

VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION
Y2K ACCOMPLISHMENTS
DURING THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION

VBA Program Responsibilities:

The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) of the Department of Veterans Affairs is responsible for the delivery of benefits to Veterans. Compensation, Pension, Insurance, Vocational Rehabilitation, Education and Loan Guaranty benefits are key programs administered by the VBA. These programs are administered through 58 regional offices supported by three data processing centers.

VBA realizes what a significant impact these programs make to the veterans' and their dependents' daily lives. These programs are key to the quality of life for our veterans and their beneficiaries. In fiscal year 1997, VBA paid about \$23 billion in benefits to at least 4.4 million veterans and their dependents.

Early Y2K Awareness:

Even though VBA's Year 2000 project officially began in 1996, there was very early awareness of this potential problem. In the 1980's, modifications were made to correct year 2000 failures, or to prevent them. By late 1991, many of the computer specialists understood that the year 2000 problem could be a major problem, and a detailed analysis was performed on all VBA applications. Because of the excellent computer specialists in the VBA, coupled with the date intensiveness, and early fail dates of our applications, we had early awareness of the year 2000 problem. This early awareness allowed for a quick, proactive start to VBA's efforts.

CONGRESS/GAO:

There was extensive Congressional, media and public scrutiny of the Year 2000 project because of the serious consequences of the problem. VBA was one of the first to have its Year 2000 efforts subject of a Congressional hearing, and as the subject of a General Accounting Office audit. These oversight efforts did much to reinforce awareness and the criticality of the project at the very senior management levels.

Office of Information Management:

The VBA Year 2000 Project (Y2K) addresses the necessary modifications that must occur to VBA systems to avoid the potential disastrous impact that could occur. With this realization of the impact on VBA systems and the grave consequences to veterans, the VBA Office of Information Management has given Year 2000 Project its highest priority.

VBA/Y2K SCOPE:

The VBA Year 2000 Project scope includes all applications, hardware, software, compilers, third party products, telecommunications, interfaces and anything else that could cause a Year 2000 problem. This includes applications and products residing on the Honeywell(Bull) and IBM mainframes, Wang, personal computer and LAN environment (Stage I and Stage II). Other projects within VBA address facilities issues and voice communications.

VBA/Y2K STRATEGY:

VBA's primary strategy was to make applications compliant in their current environment. The Compensation, Pension, Education and Vocational Rehabilitation systems were made compliant on their Honeywell (Bull) mainframes. Insurance was made compliant on the IBM platform. In a few instances, application redesign was used to make applications compliant.

Other components of VBA's strategy were the categorization of applications into three priorities (mission critical, administrative, and those to be retired), to know our "fail dates", and setting an internal goal of having everything compliant by December 1998.

EARLY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

VBA began making applications compliant in 1993. In April 1996, the VBA formally appointed the Year 2000 Project Manager and Team. In July 1996, the first VBA Year 2000 Project Plan was published. This plan has been continually updated and enhanced.

Y2K Project Plan:

This plan outlines the direction, strategy, and milestones VBA will pursue to ensure that all ADP applications, operating systems, third party products, hardware, utilities, etc., are year 2000 compliant. The payment of benefits to veterans and their beneficiaries must not be interrupted or compromised in any manner. (see Attachment A)

Contractor Support/Oversight:

In October 1996, the first of our contracting partners was brought on board. To date, seven more contracts have been awarded for Y2k tasks including code renovation, project support, oversight and independent verification and validation (IV&V) activities.

VBA has made excellent progress in resolving Year 2000 issues. As of March 31, 1999, VBA was 100% through the renovation phase, 100% through the validation phase, and 100% through the implementation phase. One-hundred percent (100%) of our modules are compliant. All applications and systems were implemented by VBA by the March 31, 1999 deadline, as mandated by OMB.

Y2K Kick-Off

SRA OVERSIGHT

Significant of Activities:

- 10/01/97 Established Year 2K project team and responsibilities. (Completed)
- 10/05/97 Hold kick off meeting with project team.(Completed)
- 11/06/97 Held conference call with SRA (Year 2K contractor), Central Office, and area office's facility personnel to discuss Year 2K concerns at the regional offices.(Completed)
- 12/08/97 SRA presented a white paper to Office of Resource Management on their proposed roll-out to survey the regional offices for Year 2K concerns. (Completed)
- 01/30/97 SRA conducted beta test of survey at the Washington Regional Office. (Underway)
- 02/17/98 Deploy surveys to the regional offices. (Conduct survey of the regional offices through the area offices.)
- 04/15/98 Conduct second follow up survey only with those regional offices that have outstanding mission critical Year 2K issues.
- 05/01/98 Present final results of Year 2K survey to the Office of Resource Management.
- 06/01/98 Begin renovation of regional offices that require Year 2K upgrades.
- 08/01/98 Notify VBA management and OMB of all regional office facilities that are Year 2K compliant and of any outstanding issues.
- 10/01/98 Perform validation testing of all facilities to insure year 2K compliance.

VBA/Y2K Intranet Website:

The VBA/Y2K website (intranet) is a historical repository of Y2K activities and documentation and is located at: "152.124.238.193/projects/y2k/y2kindex". It serves as our "online library" of the Y2K Project (see Attachment B for critical documents).

VBA/Y2K Internet Website:

Our VBA/Y2K Internet website was our means to communicate to our veteran population, other federal agencies and the entire country to report on significant activities directly affecting veterans. It is located at: "www.vba.va.gov/projects/y2k/y2k" (see Attachment C).

History of Y2K/VBA:

A History of VBA's Y2K Project was prepared by Deborah Rankin (summer intern) and edited by Paul Wojdyla (Y2K Team Member) on March 23, 2000. (see Attachment D).

Lessons Learned:

A Y2K Lessons Learned package was prepared on January 27, 2000. VBA Y2K efforts and lessons learned throughout the Y2K preparations are applicable in helping an agency improve their information technology (IT) management standards. VBA Y2K preparations supported the Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996, which required improvement in the management of IT. (see Attachment E)

(Paul A. Wojdyla, 09/22/00)

Attachments:

- A) Year 2000 VBA's Plan for Compliance.
- B) VBA/Y2K Intranet Website
- C) VBA/Y2K Internet Website
- D) History of Y2K
- E) VBA Y2K Lessons Learned Brief

(Paul A. Wojdyla, 09/22/00)