffing levels to ensure the workload is appropriately addressed. Shift work among regional offices as needed to maximize resources and enhance performance. Continue pursuing improved training initiatives so that employees will receive essential guidance, materials, and tools to meet their changing and increasingly complex responsibilities. For example, VA is providing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A cycle of core training for all C&P staff. Additional training deployed through VA's Training and Performance Support System computer-based training program. Electronic Performance Support System job aids. Satellite broadcasts at regular intervals to address areas of inconsistency and misunderstanding. Training letters for guidance.



Strategic Goal #1		
Restoration and Improved Quality of Life for Disabled Veterans		
Measure	Target	Result
Average number of days to initiate development of remands at the Appeals Management Center (AMC) (Compensation)	16 days	32 days
Causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was an unexpected increase in the number of remand receipts from the Board of Veterans' Appeals over the last 4 months of the year. 	
Resolution Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Office of Field Operations will continue oversight of the AMC. The AMC and AMC Resource Centers will use overtime targeted at remand inventory reduction. The AMC experienced FTE losses in 2006 and is actively hiring Veteran Service Representatives and promoting Rating Veteran Service Representatives who recently returned from training. 	

Strategic Goal #2		
Smooth Transition to Civilian Life		
Measure	Target	Result
Average days to complete original education claims	27 days	40 days
Causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new benefit, the Reserve Educational Assistance Program, significantly increased overall case workload and age of inventory. Available resources were not sufficient to counter the increase in the volume of incoming work as compared to the same period in 2005. 	
Resolution Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Education Regional Processing Offices have hired additional staff to counter increases in workload. Improvements in productivity and timeliness are projected as new hires complete training and become more experienced. A Contract Management Support Center has been established in an effort to reduce the abandoned call rate and allow the Regional Processing Offices to maximize claims processing capacity. In FY 2007, we anticipate receiving positive results. 	



Average days to complete supplemental education claims		13 days	20 days
Causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new benefit, the Reserve Educational Assistance Program, significantly increased overall case workload and age of inventory. • Resources were diverted from supplemental claims processing to original Reserve Educational Assistance Program processing to address the aging case backlog. • Available resources were not sufficient to counter the increase in the volume of incoming work as compared to the same period in 2005. 		
Resolution Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Education Regional Processing Offices have hired additional staff to counter increases in workload. Improvements in productivity and timeliness are projected as new hires complete training and become more experienced. • A Contract Management Support Center has been established in an effort to reduce the abandoned call rate and allow the Regional Processing Offices to maximize claims processing capacity. In FY 2007, we anticipate receiving positive results. 		

Strategic Goal #3		
Honoring, Serving, and Memorializing Veterans		
Measure	Target	Result

In this section of the performance shortfall analysis, the measures shown below have been grouped together because their activities are interrelated.

Non-rating pension actions - average days to process		66 days	92 days
Non-rating pension actions – average days pending		73 days	161 days
Causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Pension Maintenance Centers (PMC) traditionally receive one batch of Income Verification Matches (IVM) during the last quarter of the year. In 2006, the PMCs received two releases of IVMs to process instead of one. The earlier release during the first quarter affected cumulative processing timeliness for the year. 		
Resolution Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While trying to maintain a proper balance between pension claims processing and other priorities, VBA plans to recruit additional staff nationwide over the next 2 years. Real progress will be realized as the number of trained staff increases. • The measures will be included in the FY 2007 Regional Office Directors' Performance Standards. • VA will also: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate current staffing levels to ensure the IVM workload shift is appropriately addressed. • Standardize training and implement job aides at the PMCs so that employees will receive the essential guidance, materials, and tools to meet their changing and increasingly complex responsibilities. 		



Strategic Goal #3		
Honoring, Serving, and Memorializing Veterans		
Measure	Target	Result

In this section of the performance shortfall analysis, the measures shown below have been grouped together because many of their activities are interrelated.

Rating-related pension actions – average days pending	69 days	90 days
Average number of days to process a claim for reimbursement of burial expenses	48 days	72 days
Causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VA received a greater than expected number of claims in 2006. Through August 2006, we received 2 percent more claims (738,577) than we received through August 2005 (722,244). VA's concentration on the resolution of older claims increased processing timeliness. VA diverted resources to the training/development of new staff as a result of the attrition of experienced staff. 	
Resolution Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While trying to maintain a proper balance between compensation and burial claims processing and other priorities, VBA plans to recruit additional staff nationwide over the next 2 years. Real progress will be realized as the number of trained staff increases. VA will also: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate current staffing levels to ensure the workload is appropriately addressed. Shift work among regional offices as needed to maximize resources and enhance performance. Continue pursuing improved training initiatives so that employees will receive essential guidance, materials, and tools to meet their changing and increasingly complex responsibilities. For example, VA is providing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A cycle of core training for all C&P staff. Additional training deployed through VA's Training and Performance Support System computer-based training program. Electronic Performance Support System job aids. Satellite broadcasts at regular intervals to address areas of inconsistency and misunderstanding. Training letters for guidance. 	



Enabling Goal		
Applying Sound Business Principles		
Measure	Target	Result
Cumulative % of FTEs (compared to total planned) covered by initiated Management Analysis/Business Process Reengineering (MA/BPR) studies of non-core commercial functions	33%	0%
Causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early in FY 2006, VHA focus and priority shifted to Hurricane Katrina recovery. • Extensive changes in leadership and key personnel caused delays in MA/BPR program execution. • Slow progress in awarding MA/BPR support contracts caused delays in MA/BPR program execution. 	
Resolution Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All issues causing delays have been resolved. • VA is proceeding with plans for studies in the first quarter of 2007. 	
Percentage of statutory reports that are submitted to Congress within the required timeframe	35%	13%
Causes	Program offices did not know well enough in advance what reports were coming due.	
Resolution Strategies	A continually updated listing of reports due to Congress is now posted on VA's Intranet. The listing enables all program offices to identify those reports that require their response and the respective due dates.	