

**The Veterans Benefits Administration's (VBA) Learning Policy, Responsibility,  
and Administration**

**1. Purpose**

VBA is committed to developing a high-performing workforce. One critical component in meeting this commitment is ensuring employees are provided the support and opportunity necessary to learn and develop the knowledge and skills needed for the evolving requirements of their work. To be successful, this learning process must be consistent and properly coordinated across the organization. This circular defines VBA's policy on learning, which includes the methods used to educate, train, and develop VBA employees. It also assigns responsibilities for learning management, administration, development, and budgeting.

**2. General**

The Office of Employee Development and Training (ED&T/20T), working in a cooperative partnership with the business lines, staff offices, Service Delivery Networks (SDNs), regional offices (ROs), and their respective training coordinators, is responsible for ensuring the development, implementation, and assessment of VBA learning programs. It supports and assists the business lines, staff offices, SDNs, and ROs in the development, implementation, and assessment of business line specific technical training, non-technical training, and support function technical training not specifically related to a business line. It administers these programs in accordance with training policy and other requirements determined by the Under Secretary for Benefits and/or both of the Deputy Under Secretaries. The Office of Employee Development and Training is comprised of a Central Office Staff (20T), the Veterans Benefits Academy (20TA), and the Technical Training & Evaluation TT&E/20TO Staff. Business lines/Support Staff, Office of Field Operations (OFO), SDNs, and ROs will coordinate all training plans for training needs and resource requirements with ED&T/20T.

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### 3. VBA Learning Policy

Today's business environment, both public and private, is characterized by dynamic, rapid change. This change drives employees, managers and leaders to continuously adapt and grow. The organization must ensure that employees have the support necessary to learn and develop the knowledge and skills needed for their current responsibilities. Employees also need support to meet the evolving requirements of their work and to enhance their ability to anticipate and meet the needs of the veteran of the future.

a. VBA aspires to become a learning organization. Peter Senge in his book The Fifth Discipline, describes a learning organization as one where "people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together." Facilitating the process of people learning how to learn together requires giving people opportunities to communicate and share information and experiences. One way VBA is accomplishing this is through the intentional establishment of communities of practice.

b. VBA's recognition of the concept of communities of practice is an attempt to take full advantage of a valuable learning tool. Communities of practice are individuals, informally bound to one another through exposure to a common class of problems, common pursuit of solutions and thereby themselves embodying a store of knowledge. Members of the community may include novices as well as experts. Members coach and mentor each other to help transfer knowledge. Knowledge transfer is effected as they share ideas and information, identify common challenges and develop solutions to those challenges. It is an effective way of leveraging the informal interests and skills of employees and provides an opportunity for them to help each other develop on the job.

c. VBA is committed to developing a high-performing workforce. We will select, orient and develop talented individuals, provide them the technical and non-technical skills to meet the organization's mission, and to change and adapt to changing performance objectives.

d. VBA will provide innovative training and performance-based learning activities for all employees. Employee skills and competencies will be continuously assessed and compared against organizational requirements. Skill certification or credentialing will be established for every decision-making position. Performance-based training will be provided and connected to measurable outcomes. Training plans and practices will be consistently prepared and delivered, using multimedia techniques, throughout the organization and the training will reinforce team behaviors and customer service.

e. Employees will be provided the opportunity to develop or enhance their requisite skills in keeping with the best practices of high-performing organizations. VBA will promote self-directed, life long learning, both formal and informal. It will establish a leadership development system that will allow it to identify, develop, and maintain managers and executives with the skills, core competencies, and values critical to providing leadership for the organization.

#### **4. ED&T Mission Statement**

The mission of ED&T is to ensure that the VBA develops, implements and evaluates innovative learning programs and practices that promote a systematic and comprehensive approach to training and developing VBA employees in order to provide quality, seamless service to veterans.

#### **5. Organizational Objectives**

The objectives of the 20T are to:

a. Provide customer-focused learning that is accessible, timely, cost effective, and responsive to organizational objectives, strategic initiatives, and goals;

b. Ensure that the training of VBA employees takes full advantage of technological advances in acquiring the skills and learning needed to succeed in a changing workplace (Presidential Executive Order number 13111 of January 12, 1999, "Using Technology to Improve Training Opportunities for Federal Government Employees");

c. Partner with businessline, support staff, SDN/RO training coordinators to ensure that all employees are offered the right training to receive the right skills at the right time;

d. In partnership with the business lines, support staffs, SDN's and RO's, serve as a VBA point of contact for training partnerships with the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), the National Cemetery Administration (NCA), the Board of Veterans Appeal (BVA), other VA Staff Offices, the VA Learning University (VALU), and veterans' service organizations (VSOs);

e. Cooperate with the Office of Human Resources, in supporting the inclusion of our Union Partners in assessing training needs and delivering training to meet those needs;

f. Coordinate nationwide training needs assessments;

g. Provide basic training for SDN/RO-level training coordinators to assist them in implementing all training;

h. Maintain models of comprehensive employee development learning plans that can be tailored and implemented for all VBA employees with their supervisors; and

i. Maintain a contemporary awareness of developments in the field of training and organizational development by establishing and maintaining appropriate affiliations with professionally recognized educational and learning organizations.

## **6. Training Organization**

The Office of Employee Development and Training is comprised of a Central Office Staff (20T), the Veterans Benefits Academy (20TA), and the Technical Training & Evaluation TT&E/20TO Staff. The organizational chart for VBA training functions is found in Appendix A. The training organization and

function is under the cognizance of the Deputy Under Secretary for Field Operations. Its units have specific responsibilities for the support and development of technical and non-technical training and is found in Appendix B.

**a. The roles and responsibilities of the Central Office 20T staff are to:**

(1) Provide professional training consultation to field stations and Central Office relative to the identification of training requirements, identification of alternatives to satisfy the requirements, recommendations for optimum training systems, technical advice throughout the acquisition cycle, and the design, development, and procurement of training systems.

(2) Communicate and coordinate with training entities at all levels of the organization. This will be supported by regularly scheduled meetings of all VBA parties (including program, field and COP training coordinators) involved in training development and delivery to foster communication about and coordination of agency training and development activities and resources.

(3) Coordinate with 20TA and 20TO in providing support and guidance to VBA business lines, staff offices, and SDN/RO managers in developing and modifying VBA's Strategic Training Plan for employee training that is cost effective, comprehensive, flexible and consistent with the VBA Strategic Plan.

(4) Assist the business lines, staffs, and the OFO in planning, developing, implementing, and evaluating learning programs for agency functions, e.g., information technology training, human resource management, contract management, finance, budget, administrative support and the Training and Performance Support System (TPSS) outlined in Appendix C.

(5) Develop and implement cross-functional training requirements such as team dynamics/team training, coaching, mentor development, project management, GPRA, new employee orientations (VBA Opportunity Program).

(6) Assist the Office of Human Resources in the development and implementation of mandatory training, i.e., employee benefits planning, violence in the workplace, and conflict resolution.

(7) Assist the VBA Equal Employment Manager in the development and implementation of mandatory training, i.e. diversity, sexual harassment, and EEO.

(8) Plan, develop, and implement an integrated, competency based managerial and leadership development and certification program to meet VBA's leadership succession planning requirements, under the direction of the VBA Leadership Steering Group, composed of senior executives and managers from Central Office and the field.

(9) Coordinate and administer training offerings from external sources such as the Office of Personnel Management, the Federal Executive Institute, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Leadership VA, and university-based and private-sector vendors.

(10) Develop the Education Management and Competency Management System (EM&CMS) (training tracking/skills inventory/employee development tracking) that integrates and documents data on employee skills, training and job development to support the tracking and measurement of the employee development component of the VBA Balanced Scorecard. System management will be shared with the Office of Human Resources as it is integrated with PAID/OLDE and HRLINKS.

(11) Foster and create opportunities to practice collaboration and teamwork to support workplace case management strategies and training activities, e.g., communities of practice. Expand the capacity for building and implementing learning programs for VBA through collaborative partnerships with groups such as the VA Learning University, the VHA Employee Education System, veterans' service organization training units, corporate universities, and other government agency training organizations.

(12) Manage and develop the VBA Distance Learning System to include the Veterans Benefits Network (VBN) satellite system and the VBA Video Conferencing System (VBA VCS). The 20T staff coordinates use of the video conferencing system among VBA field and headquarters units and between VBA and BVA. The staff assists VBA business lines and other program sponsors with

the creation and development of distance learning courses. 20T provides comprehensive format and delivery support. The sponsoring service/office is

responsible for content, subject matter experts, broadcast presenters, and one-touch facilitator support. 20T is responsible for scheduling broadcasts on two satellite systems to support all VBA sites; coordinating use of a satellite uplink and downlinks at approximately 65 VBA sites in the United States and Puerto Rico; overseeing the operation, installation, and maintenance of satellite downlink equipment; coordinating all contract vehicles to support production and signal delivery for broadcasts; and serves as the point of contact with contractors for the resolution of technical problems. (See Appendix D)

(13) Develop and maintain a national inventory of training facilities, equipment, and support capacity within VBA's facilities.

(14) Create and maintain a VBA Training Web Site. The website is a source for initial identification and access to training resources and points of contact in and outside VBA, and contains links to other VBA websites.

(15) Maintain a contemporary awareness of business practices through affiliation with private and public sector benchmarking organizations and academic/non-profit groups.

**b. The roles and responsibilities of the Veterans Benefits Academy (20TA) are to:**

(1) Consult with 20T, Field Operations, and VBA business lines and staff offices in supporting the Under Secretary for Benefits programs on the development of performance-based curricula for centralized and exportable just-in-time (JIT) training.

(2) Develop, deliver and manage courses of instruction for the Introduction to Leadership Course, Division Leadership and Management Training (DLMT), Instructor Development Course (IDC), business skills and Instructional Systems Design Course (ISD).

(3) Provide facilities, multi-media equipment, supplies, and training services for videoconferencing and classroom activities to include: formal

(4) Publish the monthly Veterans Benefits Academy and Veterans Benefits Network (VBN) schedule of classes/events.

(5) Support resource management and budget execution for all elements of 20T.

(6) Create and manage a VBA Learning Resource Center that will maintain, circulate, distribute, update, and archive learning materials.

(7) Publish and administer a manual of operations and procedures for the Learning Resource Center that will schedule the involvement of VBA subject matter specialists and training material owners in the process of review and maintenance of materials. (See appendix F that is under development)

(8) Maintain and manage a contract for lodging accommodations. Publish and maintain a manual of operations that describes hotel accommodations and transportation of adult learners, for the use of training sponsors and participants.

(9) Assist and provide guidance to subject matter experts, managers, and training practitioners/partners in VBA, Veterans Health Administration (VHA), National Cemetery Administration (NCA), Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA), VA Learning University (VALU), and veterans' service organizations in the development and delivery of training.

(10) Serve as a resource for copies of models of comprehensive employee development learning plans, obtaining services in project management, contractor support, and the provision of expertise in Instructional Systems Design (ISD) methodology for training analysis, design, development, delivery, and evaluation.

**c. The roles and responsibilities of the TT&E Staff are to:**

(1) In conjunction with the five business lines, manage the development

8

**November 29, 1999**

**Circular 20-99-3**

of a formal training delivery system (TPSS) that fulfills the specific technical training needs of VBA's business lines. Administer and/or conduct analysis, design, development, implementation and evaluation of VBA technical training (see Appendix B), in accordance with the training instructional design model (see Appendix C). The TT&E Office manages the creation of training delivery

systems using formal Instructional Systems Development (ISD) processes that typically involve Computer Based Technology (CBT), as well as other instructional methods. The purpose of these technical training programs is to uniformly impart technical skills to VBA's business line workforce to meet VBA's commitment to have a workforce able to deliver benefits and services to veterans and their families in an effective, efficient manner. TPSS generated data on employee progress in acquiring technical skills will automatically roll up to VBA's EM&ECS. The overall goal is to develop a formal technical training program for all technical business-line positions in VBA. Additionally, the TT&E Office also provides professional training consultation to field stations and Central Office relative to the identification of technical training requirements, identification of alternatives to satisfy the requirements, recommendation for optimum training systems, technical advice throughout the acquisition cycle, and the design, development, and procurement of training systems.

(2) The Director, TT&E, is operationally responsible to the Deputy Under Secretary for Field Operations for creating and maintaining all business line formal training systems, as well as any special projects assigned. The Director, TT&E, reports administratively to the Director, ED&T (20T) to receive policy, planning, and administrative guidance. The Director, TT&E, is to coordinate directly with sponsors to assure the tasks necessary to implement and upgrade technical training are accomplished in a manner responsive to management-determined needs. In addition to routine coordination with training initiative sponsors, the Director, TT&E, will regularly keep the Deputy Under Secretary for Field Operations and the Director of ED&T apprised of progress in fielding and improving technical training for the business lines' field operating organizations. In doing so, the Director, TT&E, will inform the Deputy Under Secretary for Field

**Circular 20-99-3**

**November 29, 1999**

9

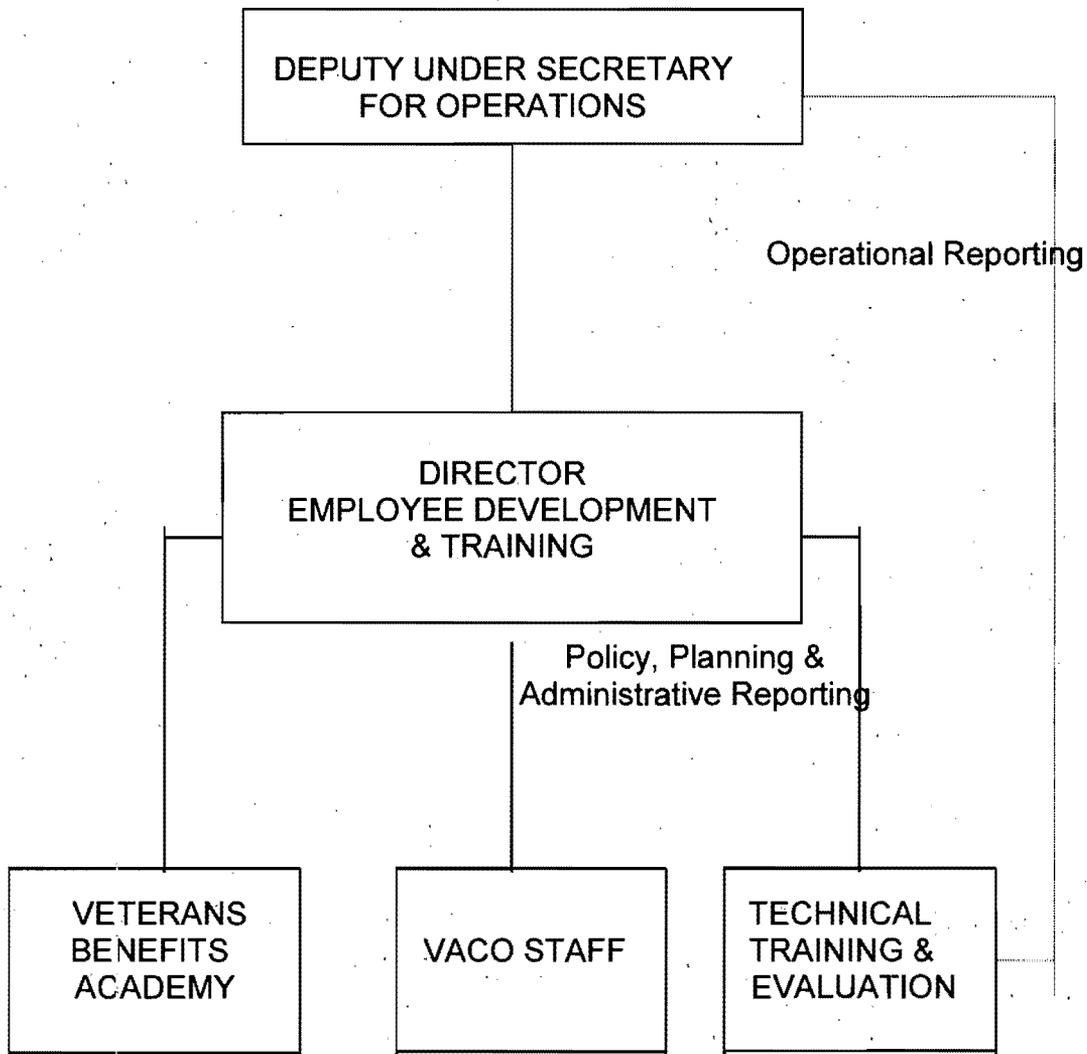
Operations and the Director of ED&T of any significant issue that may adversely affect the implementation of training initiatives on time and within budget.

**7. Rescission.** Circular 20-97-1 dated 2/13/97.

/s/  
Joseph Thompson  
Under Secretary for Benefits

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**Appendix A**  
**Office of Employee Development & Training**  
**Organization Chart**



**Appendix B  
Types of Training**

This appendix outlines the distinctions between and responsibilities for, business-line specific technical training, support function technical training, non-technical training and the training of VBA's external partners. Business line specific technical training is any training required for technical management and execution of business line work within a regional office or processing center. Support function technical training is of a technical nature that is not specifically related to a business line. Non-technical training is all other training provided at a regional office, processing center, or headquarters setting.

**Technical Training**

a. The Technical Training and Evaluation Staff (20TO), located in Orlando, Florida, has primary responsibility for the support of business line specific technical training. The Office of Employee Development and Training Staff (20T) in Washington has primary responsibility for support function technical training. The overall purpose for creating a technical training policy in VBA is to meet the two major training criteria of all VBA technical training to:

- (1) ensure VBA technical training needs are based upon improving individual and organizational performance, and
- (2) ensure that VBA technical training demonstrates an improved return on investment (ROI).

These two essential criteria for technical training require that VBA develop technical training that is reliable and valid and that technical training developed meets GPRA-related budget standards. By meeting these two essential criteria, the VBA business lines are positioned to support and defend their training budgets within the VBA planning and budgeting process.

b. Business line specific technical training is any training required for technical management or execution of business line work (i.e., technical

## **Appendix B**

functions of the compensation and pension, insurance, education, loan guaranty, and vocational rehabilitation and counseling services) within field stations under the cognizance of the Deputy Under Secretary for Field Operations. In order for business-line specific technical training to meet the two previously identified major training criteria, cross-functional teams of experts, in conjunction with representatives of the sponsor and the responsible training organization, will employ the steps in the technical training instructional development model (see Appendix C).

c. Support function technical training is any training required for the technical management and execution of staff functions (i.e., information technology, employee development and training, human resources, finance, strategic planning and budgeting).

### **Non-Technical Training**

a. The Office of Employee Development and Training Staffs in Washington (20T) and Baltimore (20TA) have primary responsibility for the support of non-technical training. Examples of non-technical training include:

(1) leadership development, general management, and supervisory training courses;

(2) mandatory training, required for employees as the result of law, regulation, or other directives of higher authority (e.g., prevention of sexual harassment, contracting officer's technical representative (COTR) training);

(3) training for employees in administrative and management support functions that have universal or broad application within VBA (e.g., human resources management functions, new employee orientation, communication of health and life insurance open season changes, communication of new management initiatives to the workforce); and

(4) training considered necessary for the improvement of the VBA workforce and workplace (e.g., stress management, customer service, time

management, team building, communications).

b. The overall purpose of non-technical training initiatives within VBA is to fulfill the following VBA training needs:

- (1) legal and regulator mandates in specific categories of training;
- (2) complete and effective communication with the workforce on organizational and administrative issues in which the workforce has a personal interest;
- (3) availability of training that will assist in making VA an employer of choice; and
- (4) skills development training for new unit leaders, supervisors, managers, and executives to enable them to effectively operate VBA organizations in a business-like manner.

#### **Training VBA's External Partners**

VBA provides training for a number of external parties who partner in the delivery of veterans benefits. Given the programmatic origin and basis of this training and in cooperation with field elements, each business line has primary responsibility, with the support of ED&T and other support elements like the Office of Information Management, to design, develop and deliver this training.

- a. In Compensation and Pension Service, training is focused toward local veterans service officers. Training consists of providing instruction on submissions of inquiries to the VA file locator and payment system, skills to access VA systems, and the basic development skills needed to build and process a veteran's claim.
- b. For Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling Service, our partnership extends from the U. S. Department of Labor and state departments of employment services to private professional vocational rehabilitation counselors.
- c. Loan Guaranty Service is required to provide training to a variety of private sector program participants, including lenders and servicers (mortgage

**November 29, 1999**

companies, banks, S&L's, credit unions), appraisers, compliance inspectors, real estate sales personnel and property management brokers.

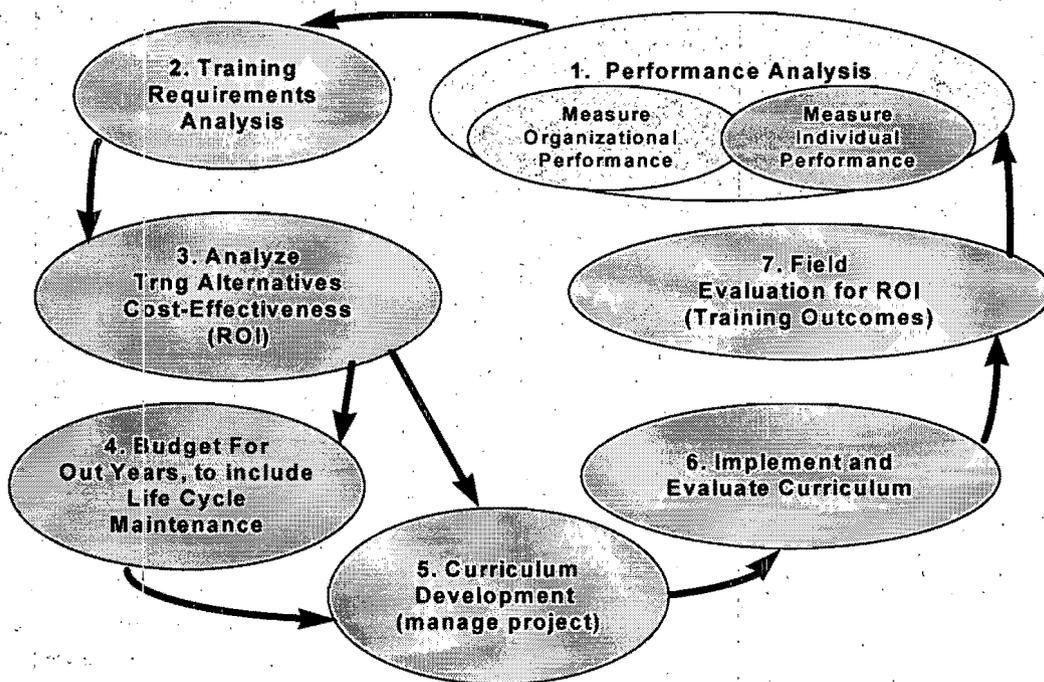
d. In Education Service, training is focused toward school certifying officials who submit training and enrollment information on behalf of eligible VA beneficiaries. Training ensures compliance with the laws governing the payment of VA benefits, and provides technical assistance in the use of our automated systems. Our network of compliance and liaison personnel provide training on an individual basis during school visits, and formally at state and regional school conferences.

e. The Insurance Service trains Veterans Service Officers at the National, State, and County levels to assist veterans to apply for their insurance benefits. The Service also trains those Department of Defense personnel who help soldiers complete their Servicemembers Group Life Insurance (SGLI) Application and Beneficiary forms, counsels separating soldiers regarding their Veterans Group Life Insurance (VGLI) eligibility, and trains casualty officers who help insurance beneficiaries file claims.

**Appendix C**  
**VBA Technical Training System**

The following information is applicable to applications developed by the 20TO Staff.

The VBA Technical Training System is diagrammed in Figure 1. The information in each element within the diagram is explained in the text that follows the diagram.



**Figure 1: VBA Technical Training System**

**Performance Analysis**

It is the responsibility of the OFO and the business lines to continually monitor and measure the performance of both the organization and the

## **Appendix C**

individuals within the organization. As performance is examined, areas where a gap between what should be and what is will be determined. Training may be identified as the best solution to bridge some of those gaps. When possible technical training needs are identified, this system is used to guide the planning and development of technical training courses to meet the need. The OFO is also responsible for determining the priority of training needs. Since resources are always limited, it is necessary to set priorities that concur with the mission and goals of VBA in both the long and short term.

The lead responsibility for element one, Performance Analysis, is the OFO and the services.

### **Training Requirements**

Once the potential training need is defined, the TT&E Office will take an active role in developing a Plan of Action and Milestones for the training. Such plans include needs assessment, training situational analysis, job analysis, etc., and will be completed at this time. These groups of products determine if there truly is a training issue, and if there is, what is the appropriate course of action.

The lead responsibility for element two, Training Requirements Analysis, is the TT&E Office. Supporting this effort will be a project team including the sponsoring service, which will provide data, subject matter experts, and other critical units as necessary (e.g., IRM).

### **Analyze Training Alternatives Cost Effectiveness (ROI)**

VBA technical training has one objective, improving organization performance. Therefore, VBA training is driven by concerns for ROI, cost limitations, flexibility, accuracy, efficiency, and timeliness. The TT&E Office will develop alternatives to meet the identified training need and present those to the sponsor for review. The alternatives will include information concerning elements of the need which can be reflected in costs for development. ROI will be determined and a course of action will be decided upon.

The lead responsibility for element three, Analyze Training Alternatives Cost Effectiveness, is the TT&E Office. Supporting this effort will be sponsoring service, and the project team.

### **Budget for Fiscal Out Years; to Include Life Cycle Maintenance**

The budgeting requirements for training programs will coincide with the budget cycle of VBA. Budget will include cost of training development, including the cost of Life Cycle Maintenance to ensure continued effectiveness of training and protection of the investment, where necessary. Whether included in five-year plans as budget initiatives, inserted into current year as one-time expenses, or requested outside of the regular budget cycle, all VBA budget requirements will be met by the sponsoring business line via the VBA budgeting process. Moneys allocated to training development will be integrated into the business plan of each business line and in the overall VBA business plan and budget submissions. It is important to note that Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) standards require supporting documentation for budget proposals. The data are gathered in steps two and three of the technical training systems model. Therefore, these efforts would be completed prior to budget development. If the dollar thresholds are large enough, then the initiative will have to compete in VA's Capital Investment Proposal process.

The lead responsibility for element four, Budget for Fiscal Out Years to include Life Cycle Maintenance, will be the sponsoring business line.

### **Curriculum Development (manage project)**

All curriculum development will be completed using the Instructional Systems Design (ISD) methodology to minimize risk and increase the effectiveness of the training programs. Training will be performance-based and validated to ensure effectiveness of the training program. The steps in the development include task analysis, learning analysis, development of objectives, development of performance-based testing requirements, selection of media, development of the course, with individual trials and validation. Curriculum development can be done within government (in house) or with contractor

support. If contractor support is used, the TT&E Office will work with the sponsor to determine contractual requirements and provide procurement services. Project management practices are described as follows:

a. The TT&E Office provides technical assistance to VBA managers in developing, delivering and evaluating their training. The staff is composed of personnel who are technically qualified in ISD procedures, and many have supplementary experience in more specialized skills. As each training project is identified, a project team will be assigned. Each project team will be "task organized" to include a Project Manager, Subject Matter Expert (SME) and other technical experts as required. Members of the TT&E Office staff may serve multiple functions on the same or separate projects as project manager, technical support, training consultant, or contract manager.

b. All work accepted by the TT&E Office will have a specific training product(s) as final deliverables. These deliverables will be clearly outlined in a Plan of Action and Milestones (POA&M) which is specifically developed for each project. The project manager, usually a TT&E Office staff member, defines goals of training, resources needed, time frames, etc. in the POA&M. The sponsor of each training project and the Director, TT&E, ensure that development of that project meets organizational needs and remains aligned with VBA goals and objectives. (The standard project management procedures and processes apply.)

The lead responsibility for element five, Curriculum Development, will be the TT&E Office. Support for this element will include the sponsoring service, OFO, contractual support where required, Hines, etc.

### **Implement and Evaluate Curriculum**

Once a training package has been developed and validated, it is released from TT&E Office responsibility to the OFO and sponsoring business line, who will have the responsibility to implement the training in the field. Implementation plans and evaluation of the training effectiveness across the implementation plan

will be required. Kirkpatrick's (1994) Level I and II evaluation will take place under the direction of the OFO and the business lines within the implementation plan. Level I can be described as the immediate feedback of the students in training. Level II measures the performance level of the students between the pre-test and the post-test.

The lead responsibility for the sixth element, Implement and Evaluate Training, rests with the OFO. Support for this element will come from the business line and the TT&E Office.

### **Field Evaluation for ROI (Training Outcomes)**

Field Evaluation for ROI is the comprehensive evaluation of training outcomes as related to both job performance and organizational performance. (Kirkpatrick's (1994) Level III and IV evaluation.) The data collected and analyzed provides information for use with Balanced Scorecard evaluation as well as to directly meet the needs of GPRA requirements. This information will directly lead VBA back to the first element in the system, Performance Analysis, in an effort to continually identify areas where gaps exist and plans to address those gaps in performance.

The lead responsibility for the seventh element, Field Evaluation for ROI (Training Outcomes) rests with the OFO.

Figure 2 represents the training function responsibility matrix described above:

<b>Training Function Responsibility</b>	<b>Office of Field Operations</b>	<b>Business Lines</b>	<b>Others Contractors, Hines, etc.</b>	<b>Technical Training &amp; Evaluation</b>
1. Performance analysis	<b>Lead</b>	Support		Support
2. Training requirements		Support		<b>Lead</b>
3. Analyze training alternatives cost-effectiveness (ROI)		Support		<b>Lead</b>
4. Budget for fiscal out years to include life cycle maintenance		<b>Lead</b>		
5. Curriculum development (manage project)	Support	Support	Support	<b>Lead</b>
6. Implement and evaluate curriculum	<b>Lead</b>	Support		Support
7. Field evaluation for ROI (training outcomes)	<b>Lead</b>			Support

**Figure 2: Technical Training Function Responsibility Matrix**

Kirkpatrick, D. L. (1994). *Evaluating training programs*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Training that has been developed, validated and fielded within VBA will be evaluated for effectiveness. Evaluations are done to determine if the investment made in training by VBA is improving the productivity of VBA. This is accomplished using the four levels of training measurement (Kirkpatrick, 1994) that are the accepted methods of training evaluation in academia, business and government. These four levels are:

**LEVEL I - General reactions**

These are evaluations that students make immediately after completing training. In these evaluations, students have the opportunity to express reactions to the training just presented. This is especially useful during continuing training programs to adjust environmental distractions and modify presentations to better meet student needs. These evaluations are commonly called "smile sheets".

**LEVEL II - Learning (facts, principles)**

These are evaluations, typically using pre and post tests, to determine precisely what students have learned. Learning may be knowledge based or performance based. If objectives, test items and content of training are knowledge-based, the students who score higher on post tests will have gained knowledge upon completing training. However, if objectives, test items and content of training are performance-based, the students who score higher on posttests will have gained skills that can be applied directly to their jobs.

**LEVEL III - Job behavior changes**

These are evaluations to determine if skills acquired in training are being applied on the job over extended periods of time. It is often difficult to accurately evaluate training at this level since many factors can affect performance on the job. Systematic statistical evaluation of job performance, before and after training, is usually a factor in evaluation at this level.

**LEVEL IV - Organizational result (reduced costs, improved quality, increased quantity)**

These are evaluations to determine if the performance of VBA, as an organization, has been improved through the training provided to its employees. This is typically called the ROI in training. The concept is to link elements of the training curriculum to elements of desired organizational outcomes that are observed with productivity measurements. Where these links can be established, organizational performance indicators can show the impact of training on productivity. Because many other factors can affect the productivity of an organization, it is a complicated task to accurately gauge ROI from training. However, it must be done for critical business line processes to determine how to best use the training resources of VBA to improve the ability of VBA to accurately and timely deliver earned entitlements to veterans and their families.

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Kirkpatrick, D. L. (1994). *Evaluating training programs*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

**Appendix D**  
**Glossary of Terms**

Bridge	In videoconferencing vernacular, a bridge connects three or more conference sites so that they can simultaneously communicate. Bridges are often called MCU's - multipoint conferencing units. In IEEE 802 parlance, a bridge is a device that interconnects LAN's or LAN segments at the data-link layer of the OSI model to extend the LAN environment physically. They work with frames (as opposed to packets) of data, forwarding them between networks. They learn station addresses and they resolve problems with loops in the topology by participating in the spanning tree algorithm. Finally, the term bridge can be used in audio conferencing to refer to a device that connects multiple (more than two) voice calls so that all participants can hear and be heard.
C Band	The satellite frequency range from 4 to 8 GHz. This is the band normally used for VHA satellite broadcasts.
Circular Compliance	After this circular has been disseminated, adherence will be tracked and tied to performance plans and linked to the budgeting structure/process.
Distance Learning	The incorporation of video and audio technologies into the educational process so that students can attend classes and training sessions in a location distant from that where the course is being presented. Distance learning systems are usually interactive and are becoming a highly-valuable tool in the delivery of training and education to widely-dispersed students in remote locations or in instances where the instructor cannot travel to the student's site.
Downlink	The location used to receive signals for a satellite videoconference. This equipment typically consists of an antenna and receiver configuration and is much less sophisticated than an uplink.

## **Appendix D**

### **Ku Band**

The satellite frequency range from 10.9 to 17 GHz. This is the band normally used for VBA satellite broadcasts.

### **One Touch**

The One Touch Viewer Response System is a client-server based system that enables interactivity between instructors and remote students. The interactivity features include the ability to conduct verbal conversations between the instructor and two remote students at a time. All additional calls are stored in a calling queue while waiting for an available line to the instructor. The instructor is also capable of developing and delivering pop question and quizzes through the Viewer Response System. These questions are formatted as true/false, yes/no, multiple choice and numeric questions. The remote student use individual response keypads for their verbal communications and answering instructor prompted questions. All course delivery data including question results, attendance records, and call frequency are recorded during each interactive session and can be used for post training analysis.

### **Project Consultant**

If the Office of Employee Development and Training is not named as the Project Manager, they will provide consulting services to the project team. These services include but are not limited to the following: options for training delivery medium, e.g., live education, satellite broadcast, computer-based training, or video conferencing; conducting a needs assessment; performance measurement; developing the training deployment plan; and the training evaluation plan.

### **Project Manager**

The project manager (PM) is the individual with complete technical and administrative oversight of the project. The PM assembles the project team ensuring all key players participate from the outset of the project; performs administrative support duties; develops the project plan

including milestones, identifies deliverables, performs cost analysis and a risk analysis; establishes and executes the budget; keeps sponsor, management and team updated on project status; deploys and implements project in a timely fashion; performs a comprehensive evaluation of the project and produces a final project report.

**Satellite System**

A means of broadcasting information, normally in one direction only, that is transmitted through an uplink, over a satellite transponder, and received by a downlink station. Sometimes used in conjunction with a OneTouch (see) viewer response system.

**Sponsor**

The sponsor is the organizational element that owns the project. The sponsor is responsible for obtaining project approval, providing adequate funding for the project, and assigning the project manager.

**Transponder**

A combination receiver, frequency converter, and transmitter package, physically part of a communications satellite. Transponders have a typical output of five to ten watts, operate over a frequency band with a 36 to 72 megahertz bandwidth in the L, C, Ku bands. Communications satellites typically have between 12 and 24 onboard transponders although the INTELSAT VI at the extreme end has 50.

**Uplink**

The earth station used to transmit signals for a satellite videoconference.

**Video Conference System**

The name generically given to videoconference equipment and sessions. This system is either one way (point to multipoint or broadcast) or two way (point to point or interactive) and consists of one or more television cameras and monitors at each end. Multiple locations may be included in a videoconference session through a bridge.