

**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Memorandum

Date: **APR 05 2017**

From: Director, Center for Women Veterans (00W)

Subj: Approval of New Dates and Location for the 2017 National Summit on Women Veterans (VAIQ #7786087)

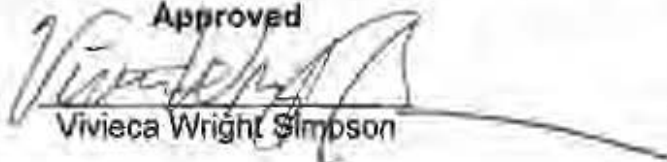
To: Chief of Staff (00A)

1. The purpose of this memorandum is to seek approval of the new location and dates for the 2017 National Summit on Women Veterans (Summit). The Summit was previously approved to take place on March 16-18, 2017 in Dallas, TX. However, due to the fact that we were unable to identify a venue for availability during the anticipated dates and that timeframe has since passed, we are required to obtain approval for the new location and dates. We would like to now plan the Summit for August 25-26, 2017, at the Hyatt Regency Houston in Houston, TX.

2. For background, the purpose of the Summit is to provide women Veterans and the local/state/Federal/NGO partners who serve them with information about the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) benefits and services, especially those designated for women Veterans; to engage in transparent dialogue about issues impacting women Veterans; share women-focused research and innovations; and connect with community partners. Participation in the Summit will positively affect the Veteran experience, as well as the VA employee competency in assisting women Veterans. The Summit will employ various modes of participation—which may include a virtual option—to promote maximum participation for women Veterans and cost efficiency for VA. All efforts will be made to select a conference venue that provides government discounts, and a hotel that provides the per diem rate or below per diem rate for sleeping rooms.


3. We worked with the Office of Acquisitions to identify a contractor capable of securing this particular venue, which has the availability and space necessary to accommodate the event during that timeframe. Please approve the changes to the dates and location. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at 202-461-6192.

Approved


Vivieca Wright Simpson

Not Approved

Vivieca Wright Simpson



Kayle M. Williams
Director

05 APR 2017
Date



STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION REVIEW

NAME OF ORIGINATOR Kayla M. Williams	VAHQ NO. 7759111	DATE 12/12/2016	DATE DUE 12/19/2016
--	----------------------------	---------------------------	-------------------------------

NAME OF EXECUTIVE SECRETARY STAFF <i>[Signature]</i>	SUBJECT 2017 National Women Veterans Summit(Summit)
---	---

ROUTING	INITIALS	DATE	COMMENTS
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXEC SEC	<i>[Initials]</i>	12/22/16	
<input type="checkbox"/> SENIOR ADVISOR			
<input type="checkbox"/> COSVA			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DERSECVA	<i>[Signature]</i>	1/9/17	Improved: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disapproved: <input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SECVA	<i>[Signature]</i>		Approved: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disapproved: <input type="checkbox"/>

KEY POINTS

- ▶ The Summit is tentatively scheduled for March 16-18, 2017, in Dallas, TX. Target audience is approximately 300 VA attendees; 500 Veterans, VSOs, other stakeholders, from various locations.
- ▶ Travel estimate includes cost for VA staff only; government per diem rate for lodging (\$146.00) and meals (\$64.00). All efforts will be made to select a hotel that can provide government rate.
- ▶ Conference and event planning costs will be covered by VE; participating Administrations and Staff Offices will cover the travel and training cost for their own staff members.

CONCURRENCE
Kayla Williams 12/20/16

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose - Discussion - Recommendation

Purpose: To provide women Veterans and the local/state/Federal/NGO partners who serve them with information about the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) benefits and services, especially those designated for women Veterans; to engage in transparent dialogue about issues impacting women Veterans; share women-focused research and innovations; and connect with community partners.

Discussion: VA employees will obtain updated training on VA policy and available resources that address women Veterans' needs and concerns; and community partners will be exposed to information that may facilitate subsequent future collaboration. Participation in the Summit will positively effect the Veteran experience, as well as the VA employee competency in assisting women Veterans. The Summit will employ various modes of participation--which may include a virtual option--to promote maximum participation for women Veterans and cost efficiency for VA. All efforts will be made to select a conference venue that provides government discounts, and a hotel that provides the per diem rate for sleeping rooms. The last Summit, held in July 2011 in Washington, DC, was attended by 400 VA staff members, women Veterans, Congressional staff, and other partners; cost was \$110,256.12. Projected costs for the 2017 Summit is estimated at \$993,000, will include 800 participants, and will take place in Dallas, TX. VE will pay \$220,000 for the Summit and the remaining travel and training costs will be covered by participating Administrations and Staff Offices.

Recommendation: That SECVA approve the conference package.

FOR OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY USE ONLY

SPECIAL HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS	DATE OF INCOMING	DATE VA RECEIVED	DATE OF INTERIM	DATE RECEIVED IN 001B
<input type="checkbox"/> RUSH <input type="checkbox"/> NOTARIZE	<input type="checkbox"/> DATE DOCUMENT FOR			

**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Memorandum

Date: 26 APR 17

From: Acting Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration

Subj: Request Approval to Implement Senior Leader Annual Business Meeting August 2017
(54625/BIS 4609)

To: Chief of Staff

1. In accordance with existing Department of Veterans Affairs conference policies and guidelines, and all applicable statutes and regulations, the Office of Human Resources and Administration requests your approval to implement Senior Leader Annual Business Meeting August 2017 (54625/BIS 4609) in fiscal year 2017.
2. Purpose: The primary purpose of the conference is to develop and sustain awareness in leading services pertaining to clients' complex operational needs. The secondary purpose of the conference is to gain knowledge in developing methods and opportunities to change operational best practices through improvements in executive governance. A third purpose of this conference is for the Office of Enterprise Integration (OEI) to promote operational capabilities among executives in the Department, especially VHA.
3. Goals and Objectives: The conference will improve the VHA service capability by enhancing awareness among staff and reinforcing the value of executive governance through in-person cooperation among colleagues. The conference will also enhance the quality of services to Veterans by preparing and encouraging staff to apply their improved understanding to practices and other conditions affecting complex operations in VHA. The face-to-face conference will help VHA staff clarify and coordinate future requirements that Office of Enterprise Integration (OEI) is promoting in executives with the goal of improving operational efficiency across major work functions.
4. Justification: The conference requires extended, uninterrupted episodes of face-to-face engagement to sustain attention on complex operational factors and conditions affecting stakeholders. The content of the conference is consistent with goals of VA and VHA, as it will include an extensive set of peer-to-peer presentations that concentrate on necessary designs, methods, and professional requirements for improving executive governance and overall operational efficiency. The conference is required by attendees to fully support their professional compliance to meet Department standards for full participation in the mission of VA and its growth of performance capability. Lodging taxes are included in estimated costs even if the Federal Government is tax-exempt in selected locations because all travelers attending the conference may not hold a government issued travel card. All travelers will have completed mandatory travel card and ethics training as required by VHA.

Subj: Request Approval to Implement Senior Leader Annual Business Meeting August 2017 (54625/BIS 4609)

5. **Business Case Analysis:** The proposed conference, Senior Leader Annual Business Meeting August 2017 (54625/BIS 4609), beginning on 2017-08-22 and ending on 2017-08-25 will be held in Washington, DC and include 650 VA personnel of which 500 will be travelers; 500 air travelers and 0 POV travelers, at a total estimated cost of \$1,231,130.00. The estimated cost per attendee is \$1,894.05. The travel dates are 2017-08-21 returning 2017-08-25. The value of the event to the VA mission is that it will reinforce vital Veteran services, as well as reinforce knowledge in developing executive governance of the operational conditions affecting such services. The value of the training event cannot be achieved through teleconferencing or video-conferencing because of the required interactions to achieve sustained concentration on collegial exchange of knowledge. Detailed market cost research was conducted on three potential locations. The location selected was determined to offer the VA the best value, especially with regard to its location services and travel proximity. Virtual options do not meet all educational requirements.

\$123,000.00 in non-travel costs is to cover meeting space (\$14,000.00), audiovisual equipment rental (\$60,000.00), venue service charge (\$40,000.00) and printing of meeting material (\$9,000.00).

\$22,500.00 in contractor support is to cover the cost of facilitators who will provide coaching and mentoring instruction.

6. The proposed dates and location are:

Dates	Potential Location
08/22/2017 - 08/25/2017	Washington, DC

7. The overall proposed per event cost estimate is provided below:

	Number of employees	Support Staff/VA Faculty	Non-Travel Cost	Travel Cost	Contractor Support	Total Cost	Cost per Participant
Senior Leader Annual Business Meeting August 2017 (54625/BIS 4609)	650	10 Support/ 7 Faculty out of 650 Employees	\$123,000.00	\$1,085,630.00	\$22,500.00	\$1,231,130.00	\$1,894.05

Subj: Request Approval to Implement Senior Leader Annual Business Meeting August 2017 (54625/BIS 4609)

- The Responsible Conference Executive (RCE) for this event is Pamela S. Mitchell, Acting Assistant Secretary, Office of Human Resources and Administration, and is available at 202-461-7750 should you wish to further discuss the proposed Senior Leader Annual Business Meeting August 2017 (54625/BIS 4609).

Pamela S. Mitchell
Pamela S. Mitchell
Acting Assistant Secretary, Office of Human
Resources and Administration

26 APR 17
Date

APPROVED / DISAPPROVE

Vivieca Wright Simpson
Vivieca Wright Simpson, MSPH
Chief of Staff

26 APR 17
Date



STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION REVIEW

NAME OF ORIGINATOR EESEventsTeamVACO@va.gov	VAIQ NO 7778197	DATE 2 Mar 17	DATE DUE
--	--------------------	------------------	----------

NAME OF EXECUTIVE SUMMARY STAFF	SUBJECT VA Senior Leaders Mid-Year Meeting (54677 / BIS 4665)
---------------------------------	--

ROUTING	INITIALS	DATE	COMMENTS
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXEC SEC	<i>JB</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/> SENIOR ADVISOR			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COSVA	<i>VWS</i>	<i>3/9/17</i>	APPROVED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISAPPROVE <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> DEPSECVA			
<input type="checkbox"/> SECVA			

KEY POINTS

- ▶ Loudoun County, VA / 04/25/2017 - 04/27/2017
- ▶ Target Audience: Senior Leadership - VACO Administration, Facility Directors, and Staff senior leaders
500 participants / \$1,899.97 per participant
- ▶ Total Cost: \$949,985.40
\$113,000.00 in non-travel costs is to cover meeting space (\$10,000.00), audiovisual equipment rental (\$54,000.00), venue service charge (\$40,000.00) and printing of meeting material (\$9,000.00).

Funding: The Office of Enterprise Integration is 100% responsible for funding all non-travel costs. Each individual attendee's office/facility will be responsible for travel costs

A request to recommend approval for Local Per diem for VA Senior Leaders Mid-Year Meeting will be submitted as soon as location has been finalized.

CONCURRENCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose - Discussion - Recommendation

Purpose: Office of Enterprise Integration, OEI is conducting a strategic support project that will support the implementation of the VA Secretary's vision, his priorities and transformation plan to Sr. Executives within VA to dramatically improve the leadership capabilities of VA leaders. This meeting is to ensure senior leaders across VA are aligned and aligning their part of the VA business with the Secretary's vision and overarching VA goals and objectives.

Goals and Objectives: VA Senior Leaders will attend a 1 1/2 day long VA Senior Leaders Mid-Year Meeting with an optional day for the administrations to meet separately. The goals and objectives include ensuring leaders across VA are aligned/aligning their part of the VA enterprise with the Secretary's vision and VA goals and objectives.

a) Since the 2010 Senior Leaders there have been significant changes in leadership and vision across the Department. The Secretary envisions reviewing our progress in 2017, documenting lessons learned, celebrating successes and renewing our commitment to complete VA's transformation.

b) This conference will involve senior leaders from across the Department who will share their experiences, ideas, and insights. The attendees will plan the way forward to maintain and sustain our success, while focusing on fundamental skills developed in 2017 that are critical to our success moving forward. Ultimately, this will inspire leaders and employees across the Department to provide the best possible service to our Veterans.

Justification: The proposal details the reasons that a face to face meeting is required to accomplish the goals and objectives. It overcomes the presumption that a face to face meeting is not necessary. All alternative means have been considered and are determined to be insufficient for achieving the stated purpose, goals and objectives.
(See Appendix F of VA Financial Policies and Procedures Conference Planning, Vol XIV, Chapter 10, December).

FOR OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY USE ONLY

SPECIAL HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS		DATE OF INCOMING	DATE VA RECEIVED	DATE OF INTERIM	DATE RECEIVED IN 001B
<input type="checkbox"/> RUSH	<input type="checkbox"/> DATE DOC FOR				
<input type="checkbox"/> NOTARIZE					

**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Memorandum

Date: **MAR 10 2017**

From: Acting Assistant Secretary, Office of Enterprise Integration

Subj: Request Approval to Implement VA Senior Leaders Mid-Year Meeting (54677 / BIS 4665)

To: Chief of Staff

1. In accordance with existing Department of Veterans Affairs conference policies and guidelines, and all applicable statutes and regulations, the Office of myVA requests your approval to implement VA Senior Leaders Mid-Year Meeting (54677 / BIS 4665) in fiscal year 2017.
2. Purpose: The primary purpose of the meeting is to develop and sustain awareness in leading services pertaining to clients' complex operational needs. The secondary purpose of the meeting is to gain knowledge in developing methods and opportunities to change operational best practices through improvements in executive governance. A third purpose of this training is for the myVA to promote operational capabilities among executives in the Department, especially VA Staff Offices.
3. Goals and Objectives: The meeting will improve the VA Staff Offices service capability by enhancing awareness among staff and reinforcing the value of executive governance through in-person cooperation among colleagues. The meeting will also enhance the quality of services to Veterans by preparing and encouraging staff to apply their improved understanding to practices and other conditions affecting complex operations in VA Staff Offices. The face-to-face training will help VA Staff Offices staff clarify and coordinate future requirements that myVA is promoting in executives with the goal of improving operational efficiency across major work functions.
4. Justification: The training requires extended, uninterrupted episodes of face-to-face engagement to sustain attention on complex operational factors and conditions affecting stakeholders. The content of the training is consistent with goals of VA and VA Staff Offices, as it will include an extensive set of peer-to-peer presentations that concentrate on necessary designs, methods, and professional requirements for improving executive governance and overall operational efficiency. The training is required by attendees to fully support their professional compliance to meet Department standards for full participation in the mission of VA and its growth of performance capability. Lodging taxes are included in estimated costs even if the Federal Government is tax-exempt in selected locations because all travelers attending the conference may not hold a government issued travel card. All travelers will have completed mandatory travel card and ethics training as required by VHA.

Subj: Request Approval to Implement VA Senior Leaders Mid-Year Meeting (54677 / BIS 4665)

5. **Business Case Analysis:** The proposed meeting, VA Senior Leaders Mid-Year Meeting (54677 / BIS 4665), beginning on 2017-04-25 and ending on 2017-04-27 will be held in Loudoun County, VA and include 500 VA personnel of which 470 will be travelers; 470 air travelers and 0 POV travelers, at a total estimated cost of \$949,985.40. The estimated cost per attendee is \$1,899.97. The travel dates are 2017-04-24 returning 2017-04-28. The value of the event to the VA mission is that it will reinforce vital Veteran services; as well as reinforce knowledge in developing executive governance of the operational conditions affecting such services. The value of the training event cannot be achieved through teleconferencing or video-conferencing because of the required interactions to achieve sustained concentration on collegial exchange of knowledge. Detailed market cost research was conducted on three potential locations. The location selected was determined to offer the VA the best value, especially with regard to its travel proximity and location services. Virtual options do not meet all educational requirements.

\$113,000.00 in non-travel costs is to cover meeting space (\$10,000.00), audiovisual equipment rental (\$54,000.00), venue service charge (\$40,000.00) and printing of meeting material (\$9,000.00).

A request to recommend approval for Local Per diem for VA Senior Leaders Mid-Year Meeting will be submitted as soon as location has been finalized.

6. The proposed dates and location are:

Dates	Potential Location
04/25/2017 - 04/27/2017	Loudoun County, VA

7. The overall proposed per event cost estimate is provided below:

	Number of employees	Support Staff/VA Faculty	Non-Travel Cost	Travel Cost	Contractor Support	Total Cost	Cost per Participant
VA Senior Leaders Mid-Year Meeting (54677 / BIS 4665)	500	10 Support/0 Faculty out of 500 Employees	\$113,000.00	\$836,985.40	\$0.00	\$949,985.40	\$1,899.97

Subj: Request Approval to Implement VA Senior Leaders Mid-Year Meeting (54677 / BIS 4665)

8. The Responsible Conference Executive (RCE) for this event is Dat Tran, Acting Assistant Secretary, Office of Enterprise Integration, and is available at 202-461-5800 should you wish to further discuss the proposed VA Senior Leaders Mid-Year Meeting (54677 / BIS 4665).

Dat P. Tran
105354

Digitally signed by Dat P. Tran
105354
DN: dc=gov, dc=va, o=internal,
ou=people,
0.9.2342.19200300.100.1.1=dat.tr
an@va.gov, cn=Dat P. Tran
105354
Date: 2017.02.27 13:38:30 -05'00

Dat Tran
Acting Assistant Secretary, Office of Enterprise
Integration

Date



Department of Veterans Affairs

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION REVIEW

NAME OF ORIGINATOR Kevin T. Hanretta		VAIQ NO. 7725501	DATE 8/25/16	DATE DUE
--	--	----------------------------	------------------------	----------

NAME OF EXECUTIVE SECRETARY STAFF Jen Jessop	SUBJECT 818114 VA Basic Police Officer Course (VABPOC) Class Number 1701
--	--

ROUTING	INITIALS	DATE	COMMENTS
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXEC SEC	<i>JH</i>	8/31/16	
<input type="checkbox"/> SENIOR ADVISOR			
<input type="checkbox"/> COSVA			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DEPSECVA	<i>JH</i>	8/31	Recommend: Approval X
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SECVA	<i>nm</i>	9/6	Approved: nm

KEY POINTS

- ▶ October 10 - December 02, 2016/North Little Rock, Arkansas
- ▶ 72 trainees - 16 staff/\$12,450.00 per attendee/Total cost: \$900,000.00
- ▶

CONCURRENCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose - Discussion - Recommendation

This 8 week course is required for newly hired VA Police officers to receive certification to perform law enforcement duties at VAMCs nationally.

The VABPOC includes dynamic, intense, scenario & role play based training. Subjects include small arms training & qualification, defensive tactics, ground defense, expandable straight baton, chemical weapon & a myriad of other subjects which rely on physical skills. Of great importances is the 40 hours of behavioral science training received which teach officers how to use verbal communication skills to de-escalate violent situations.

This training provides VA Police officers with specialized training in Federal law enforcement and prepares them with the ability to deal with Veterans inflicted by TBI, PTSD, suicidal/homicidal ideation, and other critical crisis intervention & verbal de-escalation skills & techniques unique to a health care environment.

All Police officers must successfully complete the BPOC before receiving their badge & credentials or being certified/authorized to perform any law enforcement duties. Upon graduation, newly assigned officers will: a) have completed certification requirements; and b) respond to & control various calls for service such as active shooter, workplace violence, disturbances, customer service/assistance, etc.

FOR OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY USE ONLY

SPECIAL HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS <input type="checkbox"/> RUSH <input type="checkbox"/> DATE DOCUMENT FOR <input type="checkbox"/> NOTARIZE	DATE OF INCOMING	DATE VA RECEIVED	DATE OF INTERIM	DATE RECEIVED IN 001B

**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Memorandum

Date:

SEP 01 2016

From: Interim Assistant Secretary for Management and Interim Chief Financial Officer (004)

Subj: Financial Management Training Event (Cork ID #2474)¹⁸⁷⁸

To: Deputy Secretary (001)

1. In accordance with existing Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) conference policies, guidelines, and all applicable statutes and regulations, the Office of Management (OM) requests your approval to execute a Financial Management Training Event in fiscal year (FY) 2017.

2. Purpose:

The Financial Management Training Event will reinforce accurate financial transactional processes; increase employee knowledge, skill, and proficiency; help remediate audit findings and deficiencies; and support change management for the Financial Management Business Transformation (FMBT) effort.

3. Goals and Objectives:

This training is intended to establish department-wide financial expectations; provide targeted training for critical issues and internal control deficiencies; and increase awareness of financial policies, processes, reports, and required actions.

4. Justification:

The Financial Management Training Event is required in order to help remediate current audit findings and avoid repeat or new findings during the annual financial statement audit. The training will follow a three-prong approach:

- Targeted financial management training related to audit findings
- New financial management initiatives and policies affecting VA
- Industry best practices for effectively implementing financial processes, policies, and procedures

Subj: Financial Management Training Event (Cork ID #2474)¹⁸⁷⁸

5. Business Case Analysis:

The proven benefits of face-to-face training include focused, engaged participants; customized interactions/discussions between attendees and facilitators; and enhanced networking opportunities to share best-practices. After conducting a cost comparison of potential locations, Nashville, Tennessee was identified as the lowest cost venue.

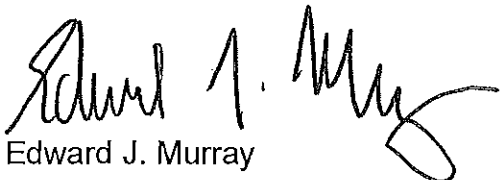
6. The proposed dates and location are:

DATE	POTENTIAL LOCATION
January 11-13, 2017	Nashville, TN

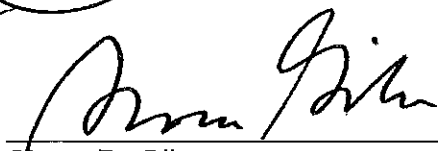
7. The overall proposed per event cost estimate is provided below:

	Number of VA employees	Number of Support Staff	Non-Travel Cost	Travel Cost	Contractor Support	Total Cost	Cost per Participant
Financial Management Training	305	5	\$18,690	\$455,805	0	\$474,000	\$1,530.63

8. I am available at (202) 461-6703 should you wish to further discuss this event.


Edward J. Murray

Approve/Disapprove:


Sloan D. Gibson
Deputy Secretary

9/13/16
Date

Date: February 1, 2017

From: Principal Executive Director, Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construction (003)

Subj: Request Approval for the VA 2017 Acquisition Workforce Innovation Symposium (AWIS) (VAIQ 7766268)

To: Acting Chief of Staff

1. In accordance with existing Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) conference policies and guidelines, and all applicable statutes and regulations request your concurrence and approval to host the VA 2017 Acquisition Workforce Innovation Symposium (AWIS).

2. Purpose: The Office of Acquisition and Logistics (OAL) is orchestrating the 2017e symposium to enhance the professional readiness and intrinsic knowledge of VA'se contracting professionals across the Department.e

3. Goals and Objectives: The Symposium is designed to improve the overall capabilities of VA's contracting workforce, with immediate emphasis on improving employee engagement, enhancing customer service, and closing the identified Federal acquisition functional and technical competency gaps. The symposium supports our continuing efforts to deploy professional development strategies that address common challenges contracting officers (COs) face and provide opportunities for connectivity and collaboration across the enterprise, combined with formal educational conference sessions.e

4. Justification: VA employs over 2600 COs. In November 2016, we successfully hosted a symposium attended by over 970 of VA's COs in conjunction with the VAe National Veterans Small Business Engagement. The 2017 Symposium will expand these same opportunities for continued professional development more broadly to those contracting specialists who were unable to attend in 2016. Providing this type of learning environment for VA's acquisition professionals has proven to be an effective method of achieving optimal learning results. The symposium will have approximately 1,500 attendees from VA's acquisition workforce and include GS-1102 employees from all VA organizations.e

5. Business Case Analysis: Expenditures in support of this effort are estimated at \$2,698,418 to include contractor cost of \$215,618 and attendee travel at \$2,482,800.e The attached VA Form 10008 details the estimate.e

6. Contracted Services: The objective of this effort is to obtain consulting, professional, and overall managerial services to plan and execute VA's 2017 AWIS. In addition to consulting and professional services, the contractor shall provide all required planning, logistical, on-site, and closeout support services.e

Page 2.

Subj: Request Approval for the VA 2017 Acquisition Workforce Innovation Symposium (AWIS) (VAIQ 7766268)

7. Proposed Locations and Dates: The symposium will be held March 14-15, 2017, at the Gaylord Opryland, Nashville, TN. Travel dates will be March 13, 2017 and March 16, 2017.

8. Ms. Judith Dawson, VA's Acquisition Career Manager is coordinating can be reached at (202) 461-1533 or Judith.dawson@va.gov.



Gregory L. Giddens

Attachment: VA Form 10008 Conference Request form

APPROVED/DISAPPROVED



Gina S. Farrissee
Acting Chief of Staff

2/7/17
Date

NAME OF ORIGINATOR Charles Wright 202-461-9535	VAIO NO. 1734788	DATE 08/04/2016	DATE DUE
--	----------------------------	---------------------------	----------

NAME OF EXECUTIVE SECRETARY STAFF <i>Jan Jessup</i>	SUBJECT VBA Challenge Training Session 2017-1 from 11 Oct to 18 Nov 2016
--	--

ROUTING	INITIALS	DATE	COMMENTS
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXEC SEC	<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>9/15/16</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> SENIOR ADVISOR			
<input type="checkbox"/> COSVA			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DEPSECVA	<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>9/22/16</i>	Recommend: Approval <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disapproval _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SECVA	<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>9/25</i>	Approve <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disapprove _____

KEY POINTS

- ▶ Denver, CO / 11 Oct - 18 Nov 2016
- ▶ Audience: Veteran Service Representatives & Rating Veteran Service Representatives
- ▶ 185 Attendees / \$8,373 per attendee / Total cost: \$1,549,000

CONCURRENCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose - Discussion - Recommendation

The training will focus on training all aspects of the VBA Veterans Service Representatives (VSRs) and Rating Veterans Service Representatives (RVSRs) job requirements to ensure VBAs transformation success.

The training will provide new Veterans Service Center employees with the skills they need to function effectively in their positions as VSRs or RVSRs. Challenge provides hands-on training with computer applications and advances the new employees through progressively more challenging practice claims. Challenge training is a key initiative in the transformation of VBA and a critical component in achieving our transformation goals for improved service delivery.

Upon the conclusion of the resident portion of Challenge training: Newly hired Veterans Service Representatives will develop 1.5 cases per day at 94% accuracy, or will promulgate 3.0 cases per day at 94% accuracy; Newly hired Rating Veterans Service Representatives will demonstrate mastery by rating at least one simple (one-to-two issue) claim per day at 90% accuracy.

Consideration of alternate presentation methods: Face-to-face training is required for effective interaction between the employees and instructors. The plenary and breakout sessions are structured to allow participants to actively participate, contributing thoughts and ideas for improving the service we provide.

FOR OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY USE ONLY

SPECIAL HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS	DATE OF INCOMING	DATE VA RECEIVED	DATE OF INTERIM	DATE RECEIVED IN 001B
<input type="checkbox"/> RUSH <input type="checkbox"/> DATE DOCUMENT FOR <input type="checkbox"/> NOTARIZE				

Memorandum

Date:

From: Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits

Subj: Request Waiver for VBA Challenge Session 2017-1 Training in FY 2017

Thru: Deputy Secretary

To: Secretary

1. In accordance with the existing Department of Veterans Affairs Conference policies and guidelines, and all applicable statutes and regulations, the Veterans Benefits Administration requests your approval of a waiver to implement centralized, face-to-face Challenge training class. The Challenge training session will cost in excess of the maximum allowable expense of \$500,000.

a. Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF)

1. The execution of this conference is subject to the availability of FY17 funds. If FY17 funds are not available, this request will be canceled
2. Comparative analysis for venue and cost have been conducted
3. Conference participation is limited to required attendees

2. Purpose: The Challenge training program is a national technical training curriculum that provides new Veterans Service Center employees with the skills they need to function effectively in their positions as Veterans Service Representatives (VSRs) or Rating Veterans Service Representatives (RVSRs). Challenge provides hands-on training with computer applications and advances the new employees through progressively more challenging practice claims. Challenge training is a key initiative in the transformation of VBA and a critical component in achieving our transformation goals for improved service delivery.

3. Goals and Objectives: Upon the conclusion of the resident portion of Challenge training:

- Newly hired Veterans Service Representatives will develop 1.5 cases per day at 94% accuracy, or will promulgate 3.0 cases per day at 94% accuracy;
- Newly hired Rating Veterans Service Representatives will demonstrate mastery by rating at least one simple (one-to-two issue) claim per day at 90% accuracy

4. Justification:

a. Challenge training is a proven program designed to establish in eight weeks employee skill levels that previously took six to eight months to achieve. On completion of Challenge training, employees complete 150 percent more claims per day in their first six months, with a 30 percent increase in accuracy, when compared to early student performance under the previous program.

b. Challenge training emphasizes evaluation of student learning through pre- and post-tests; introductory skill practices using mock cases; closely supervised, actual work using live cases; and immediate feedback from experienced instructors.

5. Business Case Analysis: Challenge costs are effectively constrained. Use of existing government facilities, rather than commercial training facilities, leverages sunk costs of existing facilities. The classrooms are outfitted with suitable classroom equipment including computers connected to the VBA network that are already loaded with relevant computer applications.

6. The proposed dates and location for the training session is:

TIME	POTENTIAL LOCATIONS
October 11, 2016 to November 18, 2016	Compensation Service Training Facility, Denver, CO

a. Denver, Colorado was chosen as the training location due to the cost savings of sending employees to a government owned and operated training facility. If training is held in another location, the cost for travel and lodging for an additional 32 employees (instructors) would need to be added to the cost of the conference.

b. The training session will occur with:

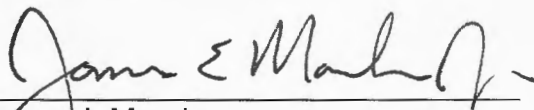
- 185 participants 150 students, 3 support staff, and 32 Instructors (locally based)
- 153 participants will travel to Compensation Service Training Facility

7. VBA is using only government facilities and support staff for this event. Hotel costs include only lodging rates, and will be equal to or less than the GSA rate for the cities where training will occur. No "logo", SWAG, food, light refreshments, or entertainment items or services will be purchased. All attendees will be informed that no per diem can be claimed for any meals provided at government expense.

Total Cost Breakdown for Average Cost per Participant (Students/Instructors/Support)

	Number of VA employees	Number of Travelers	Travel Costs	Total Cost	Cost per Participant
Support Staff	3	3	\$34,000	\$34,000	
VSR Class	100	100	\$1,126,000	\$1,126,000	
RVSR Class	50	50	\$389,500	\$389,500	
Instructors	32	0	0	0	
Total (rounded to nearest \$thousand)	185	153	\$1,549,000	\$1,549,000	\$8,373

8. I am available at (202) 461-9300 should you wish to further discuss this proposed Challenge training event.



Thomas J. Murphy
Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits
Performing the duties of
Under Secretary for Benefits

For



Department of Veterans Affairs

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION REVIEW

NAME OF ORIGINATOR Dave Thomas (1-4400)	VAIO NO.	DATE 04/01/2015	DATE DUE
---	----------	---------------------------	----------

NAME OF EXECUTIVE SECRETARY STAFF	SUBJECT
-----------------------------------	---------

ROUTING	INITIALS	DATE	COMMENTS
<input type="checkbox"/> EXEC SEC			
<input type="checkbox"/> SENIOR ADVISOR			
<input type="checkbox"/> COSVA			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DEPSECVA	<i>[Signature]</i>	4/8/15	Recommend: Approval <i>[Signature]</i> Disapproval _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SECVA	<i>[Signature]</i>	4/13	Approve <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>[Signature]</i> Disapprove _____

KEY POINTS

- ▶ 2015: Pittsburgh, PA / Nov 14-20, 2015
350 VA Procurement Decision Makers (PDM) / \$6,680 per attendee / Total cost: \$2,364,872
- ▶ 2016: Minneapolis, MN / Oct 29-Nov 4, 2016
350 VA PDM / \$6,682 per attendee / Total cost \$2,365,374
- ▶ In 2013, 296 Veteran Owned Small Businesses received more than \$878 million in contracts from VA.

CONCURRENCE

Thomas J. Leney, Executive Director, SVBP
 Dave Thomas, Director, NVSBE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose - Discussion - Recommendation

- * The Conference will have 4,000 total attendees from Federal & commercial sectors and will include procurement decision makers (PDMs) and Veteran Owned Small Businesses (VOSB).
- * Both years have a significant cost, but the event generates a high ROI.
- * Annual engagement provides access to economic opportunities for VOSBs by direct communication with both Federal and commercial PDMs. This is accomplished by Business Opportunity, Networking Round-tables, Senior Leader Round-tables, Dining with Decision Makers & Exhibits enabling PDMs to identify VOSBs that can meet their needs & enables VA to make their small business goals.
- * It shows VA & other Federal agency commitment to assisting Veterans improve their economic well-being.
- * In Atlanta, there were over 83,000 connections made at this event.
 - 96% of small business attendees stated they made new & valuable business connections
 - 72% of small business representatives stated the event met or surpassed their expectations.
 - 69% of Federal PDMs stated they met with 20 or more small businesses
- * This event is a reoccurring annual event. 2015 & 2016 will be the fifth & sixth iteration respectively.
- * Actual cost in 2014 was \$2,438,607. In order to reduce costs & improve planning & implementation we need to "lock-in" venues and market the events early.

Recommendation: Deputy Secretary recommend approval and Secretary approve waiver to conduct the 2015 & 2016 NVSBE.

FOR OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY USE ONLY

SPECIAL HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS <input type="checkbox"/> RUSH <input type="checkbox"/> DATE DOCUMENT FOR <input type="checkbox"/> NOTARIZE	DATE OF INCOMING	DATE VA RECEIVED	DATE OF INTERIM	DATE RECEIVED IN 0018

**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Memorandum

Date: April 1, 2015

From: Executive Director Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization
(OSDBU) (00SB)

Subject: Waiver - 2015/2016 National Veterans Small Business Engagement (NVSBE)

To: Secretary (00)

1. **Purpose:**

a. The Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) requests your approval of a waiver to conduct the NVSBE in Pittsburgh, PA from November 14 - 20, 2015 and Minneapolis, MN from Oct 31-Nov 4, 2016. The estimated cost of NVSBE is \$2,364,872 and \$2,365,374 for 2015 and 2016 respectively.

2. **Background:**

- a) The NVSBE 2015 and 2016 are the fifth and sixth annual major events that provide Veteran-Owned Small Business Owners (VOSB) improved access to VA, Federal, and Commercial Procurement Decision Makers (PDM's). This event enables VA to clearly demonstrate its commitment to its priority goal of "Access" and its strategic objective of improving Veteran economic security.
- b) The National Veterans Small Business Engagement is part of VA outreach to Veteran-Owned Small Businesses in accordance with Public Law 95-507, the Small Business Investment Act of 1958, which defines procurement set-asides and provides maximum practicable opportunities in its acquisitions to small businesses. Under the authority of the Act, VA provides vendor counseling sessions, participates in events targeting the small business community and provides other training and business development outreach to small business owners. Public Law 106-50, the Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999, expanded existing programs and provided new assistance programs for Veterans who own or operate small businesses. The law mandated that agencies provide information to Veteran-Owned firms on what each agency is purchasing or could purchase, and directs VA to expand outreach to educate Veterans not yet in business about self-employment opportunities.
- c) This waiver seeks approval for two year funding:
- (1) Experience has shown that the best venue sites at the most economic value are reserved 2 to 3 years in advance. In the past, our selection of potential venues occurred less than 12 months in advance of the event which limited the availability of sites that would otherwise meet our criteria,

restricted the time required to plan the event, and in some instances would increase site fees and meeting space rentals.

- (2) Stakeholder feedback from both the federal and private sectors indicate that attendees need to know the location early on so they can plan their travel and expenses more effectively.
- (3) Announcing the sites two years out builds predictability and assists in the logistical planning such as, hotel group room blocks and PDM selection.
- (4) Traditionally the best pricing in hotels/venues are secured farther in advance of the event.

3. Goals and Objectives:

- a. The ultimate goal of the NVSBE is to enable procurement ready VOSBs to add value to the mission of the VA by providing the opportunity to learn about requirements and match capabilities necessary to compete effectively for procurement awards. The Engagement provides an opportunity for VOSBs to discuss potential opportunities with a large number of PDMs as well as with potential small and large business partners.
- b. In order for VA to meet its socioeconomic procurement goals, VA PDM's must be aware of VOSBs that can add value to VA missions, gain access to VOSBs to understand their capabilities in order to mitigate the perception of risk associated with doing business with a VOSB.
- c. This is the premier federal government event enabling Veteran-Owned Small Businesses to maximize opportunities to achieve the access needed to effectively compete for and win federal contracts.
- d. The 2014 NVSBE event hosted over 3,200 participants and offered the opportunity for VOSBs to connect with more than 375 PDMs from federal agencies and private industry at more than 2,800 "Direct Access" activities.
- e. The 2015 NVSBE will expand on the success of the previous events. We will monitor the return on investment for VA participants by managing the number of procurement-ready VOSB with which they can connect and refine the use of the Event Management Services Software (EMSS) that enables participants to enhance connections. In 2014, participants recorded more than 83,000 connections.

5. Business Case Analysis:

- a. **Cost Justification:** The total cost of the 2014 NVSBE was \$2,438,607.32. The pricing cost to VA includes air travel, lodging, per diem, travel voucher fees and registration fees.

- b. **No-Cost Implementation Contract:** The entire NVSBE contract will be implemented at no cost to the government. The majority of the planning will be done by our OSDBU internal federal and contractor team. The contract includes commercial marketing, registration, event logistics planning, and venue negotiations.
- c. **Number and Type of Attendees:** We seek to increase the value of VA investment by attracting more than 3,000 business participants to work with 350 VA officials, 100 officials from other federal agencies, and more than 60 commercial customers. We seek to increase return on investment by connecting PDMs who have opportunities (Buyers) with the VOSBs capabilities (Sellers) prior to the event so all participants can most effectively use their time at the event to have discussions with relevant partners.
- d. **Duration:** The NVSBE will last three days to enable participants to make more and better connections (travel costs are determined based on arrival the night before and staying the night on the last day of the conference). In addition to the primary objective of providing access, the event also enables VA agencies to conduct training for staff. In 2014, VHA reduced their training costs for VHA acquisition staff by taking advantage of their presence at these annual events to conduct training the day prior and after the conference.
- e. **Timing:** The 2015 NVSBE has been scheduled for the first quarter of the fiscal year (FY). Since our most critical asset for ensuring a beneficial event are the PDMs, OSDBU has listened and responded to the positive responses of the PDMs and continue to schedule the event during the first quarter.

Previously, the Engagement was held during the fourth quarter, but that caused the PDMs and those from other agencies difficulty in processing procurements before years' end. We also took into consideration when choosing event dates in 2014 and now 2015 the advice of the acquisition community to avoid the month of October as PDMs are consumed with year-end closeout activities. The proposed dates for 2015 and 2016 NVSBE do not conflict with holidays or other organizations holding events over the same time period in the convention centers and surrounding areas.

- f. **Major Activities:** We propose the following:
 - 1.) Business Opportunity Sessions (400)
 - 2.) Networking Receptions (2)
 - 3.) Exhibits (300)
 - 4.) Dining with Decision Maker networking sessions at Luncheons (1,200)
 - 5.) Networking Roundtables (1,800)
 - 6.) Executive Roundtables (5)
 - 7.) Senior Leader Roundtables (70)

- 8.) Learning Sessions to improve procurement readiness of VOSB (60)
- 9.) Workshops (VOSB/PDM) (3)

6. Cost Mitigation Efforts:

- a. Although our goal is to increase return on investment, rather than merely to reduce costs, we have undertaken a number of cost mitigation efforts. We are restricting attendance to VA PDMs with procurement opportunities that are relevant to firms beyond their local area. The use of no-cost contract for the NVSBE will spread costs across all participants. Event expenses covered under the no-cost contract are funded by hotel concessions, venue food and beverage guarantees, booth fees, sponsorships, and registration fees paid by all participants.

As a result, VA expenditures for the NVSBE are limited to travel and registration fees for VA participants, and exhibit fees for VA organizations. Other Cost Savings/Cost Avoidance measures follow:

- 1.) **SWAG:** There are no gifts, trinkets, memorabilia, or commemorative embossed items. Sponsors may provide items based on their sponsor package, at no cost to VA.
 - 2.) **Per Diem:** All federal government participants will be notified that they may not claim per diem for meals provided to them at the NVSBE.
 - 3.) **Food and Beverage:** The NVSBE contractor will stipulate that all provision of food and light refreshments will be in compliance with federal policy and regulations.
 - 4.) **Entertainment:** There will be no entertainment included in the NVSBE.
 - 5.) **Hotel Costs:** Event hotels are requested to provide rooms on a per diem basis.
 - 6.) **VA Integrated Operations Center (IOC):** Recommend retaining a lean IOC footprint as we did in 2014.
- b. **Advanced Planning:** By planning 2 years in advance, we will reduce the risk of problems due to the application of technology associated with the event. In particular we seek to expand the availability to match VOSBs to PDMs prior to the event, so that PDMs can be assured of meeting the right procurement ready VOSBs. It also allows us to lock-in the best cities to conduct this event and improve on marketing effort to attract more VOSB.

7. **Location:** The site assessment for the event has been completed. Based on feedback from approximately 46 potential venues, we recommend that the 2015 NVSBE be held in Pittsburgh, PA from November 14 - 20, 2015 and the 2016 NVSBE held in Minneapolis, MN on Oct. 31 - Nov 4, 2015. (Attachment A)

DATE	LOCATION
Nov 14 – 20, 2015	Pittsburgh, PA
Oct 31 – Nov 4, 2016	Minneapolis, MN

8. **Estimated Cost:** The overall estimated costs for the NVSBE are summarized below. For comparison purposes, we also show the actual costs for 2014. The non-travel cost increases are due to anticipated increases in registration fees and booth fees. Due to the nature of the no-cost contract, the contractor determines these fees, so we can only estimate them at this time. The increase in the travel cost estimate is due primarily to anticipated increases in airline tickets and travel voucher fees not included in 2014.

	Training Event Title	Number of VA employees	Non-Travel Cost	Travel Cost	Contractor Support	Total Cost	Cost per Participant
Actuals	NVSBE 2014	430	\$219,304	\$590,287	\$1,629,016	\$2,438,607	\$5,671
Estimate	NVSBE 2015	354	\$346,000	\$624,760	\$1,373,957	\$2,364,872	\$6,680
Estimate	NVSBE 2016	354	\$367,700	\$613,717	\$1,383,957	\$2,365,374	\$6,682

9. **Risk Assessment:** Listed below are major risks identified:

Risk	Mitigation
Sites do not meet NVSBE needs	Completed site visits to Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and Minneapolis. Met with key venue, hotel and city officials.
Not attracting VOSBs	Early marketing of business opportunities and early announcement of venue.
Insufficient procurement ready VOSBs	Partner with PTACs, SBA, and other organizations to identify procurement-ready VOSBs prior to event. Announce VA Staff participation early.
Site availability	Get waiver signed for two years.

10. **Budget Reviews and AAR:** To ensure effective oversight, coordination, and synergy, we will continue to use the Executive Steering Committee consisting of senior executives from all relevant VA organizations to review planning and coordinate activities. We will provide a cost update prior to the event to ensure all costs have been captured and waiver adjusted as needed. Actual event costs will be briefed along with an assessment of the extent to which the NVSBE accomplished its goals as part of the After Action Report process.

11. **Participation of VA Executive Leadership:** We propose that The Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (SECVA) attend the NVSBE split between two days; and the Undersecretaries attend to show senior leadership commitment to this important outreach effort. The attendance of Executive Leaders at past NVSBEs made a very positive impression on the stakeholder community. Several engagement activities effectively demonstrated VA commitment to our stakeholders at the highest level. Final schedules will be determined in coordination with the Executives to facilitate their participation. Pittsburgh and Minneapolis both have VA facilities within their metropolitan areas.

12. I am available at your convenience to discuss these two proposed events.



Thomas J. Loney

Attachments

A – Site Information – 2015/2016

B – 2014 After Action Review Summary



Department of Veterans Affairs

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION REVIEW

NAME OF ORIGINATOR George L. Tanner, Ph.D., Dean VALU	VAIQ NO. 7609611	DATE 03/10/2016	DATE DUE
---	----------------------------	---------------------------	----------

NAME OF EXECUTIVE SECRETARY STAFF	SUBJECT Request Waiver for 2016 Leadership VA (LVA) Conferences, Sessions I - IV (VAIQ #7609611) and Local Per Diem Request
-----------------------------------	---

ROUTING	INITIALS	DATE	COMMENTS
<input type="checkbox"/> EXEC SEC			
<input type="checkbox"/> SENIOR ADVISOR			
<input type="checkbox"/> COSVA			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DEPSECVA	<i>[Signature]</i>	3/30/16	Recommend: Approval X
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SECVA	<i>[Signature]</i>	4/3/16	Approved: X Disapproved: _____

KEY POINTS

- ▶ Dates: Session I-Washington, DC, May 2 - 6, 2016; Session II-Salt Lake City, UT, Jun 20 - 24, 2016; Session III-St. Paul, MN, Aug 22 - 26, 2016; Session IV-Washington, DC, Nov 14 -18, 2016
- ▶ Target Audience: Select VA Senior Leaders
- ▶ Approx 103 total participants (over 4 sessions)/\$4,002.42 per participant/Total Cost:\$1,649,000.00
*Same 103 participants attend each session

CONCURRENCE
00A

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose - Discussion - Recommendation

- LVA is VA's premier enterprise-wide leadership development program. LVA Fellows are selected through a competitive process. Fellows must attend four week-long residency sessions.
- The primary purpose of the LVA program is to develop and enhance the leadership skills and competencies of VA's high-performing leaders.
- LVA Sessions I & IV: The location for these two sessions was selected to maximize direct interaction of the fellows with the Department's most senior leaders and conduct a site visit to Capitol Hill to converse with Congressional Legislators. There's also an opportunity for the fellows to lay the foundation for their service learning activity by providing direct support to a local VSO; the Maryland Center for Veterans Education & Training (MCVET). Finally, the fellows will brief their team projects during the MyVA InnoVAtion Symposium to VA senior leaders during Session IV.
- LVA Session II: The location for Session II was selected to allow the fellows to experience the inner workings of a VA Medical Center. They will also be providing volunteer support assistance for the medical center leading up to the start of the 36th National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Salt Lake.
- LVA Session III: The St. Paul Regional Benefit Office was selected to provide the fellows with an opportunity to gain insight on all of VBA's business lines and to understand the breadth and depth of the environment of claims submission. The St. Paul RO also touts a Pension Management Center (one of three in the nation).

FOR OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY USE ONLY

SPECIAL HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS	DATE OF INCOMING	DATE VA RECEIVED	DATE OF INTERIM	DATE RECEIVED IN 001B
<input type="checkbox"/> RUSH <input type="checkbox"/> DATE DOCUMENT FOR				
<input type="checkbox"/> NOTARIZE				

**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Memorandum

Date: MAR 10 2016

From: Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration (006)

Subject: Request Waiver for 2016 Leadership VA (LVA) Conferences, Sessions I - IV (VAIO # 7609611)

Thru: Deputy Secretary (001)

To: Secretary (00)

1. In accordance with existing Department of Veterans Affairs Conference policies and guidelines, and all applicable statutes and regulations, the Office of VA Learning University (VALU) requests waiver for LVA Conferences, Sessions I - IV in 2016. The LVA program consists of four week-long face-to-face conference sessions scheduled for delivery between the months of May and November 2016. One hundred (100) LVA Fellows and 3 FTE support personnel are projected to attend all four residency sessions and the total cost will exceed \$500,000.

2. Purpose: The LVA program is the Department's premier leadership development training event for high-potential, high-performing GS 13 - 15 and Title 38 equivalent employees. The primary purpose of the program is to develop and enhance the leadership skills and competencies of the Department's high-performing leaders in order to better prepare them for higher levels of responsibility. Additionally, VALU will continue to coordinate with the MyVA Task Force, Office of Policy and Planning to ensure the integration of MyVA Idea House initiatives with the LVA curriculum as InnoVAtion Projects.

3. Goals and Objectives:

a. LVA Core Program Goals will:

- 1) Provide competency-based leadership training and developmental experiences that are focused on enhancing the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs) for high-potential employees.
- 2) Increase the bench strength and quality of the senior leadership throughout the Department.
- 3) Develop and enhance critical thinking and innovative skills that VA leaders require for success while operating within a large, complex organization.
- 4) Facilitate the development of strong networks and increase dialog across Administrations to enhance collaboration towards accomplishment of VA strategic goals.

Request Waiver for 2016 Leadership VA (LVA) Conferences, Sessions I - IV (VAIQ # 7609611)

- 5) Build and sustain a culture of mentoring within the VA's leadership pipeline.
- 6) Rekindle the commitment of talented and motivated VA leaders towards public service and support of the Department's mission.

b. LVA Core Program Objectives – Upon completion LVA Fellows will:

- 1) Effectively align I CARE with each of the initiative's core values. Make excellent use of the opportunity to collaborate with other high-potential, high performers within the VA. (ECQs: Results Driven, Leading Change, Leading People, Building Coalitions).
- 2) Understand and are able to apply strategic leadership skills and competencies towards a sense of direction, and build ownership and alignment within their workgroups to implement change. (ECQs: Leading Change, Leading People).
- 3) Develop and implement a sustainable change management environment within the Department; both internally and externally. (ECQ: Leading Change).
- 4) Understand the value of effectively developing and utilizing the diverse talent that exists in their LVA class. (ECQs: Leading People, Business Acumen).
- 5) Identify current and potential threats to the Department. Use technology to develop technical strategies/solutions to transform the VA into a more effective 21st Century organization. (ECQs: Results Driven, Business Acumen, Building Coalitions).

4. Justification: LVA ensures continuity of leadership development within the Department by building a sturdy pipeline of committed, talented and engaged fellows. The program allows VA to ensure the delivery of high-quality healthcare, benefits, memorial and other services to our Veterans and their families. The LVA program immerses its fellows in a collaborative, blended learning environment; including instructor-led classroom sessions, on-line learning and action learning (project development). The blended learning environment better prepares LVA Fellows to expand their leadership skills and competencies. The blended approach is also an effective methodology for adult learning and our LVA Alumni Fellows have clearly indicated that it was a critical component to their learning experience.

The LVA curriculum is aligned to support OPM ECQs and focuses on enterprise-wide objectives as fellows develop networks across the Department and create synergy amongst its high-performing leaders. Forming collegial, professional relationships amongst LVA Fellows can lead to effective organizational change. The program's broad-

Request Waiver for 2016 Leadership VA (LVA) Conferences, Sessions I - IV (VAIG # 7609611)

based curriculum is designed to be delivered over four distinct week-long sessions to ensure a comprehensive and rewarding learning experience.

Each session focuses on a different Administration theme (See Tab A) and incorporates residential instructor-led training, online and action learning to round out the curriculum. This broad-based curriculum allows the fellows to gain an enterprise-wide perspective of VA and fosters an appreciation for the various roles and responsibilities of their colleagues. Another key aspect of the LVA curriculum is that it leverages the expertise of VA senior leaders to provide real world experiences and thoughtful engagement to stimulate critical thinking. Industry experts provide exposure to best practices that are currently impacting both government and the private sector.

The face-to-face, instructor-led learning environment is an essential aspect to the overall success of the curriculum. The LVA program would likely lose its effectiveness and appeal to applicants without this key component of the curriculum. The series of highly interactive workshops, critical thinking activities, customized MyVA InnoVation projects and lectures promotes collaborative learning and closes a leadership skills gap (ECQ 5: Building Coalitions). Focusing on building coalitions better prepares LVA Fellows to overcome one of the six common deficiencies of new leaders of the Department, identified by the Corporate Leadership Council: *Failure to establish key connections and partnerships*. Additionally, site-visits are incorporated into the curriculum to allow the fellows to have an up close view of how each Administration performs their primary functions.

The LVA capstone (MyVA InnoVation Project Symposium) is conducted during the final residency session in Washington, DC. The LVA InnoVation Symposium requires fellows to brief their "out of the box" solutions to current VA issues that promote effective change for Veterans and the Department. Prior to the first residency session, the fellows will be strategically divided into project teams. Each project team will be assigned a project from the MyVA Task Force and an Executive Sponsor, and must collaborate for months to develop thoughtful solutions (*that can be implemented*) to some of VA's most difficult issues. During the symposium the teams will present their projects at a high-level briefing to key members of the MyVA Task Force, Executive Sponsors and VA senior leaders. The fellows will also compose a written proposal that articulates the development of their project post-graduation.

The endearing objective of the LVA program is to bring high-performing employees, from across VA together and teach them to work collaboratively to solve some of the most pressing issues facing the Department. The learning objectives of the LVA program justify the necessity to primarily use a face-to-face modality throughout the curriculum. However, the LVA program also leverages technology and incorporates virtual, self-paced instruction during intersessions. Applicants must compete for merit selections to the LVA program and once selected will receive top-notch, rewarding training. However, the true winners are the Veterans that are better served by VA incorporating an innovative learning experience into its leadership development portfolio for its high-performing leaders.

Request Waiver for 2016 Leadership VA (LVA) Conferences, Sessions I - IV (VAIQ # 7609611)

5. Total Estimate for Sessions I - IV: The total estimate for Sessions I - IV include: non-travel (\$147,339.19), travel (\$979,660.81) and contractor support (\$522,000) costs, total cost \$1,649,000 and cost per participant \$16,009.71 (see Table A below for details). The cost estimate breakdown considers 100 fellows and 3 FTEs attending four week-long training events. The total cost per participant for each conference is significantly less expensive than comparable commercial and government week-long training events based on market research.

Table A (Total Cost Breakdown Estimate)

Session	Number of VA Employees	VA Support Staff	Non-Travel Costs	Travel Costs	Contractor Support	Total Cost	Total Cost Per Participant
I	100	3FTEs + 3CTRs	\$37,850.23	\$284,649.77	\$130,500	\$453,000	\$4,398.06
II			\$36,459.57	\$208,040.43	\$130,500	\$375,000	\$3,640.78
III			\$36,272.47	\$229,227.53	\$130,500	\$396,000	\$3,844.66
IV			\$36,756.92	\$257,743.06	\$130,500	\$425,000	\$4,126.21
Totals	103		\$147,339.19	\$979,660.81	\$522,000	\$1,649,000	\$16,009.71

Notes:

- Costs represented here are based on FY16 per diem rates, GSA City Pairs and market research currently available.
- These are projected estimates for each designated city. Actual costs could vary; depending on dates, hotel, session program requirements and home station of traveler.
- Costs are estimates based on current market research, non-travel cost are defined and identified on 10008a.
- Average estimates do not include any contract adjustments that will be negotiated by an approved VA contracting official.

6. The proposed dates and locations are:

Session	Dates	Locations
I	May 02 - 06, 2016	Washington, DC
II	June 20 - 24, 2016	Salt Lake City, UT
III	August 22 - 26, 2016	Saint Paul, MN
IV	November 14 - 18, 2016	Washington, DC

Request Waiver for 2016 Leadership VA (LVA) Conferences, Sessions I - IV (VAIQ # 7609611)

LVA Sessions I & IV: The location for these two sessions was selected to maximize direct interaction of the fellows with the Department's most senior leaders, conduct a site visit to Capitol Hill to converse with Congressional Legislators and experience an NCA cemetery. There's also an opportunity for the fellows to lay the foundation for their service learning activity by providing direct support to a local Veteran Service Organization; the Maryland Center for Veterans Education & Training (MCVET) during Session I. Finally, the fellows will brief their team projects during the MyVA InnoVAtion Symposium to VA senior leaders and their Executive Sponsors while in Washington, DC during Session IV.

LVA Session II: The location for Session II was selected to allow the fellows to experience the inner workings of a VA Medical Center. They will hear from a panel of experts that work at the Salt Lake City Regional Medical Center. More importantly, the fellows will be providing volunteer support assistance for the medical center as VA prepares for the start of the 36th National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Salt Lake City.

LVA Session III: The city of St. Paul was selected to provide the fellows with an opportunity to gain insight on all of Veterans Benefit Administration's business lines. The St. Paul Regional Benefit Office site visit will allow the LVA Fellows to understand the breadth and depth of the environment of claims submission, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment functions, loan support services and more. Additionally, it will give the fellows an opportunity to better understand the inner workings of the Pension Management Center (one of three in the nation) at the St. Paul Regional Office.

The 15 and 45 day After Action Reports will be drafted following the final conference session outlining the projected versus actual expenditures allocated to achieving the conference goals and objectives. This conference will be conducted in accordance with all guidance provided by the HRA Budget Office, VACO VALU Travel Team and the Corporate Travel and Reporting Office (CTRO).

Both the VA Hosted and Co-Hosted Conference Proposed Checklist for Conference Certifying Officials and Department of Veterans Affairs Hosted or Co-Hosted Conference Request Guidance were used to plan this conference/training event exceeding \$500,000 as referenced at <http://vaww.trainingevents.va.gov/> of the Corporate Travel and Reporting Office (CTRO) Guidance. The HRA Conference Certifying Official (CCO) has reviewed and signed off on the attached Conference Certification form.


There will be no use of entertainment or food paid by VA. Light refreshments will be separately funded by VA with an approval memo for this event. No "Stuff We All Get (SWAG)" or promotional items will be purchased by VA; however, instructional materials are included in the tuition for training purposes. Attendees will be instructed to claim per diem for meals for this event as meals will not be provided. Request for approval of local per diem is requested for these sessions and no additional costs will be authorized by VALU

Request Waiver for 2016 Leadership VA (LVA) Conferences, Sessions I - IV (VAIQ # 7609611)

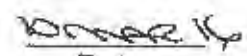
7. The overall cost estimate is provided below:

	Number of VA Employees	Number of VA Support Staff	Non-Travel Cost	Travel Cost	Contractor Support	Total Cost	Total Cost per Participant
LVA Sessions I-IV	100 Fellows	3FTEs	\$147,339.19	\$979,660.81	\$522,000	\$1,649,000	\$16,009.71

8. I am available to discuss this waiver request for LVA Conferences, Sessions I - IV.



Gina S. Farrissee
Assistant Secretary for Human Resources
and Administration (006)



Date



STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION REVIEW

NAME OF ORIGINATOR Mark Ballesteros, OPIA	VAIQ NO. 7758790	DATE 1/18/17	DATE DUE
---	----------------------------	------------------------	----------

NAME OF EXECUTIVE SECRETARY STAFF <i>Jan Jessop</i>	SUBJECT <i>Request Waiver for the 2017 OPIA National Training Academy in Nashville</i>
--	---

ROUTING	INITIALS	DATE	COMMENTS
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXEC SEC	<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>1/18/17</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> SENIOR ADVISOR			
<input type="checkbox"/> COSVA			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DEPSECVA	<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>1/19</i>	Recommend: Approval <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disapproval ___ See me ___
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SECVA			Approve ___ Disapprove ___ See me ___

KEY POINTS

- ▶ Nashville, TN / Aug 7-11, 2017
- ▶ Audience: Public Affairs / Communications Professionals
- ▶ 425 Attendees / \$1980 per attendee / Total Cost: \$841,465

CONCURRENCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose - Discussion - Recommendation

- * OPIA would like to host the 2017 National Training Academy in Nashville from Aug 7-11, 2017
- * This training event was held in 2016 for the first time in three years for public affairs and communications professionals from VA medical facilities, regional benefits offices, and cemeteries across the country.
- * This specialized training will build on the momentum from last year's training event and equip those who have communications responsibilities with the skills and techniques to do their jobs.
- * Curriculum will include courses for all levels of experience, provide instruction that is both practical and applicable, and have a focus on case studies and lessons learned from communications challenges faced during the last year.
- * Training will emphasize the importance of Veteran-centric communications, and incorporating a commitment to VA's mission and ICARE Values.
- * Many VA employees with communications responsibilities often have no formal training, and few training opportunities to further develop the skills they have acquired through experience.
- * This annual training event is essential to continue the professional development for the group with the primary task of communicating to Veterans and their families about the care and benefits for which they may be eligible.

FOR OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY USE ONLY

SPECIAL HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS	DATE OF INCOMING	DATE VA RECEIVED	DATE OF INTERIM	DATE RECEIVED IN 0018
<input type="checkbox"/> RUSH <input type="checkbox"/> DATE DOCUMENT FOR				
<input type="checkbox"/> NOTARIZE				

Date: January 17, 2017

From: Assistant Secretary, Public and Intergovernmental Affairs

Subj: Request Waiver for the 2017 OPIA National Training Academy in Nashville, Aug. 7-11, 2017

Thru: Deputy Secretary

To: Secretary

1. In accordance with existing Department of Veterans Affairs Conference policies and guidelines, and all applicable statutes and regulations, the Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs requests your waiver to implement its National Training Academy in fiscal year (FY) 2017.

2. Purpose: This annual training provides a vital professional development opportunity for VA public affairs and communication professionals. This training will strengthen core communication skills and discuss more effective and creative ways for VA public affairs and outreach practitioners to connect with key stakeholders.

3. Goals and Objectives: The goal of the conference is two-fold. The first is to improve communications with Veterans. Ultimately, VA's communications efforts are undertaken to provide Veterans with a better understanding of the care and benefits available to them. Those efforts depend largely on the second goal: A well-trained and professional communications workforce that understands the full range of capabilities available to them and possesses the ability to leverage those capabilities at the appropriate time and in the correct venue. The training academy will offer a comprehensive group of courses that will enable VA communicators to communicate better with Veterans. The curriculum will focus on the provision of complete, timely and accurate information to internal and external audiences; enhancement of the Department's ability to communicate during a crisis; and the understanding of the most up-to-date communications platforms and the methods to employ them effectively.

Training emphasis will be on crisis operations and the importance of communicating our commitment to VA's mission and I-CARE Values and what we have done to improve facility operations and earn the trust of Veterans back. The foundation of the academy will be built upon the Veteran-centric mindset that has been instilled in the department through the implementation of the MyVA transformation.

Curriculum will focus heavily on best practices during the last year and share case studies from the field that demonstrate we serve Veterans best by being accessible to reporters, transparent in our delivery of information and facts, and fully accountable for our actions when we make mistakes. Training will also focus on increasing the understanding and importance of integrating social media into daily communication,

developing effective and creative ways to communicate and strengthen relationships with VSOs and other stakeholders.

4. Justification: The Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs (OPIA) holds the functional responsibility for training public affairs personnel in the Department of Veterans Affairs. Many VA employees with communications responsibilities often have no formal training in the field, and few training opportunities to further develop the skills they have acquired through experience. The training academy often provides the single opportunity during the year for VA to conduct comprehensive training for all those who communicate on behalf of the department. A training academy where attendees interact with each other is the most effective means to conduct that training. It not only creates a venue that encourages interaction, it also fosters a spirit of collaboration and teamwork where best practices are shared and perpetuated throughout the organization.

For example, part of the curriculum includes training in on-camera interview techniques, which includes participants undergoing a taped interview where they apply what they have learned. The anxiety created by the physical presence of the camera, the interviewer, and an audience of their peers cannot be duplicated using remote means. The interview is followed by instant, real-time feedback from instructors and audience members, which often includes playback of the interview itself. This training most closely replicates the interview experience, and provides an insight for participants that they can draw from when preparing subject matter experts at their facility for interviews.

As a result, experience has shown that public affairs professionals take advantage of the opportunity to provide input to organizational strategies and emerging communication initiatives, not just during the training academy itself, but throughout the year. Public affairs leadership has the opportunity to confirm employee understanding of key issues, identify gaps and encourage on the spot feedback and engagement. Interacting directly with communicators and leaders allows VA employees to expand their professional networks and establish shared experiences to enhance future communication. This training academy underscores VA's commitment to public affairs and helps develop cohesiveness among the communicators of the organization, the basis of cooperation and success across the Department.

As stated before, many individuals in the field who hold public affairs duties have no formal training. Even those who have had formal training are general practitioners in that they have responsibilities in all areas of public affairs – media relations, online communications, community relations, and internal communications. They often do not have the time to become expert in every facet of public affairs.

OPIA would arrange guest speakers who are experts in specific communications areas and, as such, can provide up-to-the-minute techniques and information tempered with experience drawn from practical application. These experts would enhance the curriculum, and provide an efficiency by being able to address the largest gathering of VA public affairs professionals during the year.

OPIA has identified critical needs that need to be addressed in the areas of crisis communications, social media, employee/internal communications, television interviews, outreach, 508 compliance, desktop publishing, analytics, and online training. While OPIA has conducted training in these areas at previous training academies, and will at this one, training provided from an external viewpoint will bolster the overall strength of the training.

In order to keep costs for such an addition to a minimum, OPIA will work with acknowledged experts who reside in the area.

TIME	POTENTIAL LOCATION
August 7-11, 2016	Nashville, Tenn.

7. The overall proposed per event cost estimate is provided below:

Training Event Title	Number of employees	Support Staff	Non-Travel Cost	Travel Cost	Contract or Support	Total Cost	Cost per Participant
	425	25	\$58,250	\$713,215	\$70,000	\$841,465	\$1,980

8. I am available at (202) 461-7430 should you wish to further discuss this proposed public affairs training event.



 Gary Tallman
 Executive Director
 Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs

1-18-2017

 Date



Department of Veterans Affairs

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION REVIEW

NAME OF ORIGINATOR Kevin T. Hanretta	VAID NO. 7725520	DATE 8/25/16	DATE DUE
--	----------------------------	------------------------	----------

NAME OF EXECUTIVE SECRETARY STAFF Jennessup	SUBJECT VA Basic Police Officer Course (VABPOC) Class Number 1702
---	---

ROUTING	INITIALS	DATE	COMMENTS
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXEC SEC	<i>JH</i>	<i>8/24</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> SENIOR ADVISOR			
<input type="checkbox"/> COSVA			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DEPSECVA	<i>JH</i>	<i>8/31</i>	<i>Recommend: Approval X</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SECVA	<i>nm</i>	<i>9/6</i>	<i>Approved: [Signature]</i>

KEY POINTS

- ▶ October 24 - December 16, 2016/North Little Rock, Arkansas
- ▶ 72 trainees - 16 staff/\$12,450.00 per attendee/Total cost: \$900,000.00
- ▶

CONCURRENCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose - Discussion - Recommendation

This 8 week course is required for newly hired VA Police officers to receive certification to perform law enforcement duties at VAMCs nationally.

The VABPOC includes dynamic, intense, scenario & role play based training. Subjects include small arms training & qualification, defensive tactics, ground defense, expandable straight baton, chemical weapon & a myriad of other subjects which rely on physical skills. Of great importances is the 40 hours of behavioral science training received which teach officers how to use verbal communication skills to de-escalate violent situations.

This training provides VA Police officers with specialized training in Federal law enforcement and prepares them with the ability to deal with Veterans inflicted by TBI, PTSD, suicidal/homicidal ideation, and other critical crisis intervention & verbal de-escalation skills & techniques unique to a health care environment.

All Police officers must successfully complete the BPOC before receiving their badge & credentials or being certified/authorized to perform any law enforcement duties. Upon graduation, newly assigned officers will: a) have completed certification requirements; and b) respond to & control various calls for service such as active shooter, workplace violence, disturbances, customer service/assistance, etc.

FOR OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY USE ONLY

SPECIAL HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS <input type="checkbox"/> RUSH <input type="checkbox"/> DATE DOCUMENT FOR <input type="checkbox"/> NOTARIZE	DATE OF INCOMING	DATE VA RECEIVED	DATE OF INTERIM	DATE RECEIVED IN 001B