

VA ENTRANCE, EXIT, AND TRANSFER SURVEYS

1. **REASON FOR ISSUE.** To revise the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) policy for Entrance and Exit Surveys to align with changes made to the surveys and implementation of new requirements under Section 211, VA Choice and Quality Employment Act of 2017.
2. **SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES.** This directive revises the policies and requirements for VA Entrance and Exit Surveys and incorporates new requirements for the new VA Transfer Survey. This directive will replace the electronic version of VA Directive 5004, VA Entrance and Exit Surveys, dated August 9, 2010, and VA Directive 5006, Exit Survey dated May 23, 2003 that is maintained on the [Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer website](#) and [VA Publications website](#) and incorporates the following changes:
 - a. Changes the name of the directive from Employee Entrance and Exit Surveys to VA Entrance, Exit, and Transfer Surveys;
 - b. Implements the requirements for a new VA Exit Survey under Section 211, VA Choice and Quality Employment Act of 2017, Public Law 115-46;
 - c. Establishes requirements for a new Department-level Transfer Survey;
 - d. Standardizes processes for the use and administration of Department-level Entrance, Exit, and Transfer Surveys across the Department;
 - e. Updates roles and responsibilities to include the establishment of a Governance Work Group to oversee recommendations on all aspects of the survey;
 - f. Changes the requirement for survey results to be accessible with as few as five respondents;
 - g. Mandates new Department-level reporting requirements and responsibilities; and
 - h. Incorporates requirements of and rescinds Human Resources Management Letter No. 05-19-08, Interim Guidance for the New Department of Veterans Affairs Exit Survey and Transfer Survey.

3. **RESPONSIBLE OFFICE.** Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer, Strategic Human Capital Planning Service (053).
4. **RELATED HANDBOOK/DIRECTIVE.** Not applicable.
5. **RESCISSION.** VA Directive 5004, Employee Entrance and Exit Survey dated August 9, 2010, and Human Resources Management Letter No. 05-19-08, Interim Guidance for the New Department of Veterans Affairs Exit Survey and Transfer Survey, dated August 1, 2019.

CERTIFIED BY:

**BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS:**

/s/

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/s/

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1. **PURPOSE.** This directive establishes the policy and responsibilities for the new Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Entrance, Exit, and Transfer Surveys. The purpose of this directive is to:
 - a. Standardize and promote consistency in the processes for the use and administration of VA Entrance, Exit, and Transfer surveys across the Department to:
 - (1) Improve the information available for recruitment and retention action planning and to meet reporting requirements; and
 - (2) Improve employee retention, which can positively impact employee engagement, employee experience, and ultimately customer experience, the latter of which are part of the Secretary's strategic and employee engagement goals.
 - b. Comply with all federal laws, regulations, and external reporting requirements.
2. **POLICY.** This directive applies to all VA career, non-career limited term and limited emergency employees and Senior Executive Service (SES) appointees covered by title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.), and Chapters 73 and 74 of Title 38, U.S.C. who occupy SES-equivalent and Senior Level positions. Political appointees and employee of the Office of Inspector General are not covered.
 - a. General.
 - (1) Only the most current version of the VA Entrance, Exit, and Transfer Surveys will be used. Previous versions of the entrance and exit surveys are rescinded.
 - (2) The surveys are voluntary and will remain anonymous. If a narrative or free text is provided, that information will be passed on verbatim to the appropriate facility and program offices. No identifiable information will be sent unless the respondent chooses to include it in the actual text of the narrative or free text response.
 - (3) Entrance Surveys for employees hired at VA shall be administered in accordance with the procedures in this directive. This includes employees with a first appointment to VA, transferring from another Federal agency to VA, and employees who separated and are returning to VA under a new appointment.
 - (4) Exit Surveys for employees who voluntarily separate from VA will be administered in accordance with the procedures in this directive. Voluntary

separations include voluntary retirements, resignations, and termination of temporary, term, and time-limited appointments. This does not include conduct or performance-based actions or employees transferring to another administration, office, or facility and staying within VA.

- (5) Transfer Surveys for employees who are transferring from one VA organization to another VA organization and/or field office (e.g., employee moves from Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) to the Office of Acquisition Logistics and Construction (OALC) or from one office with the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) to another office/facility within) shall be administered in accordance with procedures in this directive. This includes voluntary reassignments, promotions and changes to lower grades to another position in another VA organization. It does not include temporary details, management directed reassignments, changes to lower grades, reduction in force personnel actions, employees separating from VA, or transfers to another Federal agency.
 - (6) No documentation relating to VA Entrance, Exit, and Transfer Surveys shall be included in an employee's personnel file.
 - (7) Questions regarding VA Entrance, Exit, and Transfer survey policy or administration may be directed to the Director, Strategic Human Capital Planning Service (SHCPS) at vaentranceexitsurvey@va.gov.
 - (8) Technical difficulties completing the VA Entrance, Exit, and Transfer surveys should be directed to the VHA, Workforce Management and Consulting (WMC) Survey Help Desk at vhawmcsurveyhelpdesk@va.gov.
- b. Entrance Survey Process. All employees hired at VA must be offered the opportunity to complete the VA Entrance Survey.
- (1) The VA Entrance Survey must be incorporated into all onboarding checklists and the new hire orientation process with the link to the survey.
 - (2) The onboarding checklist must be annotated by the signature or initials of the human resources officer (HRO) or designated human resources point of contact to serve as proof that the employee was given the opportunity to take the VA Entrance Survey.
 - (3) An electronic mail message must be sent to the new employee with the link to the VA Entrance Survey within the first 30 calendar days of onboarding. The email shall include a welcome message, the survey link, instructions to access the website, and for completing the survey.
 - (4) All employees will be given access to a computer to complete the survey.
- c. Exit/Transfer Survey Process.

- (1) All employees who voluntarily separate from VA must be offered the opportunity to complete the VA Exit Survey.
 - (2) All employees transferring from one VA organization to another VA organization and/or field office (e.g., employee moves from VBA to OALCor from one office with VHA to another office/facility within VHA) must be offered the opportunity to take the VA Transfer Survey.
 - (3) HROs must send an electronic mail message to the employee with the link to the VA Exit or Transfer Survey upon receipt of notification of the employee's separation or transfer. The email shall include a farewell message, the survey link, and instructions to access the website and complete the survey.
 - (4) The VA Exit and Transfer Surveys must be incorporated into all VA clearance forms by including a link to the surveys. The official [VA Form 3248, Employee's Clearance From Indebtedness](#), must be used in the clearance process. The form may be modified to meet local needs, and it must include the VA Exit and Transfer Surveys and the respective links.
 - (5) The clearance form must be annotated by signature or initials of the HRO or designated human resources point of contact to serve as proof that the employee was given the opportunity to take the VA Exit or Transfer Survey.
- d. Data Collection and Analysis of Survey Results.
- (1) Data will be collected on an approved survey platform.
 - (2) Analysis of Survey Results.
 - (a) Responses to the survey are confidential and anonymous. Narrative responses are optional and will be provided to the designated point of contact (POCs) at each facility and/or program office when received from respondents.
 - (b) Analyses will not be conducted on organizational units with less than five respondents within the selected parameters (e.g., organization, occupation, race, gender, etc.) to ensure survey responses do not identify individual employees.
 - (c) An analysis of survey results will be used in strategic human capital, workforce and succession planning activities, and reports.
 - (d) To meet the annual reporting requirements in Section 211, VA Choice and Quality Employment Act of 2017 (referred to as the VA Choice Act), the analysis of the VA Exit Survey results shall include:

3. RESPONSIBILITIES.

- a. **Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration/Operations, Security and Preparedness (ASHRA/OSP)** shall serve as the principal advisor to the Secretary on all VA Entrance, Exit, and Transfer Survey matters.
- b. **Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials** shall:
 - (1) Oversee survey activities within their respective organization and ensure compliance with all requirements in this directive, Federal regulations, statutes and law;
 - (2) Communicate clearly the expectations and support needed for the VA Entrance, Exit, and Transfer Survey;
 - (3) Encourage managers, supervisors, and employees to participate in survey administration activities; and
 - (4) Respond to VA-level requests for information and data calls in a timely manner.
- c. **The Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO)** shall:
 - (1) Advise and assist the ASHRA/OSP and other agency officials in carrying out the VA's responsibilities for the VA Entrance, Exit, and Surveys to include:
 - (a) Lead, engage and obtain support of senior leaders in Department-level employee engagement survey initiatives to improve the employee experience to include recruitment, hiring, employee retention and morale;
 - (b) Ensure VA-wide compliance with this directive;
 - (c) Align the VA's entrance, exit and transfer surveys policies, program and activities with the mission, strategic goals and performance outcomes;
 - (d) Use the HRStat quarterly review process, in coordination with the VA Performance Improvement Officer, to assess the VA's progress towards meeting the VA's employee experience and performance goals;
 - (e) Provide final approval authority for all VA Entrance, Exit, and Transfer Survey initiatives, actions and reports;
 - (f) Support the goals of this directive by developing and maintaining a governance work group to review and recommend improvements to

all aspects of the surveys which promote efficient and effective strategic human capital management; and

- (g) Assist Administrations and Staff Offices with the development of action plans and technical assistance to business lines within Administrations and Staff Offices to improve recruitment and employee retention.
- d. **Director, SHCPS** has oversight responsibility of the VA Entrance, Exit, and Transfer Survey. This includes:
 - (1) Policy development, changes and updates, and program administration;
 - (2) Quarterly and annual reporting to internal and external stakeholders;
 - (3) Responding to inquiries on survey administration and policy;
 - (4) Serving as the chairperson for the VA Entrance, Exit, and Transfer Survey Governance Work Group; and
 - (5) Periodically assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of the VA Entrance, Exit, and Transfer policy to ensure the VA is meeting the intended outcomes.
- e. **Director, VHA WMC** is responsible for the maintenance of the on-line survey tool, data cubes, distribution of quarterly narrative/free text reports to managers of major organizations and answering technical questions on completing the survey.
- f. **VA Entrance, Exit, and Transfer Survey Governance Work Group** is a group of Subject-Matter Experts from across the Department with responsibility for reviewing and recommending changes on all aspects of the surveys. The Governance Work Group shall:
 - (1) Develop, modify or revise the change request process to meet VA needs and ensure proposed changes do not conflict with requirements in the VA Choice Act;
 - (2) Review change requests on a quarterly basis;
 - (3) Request additional information and or supporting data to understand the nature, justify and or support the change; and
 - (4) Notify the requestee on the status and decision on the requested change.

g. **HR Officers** or the designated point of contact shall:

- (1) Administer the VA Entrance, Exit, and Transfer survey in accordance with the policies and processes in the directive;
- (2) Provide employees with access to a computer to take the survey;
- (3) Distribute free text/narrative responses to designated management officials in their organization who can act upon the information; and
- (4) Respond to Department-level requests for information and data calls in a timely manner.

h. **Managers and Supervisors** shall:

- (1) Encourage employees to participate in the VA Entrance, Exit, and Transfer Surveys;
- (2) Monitor and utilize survey results; and
- (3) Comply with all policy and processes requirements in this directive.

4. REFERENCES.

[Section 211, VA Choice and Quality Employment Act of 2017, Public Law 115-46](#)

5. DEFINITIONS.

- a. **Agency.** An Executive or military department as specified by 5 U.S.C. Sections 101, 102, and 5102, which has primary authority and responsibility for the administration of substantive national programs enacted by Congress; a comparable independent agency; or a large agency next below the Department of Defense with worldwide missions and field activities, multi-billion dollar programs or resources to manage, and major mission(s) directly affecting the national security. For example, Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Labor, Department of Agriculture, Office of Personnel Management, and the General Services Administration.
- b. **Administration/Staff Office.** Also defined as a bureau is an organizational unit directly below the agency level that reports to the VA Secretary or his/her staff. For example, Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), National Cemetery Administration (NCA), and the VA Central Office (VACO) Staff Offices, such as the Office of Information and Technology, Office of Management, or the Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs.
- c. **Major Organization.** Veterans Integrated Service Network and equivalent level organizations – a major organizational unit directly below the bureau or

Administration/Staff Office level. For example, Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN), VBA Regional Offices, NCA District Offices, Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer, Office of Public Affairs, Office of Construction and Facilities Management, and Identity, Credential, and Access Management (ICAM) Program Office.

- d. New Hire. Includes employees with a first appointment to VA, transferring from another Federal agency to VA, and employees who separated and are returning to VA under a new appointment.
- e. Organizational Unit. For this directive, a generic term that refers to any component, subdivision, or group of employees that is directed by a supervisory position. For example, VHA, VBA and NCA Facilities, and subcomponents of major organizations in VACO.
- f. Political Appointee. An individual serving in an appointment to a political position; and the term “political position” means—
 - (1) A position described under sections 5312 through 5316 of title 5, United States Code (relating to the Executive Schedule);
 - (2) A noncareer appointment in the Senior Executive Service, as defined under paragraph (7) of section 3132(a) of title 5, United States Code; or
 - (3) A position in the executive branch of the Government of a confidential or policy-determining character under schedule C of subpart C of part 213 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations.
- g. Transfers within VA. Includes voluntary reassignments, promotions, and changes to lower grades to another position in another VA organization.
- h. Voluntary separation. Includes voluntary retirement, resignation, and transfer to another Federal agency, but not transfers within VA or termination due to performance and/or conduct.