

Department of Veterans Affairs Fiscal Years 2022-28 Strategic Plan

This document presents VA’s Strategic Plan for fiscal years (FY) 2022-28 and describes the important support VA’s three Administrations (VHA, VBA and NCA) and Staff Offices will provide to Veterans, Service members, families, caregivers and survivors as we strive to achieve the very best outcomes for them. The strategic plan highlights the mission-focused outcomes VA intends to accomplish to improve the quality of life, outcomes and experiences for Veterans, Service members, their families, caregivers and survivors.

The Plan also describes the stewardship goal and objectives VA seeks to attain to improve operations and management functions ensuring the most effective use of taxpayer resources and sustainability for future generations of Veterans. Moreover, it reinforces a commitment to a culture of interoperability that promotes a consistently positive and seamless Veteran experience with VA. By aligning business, data, and information, systems and technology VA ensures the right information and services securely and reliably reach the right person, at the right time and in the best manner to make timely, informed decisions and to enable actions.

VA is committed to improving outcomes, access and the quality of life for Veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors. We advocate for Veterans and seize opportunities that address the challenges impacting their lives today while preparing for emerging threats and the rapid pace of change. The VA FY 2022-28 Strategic Plan describes our approach to ensure Veterans receive timely benefits, care, memorialization and services and ensures we deliver quality experiences and customer satisfaction that surpass expectations today and into the future.

The strategic plan has 4 strategic goals, 13 objectives and 75 strategies that are specifically designed to drive achievement of VA’s mission and the Secretary’s fundamental principles. The strategic plan reinforces VA’s communications from the Administrations and Staff Offices to deliver clear and consistent messages. This message demonstrates our appreciation for each Veteran’s sacrifice and service and our commitment to improving their health, well-being and economic security. Goals, objectives and strategies guide the Department and ensure a unified effort towards achieving VA’s mission.

The strategic plan also includes performance milestones for each strategic objective. These performance milestones describe the desired state of affairs at the end of this strategic plan and help us understand our progress and when the necessary work is completed. Performance milestones demonstrate through evidence that we have achieved the strategic objective or that more work is still needed.

[Submitter's Note: This StratML Part 1, Strategic Plan, rendition includes only the goals and objectives and not the strategies and performance indicators. They will be included in a StratML Part 2, Performance Plan/Report, rendition.]

Contents

Vision.....	4
Mission.....	4
Values	4
1. Needs & Performance.....	7
1.1. Information.....	7
1.2. Trends, Needs & Solutions	7
2. Benefits, Care & Services.....	8
2.1. Special Emphases	8
2.2. Service Delivery	8
2.3. Needs, Disparities & Barriers	9
2.4. Illnesses & Injuries	9
2.5. Value & Sustainability.....	10
3. Stewardship, Transparency & Accountability.....	11
3.1. Trust	11
3.2. Culture & Accountability	11
4. Governance, Systems, Data & Management	12
4.1. Empowerment	12
4.2. Data	12

4.3. Systems.....13
4.4. Governance, Management & Evidence13
Administrative Information.....14



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

Stakeholder(s):

Denis McDonough :

Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

President Abraham Lincoln :

On March 4, 1865, during his second inaugural address, President Abraham Lincoln described his vision for national reconciliation and mission to bind the wounds and heal a Nation torn apart from a lengthy civil war. In 1959, President Lincoln's immortal words became the motto of the Veterans Affairs Administration, now the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA or Department) and stand today as a solemn reminder of VA's commitment to care for those injured in our Nation's defense and the families of those killed in its service.

VA Stakeholders :

VA is committed to serving Veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors throughout their life journey. To do so, VA's 3 Administrations and 23 major Staff Offices deliver benefits, care and services to improve wellbeing, outcomes and memorialization services to honor Veterans' sacrifice and contributions to the Nation. Furthermore, VA partners with families and caregivers to provide the best care and address the unique needs of our Veterans.

Veterans :

Veterans are individuals who have served in one of the eight uniformed services and meet the length of service and character of discharge requirements prescribed by law: Army; Marine Corps; Navy; Air Force; Space Force; Coast Guard; some members of the Public Health Services and the Commissioned Officer Corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA); as well as eligible members of the Reserve and National Guard components; World War II Merchant Mariners; certain members of the Philippine Armed Forces; and other groups designated by DoD. When the term "Veteran" is used in this VA Strategic Plan, it includes all who are eligible for VA benefits, care, memorialization and services.

Families of Veterans :

VA also provides benefits and services to eligible survivors, spouses, dependents and dependent parents of Veterans, as well as caregivers of certain disabled Veterans. Service members in an active-duty status also may be eligible for certain VA benefits and services which include, but are not limited to, Service members' Group Life Insurance, Traumatic Injury Protection, GI Bill, Education and Career Counseling, the VA Home Loan program and certain medical services.

Caregivers of Veterans

Survivors of Veterans

Board of Veterans' Appeals :

The Board of Veterans' Appeals (Board) conducts hearings and renders appeals decisions for benefits and services on behalf of the Secretary.

Marginalized Veterans :

VA also has offices and programs that focus on marginalized, underserved and at-risk Veterans, such as the Center for Minority Veterans and Center for Women Veterans and programs focused on mental health and suicide prevention, eliminating homelessness and fostering Veteran success through Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) to ensure we accomplish our mission and deliver the benefits, care and services Veterans earned and need.

Underserved Veterans

At-Risk Veterans

Center for Minority Veterans

Center for Women Veterans

VA Central Office (VACO) :

VA's Central Office (VACO) is in Washington, DC, and field facilities are throughout the Nation as well as in the U.S. territories and in the Philippines. Veteran programs are delivered by VA's three major Administrations: VHA, VBA and NCA. The Administrations and Staff Offices work together to consistently deliver high-quality benefits, care and services that improve outcomes for Veterans, their families, caregivers, survivors and Service members and accomplish our mission through routine day-to-day operations and during national emergencies, such as natural disasters, pandemics, terrorism and war.

Veterans Health Administration (VHA) :

Veterans Health Care: VA's Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is the largest integrated health care network in the United States, with 1,294 health care facilities serving over 9 million enrolled Veterans each year. VA provides Service members with a seamless transition from their U.S. Department

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Stakeholders (continued)

of Defense (DoD)-provided health care into the VA system of care.

Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) :

Veterans Benefits: Veterans can receive a range of benefits and services that help them transition back to civilian life. Through the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), VA helps Service members transition out of military service and assists with education, home loans, life insurance and much more.

National Cemetery Administration (NCA) :

National Cemeteries: The National Cemetery Administration (NCA) ensures those who served this Nation are never forgotten. NCA provides dignified burial services for Veterans and eligible family members by maintaining cemeteries as national shrines and providing lasting tributes that commemorate their service and sacrifice to our Nation.

VA Operational Managers :

The Fourth Mission: VA's "Fourth Mission" is an operational capability that leverages VA's personnel, equipment and infrastructure to support greater resource sharing across Federal departments and agencies. By providing expanded Federal government emergency response capacity, VA improves the Nation's preparedness and resilience to a broad range of threats and hazards during war or national emergencies in accordance with Presidential Policy Directive/PPD-8 and the National Preparedness Goal. In support of the Fourth Mission, VA maintains capabilities and develops plans for supporting Federal response activities and processes.

VA Staff Offices :

VA's Staff Offices provide a variety of services to the Department that enable accomplishment of the mission including information technology, human resources management, strategic planning, Veterans outreach and education, financial management, acquisition and facilities management.

Vision

Care for those injured in our Nation's defense and the families of those killed in its service

Mission

To fulfill President Lincoln's promise, "To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan."

Values

Principles: The VA Secretary's 4 fundamental principles and characteristics informed development of VA's 4 strategic goals, 13 strategic objectives and 75 strategies described in this strategic plan. Each implementing strategy aligns to one or more principles and connects to other strategies to ensure a comprehensive approach to improving outcomes and experiences throughout a Veteran's life journey, starting from the Veteran's or Service member's first contact with VA, during military service and transition to civilian life and through end of life. The Secretary's fundamental principles lead and manage VA in alignment with VA's ICARE Core Values, Core Characteristics and Customer Experience Principles^{6, 7} to ensure the delivery of quality and timely benefits, care and services to Veterans, their families, caregivers, survivors and Service members.

Advocacy: VA will be the Nation's premier advocate for Veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors.

Access: VA will provide timely access to VA resources: world-class health care, earned benefits and a final resting place as a lasting tribute to their service. · Deliver benefits, care and services to our most vulnerable Veterans. · Reduce Veterans' homelessness and suicide. · Ensure access to educational opportunities, training and jobs worthy of the Veteran's skills and service. · Provide care in their homes when Veterans need it and the training, support and resources our caregivers need.

Outcomes: Veteran outcomes will drive everything we do. · Leverage data, informatics and evidence to understand outcomes. · Measure the quality and effectiveness of benefits, care and services and Veterans' experiences and satisfaction.

Excellence: VA will seek excellence in all we do for Veterans. · Leverage the strength and diversity that defines our Veterans, our workforce and our country. · Ensure every Veteran is afforded access to VA's capacity and resources. · Ensure diversity, equity and inclusiveness are fundamental to everything we do. · VA welcomes all Veterans, including women, Veterans of color and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and other identities (LGBTQ+).⁸ · Ensure every person feels safe, free of harassment and discrimination in VA facilities. · Beyond these four fundamental principles, VA also will: · Improve management and accountability. · Customize care to meet specific

needs. · Ensure racial justice and an equal chance for opportunity. · Reduce staff shortfalls, leadership gaps. · Continue to build Veteran trust in VA.

Values: VA's five, "I CARE" core values underscore the obligations inherent in VA's mission and define who we are, our culture and how we care for Veterans and eligible beneficiaries. Our values are more than just words—they affect outcomes in our daily interactions with Veterans, eligible beneficiaries and our VA colleagues and partners. ^ Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect and Excellence ~ Taking the first letter of each word ... creates a powerful acronym "I CARE" that reminds each VA employee of the importance of their role in this Department. These core values come together as five promises we make as individuals and as an organization to those we serve.

Integrity: Act with high moral principle. Adhere to the highest professional standards. Maintain the trust and confidence of all with whom I engage.

Commitment: Work diligently to serve Veterans and other beneficiaries. Be driven by an earnest belief in VA's mission. Fulfill my individual responsibilities and organizational responsibilities.

Advocacy: Be truly Veteran-centric by identifying, fully considering and appropriately advancing the interests of Veterans and other beneficiaries.

Respect: Treat all those I work with and serve with dignity and respect.

Excellence: Strive for the highest quality and continuous improvement. Be thoughtful and decisive in leadership and accountable for my actions, willing to admit mistakes and rigorous in correcting them.

Characteristics: Core Characteristics ~ VA's Core Characteristics define what we stand for and what VA strives to be as an organization. They embody the qualities of VA employees to support VA's mission and commitment to Veterans, their families and beneficiaries. The Core Characteristics are: Trustworthy, Accessible, Quality, Innovative, Agile and Integrated.

Trustworthiness: Trustworthy ~ VA earns the trust of those it serves—every day—through the actions of all employees.

Accessibility: Accessible ~ VA engages and welcomes Veterans and other beneficiaries, facilitating their use of the entire array of its services. Each interaction will be positive and productive.

Quality: Quality ~ VA provides the highest standard of care and services to Veterans and beneficiaries while managing the cost of its programs and being efficient stewards of all resources entrusted to it by the American people.

Innovation: Innovative ~ VA prizes curiosity and initiative, encourages creative contributions from all employees, seeks continuous improvement and adapts to remain at the forefront in knowledge, proficiency and capability to deliver the highest standard of care and services.

Agility: Agile ~ VA anticipates and adapts quickly to current challenges and new requirements by continuously assessing the environment in which it operates and devising solutions to better serve Veterans, other beneficiaries and Service members.

Integration: Integrated ~ VA links care and services across the Department; other Federal, state and local agencies; partners; and Veterans Services Organizations to provide useful and understandable programs to Veterans and other beneficiaries. VA's relationship with DoD is unique and VA will nurture it for the benefit of Veterans and Service members.

Customer Experience: Customer Experience Principles ~ VA will provide the best customer experience in its delivery of care, benefits and memorial services to Veterans, Service members, their families, caregivers and survivors. All VA employees are guided by VA's Core Values and Characteristics and Customer Experience Principles to deliver exceptional customer experiences. Customer experience is the product of interactions between an organization and a customer over the duration of their relationship. VA measures these interactions through Ease, Effectiveness and Emotion, all of which impact the overall trust the customer has in the organization.

Ease: VA will make access to care, benefits and memorial services smooth and easy.

Effectiveness: VA will deliver benefits, care, memorialization and services to the customer's satisfaction.

Emotion: VA will deliver benefits, care, memorialization and services in a manner that makes customers feel honored and valued in their interactions with VA. ^ VA will use customer experience data and insights in strategy development and decision-making to ensure that the voice of Veterans, Service members, their families, caregivers and survivors inform how VA delivers benefits, care, memorialization and services.

1. Needs & Performance

VA consistently communicates with its customers and partners to assess and maximize performance, evaluate needs and build long-term relationships and trust.

Goal 1 ensures communications are clear and messages are consistent across VA and the ecosystem of Veteran-supporting partners. VA delivers information to Veterans the way the Veteran wants to receive it, so Veterans understand their eligibility for benefits, care, memorialization and services and how to access the benefits they earned. This goal ensures VA knows Veterans, understands their needs and how the benefits, care and services we deliver impacts their lives. Goal 1 enables VA to connect with Service members early in their military careers to establish longterm relationships with them. VA will maintain that relationship as the Service member transitions to Veteran status and support their families, caregivers and survivors as they transition through each phase of their life journey.

1.1. Information

Ensure information about benefits, care and services is clear and easy to understand and access

(Consistent and Easy to Understand Information) VA and partners use multiple channels and methods to ensure information about benefits, care and services is clear and easy to understand and access. ~ Objective 1.1 describes VA's approach to delivering information and communicating with Veterans, their families, caregivers, survivors, Service members, employees and other stakeholders to ensure the information they need is readily available, accessible to all and easy to understand. VA uses customer feedback and individual/aggregated data to understand population groups and proactively distribute tailored information that meets the needs of recipients to ensure equitable access so that all Veterans feel welcomed and valued.

Stakeholder(s):

Veterans Experience Office (VEO) :
Co-Lead

Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs (OPIA) :
National Veterans Outreach Office ~ Co-Lead

1.2. Trends, Needs & Solutions

Project future trends, anticipate needs and deliver effective and agile solutions that improve outcomes, access and experiences

(Lifelong Relationships and Trust) VA listens to Veterans, their families, caregivers, survivors, Service members, employees and other stakeholders to project future trends, anticipate needs and deliver effective and agile solutions that improve their outcomes, access and experiences. ~ Objective 1.2 ensures VA consults stakeholders and uses HCD practices to understand needs, preferences, customer experiences and satisfaction and how benefits, care and services impact the lives of Veterans, their families, caregivers, survivors and Service members. VA expands stakeholder consultations to include cohorts outside the traditional Veteran population, such as employees, clinicians receiving training at VA facilities, financial and educational institutions that deliver various benefits and State, Tribal, territorial and private facilities that partner with NCA to provide memorialization services. VA will make it is easy for stakeholders to provide feedback and leverage their responses to drive change across the ecosystem of partners that improves performance, access, the quality of experiences and customer satisfaction.

Stakeholder(s):

VEO :
Co-Lead

VBA :
Office of Policy and Oversight (OPO) ~ Co-Lead

NCA :
Co-Lead, Office of Finance and Planning (OFO)

2. Benefits, Care & Services

VA delivers timely, accessible, high-quality benefits, care and services to meet the unique needs of Veterans and all eligible beneficiaries.

Goal 2 ensures access to resources and tailoring the delivery of benefits and customizing care, memorialization and services to foster equity and promote independence and optimal outcomes and well-being for Veterans, their families, caregivers, survivors and Service members. This is the largest goal in the VA FY 2022-28 Strategic Plan with 5 objectives and 32 strategies that describe our approach or what VA will do to achieve the objective. VA and the ecosystem of partners must work together to understand the needs of Veteran groups and deliver benefits, care and services that address the unique needs of individual Veterans. A thorough examination of Veteran cohorts helps VA identify potential trends, innovations and emerging treatments that might impact Veterans at different phases of their life journey. Trend analysis improves our understanding of underserved, marginalized and at-risk Veterans to promote equity and access to resources. VA is committed to delivering value to all Veterans and improving their economic security, health and quality of life.

2.1. Special Emphases

Emphasize the delivery of benefits, care and services to underserved, marginalized and at-risk Veterans

(Underserved, Marginalized and At-Risk Veterans) VA emphasizes the delivery of benefits, care and services to underserved, marginalized and at-risk Veterans to prevent suicide and homelessness, improve their economic security, health, resiliency and quality of life and achieve equity. ~ VA is focused on addressing needs and improving economic security, quality of life and independence for Veterans who need us most—our at-risk, marginalized and underserved Veterans, their families, caregivers, survivors and Service members. Objective 2.1 ensures VA programs, initiatives and the ecosystem of partners support the whole person and address mental health and suicide, homelessness and other challenges impacting Veterans' well-being. This objective ensures reliable access to benefits, care and services and promotes improved outcomes for Veterans living in rural areas, women, minorities, American Indian and Alaska Native, severely wounded, ill and injured, those with physical and/or intellectual disabilities, LGBTQ+ Veterans, transitioning Service members and those at-risk for food insecurity. HCD best practices will enable VA to deeply understand the needs and experiences of these populations.

Stakeholder(s):

Underserved Veterans

Marginalized Veterans

At-Risk Veterans

VHA :

*Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention ~
Co-Lead*

VBA :

OFO ~ Co-Lead

2.2. Service Delivery

Tailor the delivery of benefits and customize whole health care and services for the recipient at each phase of their life journey

(Tailored Delivery of Benefits, Care and Services Ensure Equity and Access) VA and partners will tailor the delivery of benefits and customize whole health care and services for the recipient at each phase of their life journey. ~ Objective 2.2 describes how VA will expand partnerships and use them as a force multiplier to enhance our capabilities and capacity to deliver quality benefits, care and services that improve the lives of Veterans, their families, caregivers, survivors and Service members based on the five domains of Social Determinants of Health (where people are born, live, work, attend school and play). VA will provide Veterans with final resting places and lasting tributes that commemorate their service and sacrifice to our Nation. We also will strengthen partnerships across the ecosystem of Veteran supporters and advocate for Veterans to facilitate

the transition from military service to education, employment or entrepreneurship and support our aging Veterans, their families and caregivers. VA leverages technology to modernize the appeals process, ensure easy access to secure VA systems and deliver benefits, health care and services the way Veterans want to receive them.

Stakeholder(s):

VBA :
OPO ~ Co-Lead

Office of the VA Secretary (OSVA) :
Co-Lead

NCA :
OFO ~ Co-Lead

2.3. Needs, Disparities & Barriers

Enhance understanding of Veteran needs and eliminate disparities and barriers to health, improve service delivery and opportunities

2.3: (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility (I-DEA)) VA will enhance understanding of Veteran needs and eliminate disparities and barriers to health, improve service delivery and opportunities to enhance Veterans' outcomes, experiences and quality of life. ~ Objective 2.3 expands VA's understanding of Veterans to customize care and meet the specific needs of individual Veterans and underserved communities. This expanded understanding will enable VA to address inequity, health disparities and barriers to access and opportunities. VA will weave the principles of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (I-DEA) into the fabric of our mission and create an organization where all employees support the cultural transformation to a VA that is more inclusive, diverse, equitable and accessible to all, especially those from underserved communities.

- Inclusion means that every individual who enters a VA facility feels safe, included and valued. VA will treat all Veterans, employees, families, caregivers, survivors and Service members with dignity, integrity and respect.
- Diversity means that VA strives to leverage the strength and uniqueness that defines our Veteran and other beneficiary populations, our VA workforce and our country. VA welcomes all Veterans and other beneficiaries and appreciates the differences, qualities and attributes that make everyone unique.
- Equity means VA intentionally commits to consistent and systematic fair, just and impartial treatment of all individuals and a just distribution of tools and resources to give everyone, including those who belong to marginalized and underserved communities, what is required to enjoy a full, healthy life.
- Accessibility means eliminating and reducing barriers in a physical or electronic space and actively opening opportunities and points of service to all, regardless of their geographic location to safeguard VA's most vulnerable Veterans' and ensure access to care and services.

Stakeholder(s):

Office of the VA Secretary (OSVA) :
Co-Lead

VHA :
Office of Health Equity (OHE) ~ Co-Lead

2.4. Illnesses & Injuries

Improve understanding of Veteran specific illnesses and injuries to develop and adopt innovative new treatments

(Innovative Care) VA will improve understanding of Veteran specific illnesses and injuries to develop and adopt innovative new treatments that prevent future illness and enhance Veteran outcomes. ~ Objective 2.4 and the strategies associated with it ensure VA will leverage innovation and research findings to improve operations, experiences, satisfaction and outcomes for customers. This objective reflects top crosscutting research priorities that informed Learning Agenda questions based on VHA research (suicide prevention and opioid pain treatment) funded through the VHA Office of Research and Development (ORD) including the more rapid translation of effective programs based on research findings into routine care settings. VA will develop and implement innovative treatment modalities and pilot communitybased interventions to end Veteran suicide and

leverage innovative technologies to expand access to virtual and inhome care. In addition, VA aspires to leverage innovation and knowledge translation to improve the quality of care and services delivered to Veterans and develop pain management treatments that prevent and alleviate Opioid Use Disorder (OUD).

Stakeholder(s):

Office of Research and Development

(ORD) :

VHA ~ Co-Lead

Office of Mental Health & Suicide

Prevention :

VHA ~ Co-Lead

Innovation Ecosystem :

VHA ~ Co-Lead

2.5. Value & Sustainability

Deliver integrated care and services, balancing resources to ensure sustainability while continuing to deliver value and improve health and well-being

(Value and Sustainability) VA, with community partners, will deliver integrated care and services, balancing resources to ensure sustainability while continuing to deliver value and improve health and well-being outcomes of Veterans. ~ Objective 2.5 ensures the long-term sustainability of VA for future generations of Veterans. VA measures the quality of services provided based on outcomes to Veterans, Service members and their eligible beneficiaries and provides value to Veterans today and in the future. VA understands trends and projects needs to prepare for future demands and shifts resources to align investments with demographics and geographic locations. VA expands partnerships across government and private sector organizations to enhance our ability to deliver benefits, care, memorialization and services every day and in times of crisis.

Stakeholder(s):

Center for Care and Payment

Innovation :

VHA ~ Lead

3. Stewardship, Transparency & Accountability

VA builds and maintains trust with Stakeholders through proven stewardship, transparency and accountability.

Goal 3 ensures VA's culture of accountability drives ethical behavior and trust across the organization and throughout the ecosystem of partners. VA listens to Veterans, other beneficiaries and employees and serves as their trusted agent. Veterans, their families, caregivers, survivors and Service members trust VA to deliver timely, high-quality benefits, care, memorialization and services. Employees trust VA to uphold our core values and customer experience principles and swiftly address ethical failures and breach of trust.

3.1. Trust

Earn trust through transparency

(VA is Transparent and Trusted) VA will be the trusted agent for service and advocacy for our Nation's heroes, caregivers, families, survivors and Service members to improve their quality of life and ensure end of life dignity. ~ VA serves as the trusted agent for Veterans, other beneficiaries and employees and sets the standard of performance that others aspire to achieve. VA willingly and routinely shares performance information publicly and actively solicits feedback from Veterans, their families, caregivers, survivors and Service members to ensure transparency and improve performance.

Stakeholder(s):

Office of Enterprise Integration (OEI) :
Co-Lead

VEO :
Co-Lead

3.2. Culture & Accountability

Improve organizational and individual accountability and ensure a just culture

(Internal and External Accountability) VA will continue to promote and improve organizational and individual accountability and ensure a just culture. ~ VA's culture of integrity and no reprisal philosophy ensures individual and organizational accountability and proper stewardship of resources. Employees, contractors and third-party providers are trained properly and understand expectations for their performance and behavior and standards are fairly enforced internally and externally across the ecosystem of partners. VA provides a safe environment to disclose allegations of misconduct or other wrongdoing and employees feel protected from whistleblower retaliation. Employees are confident VA will support their ability to speak up and swiftly and fairly hold individuals accountable for misconduct, fraud, waste and abuse and non-VA entities held accountable to strict criteria to protect Veterans and other beneficiaries.

Stakeholder(s):

Office of Integrity and Compliance :
VHA ~ Co-Lead

Office of Business Oversight (OBO) :
Office of Management (OM) ~ Co-Lead

Office of Accountability & Whistleblower Protection (OAWP) :
Co-Lead

4. Governance, Systems, Data & Management

VA ensures governance, systems, data and management best practices improve experiences, satisfaction, accountability and security.

Goal 4 ensures VA manages resources as strategic assets, to include people, infrastructure, data and technology and leverages governance, evidence, best practices and management principles to improve performance and outcomes for Veterans and other beneficiaries. VA applies a customer-centric approach to all activities, aligning and measuring activities to ensure they enhance the experience, ease of access and security for Veterans, other beneficiaries VA employees and partners. This stewardship goal improves our internal operations and describes the safeguards we will establish to execute mission related activities. Objective 4.4 addresses gaps identified in the FY 2021-28 Capacity Assessment and ensures VA complies with the Evidence Act.

4.1. Empowerment

Empower a collaborative culture that promotes information sharing, diversity, equity and inclusion and a competent, high-performing workforce

(Our Employees Are Our Greatest Asset) VA will transform its human capital management capabilities to empower a collaborative culture that promotes information sharing, diversity, equity and inclusion and a competent, high-performing workforce to best serve Veterans and their families. ~ A transformed human capital (HC) management capability is paramount for VA to serve Veterans and other beneficiaries and their diverse needs. The Chief Human Capital Officer advises and assists the Secretary, Assistant Secretary and other VA officials in carrying out responsibilities for selecting, developing, training and managing a highquality, productive workforce in accordance with merit system principles. The VA Strategic Plan and Human Capital Operating Plan describe actions that will be taken to strengthen improvements to HC management. Our core values, characteristics and customer experience principles are at the center of every decision we make. We will create a safe workplace, free of harassment, discrimination and retaliation. VA will build a more inclusive and equitable environment for all employees and those we serve. We will empower all employees to work together to address challenges, develop solutions and implement positive change with effective communication and leadership. To do this, our workforce must be agile and prepared to meet the needs of our mission. Transforming VA's HC capabilities will empower and enable a diverse, competent, high-performing workforce that consistently delivers world class services to Veterans and other beneficiaries.

Stakeholder(s):

Human Resources and Administration/ Operations :

Security and Preparedness (HR&A/OSP), Management, Planning and Analysis ~ Lead

4.2. Data

Manage data as a strategic asset

(Data is a Strategic Asset) VA will securely manage data as a strategic asset to improve VA's understanding of customers and partners, drive evidence-based decision-making and deliver more effective and efficient solutions. ~ VA will leverage authoritative, high-quality and accessible data to understand critical problems and develop evidence-based solutions that improves operations and outcomes for Veterans and other beneficiaries. VA will implement policies and standards to protect the confidentiality, integrity and accessibility of data. VA and trusted partners collaborate to leverage data as a force multiplier to understand Veterans and other customers and anticipate their needs and preferences. Furthermore, data is the foundation for effective analytics and evidence-based decisions that improve efficiencies, effectiveness, experiences and the quality of benefits, care, memorialization and services VA and the ecosystem of partners deliver.

Stakeholder(s):**OEI :**
*Co-Lead***Data Governance and Analytics :**
*Co-Lead***4.3. Systems***Deliver integrated, interoperable, secure and state-of-the-art systems*

(Easy Access and Secure Systems) VA will deliver integrated, interoperable, secure and state-of-the-art systems to ensure convenient and secure access and improve the delivery of benefits, care and services. ~ Objective 4.3 ensures technology and systems enable VA and our ecosystem of partners to work together to improve Veterans' and other beneficiaries' quality of life and outcomes. Modern systems and technology serve as another force multiplier that amplifies our efforts and enables us to achieve our mission. Veterans, other beneficiaries, VA employees and partners can access applicable data and systems as easily and securely as possible. This effort requires a commitment to a culture of interoperability that promotes a consistently positive and seamless Veteran experience with VA by aligning business, data and information and systems and technology to ensure the right information and services securely and reliably reach the right person, at the right time, in the best manner to make timely, informed decisions and enable actions. From a technical perspective, all systems are designed and operated with interoperability (one-to-many approach), ease of access and security priorities.

Stakeholder(s):**Chief Information Officer :**
*Office of Information Technology (OIT) ~ Co-Lead***Chief Information Security Officer :**
*OIT ~ Co-Lead***4.4. Governance, Management & Evidence***Improve governance, management practices and make evidence-based decisions*

(Evidence Based Decisions) VA will improve governance, management practices and make evidence-based decisions to ensure quality outcomes and experiences and efficient use of resources. ~ Objective 4.4 ensures VA's governance framework, risk management efforts and use of evidence and program evaluation ensures resources are allocated to drive VA priorities and improve quality of life for Veterans and other beneficiaries. VA proactively and continuously looks for opportunities and threats to ensure best outcomes for Veterans and other beneficiaries, learns from successes and mistakes and uses evidence to make decisions and drive policy change that improves operations, experiences and outcomes. VA will leverage knowledge and ensure consistent and equitable access to VA resources for Veterans and other beneficiaries.

VA's Performance Improvement Officer achieves VA's mission and goals through strategic planning, measurement, analysis, regular progress assessments and the use of data to improve results. The Evaluation Officer leads evidence-building and evaluation activities. The Chief Learning Officer establishes and implements employee learning and development policies, and the Chief Risk Officer assesses risk challenges and opportunities that could affect the achievement of VA goals. The Evidence-based Policy Council and the Investment Review Council allocates resources to achieve VA priorities. The Office of Asset Enterprise Management oversees VA's Strategic Capital Investment Planning (SCIP) process and VA real property, fleet and facility assets to maximize reliability, sustainability, efficiency and effectiveness.

Stakeholder(s):**Planning and Performance Management :***OEI ~ Lead*

Administrative Information

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