

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA)
ENTERPRISE ARCHITECTURE (EA)**

1. REASON FOR ISSUE: This directive establishes mandatory policy for the establishment and use of an integrated Department-wide VA Enterprise Architecture (EA).

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS: This directive prescribes Department-wide policy for the establishment and implementation of an integrated VA EA to be used for the development and management of all information assets. The VA EA is an ongoing activity intended to support decision processes across the VA and ensure the alignment of VA's information technology (IT) environment and activities with the critical mission needs of the Department. This policy:

a. Establishes mandatory compliance of all IT systems and investments with VA policy, rules, standards and capabilities defined in the VA Enterprise Architecture (EA); and

b. Encourages the use of EA capabilities as decision support to all VA decision processes where visibility to and understanding of relationships between VA's goals and objectives, business processes, performance metrics, budget and/or IT capabilities is essential.

b. Defines the role of the VA Chief Enterprise Architect as managing the VA EA and ensuring compliance with this directive; and

c. Defines contributions required of the Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials in support of VA EA development and use.

3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: The Office of Information and Technology is responsible for the contents of this directive.

4. RELATED HANDBOOK: None.

5. RESCISSION: This is a revision to and replacement of a previous policy with same name and number, dated July 12, 2002.

CERTIFIED BY:

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

/s/
Laverne H. Council
Assistant Secretary for
Information and Technology

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ENTERPRISE ARCHITECTURE (EA)**

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE. This directive establishes mandatory policy for the establishment and use of an integrated Department-wide VA Enterprise Architecture (EA). Federal law and OMB Circulars A-11 and A-130 require VA to use EA to demonstrate how all investments within the Information Technology (IT) portfolio support agency mission objectives. Given its ability to draw relationships between VA goals and objectives, business processes, performance metrics, budget and IT capabilities, EA is able to support not only this but any number of decision processes across the VA, including many outside the realm on information technology.

Given this, the VA EA is not a product or activity with a specific arbitrary end date; rather, it is an ongoing activity intended to provide continuous real time visibility into VA's business and IT environment and to ensure the alignment of VA's information technology (IT) environment and activities with the critical mission needs of the Department.

This directive establishes mandatory compliance of all IT investments and activities with the VA EA, and defines roles and responsibilities of officials throughout the Department, including the VA Chief Enterprise Architect, in the development and use of the EA.

2. POLICY

a. Enterprise architecture is a strategic information asset base, which defines the Department's mission; the information and technologies necessary to perform the mission; and the transitional processes for implementing new technologies in response to changing mission needs. It includes a baseline architecture; a target architecture; and a sequencing plan for transitioning between the two. The information contained in the EA depicts important relationships between VA goals and objectives, its business processes and the information assets that support them.

b. All VA IT systems and investments must comply with the Department's Enterprise Architecture.

c. VA officials will develop, follow, and enforce policies and procedures that define and maintain its Enterprise Architecture.

d. VA officials will support the VA EA by providing the requisite resources and information to support its priorities and intended uses.

e. VA officials will leverage the VA EA within the major decision processes intended to achieve VA's strategic goals and objectives. Specific processes include but are not limited to:

- (1) Strategic Planning
- (2) Capital Planning and Investment Control
- (3) Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Execution
- (4) End-to-End Requirements
- (5) Solution/System Development Lifecycle

f. VA officials will appropriately leverage the VA EA to support establishment and implementation of enterprise data management and information security within the VA.

g. VA officials will develop and implement the EA consistent with the following principles:

(1) VA information, systems, and processes shall be conceived, designed, operated and managed to address the Veteran-centric mission needs of VA;

(2) VA solutions shall utilize enterprise-wide standards, services, and approaches to deliver seamless capabilities to Veterans, facilitate IT consolidations through reuse, and simplify the use of Veteran functions.

(3) VA application, service and data assets shall be visible, accessible, available, understandable, and trusted to all authorized users (including unanticipated users);

(4) VA information shall be made interoperable through data standardization, including the identification, designation, and implementation of authoritative data sources;

(5) VA IT infrastructure shall be made interoperable through definition and enforcement of technology standards, interface profiles, and implementation guidance; and

(6) VA shall provide a secure environment for collaborative sharing of information assets (information, services, etc.) with Veterans and other partners, including (among others) federal agencies, third party service providers, academic researchers and businesses. The level of security will be commensurate to the risk and magnitude of the harm resulting from the loss, misuse, unauthorized access to, or modification of the information being stored or used.

h. Any architecture or related enterprise-wide information base being developed outside of the VA EA program must be complementary / aligned to the VA EA and not duplicative of the data contained therein.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

a. **The Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology, as the VA CIO, will:**

(1) Ensure Department-wide compliance with the policies contained in this directive,

(2) Ensure that all IT projects are evaluated for compliance with the EA in all decision-processes related to the planning, programming, budgeting, development, deployment and maintenance of IT systems, capabilities and investments;

(3) Utilize VA EA capabilities in any VA decision process where visibility to and understanding of relationships between VA's goals and objectives, business processes, performance metrics, budget and/or IT capabilities is essential;

(4) Designate a Chief Enterprise Architect.

b. **Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials.** These individuals will:

- (1) Implement the policies contained in this directive within their organization;
- (2) Ensure the VA Enterprise Architecture exemplifies alignment and integration between strategic goals and objectives, program/business goals, functions and processes and information technology;
- (3) Ensure the information required from their organization to support the VA's major decision processes is appropriately available, visible, understandable and accessible via the VA EA;
- (4) Ensure that all IT investments, systems and project activities are evaluated for compliance with the VA EA in all core decision processes
- (5) Utilize VA EA capabilities in any VA decision process where visibility to and understanding of relationships between VA's goals and objectives, business processes, performance metrics, budget and/or IT capabilities is essential.
- (6) Ensure the right human resources are available to support VA EA development, use and evolution;
- (7) Ensure adequate funding and commitment to the VA EA; and
- (8) Support and participate in EA governance activities as prescribed by the VA Chief Enterprise Architect

c. **VA Chief Enterprise Architect.** This individual will:

- (1) Report to the VA CIO;
- (2) Lead EA governance and thereby steward the development and use of VA's EA;
- (3) Act as an advisor to the information technology and program/business lines and ensure that program/business line goals, processes, activities and measures are emphasized in the VA EA;
- (4) Maintain the VA EA to ensure the integrity of EA products, and their consistent evolution and alignment in support of VA's strategic direction;
- (5) Establish and maintain rules and standards to be implemented in support of VA EA development;
- (6) Ensure information required to support the aforementioned VA decision processes is visible, available, accessible, and understandable via the Enterprise Architecture;
- (7) Provide the best possible information and guidance to information technology projects and stakeholders, and assist in ensuring that programs, initiatives and supporting systems development efforts are properly aligned with VA strategic goals and objectives and

program/business unit requirements.

4. REFERENCES

- a. A Practical Guide to Federal Enterprise Architecture, dated May 2012
- b. Architecture Alignment and Assessment Guide, dated October 2000
- c. Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-106, Div. E)
- d. Title 40, U.S. Code 11312 – Capital Planning and Investment Control
- e. Executive Order 13011, Federal Information Technology
- f. Federal Enterprise Architecture Framework (FEAF), dated January 2013
- g. Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552
- h. Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993 (Public Law 103-62)
- i. Office of Management and Budget Circulars:
 - (1) A-11, Preparation and Submission of Budget Estimates
 - (2) A-130, Management of Federal Information Resources
- j. Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, 44 U.S.C. Chapter 35