


VA Strategic and Enabling Goals

The following section of the Strategic Plan presents VA's four strategic goals and its enabling goal. These goals are crosscutting in nature and are intended to reflect the combined effort of all organizational elements to deliver important outcomes to disabled veterans, veterans in transition from the military, the overall veteran population and their families, and the Nation at large. Each goal has a number of associated objectives that define more detailed outcomes and outputs that will result from the implementation of VA's major programs and management functions. Each VA objective includes the following elements:

Purpose and Outcomes - This section highlights what VA plans to do and why it is important. In so doing, each objective presents the intended result of VA's program activities and addresses how the lives of veterans and their families will improve from the receipt of benefits and services delivered by the Department. This portion also presents the policy and programmatic outcomes for each major program carried out by VA.

Strategies and Processes - This portion of the objective describes how the outcomes will be achieved. It identifies specific issues that must be addressed by the Department and highlights key initiatives and activities that are planned to achieve results and enhance service delivery. It also provides a summary of applicable human, capital, information, and other resources, as well as systems, processes, and technologies that are critical to achievement of intended program results.

External Factors - This portion identifies factors and issues external to VA that may be beyond the Department's control and could significantly impact VA's ability to achieve its goals and objectives.

Performance Measures and Targets - GPRAs require Departments to provide "a description of how the performance goals included in the Annual Performance Plan relate to the goals and objectives in the Strategic Plan." VA has gone well beyond this requirement by developing performance targets that identify anticipated levels of performance to be achieved by the end of FY 2004 and during the last fiscal year of this VA Strategic Plan (2008). In many instances, these performance targets represent stretch goals or "ideal state" levels of outcome and service delivery for the Department and its programs. Since these performance targets are strategic in nature, it is anticipated that they may be modified in future years based on the results of comprehensive program evaluations. In some cases, performance targets will be achieved in other years. In these cases, the specific target year is noted. In other cases, the performance target is still under development (identified by an asterisk).

Performance measures have been categorized as outcome measures and service delivery measures. Outcome measures focus on the achievement of the stated purpose and/or legislative intent of the program. They address the tangible results and value to veterans and their families from the benefits and services VA provides. Service delivery measures focus on successful implementation of strategies and processes to improve service to veterans. These measures reflect the level of accuracy, timeliness, and customer service. The achievement of specific performance targets may also reflect the results of major management improvement initiatives.

Goal 1 – Restore the capability of veterans with disabilities to the greatest extent possible and improve the quality of their lives and that of their families.

Objectives:

- Maximize the physical, mental, and social functioning of veterans with disabilities and be recognized as a leader in the provision of specialized health care services.
- Provide timely and accurate decisions on disability compensation claims to improve the economic status and quality of life of service-disabled veterans.
- Provide all service-disabled veterans with the opportunity to become employable and obtain and maintain suitable employment, while providing special support to veterans with serious employment handicaps.
- Improve the standard of living and income status of eligible survivors of service-disabled veterans through compensation, education, and insurance benefits.

Goal 2 – Ensure a smooth transition for veterans from active military service to civilian life.

Objectives:

- Ease the reentry of new veterans into civilian life by increasing awareness of, access to, and use of VA health care, benefits and services.
- Provide timely and accurate decisions on education claims and continue payments at appropriate levels to enhance veterans' and servicemembers' ability to achieve educational and career goals.

- Improve the ability of veterans to purchase and retain a home by meeting or exceeding lending industry standards for quality, timeliness, and foreclosure avoidance.

Goal 3 – Honor and serve veterans in life and memorialize them in death for their sacrifices on behalf of the Nation.

Objectives:

- Provide high-quality, reliable, accessible, timely, and efficient health care that maximizes the health and functional status for all enrolled veterans, with special focus on veterans with service-connected conditions, those unable to defray the cost, and those statutorily eligible for care.
- Process pension claims in a timely and accurate manner to provide eligible veterans and their survivors a level of income that raises their standard of living and sense of dignity.
- Maintain a high level of service to insurance policy holders and their beneficiaries to enhance the financial security for veterans' families.
- Ensure that the burial needs of veterans and eligible family members are met.
- Provide veterans and their families with timely and accurate symbolic expressions of remembrance.

Goal 4 – Contribute to the public health, emergency management, socioeconomic well-being, and history of the Nation.

Objectives:

- *Improve the Nation's preparedness for response to war, terrorism, national emergencies, and natural disasters by developing plans and taking actions to ensure continued service to veterans as well as support to national, state, and local emergency management and homeland security efforts.*
- *Advance VA medical research and development programs that address veterans' needs, with an emphasis on service-connected injuries and illnesses, and contribute to the Nation's knowledge of disease and disability.*
- *Sustain partnerships with the academic community that enhance the quality of care to veterans and provide high quality educational experiences for health care trainees.*
- *Enhance the socioeconomic well-being of veterans, and thereby the Nation and local communities, through veteran's benefits; assistance programs for small, disadvantaged, and veteran-owned businesses; and other community initiatives.*
- *Ensure that national cemeteries are maintained as shrines dedicated to preserving our Nation's history, nurturing patriotism, and honoring the service and sacrifice veterans have made.*

Enabling Goal – Deliver world-class service to veterans and their families by applying sound business principles that result in effective management of people, communications, technology, and governance.

Objectives:

- *Recruit, develop, and retain a competent, committed, and diverse workforce that provides high quality service to veterans and their families.*
- *Improve communications with veterans, employees, and stakeholders about the Department's mission, goals, and current performance as well as benefits and services VA provides.*
- *Implement a One VA information technology framework that supports the integration of information across business lines and that provides a source of consistent, reliable, accurate, and secure information to veterans and their families, employees, and stakeholders.*
- *Improve the overall governance and performance of VA by applying sound business principles, ensuring accountability, and enhancing our management of resources through improved capital asset management; acquisition and competitive sourcing; and linking strategic planning, budgeting, and performance planning.*