



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

RECOVERY ACT PROGRAM-SPECIFIC PLAN

INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS
VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION
SUPPORT

June 2010

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1. Funding Table

A full funding description is provided in the Appendix.

2. Objectives

Chapter 33:

On June 30, 2008, Congress amended Title 38 by appending Chapter 33, Post-9/11 Veteran Education Assistance Act, (Chapter 33) which provides education assistance to Veterans, service members and members of the National Guard and Selected Reserve. The legislation further mandated that VA must begin to process the new benefit payments on August 1, 2009. VA's Office of Information and Technology (OI&T) was authorized to use \$55 Million in 2008, through a supplemental funding stream and an additional \$50 Million in 2009 was provided to OI&T to complete Chapter 33 development activities with a small portion allocated to begin the Veteran Benefit Management System (VBMS) development process. VA is using \$47.1 Million of the funds provided as part of the Recovery Act for Chapter 33 implementation.

These combined funds are being used to develop a "Long Term Solution" that automates and streamlines the application, adjudication and processing of Chapter 33 claims and directly supports the Secretary's FY 2010-2014 Strategic Plan as one of the "13 Major Initiatives –*Automate GI Bill Benefits*" that will serve as the platform from which to launch and execute the VA Strategic Plan over the next five years.

The Recovery Act funding is used to support the development of the automated decisions support system as well as the data, computing, storage, and network infrastructure required to deploy, support, and sustain this application in a secure, reliable, and stable infrastructure.

Objective --The Chapter 33 Long Term Solution supports the Secretary's FY 2010-2014 Strategic Plan in creating New *technology systems* - through an automated IT platform as a means to efficiently and accurately process Post-911 GI Bill benefit claims; and *Creation of a model for future programs – through a framework for VA to enhance other education programs by moving away from traditional IT systems.*

Veterans Benefit Management System (VBMS) Initiative:¹

- The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) adjudicates VA claims seeking entitlement to various benefits for Veterans and eligible dependents of Veterans. VBA activities address the receipt, processing, tracking, and disposition of Veterans' applications for benefits, services, and requests for assistance. Compensation and Pension Service (C&P) is one of the five VBA business lines that process VA claims in a paper-intensive environment.

¹ This initiative was renamed from Paperless Initiative.

The VBMS initiative is designed to transition C&P from paper-intensive claims processing to a paperless environment. The \$2.81Million Recovery Act funding allocated to the VBMS Initiative is providing for a Virtual Regional Office (VRO) prototype. The VRO will be a flexible, iterative, middle-user development process to solidify user needs and business requirements through a living specification. Additionally, Recovery Act funding will provide Independent Verification and Validation (IV&V) oversight of planning, design, development, testing, implementation, and maintenance components of the VBMS initiative.

Objective - The VBMS Initiative supports the Secretary’s FY 2010-2014 Strategic Plan as one of the “13 Major Initiatives” to – *Enable 21st Century Benefits Delivery and Services* that will serve as a platform to launch and execute the VA Strategic Plan over the next five years.

3. Activities

Developing, deploying, supporting, and sustaining the Chapter 33 Long Term Solution has required integrating and configuring commercial off-the-shelf technologies with custom developed software and deploying the solution in a secure, reliable, and sustainable data center infrastructure accessed by Veterans and VA claims administrators. This project requires a diverse set of engineering, information assurance, training, testing, logistics, operations, and program management support services and skill sets.

The Long Term Solution has been funded using a combination of supplemental and Recovery Act funding. Funding requirements for Chapter 33 and the Paperless Initiative are provided below. Funding for the Chapter 33 Long Term Solution provides end-to-end system lifecycle support to include requirements development, program management support, design, development, IV&V, testing, training, operations, and maintenance. Funding for the VBMS Initiative provides development of a VRO and IV&V support.

Chapter 33 – Post-9/11 GI Bill Q2 FY 2010		
Funding Requirement	Cost	Description
SPAWAR Oversight	\$3,558,718	Space and Naval Warfare Systems Center Atlantic (SPAWAR) to provide the necessary resources and support infrastructure to manage the strategic, tactical, business and technical components of the program execution. This task also includes providing necessary reports and deliverables required to manage and oversee cost and schedule performance of the program
SRC Contract	\$6,000,000	Contract to provide support for application development, data integration, configuration management, and testing.
LM Contract	\$22,516,882	Contract to provide Chapter 33 infrastructure support,

		application development and end-user training, operations support, and Chapter 33 program compliance
Terremark Contract	\$3,100,000	Contract to provide development and production environment for the long term solution.
WCI Contract	\$1,400,000	Contract for VA program management support, data integration, and information assurance
BB Contract	\$250,000	Contract for VA program management support
EMA Contract	\$5,059,800	Contract for VA program management support, data integration, information assurance, engineering management, and requirements and release management support
GEO Contract	\$1,600,000	Contract for VA implementation and integration support, program management support, and engineering management
New Hires for VA	\$500,000	Six additional IT FTE will be hired to support field station personnel where payments for Chapter 33 will be administered. Four additional FTE will be hired within the IT Chapter 33 Program Management Office to further support VA in the Interim and long-term planning and execution of the Chapter 33 program
Independent Verification and Validation	\$2,367,000	Implement IV&V contract to provide program management oversight of investment lifecycle activities
Unobligated Funds	\$833,600	Unobligated ARRA funding
Chapter 33 Subtotal	\$47,186,000	

Veterans Benefits Management System Q2 FY 2010		
Funding Requirement	Cost	Description
Virtual Regional Office Prototype	\$999,999	VRO proof of concept prototype will jumpstart the user interface design process by employing flexible, iterative, user-in-the-middle development practices to specify the user's requirements for access to claims and evidence.
Independent Verification and Validation	\$1,815,000	Implement IV&V contract to provide program management oversight of investment lifecycle activities.
VBMS Subtotal	\$2,814,000	

Grand Total	\$50,000,000
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4. Characteristics

VA has an interagency partnership with SPAWAR for contract services under the Chapter 33 program.

SPAWAR provides the necessary program management and engineering integration support required for this effort using Government personnel. Additionally, SPAWAR complements existing Government staff with industry partners to provide the requisite support resources to execute all tasking to design, develop, deploy, and sustain the Chapter 33 Long Term Solution. These industry partners will be selected based on SPAWAR's portfolio of competitively awarded, large Indefinite Delivery and Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) Contract vehicles that have the required skills and scope to support the Chapter 33 Program. SPAWAR develops and awards delivery orders to support the additional tasking required. Although it is not anticipated, SPAWAR may need to execute other contracting strategies including the initiation and award of new contracts to satisfy requirements that cannot be met using their portfolio of existing competitively awarded IDIQ contracts.

5. Delivery Schedule

The Chapter 33 final product and corresponding milestones outlined within this plan represent how SPAWAR will accomplish the Long Term Solution using Recovery Act funds. This Long Term Solution is being developed and deployed incrementally to provide an increased level of automation and capabilities throughout the duration of the Chapter 33 project.

The deliverable schedule for the Chapter 33 Long Term Solution is:

- Deployment of the development and test environment. October 2009
- Deployment of the production infrastructure. December 2009
- Release 1 - Provided a web based decision support system that allows VA claims to manually enter Chapter 33 claim data and determines Chapter 33 eligibility, entitlement and award based on the VA's defined Chapter 33 business rules. March 2010
- Release 2 – Provide automated data feeds from the multiple existing VA systems into web based decision support system developed in Release 1 to eliminate manual entry of Chapter 33 claim data and automate the Chapter 33 eligibility, entitlement and award calculations. June 2010
- Release 3 – Enhance the automated decision support system developed in Release 2, to provide automated data feeds to the VA's existing systems to process payment of approved claims. September 2010

The deliverable schedule for the VMBS Initiative is:

- Develop Virtual Regional Office (prototype)
- Period of performance: December 16, 2009 to April 15, 2010
- A no cost extension of May 5, 2010 was granted by the contractor
- Prototype completed on May 5, 2010

6. Environmental Review Compliance

Not applicable

7. Measures

Chapter 33 Long Term Solution:

The Secretary's FY 2010 – FY 2014 VA Strategic Plan outlines three specific measures by which the Chapter 33 initiative should be evaluated, these include:

Performance Measure: Reduce the average number of days to complete original Post-9/11 GI Bill education benefit claims. Baseline: 56 days; FY 2010 Target 24 days; FY 2011 Target 18 days.

Results			Target	Actuals		Targets		
2006	2007	2008	2009	2009		2010		2011
				Approp.	ARRA	Request	ARRA	
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	56 (Base- line Year)	89%	24 days	18 days

Performance Measure: Reduce the average number of days to complete supplemental education claims. Baseline: 28 days; FY 2010 Target: 10 days; FY 2011 Target: 9 days.

Results			Target	Actuals		Targets		
2006	2007	2008	2009	2009		2010		2011
				Approp.	ARRA	Request	ARRA	
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	28 days (Base- line Year)	NA	10 days	9 days

Performance Measure: Accuracy of Education Claims payment processing activities. Baseline: 94%. FY 2010 Target: 94%. FY 2011 Target: 95%

Results			Target	Actuals		Targets		
2006	2007	2008	2009	2009		2010		2011
				Approp.	ARRA	Request	ARRA	
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	94% (Base- line Year)	NA	94%	95%

The VBMS Initiative:

The Secretary's FY 2010 – FY 2014 VA Strategic Plan outlines one specific measure by which the VBMS initiative should be evaluated:

Performance Measure: Reduction in cases pending greater than 125 days (claims backlog). Baseline as of the beginning of February 2010: 171,854; Strategic Target; 0 by 2015.

Results			Target	Actuals		Targets		
2006	2007	2008	2009	2009		2010		2011
				Approp.	ARRA	Request	ARRA	
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	171,854 Claims (Baseline Year)	NA

8. Monitoring/Evaluation

Execution of funding is closely tracked by the Office of Information and Technology's (OI&T) resource management organization through weekly execution meetings, monthly performance reviews, and bi-monthly governance board meetings.

The Chapter 33 team has implemented transparent and open communication and program management processes to provide complete project visibility to the VA. This was achieved through: 1) implementation of an Agile based development methodology (Agile methodology ensures improved coordination between IT and business owners throughout the system development process; and limits risk in the areas of cost overrun and schedule slippage); 2) development of monthly Integrated Baseline Reviews with Executive VA leadership; and 3) implementation of a VA Independent Verification and Validation (IV&V) Team.

Execution of Chapter 33 and VBMS is governed by a Joint Executive Board, Steering Committee, and Chapter 33 and VBMS Working Group. These governance bodies work in concert with Office of Business Process Integration (OBPI), Office of Resource Management (ORM), business and IT work stream leads, VBA designees, and subject matter advisors to monitor and evaluate the progress of Chapter 33 program execution.

9. Transparency

The Department of Veterans Affairs uses the web for transparency and reporting to meet compliance requirements of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. VA's Web site can be reached at www.va.gov/recovery.

As a Government partner of the VA, SPAWAR will be integrated with VA personnel to provide program transparency and reporting compliance. Specifically, SPAWAR now reports on Chapter 33 Long Term Solution obligations and outlays through Department of Defense submissions.

10. Accountability

VA is ensuring accountability through mid-year and end-year reviews as part of individual performance plans with Program Management.

SPAWAR is accountable to the VA for the cost, schedule, and quality requirements for the Chapter 33 Long Term Solution. The SPAWAR Program Manager (PM) will be accountable to the SPAWAR Commanding Officer, and associated chain of command, for the execution of the Program. SPAWAR has identified and implemented the necessary executive governance structure to oversee the execution of the Program and support the Program Manager as required. Performance measures and incentives are included for key assigned Government management personnel. Additionally, the SPAWAR PM provides performance feedback to the respective Contracting Officer

Technical Representative on the performance of industry partners. If applicable this feedback is incorporated into the industry partners Contracting Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS) annual evaluation.

11. Barriers to Effective Implementation

Chapter 33:

No barriers to implementation

VBMS Initiative:

No barriers to implementation

12. Federal Infrastructure Investments

Not applicable

Information Technology – Veterans Benefits Administration Support Funding Table

Table 1A – Account Summary

	TAFS (pick from dropdown)	Appropriated to TAFS (\$000)	Program Allocations	
One account funding two programs	Information Technology – Veteran Benefits Administration Support (36-0168 2009/2010)	50.000	47.186	Chapter 33 Post 9/11 GI Bill
			2.814	Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS)

Table 1B – Obligations/Gross Outlays – April 2010 through April 2011 (\$000)²

Program Allocations		Planned Obligations and Gross Outlays (\$000s)														
BA Allocation (\$000s)	Program Name	Funding Type	Funding Year	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar/Apr	
47.186	Post 9/11 GI Bill	Obligation	2010	3.359		.244	1.078									
		Gross Outlay	2010	1.413	3.602	3.804	4.417	4.639	4.409							
		Obligation	2011													
		Gross Outlay	2011								3.904	3.902	3.917	3.670	3.677	3.886
2.814	VBMS	Obligation	2010	2.814												
		Gross Outlay	2010	.999	.151	.151	.151	.151	.151							
		Obligation	2011								.151	.151	.151	.151	.151	.305
		Gross Outlay	2011													

² Obligations and outlays for the Chapter 33 Long Term Solution are reported by SPAWAR through the Department of Defense.