Memorandum

Date: January 1, 2019

From: Director, Center for Verification and Evaluation (CVE)

Subj: CVE Core Values and Standards

To: Verification Counselors and Applicant Representatives

1. **Purpose:** To establish Core Values and General Standards for Verification Counselors and Applicant Representatives.

2. **Overview:** The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), CVE has established a program in which Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (VOSBs) may apply for listing in the Vendor Information Pages (VIP) to participate in set aside procurement opportunities made available by the VA for VOSBs. CVE, through programs such as the Verification Assistance Program, provides verification counseling through certified Verification Counselors at no cost to the Veteran. Verification Counselors are committed to providing assistance to Veterans who are going through the Vets First Verification Process. Applicant Representatives other than a Verification Counselor are generally privately retained by applicants for a fee to similarly provide verification counseling or assistance.

Our Verification Counselors and Applicant Representatives are instrumental in assisting the Veteran community with their verification efforts. VA’s Core Values are meant to guide VA employees’ interaction with each other and with people outside VA. To help our employees understand these Core Values — Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence (I CARE), they are explicitly defined in the Code of Federal Regulations at 38 C.F.R. §0.601 as follows:

(a) **Integrity.** VA employees will act with high moral principle, adhere to the highest professional standards, and maintain the trust and confidence of all with whom they engage.

(b) **Commitment.** VA employees will work diligently to serve veterans and other beneficiaries, be driven by an earnest belief in VA’s mission, and fulfill their individual responsibilities and organizational responsibilities.

(c) **Advocacy.** VA employees will be truly veteran-centric by identifying, fully considering, and appropriately advancing the interests of veterans and other beneficiaries.

(d) **Respect.** VA employees will treat all those they serve and with whom they work with dignity and respect, and they will show respect to earn it.
(e) *Excellence.* VA employees will strive for the highest quality and continuous improvement, and be thoughtful and decisive in leadership, accountable for their actions, willing to admit mistakes, and rigorous in correcting them.

The I CARE Values provide a baseline for the standards of behavior expected of all CVE employees. CVE also expects all persons working with or on behalf of CVE to espouse those very same Core Values in their dealings.

To support VA’s I CARE mission and further its initiatives, CVE requires all VA Verification Counselors and Applicant Representatives to maintain the I CARE Values.

3. **Policy:** The Director of CVE promulgates the following:

   a. CVE requires all VA Verification Counselors and Applicant Representatives to maintain I CARE Values.

   b. CVE shall revoke the CVE Verification Counselor Certification of all VA Counselors who CVE determines have failed to maintain the I CARE Values, remove that person from CVE’s directory, and cease all communication with such person with regard to verification matters for a period of one (1) year.

   c. With respect to Applicant Representatives, CVE shall cease direct communication with Applicant Representatives who CVE determines have failed to maintain the I CARE Values with regard to verification matters for a period of one (1) year.

   d. Anyone whose Verification Counselor Certification has been revoked or an Applicant Representative who CVE has imposed restrictions on communications pertaining to verification matters, following the one (1) year revocation or restriction period, may submit a formal written request (via e-mail or in writing) to the Director of CVE explaining why he or she should be reinstated as either a Verification Counselor or an Applicant Representative, without any restrictions.

   e. The decision to reinstate shall be at the Director’s sole discretion.

   f. Veterans and Veteran-affiliates who believe they have been subject to behavior that does not comport with the I CARE Values shall promptly report such conduct to CVE.

4. **Timing:** This policy is effective immediately.

   [Signature of Director of CVE]