

ITEM NO	DESCRIPTION	BASIS OF AWARD	NPC, Inc. 370-64115		SIMILAR/PREVIOUS	
			UNIT RATE	COST	UNIT RATE	COST
I. PRE-PRODUCTION TESTS:						
(a)	Transmission Test. Per test.	1	NC	\$ -	NC	\$ -
(b)	Preproduction Validation Tests					
1.	Printed Samples. Per test.	1	NC	\$ -	NC	\$ -
2.	Electronic Samples. Per test.	1	NC	\$ -	NC	\$ -
3.	Mail Management Files. Per test.	1	NC	\$ -	NC	\$ -
(c)	System Change/Updated Content Validation Test. Per test.	8	1000.00	\$ 8,000.00	2000.00	\$ 16,000.00
II. PRINTING, VARIABLE IMAGING, BINDING AND CONSTRUCTION:						
Prices offered must be all inclusive and include the cost of materials and operations (including the cost of envelopes) necessary for the printing, imaging, binding, and construction of the product listed in accordance with these specifications.						
(a)	<i>Handbooks-</i>					
1.	<i>Text</i> - Printing in black ink and imaging in black, including binding. Per page.					
(1)	Makeready and/or Setup	4046	9.26	\$ 37,465.96	9.26	\$ 37,465.96
(2)	Running per 1,000 Copies.	34146	12.50	\$ 426,825.00	8.27	\$ 282,387.42
2.	<i>Complete Cover</i> - Printing in four-color process and imaging in black including binding. Per complete cover.					
(1)	Makeready and/or Setup	52	190.30	\$ 9,895.60	190.33	\$ 9,897.16
(2)	Running per 1,000 Copies.	440	31.72	\$ 13,956.80	31.72	\$ 13,956.80
(b)	<i>Cover Letters-</i>					
	Printing in black and imaging in black, including binding per letter.					
(1)	Makeready and/or Setup	52	174.00	\$ 9,048.00	123.22	\$ 6,407.44
(2)	Running per 1,000 Copies.	440	37.17	\$ 16,354.80	27.95	\$ 12,298.00
(c)	<i>Health Benefits Insert-</i>					
	Printing in black and imaging in black, including binding per insert.					
(1)	Makeready and/or Setup	52	174.00	\$ 9,048.00	103.32	\$ 5,372.64
(2)	Running per 1,000 Copies.	358	37.17	\$ 13,306.86	27.95	\$ 10,006.10
(d)	<i>Preferred Facility Insert-</i>					
	Printing in black and imaging in black, including binding per insert.					
(1)	Makeready and/or Setup	52	174.00	\$ 9,048.00	103.32	\$ 5,372.64
(2)	Running per 1,000 Copies.	20	37.17	\$ 743.40	27.95	\$ 559.00
(e)	<i>10-0998 Rights to Seek Further Review Form-</i>					
	Printing in black, including binding. Per form.					
(1)	Makeready and/or Setup	52	169.36	\$ 8,806.72	163.66	\$ 8,510.32
(2)	Running per 1,000 Copies.	796	27.95	\$ 22,248.20	27.95	\$ 22,248.20
(f)	<i>Notice of Privacy Practices-</i>					
	Printing in black, including binding. Per notice.					
(1)	Makeready and/or Setup	52	300.00	\$ 15,600.00	252.30	\$ 13,119.60
(2)	Running per 1,000 Copies.	440	38.40	\$ 16,896.00	37.95	\$ 16,698.00
(g)	<i>Mail-out Envelope (6-1/4 x 9-1/8")-</i>					
	Printing in black, including construction. Per envelope.					
(1)	Makeready and/or Setup	52	50.00	\$ 2,600.00	94.79	\$ 4,929.08
(2)	Running per 1,000 Copies.	463	78.05	\$ 36,137.15	68.61	\$ 31,766.43
(h)	<i>Mail-out Envelope (No. 10)-</i>					
	Printing in black, including construction. Per envelope.					
(1)	Makeready and/or Setup	52	50.00	\$ 2,600.00	94.79	\$ 4,929.08
(2)	Running per 1,000 Copies.	375	45.36	\$ 17,010.00	45.36	\$ 17,010.00

III.	PAPER: Payment for all paper supplied by the contractor under the terms of these specifications, as ordered on the individual print orders, will be based on the net number of leaves furnished for the product(s) ordered. The cost of any paper required for makeready or running spoilage must be included in the prices offered. Computation of the net number of leaves will be based on the following: Text - Each page-size leaf. Covers - Two page-size leaves will be allowed for each complete cover. Prices offered must include the cost of paper for backstrip, when required. Inserts, Forms, and Notices - Each page-size leaf.						
(a)	White Uncoated Text (50 lb)						
(1)	5.5" x 8.5" trim/page-size unit. Per 1,000 leaves.	14832	5.57 \$	82,614.24	5.91 \$	87,657.12	
(2)	8.5" x 11" trim/page-size unit**. Per 1,000 leaves. **For billing purposes a product with size over 8.5" x 11" up to and including 11" x 17" will be billed at two 8.5" x 11" trim/page-size units.	2618	7.82 \$	20,472.76	5.91 \$	15,472.38	
(b)	White Litho (Gloss) Coated Cover (60 pound)						
(1)	5.5" x 8.5" trim/page-size unit. Per 1,000 leaves.	880	14.23 \$	12,522.40	14.23 \$	12,522.40	
IV.	ADDITIONAL OPERATIONS:						
(a)	CMS Initial Population (English). One-time charge.	1	500.00 \$	500.00	500.00 \$	500.00	
(b)	CMS Initial Population (Spanish). One-time charge.	1	500.00 \$	500.00	500.00 \$	500.00	
(c)	Server Maintenance. Per month.	12	5000.00 \$	60,000.00	10625.00 \$	127,500.00	
(d)	Training. Per session.	6	7500.00 \$	45,000.00	7500.00 \$	45,000.00	
(e)	On-line handbook Web Interface. Monthly.	12	10000.00 \$	120,000.00	72300.00 \$	867,600.00	
(f)	Weekly Progress Reports. Per report.	52	200.00 \$	10,400.00	200.00 \$	10,400.00	
(g)	Creation of ".txt" file containing extracted information from all files. Per print order.	52	360.00 \$	18,720.00	360.00 \$	18,720.00	
(h)	Weight calculation / pre-composition adjustment. Per record printed.	440000	0.12 \$	52,800.00	0.12 \$	52,800.00	
(i)	Return of White Mail. When required.	120	400.00 \$	48,000.00	400.00 \$	48,000.00	
(j)	Help Desk Technical Support. Per hour.	6	200.00 \$	1,200.00	200.00 \$	1,200.00	
(k)	Processing of Undeliverable/Returned Mail. Per 1,000 pieces.	28	793.93 \$	22,230.04	793.93 \$	22,230.04	
V.	PACKAGING AND MAILING: Prices offered must include the cost of all required materials and operations necessary for the mailing of the Handbooks and Inserts including the cost of collating components in proper sequence and folding (if applicable) in accordance with these specifications, insertion of components and into appropriate mail-out envelope and mailing in accordance with these specifications.						
(a)	<i>Veterans Health Benefits Handbook Package-</i> Inserting of handbook, cover letter, 10-0998 Rights to Seek Further Review form, Notice of Privacy Practice, and 6-1/4 x 9-1/8" mail-out envelope. Per 1,000 packages.	463	354.17 \$	163,980.71	206.11 \$	95,428.93	
(b)	<i>Health Benefits Insert Package-</i> Insert, 10-0998 Rights to Seek Further Review form, into No. 10 mail-out envelope. Per 1,000 packages.	356	120.06 \$	42,741.36	120.06 \$	42,741.36	
(c)	Additional performance when 2nd leaf of health benefits insert is required. Per 1,000 copies.	2	95.00 \$	190.00	75.83 \$	151.66	
(d)	<i>Preferred Facility Insert Package-</i> Consisting of inserting into No. 10 mail-out envelope. Per 1,000 packages.	20	650.00 \$	13,000.00	600.32 \$	12,006.40	
CONTRACTOR TOTALS			\$	1,390,462.00	\$	1,979,364.16	
DISCOUNT		0.25%	\$	3,476.16	0.25%	\$	4,948.41
DISCOUNTED TOTALS		20 days	\$	1,386,985.84	20 days	\$	1,974,415.75

AWARDED

Reviewed by: _____



March 7, 2024

This is Amendment No. 1. The specifications in our invitation for bids on Program 3031S, scheduled for opening at 2:00 P.M., prevailing Seattle, WA, time, on March 13, 2024, are amended as follows:

1. Change the bid opening date to 10 A.M., prevailing Seattle, WA, time, March 20, 2024.

2. **Delete the paragraph that reads on page 27:**

Notice of Privacy Practices – 8-1/2 x 11” (folded down from 17 x 11”).”

And insert in lieu thereof:

Notice of Privacy Practices – 8-1/2 x 11” (folded down from 17 x 11” or contractor has option to use 8-1/2 x 11” sheets).”

3. **Delete the paragraph that reads on page 43:**

Notice of

Privacy Practices Fold from 17 x 11” down to 8-1/2 x 11”, title out. Trim three sides and paste on fold.

And insert in lieu thereof:

Notice of

Privacy Practices Fold from 17 x 11” down to 8-1/2 x 11”, title out. Trim three sides and paste on fold.

Contractor has option to use 8-1/2 x 11” sheets in lieu of folding from 17 x 11”.

4. On page 47 replace the Determination of Award item designations for III. (a) and III. (b).

Delete the paragraph that reads on page 47:

III. (a) 17450
 (b) 880

And insert in lieu thereof:

III. (a) (1) 14832
 (2) 2618
 (b) (1) 880



5. On page 50 adjust the line item letters under III.

Delete the paragraph that reads on page 50:

		<u>per 1,000 Leaves</u>
III.	(a) White Uncoated Text (50 lb)	\$ _____
	(b) White Litho (Gloss) Coated Cover (60 pound)	\$ _____

And insert in lieu thereof:

		<u>per 1,000 Leaves</u>
III.	(a) White Uncoated Text (50 lb)	
	(1) 5.5" x 8.5" trim/page-size unit	\$ _____
	(2) 8.5" x 11" trim/page-size unit**	\$ _____
	**For billing purposes a product with size over 8.5" x 11" up to and including 11" x 17" will be billed at two 8.5" x 11" trim/page-size units.	
	(b) White Litho (Gloss) Coated Cover (60 pound)	
	(1) 5.5" x 8.5" trim/page-size unit	\$ _____

All other specifications remain the same.

If amendment is not acknowledged on bid, direct acknowledgement to:

bidsnorthwest@gpo.gov

The Program 3031S and bid opening date must be specified in the subject line of the email.

Amended bid or acknowledgement must be submitted using the method(s) specified in the solicitation for bid submission. Telephone submission is not acceptable.

BIDDER MUST ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF THIS AMENDMENT PRIOR TO BID OPENING. Failure to acknowledge receipt of amendment, by amendment number, prior to bid-opening time, may be reason for bid being declared nonresponsive.

Sincerely,

ROLAND D. WHITEHURST
Contracting Officer

Program 3031-S
Specifications by FB
Reviewed by RW

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE
Northwest

GENERAL TERMS, CONDITIONS, AND SPECIFICATIONS

For the Procurement of

VA Health Benefit Communications

as requisitioned from the U.S. Government Publishing Office (GPO) by the

Department of the Veterans Affairs (VA)

Single Award

TERM OF CONTRACT: The base term of this contract is for approximately 18 months beginning **April 1, 2024** and ending **September 30, 2025**, plus up to four (4) optional 12-month extension period(s) that may be added in accordance with the “OPTION TO EXTEND THE TERM OF THE CONTRACT” clause in SECTION 1 of this contract.

NOTE: The period from April 1, 2024 through September 30, 2024 will be used by the contractor for post award preparations and testing; this will include tasks as indicated in Attachments; actual, live production begins October 1, 2024.

BID OPENING: Bids shall be publicly opened virtually at 2:00 P.M., prevailing Seattle, WA, time, on March 13, 2024, at the Government Publishing Office, Northwest Region. All parties interested in attending the bid opening shall email infonorthwest@gpo.gov prior to bid opening date to request a Microsoft Teams live stream link. The link will be emailed on the day of the bid opening.

BID SUBMISSION: Bidders must submit email bids to bidsnorthwest@gpo.gov for this solicitation. No other method of bid submission will be accepted at this time. The program number and bid opening date must be specified in the subject line of the emailed bid submission. Bids received after 2:00 P.M., prevailing Seattle WA time, on the bid opening date specified above will not be considered for award.

ADDITIONAL EMAILED BID SUBMISSION PROVISIONS: The Government will not be responsible for any failure attributable to the transmission or receipt of the emailed bid including, but not limited to, the following –

1. Illegibility of bid.
2. Emails over 75 MB may not be received by GPO due to size limitations for receiving emails.
3. The bidder’s email provider may have different size limitations for sending email; however, bidders are advised not to exceed GPO’s stated limit.
4. When the email bid is received by GPO, it will remain unopened until the specified bid opening time. Government personnel will not validate receipt of the emailed bid prior to bid opening. GPO will use the prevailing time (specified as the local time zone) and the exact time that the email is received by GPO’s email server as the official time stamp for bid receipt at the specified location.

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CHANGES IN CONTRACT: Minor changes are scattered throughout. All bidders are cautioned to familiarize themselves with all provisions of these specifications before bidding.

Abstracts of contract prices are available at: <https://www.gpo.gov/how-to-work-with-us/vendors/contract-pricing>

For information of a technical nature, contact GPO Northwest at 206-764-3726 or email infonorthwest@gpo.gov and fbuchko@gpo.gov.

SECTION 1 - GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

GPO CONTRACT TERMS: Any contract which results from this Invitation for Bid will be subject to the applicable provisions, clauses, and supplemental specifications of GPO Contract Terms (GPO Publication 310.2, effective December 1, 1987 (Rev. 01-18)) and GPO Contract Terms, Quality Assurance Through Attributes Program for Printing and Binding (GPO Publication 310.1, effective May 1979 (revised 9-19)).

GPO Contract Terms (GPO Publication 310.2) – <https://www.gpo.gov/docs/default-source/forms-and-standards-files-for-vendors/contractterms2018.pdf>

GPO QATAP (GPO Publication 310.1) – <https://www.gpo.gov/docs/default-source/forms-and-standards-files-for-vendors/qatap-rev-09-19.pdf>.

SUBCONTRACTING: Contract Clause 6, "Subcontracts," of GPO Contract Terms (GPO Publication 310.2, effective December 1, 1987 (Rev. 01-18)), is modified to permit subcontracting of the printing of the 10-0998 Rights to Seek Further Review form, Notice of Privacy Practices, and for the manufacturing of envelopes only.

GPO IMPRINT REQUIREMENTS: The GPO imprint requirement, GPO Contract Terms, Supplemental Specifications, No. 9, is waived.

QUALITY ASSURANCE LEVELS AND STANDARDS: The following levels and standards shall apply to these specifications:

Product Quality Levels:

- (a) Printing (page related) Attributes – Level III.
- (b) Finishing (item related) Attributes – Level III.

Inspection Levels (from ANSI/ASQC Z1.4):

- (a) Non-destructive Tests - General Inspection Level I.
- (b) Destructive Tests - Special Inspection Level S-2.

Specified Standards: The specified standards for the attributes requiring them shall be:

<u>Attribute</u>	<u>Specified Standard</u>
P-7. Type Quality and Uniformity	Average Type Dimension/ Electronic Media
P-8. Halftone Match (Single and Double Impression)	Electronic Media
P-10. Process Color Match	Electronic Media

Physical Quality Control check is part of the stipulation of the Privacy Violation mitigation.

The contractor will incorporate new inspection measures to prevent PII incidents, to include the following:

A random physical sample to be pulled every ¼ of the run for each Print Order. The four random pulls are to be done at the beginning, two during and one at the end of the production run.

Random Inspections will consist of the following:

1. A CLEARED employee will pull a finished booklet package from live production run per sample requirement above.
2. The package will be opened by the employee
3. The employee will physically confirm the Veteran's name is matching on all materials listed below.
 - a. Letters
 - b. Inserts
 - c. Booklet (mailing panel on cover and name on page 1 of Chapter 1)
4. Once all names are verified correct, the material will be inserted into envelope** and returned to the production process as if it were not inspected.
**Inserted into a new envelope or re-inserted into the original envelope are acceptable as long as it does not show damage due to inspection.

OPTION TO EXTEND THE TERM OF THE CONTRACT: The Government has the option to extend the term of this contract for a period of 12 months by written notice to the contractor not later than 30 days before the contract expires. If the Government exercises this option, the extended contract shall be considered to include this clause, except, the total duration of the contract may not exceed six months for preparations and testing plus five years for actual production as a result of, and including any extension(s) added under this clause. Further extension may be negotiated under the "EXTENSION OF CONTRACT TERM" clause. See also "ECONOMIC PRICE ADJUSTMENT" for authorized pricing adjustment(s).

EXTENSION OF CONTRACT TERM: At the request of the Government, the term of any contract resulting from this solicitation may be extended for such period of time as may be mutually agreeable to the GPO and the contractor.

ECONOMIC PRICE ADJUSTMENT: The pricing under this contract shall be adjusted in accordance with this clause, provided that in no event will any pricing adjustment be made that would exceed the maximum permissible under any law in effect at the time of the adjustment. There will be no adjustment for orders placed during the first period specified below. Pricing will thereafter be eligible for adjustment during the second and any succeeding performance period(s). For each performance period after the first, a percentage figure will be calculated as described below and that figure will be the economic price adjustment for that entire next period. Pricing adjustments under this clause are not applicable to reimbursable postage or transportation costs, or to paper, if paper prices are subject to adjustment by separate clause elsewhere in this contract.

For the purpose of this clause, performance under this contract will be divided into successive periods. The first period will extend from **April 1, 2024 to September 30, 2025** and the second and any succeeding period(s) will extend for 12 months from the end of the last preceding period, except that the length of the final period may vary. The first day of the second and any succeeding period(s) will be the effective date of the economic price adjustment for that period.

NOTE: The term of the first contract year (base year) is expected to be approximately 18 months; however, the Economic Price Adjustment will be based on the date of actual production. Actual production begins on October 1, 2024.

Pricing adjustments in accordance with this clause will be based on changes in the seasonally adjusted "Consumer Price Index For All Urban Consumers - Commodities Less Food" (Index) published monthly in the CPI Detailed Report by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

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The economic price adjustment will be the percentage difference between Index averages as specified in this paragraph. An index called the variable index will be calculated by averaging the monthly Indexes from the 12-month interval ending three (3) months prior to the beginning of the period being considered for adjustment. This average is then compared to the average of the monthly Indexes for the 12-month interval ending **June 30, 2024**, called the base index. The percentage change (plus or minus) of the variable index from the base index will be the economic price adjustment for the period being considered for adjustment.

The Government will notify the contractor by contract modification specifying the percentage increase or decrease to be applied to invoices for orders placed during the period indicated. The contractor shall apply the percentage increase or decrease against the total price of the invoice less reimbursable postage or transportation costs and separately adjusted paper prices. Payment discounts shall be applied after the invoice price is adjusted.

If the Government exercises an option, the extended contract shall be considered to include this economic price adjustment clause.

NOTE: Economic price adjustments are not cumulative and are to be applied to original bid prices only.

PAPER PRICE ADJUSTMENT: Paper prices charged under this contract will be adjusted in accordance with “Table 9 - Producer Price Indexes and Percent Changes for Commodity Groupings and Individual Items” in Producer Price Indexes report, published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), as follows:

NOTE: For the purpose of this contract, the Paper Price Adjustment will be based on the date of actual production. Actual production begins October 1, 2024.

1. BLS code 0913 for All Paper will apply to all paper required under this contract.
2. The applicable index figures for the month of **September 2024**, will establish the base index.
3. There shall be no price adjustment for the first three production months of the contract.
4. Price adjustments may be monthly thereafter, but only if the index varies by an amount (plus or minus) exceeding 5% by comparing the base index to the index for the month that is two months prior to the month being considered for adjustment.
5. Beginning with order placement in the fourth month, index variances will be calculated in accordance with the following formula:

$$\frac{X - \text{base index}}{\text{base index}} \times 100 = \text{ ______ } \%$$
 where X = the index for that month which is two months prior to the month being considered for adjustment.
6. The contract adjustment amount, if any, will be the percentage calculated in 5 above less 5%.
7. Adjustments under this clause will be applied to the contractor’s bid price(s) for line items III (a) thru (b) in the “SCHEDULE OF PRICES” and will be effective on the first day of any month for which prices are to be adjusted.

The Contracting Officer will give written notice to the contractor of any adjustments to be applied to invoices for orders placed during months affected by this clause.

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In no event, however, will any price adjustment be made which would exceed the maximum permissible under any law in effect at the time of the adjustment. The adjustment, if any, shall not be based upon the actual change in cost to the contractor, but shall be computed as provided above.

The contractor warrants that the paper prices set forth in this contract do not include any allowance for any contingency to cover anticipated increased costs of paper to the extent such increases are covered by this price adjustment clause.

SECURITY – PRIVACY REQUIREMENTS:

General - All contractors and contractor personnel shall be subject to the Federal laws, regulations, standards and VA Directives and Handbooks, regarding information system security as delineated in this contract. Contractors must follow policies and procedures outlined in VA Directive 6500, *Information Security Program* and its handbooks to ensure appropriate security controls are in place.

SECURITY REQUIREMENTS: Protection of Confidential Information

- (a) The contractor shall restrict access to all confidential information obtained from the Department of Veterans Affairs in the performance of this contract to those employees and officials who need it to perform the contract. Employees and officials who need access to confidential information for performance of the contract will be determined at the post award conference between the Contracting Officer and the responsible contractor representative.
- (b) The contractor shall process all confidential information obtained from VA in the performance of this contract under the immediate supervision and control of authorized personnel, and in a manner that will protect the confidentiality of the records in such a way that unauthorized persons cannot retrieve any such records.
- (c) The contractor shall inform all personnel with access to the confidential information obtained from VA in the performance of this contract of the confidential nature of the information and the safeguards required to protect this information from improper disclosure.
- (d) For knowingly disclosing information in violation of the Privacy Act, the contractor and the contractor employees may be subject to the criminal penalties as set forth in 5 U.S.C Section 552a (i)(1), which is made applicable to contractors by 5 U.S.C. 552a (m)(1) to the same extent as employees of the VA. For knowingly disclosing confidential information as described in section 1106 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1306), the contractor and contractor's employees may also be subject to the criminal penalties as set forth in that provision.
- (e) The contractor shall assure that each contractor employee with access to confidential information knows the prescribed rules of conduct, and that each contractor employee is aware that he/she may be subject to criminal penalties for violations of the Privacy Act and/or the Social Security Act.
- (f) All confidential information obtained from VA for use in the performance of this contract shall, at all times, be stored in an area that is physically safe from unauthorized access.
See: Preaward Survey, Security Control Plan - Production Area
- (g) The Government reserves the right to conduct on-site visits to review the contractor's documentation and in-house procedures for protection of confidential information. (See "PREAWARD" for more information.)

SECURITY REQUIREMENTS: Protection of Confidential Information

This contract has been designated Public Trust Position Level 1 (Limited). Due to the sensitive nature of the information contained in the products produced under this contract, contractor employees performing under this contract will be subject to a thorough civil and criminal background check. "Performing under this contract" is defined as working on-site at a VA facility (including visiting the VA site for any reason) or having access to Government programmatic or sensitive information.

The contractor shall submit a completed Background Investigation Request Worksheet for each contractor employee who will be working on this contract within seven calendar days of contract award. VA will process all required background checks. Contractor employees are required to be fingerprinted within fourteen calendar days of contract award, unless otherwise notified by VA. It is the responsibility of the contractor to ensure fingerprint cards are processed through their local police departments or other authorized finger printers. VA will provide additional information on fingerprinting requirements at contract award.

See Exhibit A: Contractor Background Investigation Report

The general requirements as listed above are required of any new and current contractor employees performing contract work, and any project supervisors and management officials who have access to Government sensitive information.

The contractor is responsible for updating the background investigation template as personnel are added to the contract. The contractor must submit the updated roster to the Contracting Officer within seven calendar days after the added personnel are approved by VA. The background investigation forms and fingerprinting must be completed within seven calendar days of the personnel being added to the contract.

Access to VA Information and VA Information System –

1. A contractor shall request logical (technical) and/or physical access to VA information and VA information systems for employees only to the extent necessary: (1) to perform the services specified in the contract; (2) to perform necessary maintenance functions for electronic storage or transmission media necessary for performance of the contract; and, (3) for individuals who first satisfy the same conditions, requirements and restrictions that comparable VA employees must meet in order to have access to the same type of VA information.
2. All contractor employees working with VA Sensitive Information are subject to the same investigative requirements as those of regular VA appointees or employees who have access to the same types of information. The level of background security investigation will be in accordance with VA Directive 0710, Handbook 0710, which are available at: <http://www1.va.gov/vapubs/> and VHA Directive 0710 and implementing Handbook 0710.01 which are available at: <http://www.va.gov/vhapublications/index.cfm>. Contractors are responsible for screening their employees. The following are VA's approved policy exceptions for meeting VA's background screenings/investigative requirements for certain types of contractors:

Contract personnel not accessing VA information resources such as personnel hired to maintain the medical facility grounds; construction contracts; utility system contractors; etc., contract personnel with limited and intermittent access to equipment connected to facility networks on which no VA sensitive information is available, including contractors who install, maintain, and repair networked building equipment, such as fire alarm; heating, ventilation, and air conditioning equipment; elevator control systems, etc. If equipment to be repaired is located within sensitive areas of a VA facility (e.g., computer room/communications closets) VA IT staff must escort contractors while on-site.

VA Information Custodial Requirements –

1. Information made available to the contractor by VA for the performance and/or administration of this contract or information developed by the contractor in performance and/or administration of the contract shall be used only for those purposes and shall not be used in any other way without the prior written agreement of the Contracting Officer. This clause expressly limits the contractor's rights to use data as described in Rights in Data - General, Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 52.227-14(d) (1).
2. VA information will NOT be commingled with any other data on the contractor's information systems/media storage systems in order to ensure VA requirements related to data protection and media sanitization can be met. VA also reserves the right to conduct IT resource inspections to ensure data separation and on-site inspection of information destruction/media sanitization procedures to ensure they are in compliance with VA policy requirements.
3. Prior to termination or completion of this contract, the contractor will not destroy information received from VA or gathered or created by the contractor in the course of performing this contract without prior written approval by VA. Any data destruction done on behalf of VA by a contractor must be done in accordance with National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) requirements as outlined in VA Directive 6300, *Records and Information Management* and its Handbook 6300.1 *Records Management Procedures*, and applicable VA Records Control Schedules. These Directives are available at: <http://www.va.gov/vapubs/>.
4. The contractor will receive, gather, store, back up, maintain, use, disclose and dispose of VA information only in compliance with the terms of the contract and applicable Federal and VA information confidentiality and security laws, regulations and policies. Applicable Federal information security regulations include all Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) and Special Publications (SP) issued by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). If Federal or VA information confidentiality and security laws, regulations and policies become applicable to the VA information or information systems after execution of the contract, or if NIST issues or updates applicable FIPS after execution of this contract, the parties agree to negotiate in good faith to implement the information confidentiality and security laws, regulations and policies, including FIPS or SP, in this contract.
5. Contractors collecting, storing, or disseminating personally identifiable information (PII) or protected health information (PHI) data must conform to all pertinent regulations, laws, and VA directives related to privacy. Contractors must provide access for VA privacy reviews and assessments and provide appropriate documentation as directed.
6. The contractor shall not make copies of VA information except as necessary to perform the terms of the agreement or to preserve electronic information stored on contractor electronic storage media for restoration in case any electronic equipment or data used by the contractor needs to be restored to an operating state.
7. If VA determines that the contractor has violated any of the information confidentiality, privacy, and security provisions of the contract, it shall be sufficient grounds for the Government to terminate the contract for default or terminate for cause under the GPO Printing Procurement Regulations (GPO Publication 305.3).
8. If a Veterans Health Administration (VHA) contract is terminated for cause, the associated business associate agreement (BAA) will also be terminated and appropriate actions taken in accordance with VHA Handbook 1600.01 Business Associates.
9. Contractor will store, transport or transmit VA sensitive information in an encrypted form, using a VA-approved encryption application that meets the requirements of NIST's FIPS 140-2 standard.

10. The contractor's firewall and Web services security controls, if applicable, shall meet or exceed VA's minimum requirements. VA directives are available on the VA directives Web site at <http://www.va.gov/vapubs/>.
11. Except for uses and disclosures of VA information authorized by this contract for performance of the contract, the contractor may use and disclose VA information only in two other situations: (1) in response to a qualifying order of a court of competent jurisdiction; or, (2) with VA's prior written approval. The contractor will refer all requests for, demands for production of, or inquiries about, VA information and information systems to VA for response.
12. Notwithstanding the provision above, the contractor shall NOT release medical quality assurance records protected by 38 U.S.C. 5705 or records pertaining to drug addiction, sickle cell anemia, alcoholism or alcohol abuse, or infection with human immunodeficiency virus protected under 38 U.S.C. 7332 under any circumstances, including in response to a court order, and shall immediately refer such court orders or other inquiries to VA for response.
13. The contractor will not use technologies banned in VA in meeting the requirements of the contract (e.g., Bluetooth enabled devices).

Information System Design and Development –

1. Information systems that are designed or developed for, or on behalf of, VA at non-VA facilities shall comply with all VA policies developed in accordance with Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), NIST, and related VA security and privacy control requirements for Federal information systems. This includes standards for the protection of electronic PHI, outlined in 45 C.F.R. Part 164, Subpart C, information and system security categorization level designations in accordance with FIPS 199 and FIPS 200 with implementation of all baseline security controls commensurate with the FIPS 199 system security categorization (reference Appendix D of VA Handbook 6500, VA Information Security Program). During the development cycle, a privacy impact assessment will be completed, provided to the VA representative, and approved by the VA Privacy Service in accordance with VA Privacy Impact Assessment Handbook 6500.3.
2. The security controls must be designed, developed, approved by VA, and implemented in accordance with the provisions of VA security system development life cycle as outlined in NIST Special Publication 800-37 and VA Handbook 6500.
3. The contractor will be required to design, develop, or operate a System of Records on individuals to accomplish an agency function subject to the Privacy Act of 1974, (as amended), Public Law 93-579, December 31, 1974 (5 U.S.C.552a) and applicable agency regulations. Violation of the Privacy Act may involve the imposition of criminal and civil penalties.
4. The contractor agrees to –
 - a. Comply with the Privacy Act of 1974 (the Act) and the agency rules and regulations issued under the Act in the design, development, or operation of any system of records on individuals to accomplish an agency function when the contract specifically identifies the systems of records; and the design, development, or operation work that the contractor is to perform;
 - b. Include the Privacy Act notification contained in this contract in every solicitation and resulting subcontract and in every subcontract awarded without a solicitation, when the work statement in the proposed subcontract requires the redesign, development, or operation of a system of records on individuals that is subject to the Act; and,

- c. Include this Privacy Act clause, including this subparagraph (3), in all subcontracts awarded under this contract which requires the design, development, or operation of such a system of records.
5. In the event of violations of the Act, a civil action may be brought against the agency involved when the violation concerns the design, development, or operation of a system of records on individuals to accomplish an agency function, and criminal penalties may be imposed upon the officers or employees of the agency when the violation concerns the operation of a system of records on individuals to accomplish an agency function. For purposes of the Act, when the contract is for the operation of a system of records on individuals to accomplish an agency function, the contractor is considered to be an employee of the agency.
6. "Operation of a system of records" means performance of any of the activities associated with maintaining the system of records, including the collection, use, and dissemination of records.
7. "Record" means any item, collection, or grouping of information about an individual that is maintained by an agency, including, but not limited to, education, financial transactions, medical history, and criminal or employment history and contains the person's name, or the identifying number, symbol, or other identifying particular assigned to the individual, such as a fingerprint or voiceprint, or a photograph.
8. "System of records on individuals" means a group of any records under the control of any agency from which information is retrieved by the name of the individual or by some identifying number, symbol, or other identifying particular assigned to the individual.

Information System Hosting, Operation, Maintenance and/or Use –

1. For information systems that are hosted, operated, maintained, or used on behalf of VA at non-VA facilities, contractors are fully responsible and accountable for ensuring compliance with all HIPAA, Privacy Act, FISMA, NIST, FIPS, and VA security and privacy directives and handbooks. The contractor security control procedures must be identical, not equivalent, to those procedures used to secure VA systems. A privacy threshold analysis (PTA) /privacy impact assessment (PIA) must also be provided to the VA representative and approved by VA Privacy Service prior to operational approval. All external Internet connections involving VA information must be reviewed and approved by VA prior to implementation.
2. Adequate security controls for collecting, processing, transmitting, and storing of personally identifiable information, as determined by the VA Privacy Service, must be in place, tested, and approved by VA prior to hosting, operation, maintenance, or use of the information system, or systems by or on behalf of VA. These security controls need to be stated within the PTA/PIA and supported by a risk assessment. If these controls are determined not to be in place, or inadequate, a Plan of Action and Milestones (POA&M) must be submitted and approved prior to the collection of PII.
3. Outsourcing (contractor facility/contractor equipment/contractor staff) of systems or network operations, telecommunications services, or other managed services requires certification and accreditation of the contractor's systems in accordance with NIST Special Publication 800-37 and VA Handbook 6500 and a privacy impact assessment of the contractor's systems prior to operation of the systems. Government-owned (Government facility/Government equipment), contractor-operated systems, third party or business partner networks require a system interconnection agreement and a memorandum of understanding (MOU) which detail what data types will be shared, who will have access, and the appropriate level of security controls for all systems connected to VA networks.

4. The contractor must adhere to all FISMA, FIPS, and NIST standards related to the annual FISMA security controls assessment and review and update the PTA annually and both PTA/PIA if major changes occur. The PIA must be updated at a minimum of every of three (3) years absence major changes. Any deficiencies noted during this assessment must be provided to the VA Contracting Officer and the Information Security Officer (ISO) for entry into VA's Plan of Action and Milestone management process. The contractor will use VA's POA&M process to document planned remedial actions to address any deficiencies in information security policies, procedures, and practices, and the completion of those activities. Security deficiencies must be corrected within the timeframes approved by the Government. Contractor procedures will be subject to periodic, unannounced assessments by VA officials. The physical security aspects associated with contractor activities will also be subject to such assessments. As updates to the system occur, an updated PTA/PIA must be submitted to the VA Privacy Service through the VA representative for approval.
5. All electronic storage media used on non-VA leased or owned IT equipment that is used to store, process, or access VA sensitive information must have all VA sensitive information removed, cleared, sanitized, or destroyed in accordance with VA policies and procedures upon: (1) completion or termination of the contract or (2) disposal or return of the IT equipment by the contractor or any person acting on behalf of the contractor, whichever is earlier.
6. Contractor must have physical and environmental security controls to protect system, buildings and related infrastructures from individuals and environmental threats. Building physical security requirements will meet or exceed the physical security standards and practices as established with VA Directives and Handbook 0730, Security and Law Enforcement. There will be an Annual physical security survey conducted. Specific requirements and options are found in VA Directive and Handbook 0730 appendix B (Agent Cashier).
7. The contractor shall be required to obtain additional security access to VA servers and information. All VA system access procedures shall be followed to comply with the VA

Security Incident Investigation –

1. The term "security incident" means an event that has, or could have, resulted in unauthorized access to, loss or damage to VA assets or sensitive information, or an action that breaches VA security procedures.

The contractor shall immediately notify the GPO and VA representative and simultaneously, the designated Information System Security Officer (ISSO)/Privacy Officer for the contract of any known or suspected security/privacy incidents, or any unauthorized disclosure of sensitive information, including that contained in system(s) to which the contractor has access.

2. To the extent known by the contractor, the contractor's notice to GPO and VA will identify the information involved, the circumstances surrounding the incident (including to whom, how, when, and where the VA information/assets were placed at risk or compromised), and any other information that the contractor considers relevant.
3. The contractor will simultaneously report the incident to the appropriate law enforcement entity(ies) of jurisdiction, including the GPO and VA Offices of the Inspector General and Security and Law Enforcement, in instances of theft or break-in or other criminal activity. The contractor and its employees will cooperate with VA and any law enforcement authority responsible for the investigation and prosecution of any possible criminal law violation(s) associated with any incident. The contractor will cooperate with VA in any civil litigation to recover VA information, obtain monetary or other compensation from a third party for damages arising from any incident, or obtain injunctive relief against any third party arising from, or related to, the incident.

4. Liquidated damages will be applied for all expenses caused by the contractor related to data breaches involving VA sensitive personal information (SPI). This includes the specific liquidated damage expense to provide credit monitoring for a 12-month period estimated in the amount of \$37.50 per individual affected by the breach. All damages unrelated to data breaches involving SPI are subject to the actual damages clause, as specified below.
5. Unless otherwise prescribed, the contractor is, upon failure to provide services, materials, supplies, and equipment within the time specified for delivery, chargeable with all expenses caused the Government by reason of such delays in delivery for which no extension of time is provided, as actual damages to the Government on account of such delays. Also, the contractor will be charged, as actual damages, for all expenses caused the Government occasioned by delivery of materials, supplies, and equipment not conforming to specifications.

Security Controls Compliance Testing –

On a periodic basis, VA, including the Office of Inspector General, reserves the right to evaluate any or all of the security controls and privacy practices implemented by the contractor under the clauses contained within this contract. With ten (10) workday's notice, at the request of the Government, the contractor will fully cooperate and assist in a Government-sponsored security controls assessment at each location wherein VA information is processed or stored, or information systems are developed, operated, maintained, or used on behalf of VA, including those initiated by the Office of Inspector General. The Government may conduct a security control assessment on shorter notice (to include unannounced assessments) determined by VA in the event of a security incident or at any other time.

Security Training –

1. All VA employees are required to complete security and privacy awareness training initially and annually thereafter (within 365 days of previous completion date). The mandated training is listed in the Talent Management System (TMS) as VA Privacy and Information Security Awareness and Rules of Behavior (10176). Failure to complete this training in a timely manner may result in suspension or termination of access(es).

The following courses satisfy the requirement (TMS will automatically assign one of these courses to each user based on job function):

- TMS ID 10176: VA Privacy and Information Security Awareness and Rules of Behavior (WBT)
- TMS ID 832914: ISO Led Privacy and Information Security Awareness and Rules of Behavior Presentation
- TMS ID 31167: VA Privacy and Information Security Awareness and Rules of Behavior – Print (PDF)

All contractor employees requiring access to VA sensitive information and/or VA information systems shall complete the following before being granted access to VA networks or sensitive information:

- Sign and acknowledge understanding of, and responsibilities for, compliance with the *Contractor Rules of Behavior* relating to access to VA information and information systems;
See Exhibit B: Contractor Rules of Behavior
- Successfully complete VA Privacy and Information Security Awareness training and sign updated Non-Organizational Rules of Behavior initially and annually thereafter;

Successfully complete Privacy and HIPAA training initially and annual thereafter

- Successfully complete any additional cyber security or privacy training, as required for VA personnel with equivalent information system access.

2. The contractor shall provide to the Contracting Officer a copy of the training certificates for each applicable employee (for the required training as stated above) within seven (7) calendar days of notification of contract award and annually thereafter, as required. These online courses are located at the following web site: <https://www.tms.va.gov/SecureAuth35/>.
3. Failure to complete this mandatory training within the timeframe required will be grounds for suspension or termination of all physical and/or electronic access privileges and removal from work on the contract until such time as the training is completed.

Contractor Personnel Security –

1. All contractor employees who require access to the Department of Veterans Affairs' computer systems shall be the subject of a background investigation and must receive a favorable adjudication from the VA Security and Investigations Center (07C).

The level of background security investigation shall be in accordance with VA Directive 0710, dated May 18, 2007, and is available at: http://www.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1569 (VA Handbook 0710, Appendix A, and Tables 1 - 3).

The contractor shall submit a Background Investigation Request Worksheet within **seven calendar days** of contract award for each employee who will be working on this contract.

See Exhibit A: Contractor Background Investigation Report

Within seven calendar days of receiving the Background Investigation Request Worksheet, the VA Personnel Security Office will enter a background investigation request into the VA Security Investigation Center (SIC) Contractor Request Database (CRD) for each contractor employee. When the request is entered, an automated "Initial" email is sent to the contractor point of contact listed on the Background Investigation Request Worksheet. The automated email identifies the background investigation level requested and provides a web site link with further instructions. If a contractor employee has a background investigation from another federal agency, it may be reciprocated as long as the background investigation meets the appropriate level, has occurred within the last five years with a favorable adjudication, and no break in service.

If the security clearance investigation is not completed prior to the start date of the contract, the employee shall not work on the contract while the security clearance is being processed. Work will commence as soon as the contractor and contractor employee receive an email message that states the following: "We show that background investigation request on the individual listed below has been completed and the case has been initiated by the Security Investigations Center. When the case is completed, all adjudicative paperwork will be returned to the requesting office. You can provide this email to the Station ISO as proof the investigation has been initiated and access can be granted. This notice does not ensure completion of VetPro or other required security training. Those individuals that require VetPro Credentialing or additional security training must receive those completion notifications from the proper authority prior to start date."

NOTE: Per VA Memo dated January 30, 2012, From Assistant Secretary for Operations, Security, and Preparedness, Subj: Rescind-Contractor Background Investigation Requirements (VAIQ# 192200) VA policies do not require a full background investigation be initiated or completed by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) before the contractor is granted access to VA facilities or VA Information Technology resources (network). VA policies do require a contractor have the following before unescorted access may be granted to VA facilities and/or access to VA IT resources (network and/or protected data):

- a. A favorably adjudicated Special Agreement Check (SAC) or “Closed, No Issues” SAC fingerprint results;
- b. Training delineated in VA Handbook 6500.6 (Appendix C. Section 9), and,
- c. Signed “Contractor Rules of Behavior”

Member Services HR Security team services the HEC employees for background investigations.

2. The investigative history for contractor personnel working under this contract must be maintained in the databases of either the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) or the Defense Security Service (DSS). Should the contractor use a vendor other than OPM or DSS to conduct investigations, the investigative company must be certified by OPM/DSS to conduct contractor investigations.

Background Investigation –

The position sensitivity impact for this effort has been designated as **Limited Risk** and the level of background investigation is **NACI**.

Contractor Responsibilities –

1. The contractor shall bear the expense of obtaining background investigations. If the investigation is conducted by OPM through the VA, the contractor shall reimburse the VA within 30 calendar days of receipt of invoice from VA.
2. Background investigations from investigating agencies other than OPM/DSS are permitted if the agencies possess an OPM and Defense Security Service certification. The Vendor Cage Code number must be provided to the Security and Investigations Center (07C), which shall verify the information and advise the Contracting Officer whether access to the computer systems can be authorized.
3. The contractor shall prescreen all personnel requiring access to the computer systems to ensure they maintain a U.S. citizenship and are able to read, write, speak and understand the English language.
4. After contract award but prior to contract performance, the contractor shall submit a completed Background Investigation Request Worksheet (Attachment A) for each contractor employee who will be working on this contract.
5. The contractor, when notified of an unfavorable determination by the Government, shall withdraw the employee from consideration from working under the contract.
6. Failure to comply with the contractor personnel security requirements may result in termination of the contract for default.
7. Further, the contractor shall be responsible for the actions of all individuals provided to work for the VA under this contract. In the event that damages arise from work performed by contractor provided personnel, under the auspices of this contract, the contractor shall be responsible for all resources necessary to remedy the incident.

Government Responsibilities –

1. The VA Security and Investigations Center (07C) shall provide the necessary forms to the contractor or to the contractor's employees after receiving a list of names and addresses.
2. Upon receipt, the VA Security and Investigations Center (07C) shall review the completed forms for accuracy and forward the forms to OPM to conduct the background investigation. The VA facility shall pay for investigations conducted by the OPM in advance. In these instances, the contractor shall reimburse the VA facility within 30 calendar days of receipt of invoice from VA.
3. The VA Security and Investigations Center (07C) shall notify the VA representative and contractor after adjudicating the results of the background investigations received from OPM.
4. The VA representative will ensure that the contractor provides evidence that investigations have been completed or are in the process of being requested.

PREAWARD SURVEY: In order to determine the responsibility of the prime contractor or any subcontractor, the Government reserves the right to conduct an on-site preaward survey at the contractor's/subcontractor's facility or to require other evidence of technical, production, managerial, financial, and similar abilities to perform, prior to the award of a contract. As part of the financial determination, the contractor in line for award may be required to provide one or more of the following financial documents:

- 1) Most recent profit and loss statement
- 2) Most recent balance sheet
- 3) Statement of cash flows
- 4) Current official bank statement
- 5) Current lines of credit (with amounts available)
- 6) Letter of commitment from paper supplier(s)
- 7) Letter of commitment from any subcontractor

The documents will be reviewed to validate that adequate financial resources are available to perform the contract requirements. Documents submitted will be kept confidential and used only for the determination of responsibility by the Government. Failure to provide the requested information in the time specified by the Government may result in the Contracting Officer not having adequate information to reach an affirmative determination of responsibility.

Attending the Preaward survey may be representatives from the GPO and the VA.

Contractors must complete the “*Contractor Security Control Assessment (CSCA), Self-Assessment Questionnaire for Contract Service Providers*” for VA review and use during the Preaward survey security review.

See Exhibit C: Contractor Security Control Assessment (CSCA)

The Preaward survey will include a review of the contractor's mail, material, personnel, production, quality control/recovery program and security and backup facility plans as required by this specification.

NOTE: If award is predicated on the purchase of systems equipment to meet the file transmission requirements, the contractor must provide purchase order(s) with delivery date(s) at least 45 calendar days prior to the established production date. **PRODUCTION PLANS** - The contractor shall present, in writing, to the Contracting Officer within ten (10) work days of being notified to do so by the Contracting Officer or his/her representative, detailed plans for each of the activities below.

The workday after notification to submit will be the first day of the schedule. These proposed plans are subject to review and approval by the government and award will not be made prior to approval of same.

NOTE: THE GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO WAIVE SOME OR ALL OF THESE PLANS.

Backup Facility – The failure to deliver these handbooks/inserts in a timely manner would have an impact on the daily operations of VA. Therefore, if for any reason(s) (act of God, labor disagreements, etc.) the contractor is unable to perform at said location for a period of longer than seven (7) calendar days, the contractor must have a backup facility with the capability of producing the handbooks/inserts.

Plans for this contingency production must be prepared and submitted to the Contracting Officer as part of the Preaward survey. These plans must include the location of the facility to be used, security plans at the facility, equipment available at the facility, and a timetable for the start of production at that facility. Part of the plan must also include the transportation of Government materials from one facility to the other. The contractor must produce items from a test file at the new facility for verification of software prior to producing Health Benefits communications at this facility.

NOTE: All terms and conditions of this contract will apply to the backup facility.

Quality Control Plan – The contractor shall provide and maintain, within his own organization, an independent quality assurance organization of sufficient size and expertise to monitor the operations performed, and inspect the products of each operation to a degree and extent that will ensure the Government's quality assurance, inspection, and acceptance provisions are met.

The contractor shall perform, or have performed, the process controls, inspections and tests required to substantiate that the products provided under this contract conform to the specifications and contract requirements. The contractor shall describe in detail their quality control/quality assurance and recovery plans describing how, when, and by whom the plans will be performed.

The plan must provide for periodic samplings to be taken during the production run, a control system that will detect defective, missing, and/or mutilated pieces, and the actions to be taken by the contractor when defective/missing/mutilated pieces are discovered. These actions must be consistent with the requirements found in GPO Contract Terms (GPO Publication 310.2, effective December 1, 1987, (Rev. 1-18)). A recovery system is required to replace all defective, missing, and/or mutilated pieces.

This control system must use a unique sequential number to aid in the recovery program which has to be maintained in order to recover any missing or damaged pieces. These pieces must be reprinted and 100% accountability must be maintained throughout the run. The contractor must ensure that there are no missing or duplicated pieces.

The plan must include examples and a detailed description of all quality control samples and their corresponding inspection reports or logs the contractor will keep to document the quality control inspections performed on each run. The plan must provide for a complete audit trail (i.e., it must be possible to locate any piece of mail at any time from the point it leaves the press up to and including the point at which the mail is delivered to a USPS facility). An explanation of the contractor's sequential numbering system is required to understand the audit trail required for each and every piece.

NOTE: The Government will not, as a routine matter, request that the contractor produce individual pieces in transit within the plant, however, the contractor must demonstrate that they have an audit trail established that has the ability to comply with this type of request if and when the need arises.

The quality control plan must also include examples of the documentation and a detailed description of the random samples that document all of the contractor's activities. Furthermore, the plan must include the names of all quality assurance officials and describe their duties in relationship to the quality control plan.

The plan must include a detailed description of the number and types of inspections that will be performed as well as the records maintained documenting these activities.

The quality control plan must account for the number of pieces mailed daily, including days when no pieces are mailed.

The Government will periodically verify that the contractor is complying with the approved quality control plan through on-site examinations and/or requiring copies of the contractor's quality assurance records and quality assurance random copies.

Quality Control Sample Plan – The plan must provide a description of how the contractor will create quality control samples for periodic samplings to be taken during the production run and provide for backup and rerunning in the event of an unsatisfactory sample. The plan shall contain control systems that will detect defective, missing, and/or mutilated pieces.

The plan should include the sampling interval the contractor intends to utilize. The contractor will be required to create a quality control sample from each file, to be drawn from the production stream. Samples should be in unsealed envelopes with handbooks or inserts. Mailer number and file date must be indicated on each sample. The contractor must maintain samples as indicated in the contract specifications.

The plan shall detail the actions to be taken by the contractor when defective/missing/mutilated items are discovered. These actions must be consistent with the requirements found in GPO Contract Terms (GPO Publication 310.2, effective December 1, 1987, (Rev. 1-18).

Verification of Production and Mailing Plan – Contractor will be responsible for validating the integrity of every item produced in all phases of printing, packaging, and mailing and to ensure all mail pieces were correctly entered into the United States Postal System.

Mail piece Integrity shall be defined as follows: Each mail piece shall include all pages (and only those pages) intended for the designated recipient as contained in the print files received from VA.

The contractor is responsible for providing the automated print integrity control systems and processes required to prevent the commingling of pages intended for different recipients into a completed package. The contractor's printing process must have automated systems that include coding and scanning technology capable of –

1. Validating the count of pages in a set.
2. Validating the sequence of pages in a set.
3. Validating the sequence of sets in a production batch.
4. Interrupting production if variances are detected.

Mailing integrity shall be defined as follows: All records received from VA that are designated for hard copy printing were printed, inserted and entered correctly into the United States Postal System.

The contractor is responsible for providing the automated inserted mail piece tracking/reporting systems and processes required to validate that 100% of all records received from VA which are designated for hard copy printing were printed, inserted and mailed correctly. The contractor's inserting equipment must have automated systems that include coding and scanning technology capable of –

1. Reconciling page counts and quantity counts from VA provided files to print order control totals provided by VA; reporting variances.
2. Uniquely identifying each Product Types within a print order.

3. Unique identifier to be scanned after insertion to ensure all products are present and accounted for.
4. Tracking and reporting all products produced and mailed within a print order at the Product Type level.
5. Identifying and reporting all missing products that were lost or spoiled during production within a print order.
6. Generating a new production file for all missing products.
7. Tracking and reporting all products that were reproduced and mailed within a print order at the Product Type level.
8. Reconciling the total of all products produced and mailed within a print order to the control totals provided by VA; reporting all variances.
9. Reconciling the total of all products mailed to mailing totals contained on Postal Entry Forms within a print order; reporting all variances.
10. Generating a final automated summary report which provides information that all mail pieces have been scanned, after insertion, verifying that all pieces for each mail package and file date are accounted for after contents are inserted, and event information on any spoiled or missing pieces verifying that they were scanned and accounted for. A copy of the summary report must be submitted with the matching GPO 712 form(s).

The contractor must generate an automated audit report when necessary showing the tracking of all products throughout all phases of production for each mailpiece. This audit report will contain all information identified above for each phase of printing, packaging, and mailing.

All product tracking/reporting data must be retained in electronic form for 120 calendar days after mailing, and must be made available to VA for auditing of contractor performance upon request.

The contractor must maintain quality control samples, inspection reports, and records for a period of no less than 120 calendar days subsequent to the date of the check tendered for final payment by the GPO. The Government will periodically verify that the contractor is complying with the approved quality control plan through on-site examinations and/or requesting copies of the contractor's quality assurance records and quality assurance random copies.

Unique Identification Number Plan – Unique identifying numbers will be used to track each individual product, thereby providing 100% accountability. This enables the contractor to track each product through completion of the project. The contractor may create their own sequence number and run date to facilitate their presorting and inserting process but must maintain the original VA Client – Unique ID (UID) for Management Information (MI) reporting.

Recovery System – A recovery system will be required to ensure all defective, missing, and/or mutilated pieces detected are identified, reprinted, and replaced. The contractor's recovery system must use unique sequential alpha/numeric identifiers assigned to each piece (including quality control samples) to aid in the recovery and replacement of any defective/missing/mutilated pieces, and must be capable of tracking and/or locating any individual piece of mail from the time it leaves the press, up to and including when it is off-loaded at the USPS facility.

An explanation of the contractor's sequential numbering system is required to understand the audit trail required for each and every piece. NOTE: The Government will not, as a routine matter, request that the contractor produce individual pieces in transit within the plant, however, the contractor must demonstrate they will have an audit trail established that has the ability to comply with this type of request if and when the need arises.

Computer System Plan – This plan must include a detailed listing of the contractor's operating software platform and file transfer system necessary to interface with VA's File Transfer Management System (FTMS) for electronic transmission of files from VA. The plan must also include the media type on which files from VA will be received to the extent that operator intervention (e.g., a tape mount) is not required at VA or the contractor's production facility. The Computer System Plan shall demonstrate the contractor's ability to provide complete hardware and software compatibility with VA's existing network.

Included with the Computer System Plan shall be a resume for each employee responsible for the monitoring and the programming of the contractor's computer system and file transmissions.

Material Handling and Inventory Control – This plan should explain in detail how the following materials will be handled: incoming raw materials; work-in-progress materials; quality control inspection materials; USPS inspection materials; and all outgoing materials cleared for USPS pick-up/delivery.

Personnel Plan – This plan should include a listing of all personnel who will be involved with this contract. For any new employees the plan should include the source of these employees and a description of the training programs the employee's will be given to familiarize them with the requirements of this program.

NOTE: If employees have current and adequate security clearances, please notate.

Production Plan – The contractor is to provide a detailed plan of the following –

- a. A listing of all production equipment and equipment capacities to be utilized on this contract.
- b. The production capacity currently being utilized on this equipment.
- c. The capacity that is available for managing and producing the volume of work products identified within this contract.
- d. If new equipment is to be utilized, the documentation of the purchase order, source, delivery schedule and installation dates are required.

Security Control Plan – The contractor shall provide a security plan that addresses all aspects of physical and logical data file handling, processing and transfer, including publication and all associated mail handling as required. The security plan will address employee requirements for security training, background investigations and credit checks. The security plan will address inventory controls, network security, visitor controls and applicable miscellaneous aspects of production. The security plan shall meet or exceed the mandated VA security requirements and be approved by a designated VA Information Security Officer and the Privacy Officer.

The contractor shall review the security plan at least quarterly and update it as soon as changes are indicated. The security plan will be maintained throughout the life of the contract. After acceptance of the security plan, the contractor shall inform the VA representative in writing, within seven (7) calendar days of changes made to the document. In addition to the above, the contractor is also required to complete the Contractor Security Control Assessment (Attachment C) annually and keep a copy with the Security Control Plan.

The contractor shall enter into a Business Associate Agreement (BAA) and establish an Interconnection Security Agreement (ISA) with the VA, and be in accordance with HIPAA with VA prior to initial production of VA's Health Benefits Communications materials. The system must comply with Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) requirements for Government systems.

The proposed Security Control Plan must address the following:

Materials – Address how all accountable materials will be handled throughout all phases of production. This plan shall also include the method of disposal of all production waste materials in accordance with VA directive 6371 and the NIST publication 800-88.

Disposal of Waste Materials – The contractor is required to demonstrate how all waste materials used in the production of sensitive VA records will be definitively destroyed (ex. burning, pulping, shredding, macerating, or other suitable similar means). Electronic Records must be definitively destroyed in a manner that prevents reconstruction. *Definitively* destroying the records means the material cannot be reassembled and used in an appropriate manner in violation of law and regulations. *Sensitive* records are records that are national security classified or exempted from disclosure by statute, including the Privacy Act or regulation.

If the contractor selects shredding as a means of disposal, it is preferred that a cross cut shredder be used. If a strip shredder is used, the strips must not exceed one-quarter inch. The contractor must provide the location and method planned to dispose of the material. The plan must include the names of all contract officials responsible for the plan and describe their duties in relationship to the waste material plan.

Production Area – The contractor must provide a secure area(s) dedicated to the processing and storage of data for the VA Health Benefit Communication mailers, either a separate facility dedicated to this product, or a walled-in limited access area within the contractor's existing facility. Access to the area(s) shall be limited to security-trained employees involved in the production of VA Health Benefit Communication mailers.

Part of the Security Control Plan shall include a floor plan detailing the area(s) to be used, showing existing walls, equipment to be used, and the printing and finishing locations.

The Government will approve, conditionally approve, or disapprove the plan(s) within **five workdays**. If the Government conditionally approves the plan(s), the prospective bidder will be notified of the deficiencies of the plan(s) and allowed **five workdays** to respond to the issues identified by the Government in a revised Plan. If the Government disapproves the plan(s), contractor will be determined non-responsible, and a notice of disapproval will state the reasons therefore. No further revisions will be allowed.

Option Years: For each option year that may be exercised, the contractor will be required to re-submit, in writing, the above plans detailing any changes and/or revisions that may have occurred. The contractor should be prepared to submit these revised plans at each year's meeting (See "PREPRODUCTION MEETING"). THE REVISED PLANS ARE SUBJECT TO GOVERNMENT APPROVAL.

If the meeting is waived by the Government, the revised plans must be submitted to GPO within **five workdays** of notification of the option year being exercised.

If there are no changes/revisions, the contractor will be required to submit to the Contracting Officer a statement confirming that the current plans are still in effect.

ON-SITE REPRESENTATIVES: One or two full-time Government representatives may be placed on the contractor's premises on a limited basis or throughout the term of the contract.

On-site representative(s) may be stationed at the contractor's facility to: provide project coordination in receipt of transmissions; verify addresses; monitor the printing, folding, packaging, mail processing, quality control, sample selections and inspections; and, monitor the packing and staging of the mail and processing of undeliverable mail and secure destruction of undeliverable mail and defective/mutilated pieces.

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These coordinators will not have contractual authority, and cannot make changes in the specifications or in contract terms, but will bring any and all defects detected, to the attention of the company Quality Control Officer. The coordinators must have full and unrestricted access to all production areas where work on this program is being performed.

The contractor will be required to provide one private office of not less than 150 square feet, furnished with one desk, one swivel arm chair, a telephone line and an Ethernet connection and one facsimile machine (the Government will supply hookups and cover the cost of the telephone/high speed internet connection/facsimile machine service), two work tables, and two four-drawer letter-size files with combination padlock and pendaflex file folders or equal.

POSTAWARD CONFERENCE: Unless waived by the Government, the total requirements of the job as indicated in these specifications will be reviewed by Government representatives with the contractor's representatives at a Department of Veterans Affairs office in Washington, DC, or Atlanta, GA, or at the contractor's facility (to be determined after award) immediately after award. The contractor will be notified of the exact date.

NOTE: Persons that the contractor deems necessary for the successful implementation of the contract must be in attendance.

ASSIGNMENT OF JACKETS, PURCHASE AND PRINT ORDERS: A GPO jacket number will be assigned and a purchase order issued to the contractor to cover work performed. The purchase order will be supplemented by an individual print order for each job placed with the contractor. The print order, when issued, will indicate the quantity to be produced and any other information pertinent to the particular order.

ORDERING: Items to be furnished under the contract shall be ordered by the issuance of print orders by the Government. Orders may be issued under the contract from **April 1, 2024** through **September 30, 2025**, plus for such additional period(s) as the contract is extended. All print orders issued hereunder are subject to the terms and conditions of the contract. The contract shall control in the event of conflict with any print order. A print order shall be "issued" upon notification by the Government for purposes of the contract when it is electronically transmitted or otherwise physically furnished to the contractor in conformance with the schedule.

REQUIREMENTS: This is a requirements contract for the items and for the period specified herein. Shipment/delivery of items or performance of work shall be made only as authorized by orders issued in accordance with the clause entitled "ORDERING." The quantities of items specified herein are estimates only, and are not purchased hereby. Except as may be otherwise provided in this contract, if the Government's requirements for the items set forth herein do not result in orders in the amounts or quantities described as "estimated," it shall not constitute the basis for an equitable price adjustment under this contract.

Except as otherwise provided in this contract, the Government shall order from the contractor all the items set forth which are required to be purchased by the Government activity identified on page 1.

The Government shall not be required to purchase from the contractor, requirements in excess of the limit on total orders under this contract, if any.

Orders issued during the effective period of this contract and not completed within that time shall be completed by the contractor within the time specified in the order, and the rights and obligations of the contractor and the Government respecting those orders shall be governed by the terms of this contract to the same extent as if completed during the effective period of this contract.

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If shipment/delivery of any quantity of an item covered by the contract is required by reason of urgency prior to the earliest date that shipment/delivery may be specified under this contract, and if the contractor will not accept an order providing for the accelerated shipment/delivery, the Government may procure this requirement from another source.

The Government may issue orders which provide for shipment/delivery to or performance at multiple destinations.

Subject to any limitations elsewhere in this contract, the contractor shall furnish to the Government all items set forth herein which are called for by print orders issued in accordance with the "ORDERING" clause of this contract.

SECTION 508 COMPLIANCE:

1. The contractor shall comply with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. § 794d), as amended by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-220), August 7, 1998.
2. In December 2000, the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board), pursuant to Section 508(2) (A) of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998, established Information Technology accessibility standards for the Federal Government.

Section 508(a)(1) requires that when Federal departments or agencies develop, procure, maintain, or use Electronic and Information Technology (EIT), they shall ensure that the EIT allows Federal employees with disabilities to have access to and use of information and data that is comparable to the access to and use of information and data by other Federal employees. The Section 508 requirement also applies to members of the public seeking information or services from a Federal department or agency.

3. Section 508 text is available at:
 - <http://www.opm.gov/HTML/508-textOfLaw.htm>
 - <http://www.section508.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=Content&ID=14>

NOTE: The 508 requirements apply to functionality for user access into the CMS and for Veteran facing web applications.

The following links provide additional guidance to Section 508 Compliance, as required by these specifications:

www.ehealth.va.gov
www.ehealth.va.gov/508/resources_508.html
www.section508.gov

Also See Exhibit I: Section 508 Checklist

PRIVACY ACT NOTIFICATION: This procurement action requires the contractor to do one or more of the following: design, develop, or operate a system of records on individuals to accomplish an agency function in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974, Public Law 93-579, December 31, 1974 (5 U.S.C. 552a) and applicable agency regulations. Violation of the Act may involve the imposition of criminal penalties as stated in 5 U.S.C. 552a (i)(1) CRIMINAL PENALTIES. It is incumbent upon the contractor to inform its officers and employees of the penalties for improper disclosure imposed by the Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. 552a, specifically, 5 U.S.C. 552a (i)(1) CRIMINAL PENALTIES and m(1) GOVERNMENT CONTRACTORS.

PRIVACY ACT

- (a) The contractor agrees:

- (1) to comply with the Privacy Act of 1974 and the rules and regulations issued pursuant to the Act in the design, development, or operation of any system of records on individuals in order to accomplish an agency function when the contract specifically identifies (i) the system or systems of records and (ii) the work to be performed by the contractor in terms of any one or combination of the following: (A) design, (B) development, or (C) operation;
 - (2) to include the solicitation notification contained in this contract in every solicitation and resulting subcontract and in every subcontract awarded without a solicitation when the statement of work in the proposed subcontract requires the design, development, or operation of a system of records on individuals to accomplish an agency function; and
 - (3) to include this clause, including this paragraph (3), in all subcontracts awarded pursuant to this contract which require the design, development, or operation of such a system of records.
- (b) In the event of violations of the Act, a civil action may be brought against the agency involved where the violation concerns the design, development, or operation of a system of records on individuals to accomplish an agency function, and criminal penalties may be imposed upon the officers or employees of the agency where the violation concerns the operation of a system of records on individuals to accomplish an agency function. For purposes of the Act when the contract is for the operation of a system of records on individuals to accomplish an agency function, the contractor and any employee of the contractor is considered to be an employee of the agency.
- (c) The terms used in this clause have the following meanings:
- (1) “Operation of a system of records” means performance of any of the activities associated with maintaining the system of records including the collection, use, and dissemination of records.
 - (2) “Record” means any item, collection or grouping of information about an individual that is maintained by an agency, including, but not limited to, his education, financial transactions, medical history, and criminal or employment history and that contains his name, or the identifying number, symbol, or other identifying particular assigned to the individual, such as a finger or voice print or a photograph.
 - (3) “System of records” on individuals means a group of any records under the control of any agency from which information is retrieved by the name of the individual or by some identifying number, symbol, or other identifying particular assigned to the individual.

PAYMENT: Submitting invoices for payment via the GPO fax gateway (if no samples are required) utilizing the GPO barcode coversheet program application is the most efficient method of receiving payment. Instruction for using this method can be found at the following web address:

<http://winapps.access.gpo.gov/fms/vouchers/barcode/instructions.html>.

Invoices may also be mailed to: U.S. Government Publishing Office, Office of Financial Management, Attn: Comptroller, Stop: FMCE, Washington, DC 20401.

For more information about the billing process, refer to the General Information of the Office of Finance web page located at: <http://www.gpo.gov/finance/index.htm>.

Contractor’s billing invoice must be itemized in accordance with the items in the “SCHEDULE OF PRICES”.

SECTION 2. – SPECIFICATIONS

SCOPE: These specifications cover the production of an Online Handbook package only accessible through secure VA approved portals for Veteran consumption via web browser, print, a Handbook mailing package and two different Insert mailing packages consisting of separate-covered publications, cover letters, loose-leaf inserts, and mail-out envelopes requiring such operations as receipt and processing of transmitted data, electronic prepress, printing, variable imaging, binding, construction, packaging, and distribution. To be supplemented by an online handbook.

OBJECTIVES: The contractor shall complete the following:

1. Develop a web interface on the designated secure VA approved portal
 - (a) There are two (2) initial secure VA approved portals
 - (b) The scope includes 2 additional portals in the future, a total of four (4) portals
 - (c) Contractor shall coordinate with system deployment team for each portal to formalize a plan to build, implement, and deploy solution
2. Develop a secure data exchange between the Enrollment System (ES) and the Online Handbook solution to securely query, retrieve, and transmit needed data to generate the Online Handbook
3. Develop and build all content assets used to dynamically generated a personalized Online Handbook for any enrolled Veterans who requests one within a secure VA approved portal
4. Develop and build a mechanism for updating and modifying content when necessary
 - (a) Content Management System shall be available for Office of Communications staff to modify content on a monthly basis
 - (b) Content Management System shall allot for 2-3 changes monthly or approximately 36 changes annually
5. Online Handbook solution shall return a dynamically generated personalized Online Handbook within 30-60 seconds of initiating the request
6. The Online Handbook solution shall be 508 Compliant when:
 - (a) Displayed within common web browsers

The contractor shall perform the required activities at their location with additional access to VA servers and information. Contractor agrees to follow all necessary security procedures and complete any necessary forms and processes to gain access to VA servers and information. All processes and procedures needed to gain the necessary access shall be completed in a timely manner, not to exceed 2 weeks after being notified of the requirement.

TASKS: This section defines the tasks that the contractor must complete during contract performance.

1. Create an interface for requesting the Online Handbook
2. Place the Online Handbook Interface on secure VA approved portals
3. Securing retrieved Veteran Information from ES
4. Dynamically generated Online Handbook using secure Veteran data from ES

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5. Create the ability to preview, print, and save the Online Handbook
6. Create Content Management system and process
7. Online Handbook Repository in ES

TITLE: VA Health Benefit Communications

Sample Booklet may be found at the following link: <https://www.va.gov/HEALTHBENEFITS/vhbh/index.asp>

BACKGROUND: This project will deliver tailored health benefits communications materials to Veterans. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is sponsoring an initiative for the production of a Veterans Health Benefits Handbook. VA intends to provide each enrolled Veteran with a Veterans Health Benefits Handbook and replace its health benefit related letters containing “static” content, with more personalized and dynamic content.

Currently, when a Veteran becomes enrolled in the VA health care system, VA mails the Veteran a printed copy of the VHBH and Handbook Inserts are sent when changes to the Veteran’s health benefit package occur. The Online Veterans Health Benefits Handbook would allow Veterans on demand access to a personalized list of health benefit they are uniquely eligible to receive.

During the life of this contract, VA also plans to expand the content of the Handbook to include clinical information related to the Veteran’s local VA health care facilities and benefits administered by other VA lines of business, such as life insurance, home loans, education, vocational rehabilitation, compensation and pension and funeral and burial benefits.

VA intends to provide all enrolled Veterans a tailored Health Benefits Handbook (Handbook) describing in detail their specific health benefits plan, information about their preferred facility and their responsibilities (financial or other). If a Veteran’s health benefits plan or their local VA facility information changes during the interim period, the Veteran will be informed of those changes by receiving an insert letter describing the changes which the Veteran could place in their Handbook for reference. A subsection of the Handbook is the “Benefits at a Glance” which is a synopsis of the Veteran’s health benefits plan. The “Benefits at a Glance” will be leveraged as the basis for the Health Benefits Insert should the Veteran’s eligibility for VA health benefits change before it is time to issue a new printed Health Benefits Handbook. VA envisions Veterans simply selecting their preferred method of delivery as print or online.

The contractor shall provide a framework for a content repository that supports the customization, creation, management, transformation, and delivery of health benefit communications materials, which will be accessible by Veterans and VA staff through different online portals like MyVA, MyHealthVet and other VA portals, secure email and traditional mail. The contractor shall provide a fully hosted solution and provide VA with outsourced professional services for the management of the content and rules as well as online publication of on demand dynamically produced online copy of a Veteran’s Personalized Handbook. This includes but is not limited to the initial population and modifications to content, rules and style sheets and training of VA staff in maintenance of the content.

The Veterans Health Benefits Handbook will be published in both electronically online and hard copy formats. The Handbook will be available electronically (computable data) for VA staff on VA’s Enrollment System Changes that occur after initial mailing will trigger generation of a Health Benefits Insert or Preferred Facility Insert and the mail out to the Veteran will always result in a complete update of the Veterans Health Benefits Handbook in electronic (computable data) form of the Veterans Health Benefits Handbook. This way, VA and Veterans always have an up-to-date electronic version of the Handbook for viewing online or via a VA information system. VA will retrieve all files from the contractor (the benefit data files, mail management files) from the contractor’s server.

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VA's Member Services (MS), Communications Office, in conjunction with the MS Project Manager, is responsible for the authoring of communications material and development of rules associated with it. This office will be responsible for providing the contractor with the initial set of content, and rules and updates, as they occur, and for approving test outputs prior to implementation of changes.

A web interface must be developed that is only accessible through a secure VA approved portal such as MyVA or MyHealthVet that allows the Veteran to request or trigger a personalized online handbook. The Veteran will access the Online Handbook through a secure VA approved portal that validates the Veteran's identity. Once the Veteran's identity is confirmed, the Veteran will have the ability to generate an electronic personalized handbook. The contractor shall design a web query to securely connect, successfully retrieve necessary data points, and securely transmit the Veteran's data to generate a dynamic 508 compliant electronic handbook. The handbook must be generated within 30 to 60 seconds, display within common web browsers and have the capability to be printed and/or saved.

Veterans are enrolled into one of eight enrollment priorities based on their unique characteristics, such as military experience, service-connected disabilities, and financial status. Priority Group 1 is the highest priority. A Veteran's enrollment is generally continued from year to year, unless the Veteran requests disenrollment. VA intends to mail Handbooks to newly enrolled Veterans as enrollment is verified. The Veteran will be mailed a hard copy of the Handbook when the Veteran enrolls with the VA health care system.

The contractor shall provide services to achieve the objectives stated above and as described in these specifications. There are five (5) major components to these services:

- (a) Project Management.
- (b) Content Management Solution. The Content Management Solution is hosted by the contractor and includes failover and disaster recovery capability.
- (c) Publishing. Publication and delivery of VA's health benefit communications in electronic and hard copy formats, English and Spanish.
- (d) Undeliverable Mail Management. The contractor shall receive and account for undeliverable mail produced under this contract and provide VA files of undeliverable mail pieces to update its information systems. After processing, the contractor shall securely destroy the undeliverable mail pieces in accordance with these specifications.
- (e) Managed Services. The contractor will provide day-to-day technology and operational management of VA's content and rules as well as train and transition VA staff to be able to assume this responsibility. VA expects to assume primary responsibility for managing content and rules during the first option period.

Product Type and Mail Package Make-Up are as follows –

- 400H VA Veterans Health Benefits Handbook – consists of a personalized Handbook, a cover letter, 10-0998 Rights to Seek Further Review form, Notice of Privacy Practices, and a mail-out envelope.
- 400B VA Health Benefits Insert – consists of a personalized Health Benefits Insert, 10-0998 Rights to Seek Further Review form, and a mail-out envelope.
- 400F Preferred Facility Insert – consists of a personalized Facility Insert and a mail-out envelope.

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FREQUENCY OF ORDERS:

Full Production – Weekly print orders will be issued for files sent for the handbook packages and both types of insert packages. One Print Order will be issued monthly for Server Maintenance to be billed under line item IV(c).

NOTE: Files may be sent to the contractor’s server on a daily basis. When the print order is issued each week, it will be for that week’s files. Contractor is not to start production of received files until the print order for that week’s files has been issued. The print order will also be for the production of materials with static content, such as the 10-0998 Rights to Seek Further Review form and the Notice of Privacy Practices needed for that week.

QUANTITY: Estimated total quantity of at least 260,000 handbooks per year.

Full Production –

400H VA Veterans Health Benefits Handbook – Approximately 5,000 to 15,000 copies per week.

Note: Up to 3 orders per year will be approximately 130,000 copies.

400B VA Health Benefits Insert – Approximately 600 to 30,000 copies per week.

400F Preferred Facility Insert – Approximately 150 to 1,500 copies per week.

ONLINE HANDBOOK: Must be operational and in compliance with all VA system access procedures by October 1, 2024.

NUMBER OF PAGES:

Handbook – Approximately 64 to 96 pages (plus cover) per order.

Cover Letter – Face only or face and back.

Health Benefits Insert – Face only or face and back.

NOTE: An occasional order may require a 2nd leaf printing face and back.

Preferred Facility Insert – Face only or face and back

10-0998 Rights to Seek Further Review Form – Face and back.

Notice of Privacy Practices – 8 pages per order.

TRIM SIZE:

Handbook – 5-1/2 x 8-1/2”

Cover Letter – 8-1/2 x 11”.

Inserts – 8-1/2 x 11”.

10-0998 Rights to Seek Further Review Form– 8-1/2 x 11”.

Notice of Privacy Practices – 8-1/2 x 11” (folded down from 17 x 11”).

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Mail-out Handbook Envelope – 6-1/4 x 9-1/8” plus flap.

Mail-out Insert Envelope – 4-1/8 x 9-1/2 (No. 10) plus flap.

GOVERNMENT TO FURNISH: A record will be transmitted for each mailing address. The records will contain all the PII data relevant for the mailing of an associated mail piece. Files will be in record specification format, represented by dataset name. On a weekly basis, VA will also provide the contractor a file containing a facility information reference file that will be used in the development of the Handbook content. Any alteration of the data contained in the VA files is not permitted without specific instruction, in writing, from VA. All files transmitted by VA will be physical sequential. Any alteration of the notice content in the file is not permitted, without specific instruction, in writing from VA.

VA shall provide contractor with Veteran information needed to create the personalized Online Handbook, rules needed to customize the Online Handbook, and updates to the content as required. The contractor shall comply with every stipulation associated with information security as prescribed by VA Directive 6500, Information Security Program

Print-ready PDF (Acrobat DC) for the 10-0998 Rights to Seek Further Review form and the Notice of Privacy Practices will be furnished via email at the beginning of the contract to be held for reuse throughout the term of the contract. NOTE: VA will give notification of form/notice changes at least 30 calendar days prior to the change implementation.

All files will be electronically transmitted to the contractor’s server by VA. Any programming or other format changes necessitated due to the contractor’s method of production will be the full responsibility of the contractor and must be completed prior to VA’s validation.

Variable data will be furnished in text files. Variable data triggers will be provided in a delimited data file that will be uploaded to the contractor’s server on a weekly basis.

Currently, the base layout is in Adobe InDesign CC 14.0 (NOTE: The layout is available to change based on requirements of the contractor as long as the goal of the base design is obtained. File has been used on both a PC and Mac.) Visuals will be furnished for the base layout.

The files may be furnished as native application files, but this will need to be finalized based on final production of the contractor’s workflow. The files will include all illustrations/graphics in place. Contractor will be responsible to flow text and generate books based on databases provided to web-based server. Color identification system used is CMYK and Pantone Matching System.

A template will be established and furnished at the beginning of the contract for use throughout the term of the contract. The template will remain the same throughout the term of the contract. The method of furnishing the template is at the contractor’s option and will be discussed at the post-award conference.

EXHIBITS:

Exhibit A: Contractor Background Investigation Report

Exhibit B: Contractor Rules of Behavior

Exhibit C: Contractor Security Control Assessment (CSCA)

Exhibit D: Sample Pages of Veterans Health Benefits Handbook

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Exhibit E: Sample Cover Letter

Exhibit F: Sample Health Benefits Insert

Exhibit G: Sample Preferred Facility Insert

NOTE: The facsimiles of samples pages shown as Exhibits D through G are representative of the requirements which will be ordered under this contract. However, it cannot be guaranteed that future orders will correspond exactly to these attachments.

Exhibit H: Sample File Layouts

Exhibit I: Section 508 Checklist

Exhibit J: PreAward and Pre-production Various Timelines/Deadlines

Exhibit K: Self Certification of Continuous Service

Exhibit L: OF 306 (vAug 2003)

Identification markings such as register marks, commercial identification marks of any kind, etc., carried in the electronic files, must not print on the finished product.

CONTRACTOR TO FURNISH: All materials and operations, other than those listed under “GOVERNMENT TO FURNISH,” necessary to produce the products in accordance with these specifications.

The contractor will be responsible for establishing a web-based server that will allow VA access to the Content Management System in order to view and manage the content and rules.

The contractor shall provide a secure server for VA to place files for the contractor’s use in creating VA health benefits communications materials. Upon completion of work, the contractor will place files on this server for VA’s retrieval.

FILE TRANSFER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (FTMS):

Within the first year of the contract, VA will require the contractor to develop a Web Service based interface in order to support VA’s initiative of migrating away from the legacy SFTP based protocols and interfaces. The contractor shall convert the interface from flat-file based SFTP communication to a Web Service based interface to support a ‘real time’ print request transactions from VA (i.e. SOAP or REST protocol over mutual TLS). The Web Service shall support all data fields and information exchanges currently in use by the SFTP file based processes. The Web Service shall be compliant with VA enterprise security controls and design standards and is subject to VA technical review and approval. The contractor shall support integration testing and VA client integration activities related to migrating VA application communications to the new Web Service. The contractor assumes all expense for development and responsibility for configuration, maintenance, and troubleshooting of their equipment and software.

VA will not permit any private class A, B or C IP addresses, i.e., 10.xxx.xxx.xxx type IP addresses from external users on its network. At connection time to VA’s network, the contractor will be provided a suitable IP address for access to VA’s network via a firewall. VA will provide the necessary subnet(s) for connection at the remote site.

The contractor will be responsible for their own name/address to fulfill the intended purpose of data transfers. VA will provide connection information for establishing a VPN tunnel or configurations for SFTP node information to the contractor as required to accomplish file transfers.

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The contractor may determine the media type on which files from VA will be received, to the extent that operator intervention (e.g. tape mount) is not required at VA or the contractor's production facility. Multiple transmission sessions must be possible simultaneously on the contractor's equipment.

All files transmitted by VA will be written as Physical Sequential or "flat" files at the contractor's location and will be distinguished with a "run date" in the file name. Virtual Storage Access Method files and Generation Data Groups, supported by IBM/MVS or IBM/ZOS390 operating systems are not permitted under this contract. The contractor's storage format must not preclude the availability of VA's software restart feature.

VA will send files to the contractor's secure server and retrieve files from the contractor from that server. The contractor's FTMS software shall be operational for the receipt and retrieval of data files from 00:01 ET Monday until 24:00 ET Sunday, unless otherwise specified by the Government.

The communications protocol between VA and the contractor shall be the Internet Protocol (IP). The contractor must specify the type Local Area Network (LAN) connection that will be used at the location where the VA connection is to be installed. The contractor is responsible for providing complete hardware and software compatibility with VA's existing network. Production file transfers will be established according to VA's standard procedures for transmission control, dataset naming, and resource security. The contractor's file management system must accommodate multiple file transmission sessions without intervention at either end. The contractor must have sufficient capacity to support the number of concurrent transmission file sessions as dictated by VA.

NOTE: The above will apply, regardless of the number of files sent to the contractor's secure server weekly.

Any programming or other format changes necessitated due to the contractor's method of production will be the full responsibility of the contractor and must be completed prior to VA's validation.

Whenever the contractor makes a change in the programming, the contractor is required to execute a self-certification statement specifying the date of the last programming change. Prior notification of a programming change is required in addition to the self-certification statement for the contractor to schedule a validation test with VA.

In the event that any file cannot be processed due to media problems, the contractor shall notify VA's Help Desk immediately at (512) 326-6780 within two (2) hours of receipt of print order.

The contractor shall notify VA of any reprogramming and/or reformatting of data supplied by transmission necessitated due to the contractor's method of production, within two (2) hours of receipt of print order. The cost of such reprogramming and/or reformatting shall be the responsibility of the contractor and is at no cost to the Government.

PREPRODUCTION MEETING: A preproduction meeting covering the content management system implementation, printing, and mailing shall be held at the contractor's facility after award of the contract to review the contractor's production plans and to establish coordination of all operations.

Option Years: For each option year that may be exercised, the Government's representatives may request a pre-production meeting with the contractor's representatives to be held at the contractor's facility to discuss the requirements of that contract year's jobs. The Government reserves the right to waive the preproduction meeting in the option years.

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VA shall schedule the date and time of the preproduction meeting with the contractor, which shall be hosted by the contractor at the contractor's production facility. Attending this meeting will be representatives from GPO, VA and USPS. The contractor and the Government will introduce key project personnel including the person responsible for the mailing operation, and that person's backup. The contractor shall brief the VA project team on their Project Management Plan, Communications Plan, Training Plan, Configuration Management and Master Test Plan, and Change Management Process (as specified below) during the pre-production meeting describing their plan for fulfillment of the contract requirements.

The contractor shall provide the VA and GPO a hard copy of each of the documents at the preproduction meeting along with electronic versions of these documents on a CD. VA shall review and provide feedback as to their acceptance or required amendments to the Plans within seven calendar days. The contractor shall provide amended plans to VA and GPO via email within seven calendar days of receiving VA's requested edits.

After plans are approved Contractor must get pre-approval from VA for any changes prior to implementation. See above for timeline on process of review and approval.

The contractor will conduct a tour of their facility demonstrating compliance with VA security and privacy requirements, quality assurance standards, content management, and publication systems. The VA will conduct an on-site inspection of the contractor's production facility where the contractor is to furnish specific mail flow information as follows:

Project Management Plan – The contractor shall develop and maintain a project management plan that includes the project structure, scope, risk, quality and technical management approach, work breakdown structure, detailed schedule, cost requirements and proposed personnel. The work breakdown structure will be documented using Microsoft Project 2007 or a version agreed to by VA.

Communications Plan – The contractor shall create a communications plan that depicts all lines of communications to be considered for this project. It also incorporates the mechanisms, frequency and audience by which status is reported to VA.

Training Plan – The contractor shall create a training plan that describes the delivery method for training and knowledge transfer. The plan shall identify key resources and interaction points, and provide the appropriate documentation (electronically, or as otherwise agreed with the Government) for staff to use as a reference. The training plan shall reflect practical user training covering the features of the CMS used by staff for, including but not limited to, authoring and/or editing content, including inputting different content types, previewing, checking and changing content before publishing, testing and validation.

Configuration Management and Master Test Plan – The contractor shall describe, in detail, the testing approach including, but not limited to: development, testing and production environments, methods, quality assurance, definition of success metrics, and configuration management.

Change Management Process – The contractor shall establish a change management process that shall provide VA the ability to review and approve any changes to content and rules prior to implementation in the production environment and that these changes are appropriately documented in appropriate project documents. The contractor shall assure all validation tests are included in the change management process. This process may be tailored by VA based on assessment of complexity of the change, experience or outcomes.

Other Project Documentation – The contractor shall be responsible for generating presentations, reports and other project documentation necessary to brief GPO and VA on project status. The contractor will be required to conduct these presentations or briefings.

Ongoing Customer Support – Effective the day immediately following the pre-production meeting, the contractor will provide VA customer support through email and phone during regular business hours (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time) or otherwise as agreed with VA. The contractor's support teams will be expected to handle questions from VA on the management of the CMS content and rules and to troubleshoot and resolve issues with the generation of the handbook/inserts and mailing.

VA must be able to leave a message for the contractor during off hours. The contractor shall return calls or respond to emails within one hour of receipt during the regular business hours or within one (1) hour of the beginning of the regular business hours.

Reporting Requirements – The contractor shall email progress reports to the VA representative. The contractor will be required to submit the following –

Project Conference Calls – The contractor's key personnel will participate in weekly conference calls with the VA program office until full production of the Veterans Health Benefits Handbook has been implemented, at which time, the frequency of the calls may progress to monthly at the discretion of the VA. The contractor will prepare and share minutes of the meetings with the VA. The calls will commence the week immediately following the pre-production meeting. VA will schedule the calls with the contractor.

Daily Reports – The contractor shall send VA a daily report in Microsoft Excel, or in a version agreed to by VA, showing the following information. The daily report shall include a subtotal for the month's work, as well as a Fiscal Year summary –

1. The number of records for printing received during the reporting period and Fiscal Year to Date (FYTD), by Product Type (e.g., Handbooks, Health Benefits Inserts, and Preferred Facility Inserts).
2. Of the total number of records received for printing during the reporting period and FYTD, the total pieces mailed during the reporting period and FYTD, by Product Type and Preferred Facility Station Number.
3. Of the total number of records received for printing during the week and FYTD, the number of records not mailed due to: a) invalid address, as determined by CASS or a Bad Address Indicator in the Veteran's record; and, b) the number of records not processed due to data corruption (missing required data or improperly formatted data) for the reporting period and FYTD, by Product Type.
4. Number of undeliverable mail pieces processed for the reporting period and FYTD, by Product Type.
5. On-time mail-out percentage for the reporting period and FYTD (number of mailings which were not mailed within the 7 calendar day timeframe/total number of mailings).
6. Average number of calendar days from receipt of the print order to mailing for the reporting period and FYTD.

The daily reports are to begin on the first day of printing. The reports shall continue each workday until the end of the term of the contract. If no work is completed on a given workday, a negative report shall be sent. The report will be sent each day via email by 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time. The name and email address will be provided at the pre-production meeting.

Weekly Progress Reports – The contractor shall submit weekly progress reports that cover all work completed during the previous week, and any non-production work accomplished (e.g., Content Management System population or edits of content or rules), and that to be accomplished during the subsequent weeks and months. The contractor’s report shall include a narrative that addresses accomplishments, actual vs. planned project schedule, project risks and mitigations, quality and security issues and resolutions, escalation process for outstanding issues, and remediation for any issues that cause the project to be delayed.

The contractor shall submit the first report via email to VA **seven calendar days** after the preproduction meeting. Thereafter, the weekly report shall be provided to VA via email by 4:00 p.m., Eastern Time, on Friday of each week.

The weekly report shall include the following processing information described below. This information shall be provided in a format conducive of statistical analysis (e.g. Microsoft Excel).

1. Number of requests received from VA for modifications to rules contained in the Content Management System, the number of requests processed, and the number of requests pending the contractor’s action for the reporting period and FYTD. (See “CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM” below.)
2. Number of requests received from VA for modifications to content contained in the Content Management System, the number of requests processed, and the number of requests pending the contractor’s action for the reporting period and FYTD. (See “CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM” below.)
3. Number of requests received from VA for modifications to style sheets contained in the Content Management System, the number of requests processed, and the number of requests pending the contractor’s action for the reporting period and FYTD. (See “CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM” below.)
4. Number of overnight shipping requests from VA Project Manager for the reporting period and FYTD.
5. The contractor shall report whether electronic files and media have been destroyed according to VA security requirements as specified in this contract.

CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM: The contractor shall establish a Content Management System (CMS) which enables VA to provide, in print and electronic format, tailored health benefits information to Veterans driven by their characteristics and history. The Content Management System shall provide a central repository, supported by a range of tools for manipulating and managing the content, generation and presentation of the information. The solution will take the content and rules stored in the repository and produce tailored content for the Veteran in accordance to the instructions provided in each record.

The content should be separated from presentation at the time of authoring to allow for distinct style sheets to be used for each output. The final appearance of the content will be controlled through the use of style sheets. The overall page layout will be specified by page templates furnished by VA. A non-technical interface must be provided for managing this. The CMS must publish to multiple formats, such as HTML (web), hard copy print, and data files. The CMS should allow for adding support for additional formats, as new standards emerge.

Key requirements include:

- *Integrated Authoring Environment* – The CMS must provide a seamless and powerful environment for content creators, which does not require knowledge of specialized programming languages.

- *Separation of Content and Presentation* – Authoring must be style-based, with all formatting applied during publishing. The final appearance of the published material is controlled through the use of style sheets. The CMS provides page and layout templates to shorten development and publishing time and effort. The CMS must keep content and layout separate.
- *Personalization* – The CMS must be able to personalize information to the recipient based on rules, metadata, and recipient profile information.
- *Multi-User Authoring* – The CMS must be able to support multiple users and ensure data integrity and prevent access clashes.
- *Content Re-Use* – The CMS must be able to re-use content to avoid data redundancy.
- *Metadata Creation* – The CMS must be able to capture metadata to facilitate search and management.
- *Usability* – The CMS must provide an authoring environment that allows the user to create and maintain content with minimal setup and training.
- *Version Control and Archiving* – The CMS must provide strict version control as necessary for legal accountability, backup, and disaster recovery. The solution must provide an interface for these features. The CMS must provide the ability to view content as it was on a specified date in time to assist in addressing legal and record keeping compliance issues.
- *Workflow* – The CMS must provide built-in, or must support, automated workflow processes and technologies. Workflow will support authoring, testing and approval of content and rules. The solution must be easily customized and adaptable to change.
- *Security* – Security will assure adequate security levels and audit trails in place to assure integrity of content and rules.
- *Reporting* – The CMS must provide an extensive range of reports, for both users and administrators.
- *Integration with External Systems* – The CMS must be capable of receiving and processing information sent by VA and to publish the Handbook and other tailored communications and support mailing of hard copy materials to Veterans. The CMS will provide information back to VA including an electronic version of the communications material, mailing information (e.g., correspondence type, status, date) and user and administrator level reporting.
- *Extensibility* – The CMS must allow for a mechanism to extend publishing mediums and channels. The CMS must support a web-based tool which enables a query functionality (challenge and return routine) that would allow a VA portal site to provide basic information for a Veteran eligibility. The CMS would then run challenges against the existing (most up-to-date) rules, and return a listing of available benefits (content as established by the database of the handbook) based on the supplied query. This information will be returned to VA in HTML format for display through the VA portal to the requestor.
- *Multi-language(s)* – The CMS must allow the ability to publish the communications materials in a specified foreign language (Spanish). Initially, the CMS must allow an authorized user to select the foreign language for which a unique Veteran’s material would be published. When VA’s information systems are enhanced, the data string sent by VA to the CMS will reflect the Veteran’s language preference. When that enhancement is in place, the CMS will publish the communications material in the designated language as per the instruction. (NOTE: Less than 5% of all handbooks and inserts ordered will be in Spanish.)

Implement Content Management System Environments – The contractor shall implement test and production environments for the storage and manipulation of VA’s Veterans Health Benefits Handbook and other tailored communications materials. These environments should conform to the key requirements of the CMS specified above and be able to expand to hold content and rules for all VA lines of business.

Populate the Content Management System Environments (English) – The contractor shall perform an initial population of the content, rules and style sheets provided by VA into the Content Management System. These form the content and format baseline for the Veterans Health Benefits Handbook, Health Benefits Insert, Preferred Facility Insert and cover letters. The draft style sheets, content and rules for the Veterans Health Benefits Handbook, Health Benefits Insert, Preferred Facility Insert and cover letters will be provided on the Internet. The content and rules will be provided in Microsoft Word 2010, or a version agreed to by VA. Final versions of the initial set of style sheets, content and rules will be provided at Pre-Production meeting. Additionally, VA will provide the initial facility reference file, which will be used in the Pre-Production Validation Test. Population of the Content Management System shall be completed within 20 calendar days of the Pre-Production meeting.

Populate the Content Management System environments (Spanish) – The contractor shall perform an initial population of the content, rules and style sheets provided by VA into the Content Management System. These form the content and format baseline for the Veterans Health Benefits Handbook, Health Benefits Insert, Preferred Facility Insert and cover letters.

The style sheets, content and rules for the Veterans Health Benefits Handbook, Health Benefits Insert, Preferred Facility Insert and cover letters will be provided to the contractor by VA via email. The content and rules will be provided in Microsoft Word 2010, or a version agreed to by VA. VA expects to provide the contractor with the Spanish version content within six (6) months after beginning Full Production. Population with the Spanish version content will be completed within 21 calendar days after provision by VA.

Implement the Change Management Process – The contractor shall implement the change management process that controls versions and ensures the integrity of the style sheets, and content and rules residing in the Content Management System.

The contractor shall ensure updates to the content and rules provided by VA are accurately implemented in the Content Management System and that these are accurately documented in appropriate business documents. The contractor shall implement the Change Management Process with the initial population of the Content Management System.

Operational Management of VA’s Style Sheets, Content and Rules – After the initial population of the Content Management System, the contractor shall receive and execute changes to style sheets, content and rules furnished by the designated VA office. The contractor shall implement the changes in a test environment within five (5) calendar days of provision by VA and without disrupting ongoing production, unless otherwise specified by VA. The contractor will notify the VA that the proposed changes are available for review by the VA. The VA’s approval is required before they may be placed into production.

Populate the Content Management System Environments with Clinical Inventory Information – The contractor shall perform an initial population of the content, rules and style sheets for clinical inventory information provided by VA into the Content Management System. These will form the new baseline for the enhanced Veterans Health Benefits Handbook, Health Benefits Insert, Preferred Facility Insert and cover letters. The updated style sheets, content and rules for VA’s Veterans Health Benefits Handbook, Health Benefits Insert, Preferred Facility Insert and cover letters will be provided by VA as they are identified. VA will provide the contractor with clinical inventory information to be added to the Content Management System approximately six (6) months after the Pre-Production meeting. The contractor shall implement those changes within **21 calendar days** of receipt.

Populate the Content Management System Environments with Veteran's Non-Health Related Benefits Information – The contractor shall perform an initial population of the content, rules, and style sheets for non-health related benefits information provided by VA into the Content Management System. These will form the new baseline for the enhanced Veterans Health Benefits Handbook, Health Benefits Insert, Preferred Facility Insert and cover letters. The updated content, rules, and style sheets for VA's Veterans Health Benefits Handbook, Health Benefits Insert, Preferred Facility Insert and cover letters will be provided by VA as they are identified. VA will provide the contractor with the non-health related benefits information to be added to the Content Management System approximately 12 months after the preproduction meeting. The contractor shall implement those changes within **21 calendar days** of receipt.

Create a Self-Service Web-Interface to the Content Management System. The contractor shall create an interface which allows Veterans to anonymously enter information about themselves into a VA created web-based tool which calls the content and rules in the CMS and delivers benefits information to the Veteran on a VA internet site. This interface shall be completed nine months after the pre-production meeting.

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER TRAINING – The contractor shall develop training materials for training VA staff in the use of the Content Management System. The training materials will focus on the following areas: maintaining style sheets, content and rules; validation testing (unit, regression, functional and impact testing); promoting/releasing updates to content and rules; and support and troubleshooting of the environment and components.

Additionally, the contractor will provide up to four (4) separate periods of on-site desk-side coaching at VA's Health Eligibility Center in Atlanta, GA. Each period will extend for four (4) workdays, with each day of desk-side coaching being an 8-hour workday.

NOTE: The contractor shall be reimbursed for all travel costs and per diem incurred for the training and on-site desk-side coaching sessions (as specified in this contract) in accordance with the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR) in effect at the time of travel.

Develop Training Materials – The contractor shall develop the following training packages: a) Module for authoring of content and business rules and use of the Content Management System; b) Module for testing and promoting/releasing content and rules changes; c) Module for product administration tailored to the support staff responsible for granting access and managing the environment and its components.

Provide VA Staff Access to the CMS – The contractor will allow designated VA staff to have secure access to view the content and rules managed in the CMS and to be able to see the results of validation tests.

Access to the CMS shall be provided no later than 21 calendar days after the preproduction meeting, and thereafter, within three (3) calendar days of receipt of new VA staff information. The total number of VA users will not exceed 15 users.

Provide Training to Business Users – The contractor shall begin to train the business users in: a) authoring/communicating business rules; b) module for testing and promoting/releasing content and rules changes; and, c) module for product administration tailored to the support staff responsible for granting access and managing the environment and its components within 30 calendar days of the Pre-Production meeting.

Provide Training to Support Staff – The contractor shall perform administrative training to the support staff responsible for granting access and managing and troubleshooting the environment and its components within 30 calendar days of the Pre-Production meeting.

Provide On-Site Desk-Side Coaching Sessions – The contractor shall provide four (4) separate on-site desk-side coaching sessions to business users and administrative support. The training requirements for these sessions should be defined by the VA Project Manager (PM) and the contractor. The purpose of this on-site training is to address any questions regarding the product functionality and features, and implementation of best practices. These sessions shall be scheduled by VA, with the first session beginning no earlier than 30 calendar days of the preproduction meeting.

VALIDATION TESTS: Prior to commencement of production of orders placed under this contract, VA will furnish electronic test files that are to be used in performing Preproduction Validation Tests.

Dataset names and formats for this test will be provided at the Pre-Production meeting.

Transmission Test – The contractor must demonstrate that it is capable of receiving and processing Health Benefit Communication Request files in the peak anticipated volume (100,000 records per week) by performing a Transmission Test prior to retrieving live production data files. The contractor will be required to provide VA a verification message detailing the record count received/processed broken down by segments within one (1) workday after the complete transmission of the test files. (NOTE: The Transmission Test records will be sent over two (2) consecutive days.)

The transmission test will be accomplished **15 calendar days** after the Pre-Production meeting.

All production files for Health Benefit communications will be electronically transmitted. The Government will not furnish back-up cartridges at any time during the term of this contract.

NOTE: Failure of the contractor to perform the Transmission Test satisfactorily may be cause for default. The Government reserves the right to waive the requirements of the test. Contractor will be notified at the Post-award Conference if test is to be waived.

Pre-production Validation Test – Twenty-one calendar days after the Pre-Production meeting, VA will transmit a Test File containing no more than 250 test records to the contractor for their use in producing product samples. The Government will approve, conditionally approve, or disapprove the validation output within seven calendar days of receipt thereof. Approval or conditional approval shall not relieve the contractor from complying with the specifications and all other terms and conditions of the contract. A conditional approval shall state any further action required by the contractor. A notice of disapproval shall state the reasons thereof.

The contractor shall deliver the following –

- ***Printed Samples*** – For each test record, the contractor shall provide a set of sample products to VA (address to be supplied at the Pre-Production meeting) within five calendar days of receipt of the test file. No envelopes will be required for the samples. The contractor must produce these samples on their equipment that will be used in production, and with their personnel. The samples are to be printed (on the paper required by these specifications) and bound, as specified herein. The samples must be complete (reflect the complete mailing package, e.g., cover letter, 10-0998 Rights to Seek Further Review form, and Notice of Privacy Practices) and include all variable fill-ins.
- ***Electronic Handbook/Insert Samples*** – For each record in the Test File, the contractor shall provide an electronic version of the Handbooks/Inserts to VA (on the contractor's secure server for retrieval by VA) within three (3) calendar days of receipt of the test file. The Handbook cover letter, 10-0998 Rights to Seek Further Review form, and Notice of Privacy Practices shall not be provided electronically unless specifically requested by VA in advance.

- *Online Handbook Samples* – For each record in the Test File, the contractor shall provide a coded text file (ex.: HTML Mark-up) of the Handbooks to VA (on the contractor’s secure server for retrieval by VA) within three calendar days of receipt of the test file. The Handbook cover letter, 10-0998 Rights to Seek Further Review form, and Notice of Privacy Practices shall not be provided electronically unless specifically requested by VA in advance.
- *Mail Management Files* – For the Handbooks and related materials generated as a result of the Pre-Production Validation Test, the contractor will make available on the contractor’s secure server to VA three mail status files:
 - (1) A file containing records that have invalid addresses;
 - (2) A file containing records that were mailed, and,
 - (3) A file identifying records that could not be processed due to data corruption.

These files will be retrieved from the contractor’s server by VA, within three calendar days of the Pre-Production Validation Test, for processing and approval of the Test file.

To test the Undeliverable Mail processing, VA will select up to 20 records as having mail that was returned as undeliverable by the post office and provide the record information to the contractor within three calendar days of the pre-production validation test.

The contractor will make a file containing Undeliverable Records information available on their secure server available to VA within three (3) calendar days of receipt of the test undeliverable records information.

The Government will approve, conditionally approve, or disapprove the validation output within 14 calendar days of receipt thereof. Approval or conditional approval shall not relieve the contractor from complying with the specifications and all other terms and conditions of the contract. A conditional approval shall state any further action required by the contractor. A notice of disapproval shall state the reasons thereof.

All data provided by the Government or duplicates made by the contractor and any resultant printouts must be accounted for and kept under strict security to prevent their release to any unauthorized persons. Data may not be duplicated in whole or in part for any other purpose than to create material to be used in the performance of this contract.

System Change/Updated Content Validation Test – When required, VA will furnish test files containing up to 250 records for transmission that are to be used in performing a Systems Change/Updated Content Validation test. This test is required whenever VA initiates a systems/programming change or when Health Benefits communications content is created or modified. The contractor shall furnish 10 printed samples from each file (no envelopes) within five calendar days of receipt of files. The samples are to be printed (on the paper required by these specifications) and bound, as specified herein.

The samples must be complete (reflect the complete package, e.g., cover letter, 10-0998 Rights to Seek Further Review form, and Notice of Privacy Practices), and must include all variable fill-ins. In addition, for each System Change/Updated Validation Test, the contractor must provide an electronic version of each Handbook or Insert produced from the test file.

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The Government will approve, conditionally approve or disapprove the samples within seven calendar days of receipt thereof.

NOTE: The contractor is not to implement the change in live production until approved by VA.

The System Change Validation Test shall occur without a break in production of Health Benefit Communications. The Government anticipates changes in systems may occur four times per year and will inform the contractor in advance when the transmissions will contain the system changes. Changes in content or rules may occur 12 times per year.

PRODUCTION OF HEALTH BENEFIT COMMUNICATION MATERIALS:

When it is time to publish Health Benefits Communications materials, VA will create a Health Benefits Communications request file containing records for which the communications materials should be published and place it on the contractor's secure server. A record will be created for each mailing address on the file. The record will contain all the data relevant for the mailing of an associated mail piece. Request files will be in record specification format, represented by dataset name. Any alteration of the data contained in the file is not permitted, unless specifically directed by VA, in writing.

Each record on the Health Benefits Communications Request File will contain a field that identifies the delivery preference (e.g., hardcopy printing or electronic only). At the inception of this contract, all products will require hardcopy printing; however, if a Bad Address Indicator value is "Yes" or if the CASS software finds that the address provided is invalid or undeliverable, the requested material will be published in electronic format only. The electronic copy should display "Electronic Only" embedded in the background to indicate a hard copy was not mailed. Another field in each record will identify the Product Type, (e.g., Handbook, Preferred Facility Insert or Health Benefits Insert). When the record indicates publication of a Preferred Facility Insert and/or Health Benefits Insert is to be generated, the Handbook will be regenerated in electronic format and the Insert will be printed and mailed to the Veteran. When the Veterans Health Benefit Handbook, the Health Benefits Insert, or the Preferred Facility Insert is created (regardless of whether a hardcopy of the Handbook was mailed to the Veteran), the files of the Handbook and Benefits at a Glance will be sent electronically to VA for retention and access, as well as the computable data file.

Within seven calendar days of receipt of the print order, the contractor will place on its secure server for VA retrieval three (3) Mail Status files (in the format prescribed by VA) as follows:

1. A file containing records that have invalid addresses;
2. A file containing records that were mailed; and,
3. A file identifying records that could not be processed due to data corruption (e.g., missing required data or improperly formatted data).

Additionally, the contractor shall be required to receive and process undeliverable Health Benefits Communications mail returned by USPS. The contractor is responsible for processing the undeliverable mail within two workdays of receipt from USPS. The contractor shall place a file on its secure server each *calendar* day of each piece of undeliverable mail received and processed that day. Any returned mail must be securely destroyed by the contractor within 24 hours of processing and making the file available for VA's receipt.

The final version will be provided at the Pre-Production meeting.

See Exhibit H: Sample File Layouts

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NOTE: VA data provided to the contractor must be retained for 120 calendar days after mailing. The files created by the contractor in the production of Health Benefits Communications, such as data files for Handbooks, Inserts, and mail management files, must be stored on the contractor's server for 120 calendar days for VA's use.

On the 121st calendar day, the contractor is required to delete (scrub) the files from the server, unless otherwise instructed by VA. The undeliverable mail files must be deleted (scrubbed) from the contractor's server on the 121st calendar day after retrieval by VA.

VA destruction requirements are found in VA Directive 6371 and the NIST publication 800-88.

All data provided by the Government or duplicates made by the contractor and any resultant printouts must be accounted for and kept under strict security to prevent their release to any unauthorized persons. Data may not be duplicated in whole or in part for any other purpose than to create material to be used in the performance of this contract. Any duplicate data or resultant printouts must be destroyed by the contractor.

ELECTRONIC INFORMATION TRANSFER REQUIREMENTS:

Upon award of this contract, the Government will determine the connectivity method between VA and the contractor. Internet Protocol (IP) will be the connection protocol for the transmissions. At the Government's option, the Government will either place an order for a dedicated circuit data connection under GSA's FTS 2001 contract to be installed (within 60 calendar days) between the contractor's location(s) and VA's network interface location or the connectivity method will be through the Internet using VA Rescue connection. The connection method is at the sole discretion of the Government. The Government shall not be responsible for installation delays of data connections due to any external influences such as employee strikes, weather, supplies, etc., which conditions are beyond the control of the Government.

If a VPN Rescue connection method is deemed necessary, the contractor must have an Internet-ready VPN IP security (IPsec) capable device. The Government is not responsible for any cost associated with the VPN Internet connection that the contractor may incur.

If a dedicated circuit transmission is deemed necessary, VA will determine the appropriate bandwidth for the connection. The cost of this connection will be borne by the Government. The contractor shall immediately provide a complete delivery address with nearest cross street, contact name and phone number for installation of data transmission services and equipment. The contact person at the contractor's site will be available for delivery of services at the specified location. The Government shall not be responsible for incorrect or lack of address information nor for non-availability of contact person at the delivery site. VA will provide the necessary dedicated data connection including router, modem, and firewall at the contractor's specified locations(s).

ELECTRONIC PREPRESS: Prior to image processing, the contractor shall perform a basic check (preflight) of the furnished media and publishing files to assure correct output of the required reproduction image. Any errors, media damage, or data corruption that might interfere with proper file image processing must be reported to the ordering agency as specified on the print order.

The contractor shall create or alter any necessary trapping, set proper screen angles and screen frequency, and define file output selection for the imaging device being utilized. Furnished files must be imaged as necessary to meet the assigned quality level.

All halftones are to be 150 line screen or finer.

GPO imprint is waived and must not print on the finished products.

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When required by the Government, the contractor shall make minor revisions to the electronic files. It is anticipated that the Government will make all major revisions.

Prior to making revisions, contractor shall copy the furnished files and make all changes to the copy.

Upon completion of each order, the contractor must furnish final production native application files (digital deliverables) with the furnished material. The digital deliverables must be an exact representation of the final printed product and shall be returned on the same type of storage media as was originally furnished.

The Government will not accept, as digital deliverables, PostScript files, Adobe Acrobat Portable Document Format (PDF) files, or any proprietary file formats other than those supplied, unless specified by the Government.

STOCK/PAPER: The specifications of all paper furnished must be in accordance with those listed herein or listed for the corresponding JCP Code numbers in the "Government Paper Specification Standards No. 12" dated March 2011.

https://www.gpo.gov/docs/default-source/forms-and-standards-files-for-vendors/vol_12.pdf?sfvrsn=2.

All text paper used in each copy must be of a uniform shade. All cover paper must have the grain parallel to the spine.

<i>Handbook Cover</i>	White Litho (Gloss) Coated Cover, basis weight: 60 pounds per 500 sheets, 20 x 26", equal to JCP Code L10.
<i>Handbook Text</i>	White Uncoated Text, basis weight: 50 pounds per 500 sheets, 25 x 38", equal to JCP Code A60.
<i>Cover Letter</i>	White Uncoated Text, basis weight: 50 pounds per 500 sheets, 25"x38", equal to JCP A60.
<i>Inserts</i>	White Uncoated Text, basis weight: 50 pounds per 500 sheets, 25 x 38", equal to JCP Code A60.
<i>10-0998 Rights to Seek Further Review form</i>	White Uncoated Text, basis weight: 50 pounds per 500 sheets, 25"x38", equal to JCP A60.
<i>Notice of Privacy Practices</i>	White Uncoated Text, basis weight: 50 pounds per 500 sheets, 25"x38", equal to JCP A60.
<i>Mail-out Handbook Envelope</i>	White or Light Brown Kraft Shade, (at contractor's option), basis weight: 32 pounds per 500 sheets, 17 x 22", equal to JCP Code V10.
<i>Mail-out Insert Envelope</i>	White Writing Envelope basis weight: 24 lbs. per 500 sheets, 17 x 22", equal to JCP Code V20.

PRINTING/VARIABLE IMAGING: At contractor's option, the printing of the handbook text pages, cover letters, inserts, forms, notices, and envelopes may be produced via conventional offset or digital printing provided that Quality Level 3 standards are maintained. Final output must be a minimum of 150 line screen and at a minimum resolution of 1200 x 1200 x 1 dpi or 600 x 600 x 4 bit depth technology.

NOTE: GPO imprint is waived and must not print on the finished products.

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<i>Handbook Cover</i>	Prints in four-color process. Some type reverses out white. Covers 1 has full ink coverage. Image in black only on Cover 4 only consisting of agency seal, text and recipient's mailing address, Covers 2 and 3 print black only with variable information consisting of text, rules and images.
	Handbook covers 1 and 4 must be printed via offset <i>with the variable imaging of data</i> . Covers must be printed on a press capable of printing four colors in a single pass.
<i>Handbook Text</i>	Prints head-to-head in black ink only. Image in black only throughout the text pages consisting of variable text matter
<i>Cover Letters</i>	Print face only or face and back in black ink. Printing consists of text and line matter and the agency seal. Image in black only. Imaging consists of text matter and image for signature.
<i>Inserts</i>	Print face only or face and back in black ink. Printing consists of text and line matter, and the agency seal. Image in black only. Imaging consists of text matter.
<i>10-0998 Rights to Seek Further Review Form</i>	Print face and back in black ink only. Printing consists of text and line matter.
<i>Notice of Privacy Practices</i>	Print head-to-head in black ink. Printing consists of text and line matter.
<i>All Envelopes</i>	Print envelopes face only (after construction) in black ink only.

Printing shall be in accordance with the requirements for the style envelope ordered. All printing shall comply with all applicable U.S. Postal Service regulations, including automation guidelines/requirements. The envelope shall accept printing without feathering or penetrating to the reverse side.

NOTE: VA reserves the right to make changes to the format/text on any of forms, notices, or envelopes at any time during the term of the contract. Therefore, the contractor shall not pre-print or maintain more than a 30-day supply of any of the forms, notices, or envelopes required under this contract. VA will not be required to purchase from the contractor the inventory of any component remaining on hand in excess of what was authorized when a format/text change to the form, notice or envelope change is implemented.

MARGINS: Margins will be as indicated on the print order or furnished electronic files. Covers 1 and 4 of the Handbook bleed on all four sides.

BINDING: Bind as follows –

<i>Handbooks</i>	Saddle-wire stitch in two places and trim three sides. Each product must contain complete four-page signatures after trimming. Single leaves connected with a lip (i.e., binding stub) to left or right side of stitches will not be allowed.
<i>Cover Letters</i>	Trim four sides.
<i>Inserts</i>	Trim four sides.
<i>10-0998 Rights to Seek Further Review Form</i>	Trim four sides.

*Notice of
Privacy Practices*

Fold from 17 x 11" down to 8-1/2 x 11", title out. Trim three sides and paste on fold.

CONSTRUCTION (All Envelopes): All envelopes must be open side, side seam, with gummed fold-over flap for sealing. Flap depth is at the contractor's option but must meet all USPS requirements. Flap must be coated with suitable glue that will securely seal the envelope without adhering to contents, not permit resealing of the envelope and permit easy opening by the recipient. Envelopes shall be sufficiently high cut so as to prevent the flap adhesive from coming in contact with the envelope's contents. The sealed seam shall not adhere to the inside of the envelope. Envelopes shall be free from cuts, folds, tears, machine marks, foreign matter, dirt, ink smears, and adhesive stains.

Face of envelopes to contain one die-cut address window.

- On the 6-1/4 x 9-1/8" envelope, the window is located on the lower left face of the envelope, vertical placement (after manufacture). (NOTE: The size of the die-cut window for the 6-1/4 x 9-1/8" envelope will be provided at the preproduction meeting.) The die-cut window is to be located in alignment with the address location on the back of the handbook (the long dimension of the window is parallel with the long dimension of the envelope; envelope flap to the top side of the window).
- On the No. 10 envelope, the window is 1-1/8 x 4-1/2" in size, and is located 7/8" from the left edge and 1/2" from the bottom edge of the envelope. Die-cut window is to be located in alignment with the address location on the insert.

NOTE: Die-cut windows on all envelopes must allow for the viewing of the imaged mailing address (up to five (5) lines plus IMB bar code) on the handbook or insert, as applicable.

The window may have rounded or slightly rounded corners, as specified on the print order.

Die-cut windows are to be covered with a suitable poly-type, transparent, low-gloss material that must be clear of smudges, lines and distortions. Poly-type material must be securely affixed to the inside of the envelope so as not to interfere with insertion of contents. Window material must meet the current U.S. Postal Service's (USPS) readability standards/requirements.

PACKAGING:

Handbooks – Gather, fold and insert in specified order, the cover letter, the 10-0998 Rights to Seek Further Review form,, and the Notice of Privacy Practices under the handbook, with all facing toward the back of envelope, into a 6-1/4 x 9-1/8" kraft envelope with the recipient' name, address, and bar code on back cover of the handbook facing out for visibility through the envelope window.

It is the contractor's responsibility to assure:

- a) That the name on the cover letter corresponds with the name on the handbook;
- b) That only the recipient's name, address, and bar code on the handbook will be visible through the window; and,
- c) That only one (1) each of the required components is inserted into each mail-out envelope.

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Health Benefits Inserts – Gather the insert and 10-0998 Rights to Seek Further Review form, and letter-fold together with the recipient's name and address on the insert facing out. Insert into a No. 10 mail-out envelope with the recipient's name and address facing out for visibility through the envelope window. It is the contractor's responsibility to assure that only the recipients' name and address on the insert will be visible through the window and that only one (1) each of the required insert and form is inserted into the mail-out envelope.

Preferred Facility Inserts – Letter-fold and insert into a No. 10 mail-out envelope with the recipient's name and address facing out for visibility through the envelope window. It is the contractor's responsibility to ensure that only the recipient's name and address on the insert is visible through the window and that only one (1) each of the required insert is inserted into the envelope.

NOTE: It is possible that a recipient may receive one (1) each of the Health Benefit Insert and the Preferred Facility Insert, in which case the Health Benefit Insert is to be placed on top. It is the contractor's responsibility to assure that the name on the Health Benefit Insert corresponds with the name on the Preferred Facility Insert.

For most recipients, either a handbook or insert will be inserted into the envelope. On a rare occasion, a recipient may receive both a handbook and insert(s), in which case, the contractor is to place the insert(s) behind the Notice of Privacy Practices, and insert as specified above. The contractor will be responsible for establishing a web-based server that will allow VA access to the Content Management System in order to view and manage the content and rules.

After inserting all required components for each package type into applicable mail-out envelopes, seal mail-out envelopes.

Mail each individual package.

LABELING AND MARKING: On all mail-out envelopes, the contractor must use the agency's name ("Department of Veterans Affairs"), the VA seal, and the contractor's mailing address as the return address, with "Official Business" underneath the address. (VA to furnish a PDF file containing the VA seal.)

DISTRIBUTION: Mail f.o.b. contractor's city each individual mail package to both domestic (nationwide) and foreign addresses.

NOTE: Less than 10,000 addresses annually are for foreign destinations.

Mailing of all materials shall be made at Presort First Class rate (reimbursable), unless specified otherwise.

Contractor is required to apply the appropriate postage to each mailing. Contractor will be reimbursed for postage by submitting a properly completed postal service form (or equivalent) with billing invoice for payment.

The contractor must validate Veteran addresses for improved mail delivery by using Coding Accuracy Support System (CASS) Certified software to ensure the address conforms to United States Postal Service (USPS) standards. *Prior to printing hard copy materials*, the contractor will run each address through CASS-certified software to identify invalid mailing addresses. Records with invalid addresses will not have hardcopy material printed and will be published in electronic format only.

On occasion, the Government may request overnight express mailing of Communications based on special requests from VA, Congress and the Executive Branch. Such requests will be authorized through the VA representative. Contractor will be reimbursed for all express mailing costs by submitting a properly completed postal service form (or equivalent) with billing invoice for payment.

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The contractor is responsible for all costs incurred in transporting materials published as a result of this contract to the Post Office.

The contractor is required to prepare domestic Presort Standard Class mail in accordance with appropriate USPS rules and regulations, including the USPS Domestic Mail Manual, in effect at the time of the mailing. The contractor is required to obtain the maximum USPS postage discounts possible in accordance with the USPS Presort Standard Class Domestic Mail automated and non-automated mail discount structure in effect at the time of the mailing: (A) Automation (5-digit); (B) Automation (3-digit); (C) Automation (AADC); (D) Automation (Mixed AADC); (E) Non-automation (Presorted); and (F) Non-automated (Single Piece).

For each file retrieved by the contractor for delivery of communications material to Veterans, the contractor will return to VA three (3) Mail Status files: 1) a file containing records that have invalid addresses; 2) a file containing records that were mailed; and, 3) a file identifying records that could not be processed due to data corruption (e.g., missing required data or improperly formatted data). These files shall be placed in the VA-specified server location by the contractor through the use of One-VA VPN. Examples of the file formats are provided in Attachment H. The final versions will be provided at the preproduction meeting.

All copies mailed must conform to the appropriate regulations in the U.S. Postal Service manuals for "Domestic Mail" or "International Mail", as applicable.

The following US Postal Service (USPS) Ancillary Service Endorsements will be used if the piece of mail is Undeliverable as Address (UAA).

1. If a new address is identified within Months 1 through 12 – Forward the mailpiece to the new address.
2. If a new address is identified within Months 13 through 18 – Return the mailpiece to the contractor with the new address attached. The contractor will re-address the mailpiece and re-mail to the Veteran. The contractor will send VA a file containing information about the old and new address.
3. After Month 18 or if undeliverable – The mailpiece will be returned to the contractor with reason for non-delivery. The contractor will send VA a file identifying the records for which mail is undeliverable. The contractor will securely dispose of the undeliverable mail by shredding it with a cross cut shredder; the strips must not exceed one-quarter inch. The contractor must provide the location and method planned to dispose of the material.

Upon completion of each order, all furnished material, including electronic media, if applicable, and digital deliverables) and sample copies must be returned to: Department of Veterans Affairs, Chief Business Office, 2957 Clairmont Road, Atlanta, GA 30329.

All expenses incidental to picking up and returning materials and furnishing sample copies must be borne by the contractor.

WHITE MAIL: Contractor shall receive and process white mail communications relative to Program 3031-S, as follows:

When mail is received by the vendor, it shall remain unopened (if it is clearly indicated that it is in reference to the Program 3031-S contract). If the mail is not clearly marked, then said mail is to be opened only by an individual that has passed VA's security clearance.

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This mail will be gathered in a secure location and held until scheduled for return to the designated VA representative. When requested by VA, all gathered white mail relating to Program 3031-S is to be inserted into a secure shipping container (box, padded envelope, etc.). A tracking number at the time of shipment shall be provided via email to the point of contact designated by VA.

All materials will be handled/processed by a cleared employee, per VA privacy/security requirements. The VA shall have the option to select the preferred vendor/small package carrier, if multiple carriers are available.

SCHEDULE: Adherence to this schedule must be maintained. Contractor must not start production of any job prior to receipt of the individual print order (GPO Form 2511).

If required, furnished material must be picked up from to: Department of Veterans Affairs, Health Eligibility Center, 2957 Clairmont Road, Atlanta, GA 30329.

No definite schedule for pickup of material can be predetermined.

It is anticipated that the first print order for this program will be issued approximately 60 calendar days after award, effective only upon approval of the required post-award preparations and testing.

NOTE: The contractor's FTMS software shall be operational for the receipt of data files 24 hour per day, seven days per week, unless otherwise specified by the Government

Live production files may be transmitted on a daily basis Monday through Sunday, including Federal holidays.

- On Quantities up to 100,000 Health Benefits Handbooks and any required printed inserts (printed and/or electronic versions) the contractor must complete production and distribution of each week's files within seven calendar days of receipt of the print order.
- On Quantities exceeding 100,000 up to 130,000 Health Benefits Handbooks and any required inserts (printed and/or electronic versions) the contractor must complete production and distribution of each week's files within 15 calendar days of receipt of the print order.
- The contractor must furnish the electronic version of the Veterans Health Benefits Handbook and Benefits at a Glance to VA within seven calendar days of receipt of the print order.

NOTE: An electronic version of the communications will be published for each record contained on the file even if the Veteran's address is invalid (e.g. by the Bad Address Indicator, or determined invalid by CASS).

The ship/deliver date indicated on the print order is the date products ordered for mailing f.o.b. contractor's city must be delivered to the U.S Postal Service (USPS).

Unscheduled material such as shipping documents, receipts or instructions, delivery lists, labels, etc., will be furnished with each order or shortly thereafter. In the event such information is not received in due time, the contractor will not be relieved of any responsibility in meeting the shipping schedule because of failure to request such information.

For compliance reporting purposes, contractors are to report information regarding each order with date of shipment or delivery, as applicable, in accordance with the contract requirements by contacting the Shared Support Services Compliance Section via email at compliance@gpo.gov, via telephone at (202) 512-0520, or via facsimile at (202) 512-1364. Personnel receiving the email, call, or facsimile will be unable to respond to questions of a technical nature or to transfer any inquiries.

SECTION 3. – DETERMINATION OF AWARD

The Government will determine the lowest bid by applying the prices offered in the “SCHEDULE OF PRICES” to the following units of production which are the estimated requirements to produce one (1) year’s production under this contract. These units do not constitute, nor are they to be construed as, a guarantee of the volume of work which may be ordered for a like period of time.

The following item designations correspond to those listed in the “SCHEDULE OF PRICES.”

- I. (a) 1
- (b) 1. 1
- 2. 1
- 3. 1
- (c) 8

- | | (1) | (2) |
|------------|-------|--------|
| II. (a) 1. | 4,046 | 34,146 |
| 2. | 52 | 440 |
| (b) | 52 | 440 |
| (c) | 52 | 358 |
| (d) | 52 | 20 |
| (e) | 52 | 796 |
| (f) | 52 | 440 |
| (g) | 52 | 463 |
| (h) | 52 | 375 |

- III. (a) 17450
- (b) 880

- IV. (a) 1
- (b) 1
- (c) 12
- (d) 6
- (e) 12
- (f) 52
- (g) 52
- (h) 440,000
- (i) 120
- (j) 6
- (k) 28

- V. (a) 463
- (b) 356
- (c) 2
- (d) 20

SECTION 4. – SCHEDULE OF PRICES

Bids offered are f.o.b. contractor’s city for all mailing.

Prices must include the cost of all required materials and operations for each item listed in accordance with these specifications.

Bidder must make an entry in each of the spaces provided. Bids submitted with any obliteration, revision, or alteration of the order and manner of submitting bids may be declared non-responsive.

An entry of NC (No Charge) shall be entered if bidder intends to furnish individual items at no charge to the Government.

Bids submitted with NB (No Bid), NA (Not Applicable), or blank spaces for an item may be declared nonresponsive.

The Contracting Officer reserves the right to reject any offer that contains prices for individual items of production (whether or not such items are included in the DETERMINATION OF AWARD) that are inconsistent or unrealistic in regard to other prices in the same offer or to GPO prices for the same operation if such action would be in the best interest of the Government.

All invoices submitted to the GPO shall be based on the most economical method of production.

Fractional parts of 1,000 will be prorated at the per-1,000 rate.

I. PRE-PRODUCTION TESTS:

(a) Transmission Test.....per test..... \$ _____

(b) Preproduction Validation Tests –

1. Printed Samples.....per test..... \$ _____

2. Electronic Samples.....per test..... \$ _____

3. Mail Management Files.....per test..... \$ _____

(c) System Change/Updated Content Validation Testper test..... \$ _____

(Initials)

II. PRINTING, VARIABLE IMAGING, BINDING AND CONSTRUCTION: Prices offered must be all inclusive and include the cost of materials and operations (including the cost of envelopes) necessary for the printing, imaging, binding, and construction of the product listed in accordance with these specifications.

	<u>Makeready and/or Setup</u> (1)	<u>Running Per 1,000 Copies</u> (2)
(a) <i>Handbooks</i> –		
1. <i>Text</i> – Printing in black ink and imaging in black, including binding..... per page	\$ _____	\$ _____
2. <i>Complete Cover</i> Printing in four-color process and imaging in black including binding per complete cover	\$ _____	\$ _____
(b) <i>Cover Letters</i> –		
Printing in black and imaging in black, including binding per letter.....	\$ _____	\$ _____
(c) <i>Health Benefits Insert</i> –		
Printing in black and imaging in black, including binding per insert	\$ _____	\$ _____
(d) <i>Preferred Facility Insert</i> –		
Printing in black and imaging in black, including binding per insert	\$ _____	\$ _____
(e) <i>10-0998 Rights to Seek Further Review Form</i> –		
Printing in black, including binding per form	\$ _____	\$ _____
(f) <i>Notice of Privacy Practices</i> –		
Printing in black, including binding per notice	\$ _____	\$ _____
(g) <i>Mail-out Envelope (6-1/4 x 9-1/8")</i> –		
Printing in black, including construction..... per envelope	\$ _____	\$ _____
(h) <i>Mail-out Envelope (No. 10)</i> –		
Printing in black, including construction..... per envelope	\$ _____	\$ _____

(Initials)

III. PAPER: Payment for all paper supplied by the contractor under the terms of these specifications, as ordered on the individual print orders, will be based on the net number of leaves furnished for the product(s) ordered. The cost of any paper required for makeready or running spoilage must be included in the prices offered.

Computation of the net number of leaves will be based on the following:

Text - Each page-size leaf.

Covers – Two page-size leaves will be allowed for each complete cover. Prices offered must include the cost of paper for backstrip, when required.

Inserts, Forms, and Notices – Each page-size leaf.

Per 1,000 Leaves

(a) White Uncoated Text (50 lb) \$ _____

(b) White Litho (Gloss) Coated Cover (60 pound) \$ _____

IV. ADDITIONAL OPERATIONS:

(a) CMS Initial Population (English)..... one-time charge \$ _____

(b) CMS Initial Population (Spanish)..... one-time charge \$ _____

(c) Server Maintenance per month \$ _____

(d) Training per session \$ _____

(e) On-line handbook Web Interface..... monthly \$ _____

(f) Weekly Progress Reports..... per report \$ _____

(g) Creation of “.txt” file containing
extracted information from all files per print order \$ _____

(h) Weight calculation /
pre-composition adjustment per record printed \$ _____

(i) Return of White Mail..... when required \$ _____

(j) Help Desk Technical Support..... per hour \$ _____

(k) Processing of Undeliverable/Returned Mail..... per 1000 pieces \$ _____

(Initials)

V. PACKAGING AND MAILING: Prices offered must include the cost of all required materials and operations necessary for the mailing of the Handbooks and Inserts including cost of collating components in proper sequence and folding (if applicable) in accordance with these specifications, insertion of components and into appropriate mail-out envelope and mailing in accordance with these specifications.

- (a) *Veterans Health Benefits Handbook Package* –
 Inserting of handbook, cover letter,
 10-0998 Rights to Seek Further Review form, Notice of Privacy
 Practice, and 6-1/4 x 9-1/8” mail-out envelope per 1,000 packages \$ _____
- (b) *Health Benefits Insert Package* –
 Insert, 10-0998 Rights to Seek Further Review form,
 into No. 10 mail-out envelope per 1,000 packages \$ _____
- (c) Additional performance when 2nd leaf
 of health benefits insert is required..... per 1,000 copies \$ _____
- (d) *Preferred Facility Insert Package* –
 Consisting of inserting into
 No. 10 mail-out envelope per 1,000 packages \$ _____

(Initials)

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SHIPMENT(S): Shipments will be made from: City _____, State _____
The city(ies) indicated above will be used for evaluation of transportation charges when shipment f.o.b. contractor's city is specified. If no shipping point is indicated above, it will be deemed that the bidder has selected the city and state shown below in the address block, and the bid will be evaluated and the contract awarded on that basis. If shipment is not made from evaluation point, the contractor will be responsible for any additional shipping costs incurred.

DISCOUNTS: Discounts are offered for payment as follows: _____ Percent, _____ calendar days. See Article 12 "Discounts" of Solicitation Provisions in GPO Contract Terms (Publication 310.2).

AMENDMENT(S): Bidder hereby acknowledges amendment(s) number(ed) _____

BID ACCEPTANCE PERIOD: In compliance with the above, the undersigned agree, if this bid is accepted within _____ calendar days (60 calendar days unless a different period is inserted by the bidder) from the date for receipt of bids, to furnish the specified items at the price set opposite each item, delivered at the designated points(s), in exact accordance with specifications.

NOTE: Failure to provide a 60-day bid acceptance period may result in expiration of the bid prior to award.

BIDDER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE: Unless specific written exception is taken, the bidder, by signing and submitting a bid, agrees with and accepts responsibility for all certifications and representations as required by the solicitation and GPO Contract Terms - Publication 310.2. When responding by fax or mail, fill out and return one copy of all pages in "SECTION 4. - SCHEDULE OF PRICES," including initialing/signing where indicated. Failure to sign the signature block below may result in the bid being declared non-responsive.

Bidder _____
(Contractor Name) (GPO Contractor's Code)

(Street Address)

(City - State - Zip Code)

By _____
(Printed Name, Signature, and Title of Person Authorized to Sign this Bid) (Date)

(Person to be Contacted) (Telephone Number) (Email)

THIS SECTION FOR GPO USE ONLY

Certified by: _____ Date: _____ Contracting Officer: _____ Date: _____



Contractor Background Investigation Request

VA Organization Billing Information

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MARCH 12, 2010

VA HANDBOOK 6500.6 APPENDIX D

CONTRACTOR RULES OF BEHAVIOR

This User Agreement contains rights and authorizations regarding my access to and use of any information assets or resources associated with my performance of services under the contract terms with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). This User Agreement covers my access to all VA data whether electronic or hard copy ("Data"), VA information systems and resources ("Systems"), and VA sites ("Sites"). This User Agreement incorporates Rules of Behavior for using VA, and other information systems and resources under the contract.

1. GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR ALL ACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES UNDER THE CONTRACT:

- a. I understand and agree that I have no reasonable expectation of privacy in accessing or using any VA, or other Federal Government information systems.
- b. I consent to reviews and actions by the Office of Information & Technology (OI&T) staff designated and authorized by the VA Chief Information Officer (CIO) and to the VA OIG regarding my access to and use of any information assets or resources associated with my performance of services under the contract terms with the VA. These actions may include monitoring, recording, copying, inspecting, restricting access, blocking, tracking, and disclosing to all authorized OI&T, VA, and law enforcement personnel as directed by the VA CIO without my prior consent or notification.
- c. I consent to reviews and actions by authorized VA systems administrators and Information Security Officers solely for protection of the VA infrastructure, including, but not limited to monitoring, recording, auditing, inspecting, investigating, restricting access, blocking, tracking, disclosing to authorized personnel, or any other authorized actions by all authorized OI&T, VA, and law enforcement personnel.
- d. I understand and accept that unauthorized attempts or acts to access, upload, change, or delete information on Federal Government systems; modify Federal government systems; deny access to Federal government systems; accrue resources for unauthorized use on Federal government systems; or otherwise misuse Federal government systems or resources are prohibited.
- e. understand that such unauthorized attempts or acts are subject to action that may result in criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. This includes penalties for violations of Federal laws including, but not limited to, 18 U.S.C. §1030 (fraud and related activity in connection with computers) and 18 U.S.C. §2701 (unlawful access to stored communications).

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- f. I agree that OI&T staff, in the course of obtaining access to information or systems on my behalf for performance under the contract, may provide information about me including, but not limited to, appropriate unique personal identifiers such as date of birth and social security number to other system administrators, Information Security Officers (ISOs), or other authorized staff without further notifying me or obtaining additional written or verbal permission from me.
- g. I understand I must comply with VA's security and data privacy directives and handbooks. I understand that copies of those directives and handbooks can be obtained from the Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR). If the contractor believes the policies and guidance provided by the COTR is a material unilateral change to the contract, the contractor must elevate such concerns to the Contracting Officer for resolution.
- h. I will report suspected or identified information security/privacy incidents to the COTR and to the local ISO or Privacy Officer as appropriate.

2. GENERAL RULES OF BEHAVIOR

- a. Rules of Behavior are part of a comprehensive program to provide complete information security. These rules establish standards of behavior in recognition of the fact that knowledgeable users are the foundation of a successful security program. Users must understand that taking personal responsibility for the security of their computer and the information it contains is an essential part of their job.
- b. ***The following rules apply to all VA contractors.*** I agree to:
 - (1) Follow established procedures for requesting, accessing, and closing user accounts and access. I will not request or obtain access beyond what is normally granted to users or by what is outlined in the contract.
 - (2) Use only systems, software, databases, and data which I am authorized to use, including any copyright restrictions.
 - (3) I will not use other equipment (OE) (non-contractor owned) for the storage, transfer, or processing of VA sensitive information without a VA CIO approved waiver, unless it has been reviewed and approved by local management and is included in the language of the contract. If authorized to use OE IT equipment, I must ensure that the system meets all applicable 6500 Handbook requirements for OE.
 - (4) Not use my position of trust and access rights to exploit system controls or access information for any reason other than in the performance of the contract.

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- (5) Not attempt to override or disable security, technical, or management controls unless expressly permitted to do so as an explicit requirement under the contract or at the direction of the COTR or ISO. If I am allowed or required to have a local administrator account on a government-owned computer, that local administrative account does not confer me unrestricted access or use, nor the authority to bypass security or other controls except as expressly permitted by the VA CIO or CIO's designee.
- (6) Contractors' use of systems, information, or sites is strictly limited to fulfill the terms of the contract. I understand no personal use is authorized. I will only use other Federal government information systems as expressly authorized by the terms of those systems. I accept that the restrictions under ethics regulations and criminal law still apply.
- (7) Grant access to systems and information only to those who have an official need to know.
- (8) Protect passwords from access by other individuals.
- (9) Create and change passwords in accordance with VA Handbook 6500 on systems and any devices protecting VA information as well as the rules of behavior and security settings for the particular system in question.
- (10) Protect information and systems from unauthorized disclosure, use, modification, or destruction. I will only use encryption that is FIPS 140-2 validated to safeguard VA sensitive information, both safeguarding VA sensitive information in storage and in transit regarding my access to and use of any information assets or resources associated with my performance of services under the contract terms with the VA.
- (11) Follow VA Handbook 6500.1, *Electronic Media Sanitization* to protect VA information. I will contact the COTR for policies and guidance on complying with this requirement and will follow the COTR's orders.
- (12) Ensure that the COTR has previously approved VA information for public dissemination, including e-mail communications outside of the VA as appropriate. I will not make any unauthorized disclosure of any VA sensitive information through the use of any means of communication including but not limited to e-mail, instant messaging, online chat, and web bulletin boards or logs.
- (13) Not host, set up, administer, or run an Internet server related to my access to and use of any information assets or resources associated with my performance of services under the contract terms with the VA unless explicitly authorized under the contract or in writing by the COTR.

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VA HANDBOOK 6500.6 APPENDIX D

- (14) Protect government property from theft, destruction, or misuse. I will follow VA directives and handbooks on handling Federal government IT equipment, information, and systems. I will not take VA sensitive information from the workplace without authorization from the COTR.
- (15) Only use anti-virus software, antispymware, and firewall/intrusion detection software authorized by VA. I will contact the COTR for policies and guidance on complying with this requirement and will follow the COTR's orders regarding my access to and use of any information assets or resources associated with my performance of services under the contract terms with VA.
- (16) Not disable or degrade the standard anti-virus software, antispymware, and/or firewall/intrusion detection software on the computer I use to access and use information assets or resources associated with my performance of services under the contract terms with VA. I will report anti-virus, antispymware, firewall or intrusion detection software errors, or significant alert messages to the COTR.
- (17) Understand that restoration of service of any VA system is a concern of all users of the system.
- (18) Complete required information security and privacy training, and complete required training for the particular systems to which I require access.

3. ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS FOR USE OF NON- VA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

- a. When required to complete work under the contract, I will directly connect to the VA network whenever possible. If a direct connection to the VA network is not possible, then I will use VA approved remote access software and services.
- b. Remote access to non-public VA information technology resources is prohibited from publicly-available IT computers, such as remotely connecting to the internal VA network from computers in a public library.
- c. I will not have both a VA network line and any kind of non-VA network line including a wireless network card, modem with phone line, or other network device physically connected to my computer at the same time, unless the dual connection is explicitly authorized by the COTR.
- d. I understand that I may not obviate or evade my responsibility to adhere to VA security requirements by subcontracting any work under any given contract or agreement with VA, and that any subcontractor(s) I engage shall likewise be bound by the same security requirements and penalties for violating the same.

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VA HANDBOOK 6500.6 APPENDIX D

4. STATEMENT ON LITIGATION

This User Agreement does not and should not be relied upon to create any other right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable by law, by a party to litigation with the United States Government.

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND ACCEPTANCE

I acknowledge receipt of this User Agreement. I understand and accept all terms and conditions of this User Agreement, and I will comply with the terms and conditions of this agreement and any additional VA warning banners, directives, handbooks, notices, or directions regarding access to or use of information systems or information. The terms and conditions of this document do not supersede the terms and conditions of the signatory's employer and VA.

Print or type your full name

Signature

Last 4 digits of SSN

Date

Office Phone

Position Title

Contractor's Company Name

Please complete and return the original signed document to the COTR within the timeframe stated in the terms of the contract.



Contractor Security Control Assessment (CSCA)

**Self-Assessment Questionnaire for Contract
Service Providers**

Version 1.2

May 15, 2009



Contractor Security Control Assessment (CSCA)



Document Change Control

Version	Release Date	Summary of Changes	Name
Version 0.1	March 13, 2009	First working draft submitted to CPO.	CPO
Version 0.2	March 13, 2009	Format and minor content changes	CPO
Version 0.3	March 16, 2009	Second working draft with incorporated CPO changes	CPO
Version 0.4	March 16, 2009	Third working draft with incorporated CPO changes	CPO
Version 0.5	March 18, 2009	Final working draft with incorporated CPO suggestions	CPO
Version 0.6	April 15, 2009	Incorporation of CPO and VA staff combined suggestions	CPO
Version 1.0	May 5, 2009	Final draft document	CPO
Version 1.1	May 5, 2009	Updates made to NIST references in Appendix A	CPO
Version 1.2	May 15, 2009	Final Review for Release	FSS, OCS



Contractor Security Control Assessment (CSCA)



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Contractor Security Control Assessment (CSCA)



Executive Summary

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) must comply with the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) and with Office of Management and Budget (OMB) direction to ensure oversight of contractors who access, maintain, store, or transmit Veterans' sensitive information. VA established the Contractor Security Control Assessment (CSCA) to assist in defining and evaluating information security control protection mechanisms and practices used to protect Veterans' sensitive information. All contractors and contract service providers must comply with the same information security requirements as VA is recommended to do the CSCA on an annual basis.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide security guidance for contractors and contract service providers in remote locations or alternative work-sites who access, maintain, store, or transmit Veterans' sensitive information. This CSCA is a checklist built around the framework of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST).

Per NIST Special Publication (SP) 800-53A, *Guide for Assessing the Security Controls in Federal Information Systems*:

"The selective application of technological and related procedural safeguards is an important responsibility of every Federal organization in providing adequate security to its electronic data information devices."

Scope

The protection of Veterans' sensitive information is a critical and intricate part of the overall security awareness and health of the VA organization. This CSCA will assist VA in:

- Extending VA security mandates and education to affiliated contractor agencies;
- Maintaining a record of contractor agency compliance with VA-necessitated security regulations and polices that can be included in the contract file; and
- Strengthening and improving the process of securing Veterans' sensitive information on approved information devices. (An "information device" is any device used access, maintain, store, or transmit Veterans' sensitive information, such as a workstation, home computer, laptop, Blackberry, etc.)



Contractor Security Control Assessment (CSCA)



Attestation of Compliance

Please complete this Attestation of Compliance as a declaration of your compliance with the CSCA to protect Veterans' sensitive information.

Part 1. Person Completing This Document	
Contact Name:	
Title:	
Telephone:	
Business Address:	
Email:	

Part 2. Contractor Organization Information	
Contact Name:	
Title:	
Telephone:	
Business Address:	
Email:	

Part 2a. Relationships
Does your company have a relationship with one or more third-party service providers (e.g., gateways, web-hosting companies)? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Part 2b. Transaction Processing
How is information exchanged with VA?:



Contractor Security Control Assessment (CSCA)



Part 3. CSCA Validation	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Compliant: All sections are complete and all questions are answered affirmatively, resulting in an overall COMPLIANT rating.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Compliant: Not all sections are complete and/or not all questions are answered affirmatively, resulting in an overall NON-COMPLIANT rating.
<p>Target Date for Compliance:</p>	

Part 3a. Confirmation of Compliant Status	
<input type="checkbox"/>	CSCA was completed according to the instructions therein.
<input type="checkbox"/>	All information within the above-referenced CSCA and in this Attestation fairly represent the results of my assessment.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have read the appropriate VA directives relative to information security and understand that I must maintain full data security standards at all times.

Part 3b. Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR) Acknowledgement	
<i>Signature of Person Completing This Document</i>	<i>Date</i>
<i>Printed Name of Executive Officer</i>	<i>Company</i>
<i>Signature of Information Security Officer</i>	<i>Date</i>



Contractor Security Control Assessment (CSCA)



Action Plan for Non-compliance

Please select the appropriate "Compliant" status for each requirement. If you answer "No" to any of the requirements, please complete the table below with the necessary steps to become compliant and the date on which you will be compliant.

VA CSCA	Description of Requirement	Compliance Status (Select One)		Remediation Date and Actions (If Compliance Status is "No")
		YES	NO	
1	Install and maintain a firewall configuration.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	Host, operate, maintain, or use information devices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	Use and regularly update antivirus software.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	Implement access controls.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5	Conduct risk assessments.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6	Institute information security protection.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7	Privacy regulation for storage of Veterans' sensitive Information.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



Contractor Security Control Assessment (CSCA)



Self-Assessment Questionnaire

Requirement 1: Install and maintain a firewall configuration

VA requires the use of firewalls as a protection mechanism to ensure the confidentiality, integrity and availability of VA information.

Question	Response: (Select One)		Comment
	YES	NO	
1. Is a firewall used and installed on devices that will store, process, and maintain Veterans' sensitive information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. If the firewall used is a hardware device, were the vendor supplied passwords removed? (hardware includes all wireless devices and routers) <i>Wireless environment defaults include, but are not limited to, wired equivalent privacy (WEP) keys, default service set identifier (SSID), passwords, and simple network management protocol (SNMP) community strings</i>			
3. If the firewall used is a software product:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
a) Is it set to download automatic updates?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b) Is the firewall software product installed on your PC (i.e, McAfee, Norton)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
c) Is there a personal firewall software installed on any mobile and/or employee-owned computers that have direct connectivity to the Internet (e.g., laptops used by employees) and are used to access the VA's network?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Does the firewall monitor, restrict, and respond to inbound and outbound communications by sending notification alerts when a connection is attempted?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Does the firewall provide email-scanning that monitors incoming and outgoing messages for viruses and security threats?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Does the firewall prohibit direct public access between external networks and any information device component that stores Veterans' sensitive information (e.g., databases, logs, trace files)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. Is there Wi-Fi protected access (WPA and WPA2) technology enabled for encryption and authentication when WPA-capable?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. Is there justification and documentation for any risky protocols allowed (e.g., file transfer protocol [FTP]), including the reason for the use of the protocol and security features implemented?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9. Are you using Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS) 140-2 validated encryption for storing and transferring VA sensitive information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



Contractor Security Control Assessment (CSCA)



Requirement 2: VA Information Hosting, Operation, Maintenance or Use

Question	Response: (Select One)		Comment
	YES	NO	
1. Are you designing or developing a system or information device for or on behalf of VA?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Are you hosting, operating, maintaining, or using an information device on behalf of the VA that contains Veterans' sensitive information? (If so, then Certification & Accreditation (C&A) is required for the information device; and all security controls outlined in the VA Handbook 6500, Appendix D are required.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Requirement 3: Use and regularly update antivirus software

Information devices with access to Veterans' sensitive information are required to implement malicious code protection that includes a capability for automatic updates and real-time scans.

Question	Response: (Select One)		Comment
	YES	NO	
1. Is antivirus software installed on all information devices with access to Veterans' sensitive information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Is the antivirus programs capable of detecting, removing, and protecting against other forms of malicious software, including spyware and adware?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Is the antivirus mechanism current, actively running, and capable of generating audit logs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Does the antivirus mechanism provide malicious code protection mechanisms for applications that may transfer malicious code (e.g., file transfer software, instant messaging software)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Are updates to malicious code protection mechanisms made whenever new releases are available?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Are information devices with access to Veterans' sensitive information email clients and servers configured to block attachments with file extensions associated with malicious code (e.g., .pif, .vbs), and suspicious file extension combinations (e.g., .txt.vbs, .htm.exe)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. Do you scan your systems regularly for vulnerabilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Please identify the scanning technology you use here:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. Are malicious code protection mechanisms:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
a) Appropriately updated to include the latest malicious code definitions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b) Configured to perform periodic scans of the information device, as well as real-time scans of each file, as the file is downloaded, opened, or executed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



Contractor Security Control Assessment (CSCA)



Requirement 4: Implement Access Controls

VA requires the management of information device accounts, including establishing, activating, modifying, reviewing, disabling, and removing accounts. The frequency for reviews of information device accounts should be documented: the review of information device accounts every 90 days for moderate- and high-impact systems; the review of information device accounts every six months for low-impact systems.

At a minimum, VA requires addressing the deactivation of all computer information device accounts in a timely manner, indicative of the information device impact level, when a change in user status occurs, regardless of platform (including personal computer, network, mainframe, firewall, router, telephone, and other miscellaneous utility information devices), such as when the account user:

- Departs the agency voluntarily or involuntarily;
- Transfers to another area within the agency;
- Is suspended;
- Goes on long-term detail; or
- Otherwise no longer has a legitimate business need for information device access.

Question	Response: (Select One)		Comment
	YES	NO	
1. Are all users identified with a unique ID before allowing them to access information device components or Veterans' sensitive information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. In addition to assigning a unique ID, is one or more of the following methods employed to authenticate all users? a) Password b) Token devices (e.g., SecureID, certifications, or public key) c) Biometrics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Are group, shared, or generic accounts and passwords forbidden?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Are first-time passwords set to a unique value for each user?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Must each user change their password immediately after the first use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Are password procedures and policies communicated to all users who have access to Veterans' sensitive information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. Are users required to change their passwords every 90 days?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. Are user passwords required to contain both numeric and alphabetic characters?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9. Are users required to submit a new password that is different from any of the last four passwords he or she has used?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10. Are repeated access attempts limited by locking out the user ID after no more than six attempts?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
11. If a session has been idle for more than 15 minutes, must a user re-enter the password to re-activate the terminal or session?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



Contractor Security Control Assessment (CSCA)



Question	Response: (Select One)		Comment
	YES	NO	
12. Is all access to any database containing Veterans' sensitive information authenticated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Requirement 5: Conduct Risk Assessments

Risk assessments are conducted to determine the likelihood of risk to information, and whether protection mechanisms are in place to reduce risk.

Risk assessments must be conducted at VA in order to evaluate the readiness of the information device, organization, or asset that will be using Veterans' sensitive information. The risk assessments for information devices or assets with access to Veterans' sensitive information are to be updated/conducted at least every three years or whenever there is a significant change to the information device, asset or work environment that may impact the security protection of the information.

Question	Response: (Select One)		Comment
	YES	NO	
1. Has a System of Records been created per the Privacy Act of 1974?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Has the information device used under this contract been categorized (High, Medium, Low) in accordance with FIPS 199, <i>Standards for Security Categorization of Federal Information and Information Systems</i> , and NIST SP 800-60, <i>Guide for Mapping Types of Information and Information Systems to Security Categories</i> ?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Has a risk assessment been conducted to estimate potential risks and vulnerabilities to the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of Veterans' sensitive information stored, processed, or transmitted?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. If a risk assessment has been conducted for the information device or asset, does the assessment adequately address: a) The magnitude of harm that could result from the unauthorized access, use, disclosure, modification, or destruction of the information and the information devices that support its operations and assets (including information and information devices managed/operated by external parties); and b) When the risk assessment was conducted (i.e., a risk assessment was performed for the information device in [month/year])?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Does the risk assessment reflect and detail the following conditions that may impact the security or accreditation status of the information device with access to VA sensitive information: a) Where the information is stored on the device; b) The work location of the information device;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



Contractor Security Control Assessment (CSCA)



Question	Response: (Select One)		Comment
	YES	NO	
c) Potential access to the information device from unauthorized personnel; and	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
d) The latest significant changes to the information device?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. What is the risk rating of the information device, based on the risk level matrix (High, Medium, Low risk level)?			
7. Are there recommended controls/alternative options to reduce risk?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. Are risk determinations annually reviewed/updated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9. What is the impact analysis and evaluation of the information device with access to Veterans' sensitive information (High, Med, Low impact)?			
10. Were potential impacts considered in accordance with the US Patriot Act of 2001 and related Homeland Security Presidential Directives (HSPDs), ?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
11. Have mitigation strategies been discussed with VA officials with significant information and information device responsibilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
12. If a risk assessment does not exist for this information device, will a risk assessment be conducted in accordance with NIST SP 800-30, <i>Risk Management Guide for Information Technology Systems</i> , as part of the C&A process?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
13. Does a contingency plan exist for your system(s)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



Contractor Security Control Assessment (CSCA)



Requirement 6: Institute Information Security Protection

Information security is the protection of information from a wide range of threats and vulnerabilities to ensure business continuity. The framework of information security includes a minimum set of security actions needed to effectively incorporate security in the system development process.

The protection of information devices with access to Veterans' sensitive information and communications is required at the session—as opposed to packet—level by implementing session level protection where needed.

System and Communications Protection

Question	Response: (Select One)		Comment
	YES	NO	
1. Are documents or records maintained that define, either explicitly or by reference, the time period of inactivity before the information device terminates a network connection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Does the information device terminate a network connection at the end of a session or after the organization-defined time period of inactivity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

System and Information Integrity

Question	Response: (Select One)		Comment
	YES	NO	
1. Do you use web services that utilize VA information?			
2. Is the output from the information device handled in accordance with applicable laws, Executive Orders (E.O.), directives, policies, regulations, standards, and operational requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Is the output from the information device retained in accordance with applicable laws, E.O.s, directives, policies, regulations, standards, and operational requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Does the organization restrict the capability to input information to the information device to authorized personnel?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Does the information device implement spam protection by verifying that the organization:			
a) Employs spam protection mechanisms at critical information system entry points and at workstations, servers, or mobile computing devices on the network?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b) Employs spam protection mechanisms to detect and take appropriate action on unsolicited messages transported by email, email attachments, Internet access, or other common means?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



Contractor Security Control Assessment (CSCA)



Physical Security

Question	Response: (Select One)		Comment
	YES	NO	
1. Is the Veterans' sensitive information physically controlled and securely store in controlled areas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Is the information device located within an area that minimizes potential damage from physical and environmental hazards?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Is the information device positioned within an area that minimizes the opportunity for unauthorized access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Are procedures in place to help all personnel easily distinguish between employees and visitors, especially in areas where Veterans' sensitive information is accessible?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Are appropriate facility entry controls in place to limit and monitor physical access to information devices that store, process, or transmit Veterans' sensitive information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Is physical access controlled to prevent unauthorized individuals from observing the display output of information system devices that display information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



Contractor Security Control Assessment (CSCA)



Requirement 7: Privacy Regulation for Storage of Veterans' Sensitive Information

VA requires that the handling and retention of output of Veterans' sensitive information be in accordance with VA policy and operational requirements. Other requirements include: (a) physical control and secure storage of the information media, both paper and digital, based on the highest FIPS 199 security category of the information recorded on the media; and (b) utilizing alternative sites for the storage of backup information. Information devices with access to Veterans' sensitive information must prevent unauthorized and unintended information transfer via shared information device resources.

Access to VA Information and VA Information Systems

Question	Response: (Select One)		Comment
	YES	NO	
1. Do you maintain a current list of employees/sub-contractors that are accessing VA's information and information systems for this contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Have the appropriate background investigative requirements been met for all employees and subcontractors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Has access (both technical and physical) to VA information and/or VA information systems been provided to employees and subcontractors, only to the extent necessary to perform the services specified in the contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. When employees/subcontractors leave or are reassigned, is the contracting officer 's technical representative COTR notified?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Custodial Requirements

Question	Response: (Select One)		Comment
	YES	NO	
1. Were you required to sign a Business Associate Agreement prior to receiving access to Veterans' sensitive information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Is Veterans' sensitive information, made available by the VA for the performance of this contract, used only for those purposes, unless prior written agreement from the contracting officer?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Is Veterans' sensitive information maintained separately and not co-mingled with any other data on the contractors/subcontractors systems/media storage systems ?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Are you ensuring that Veterans' sensitive information gathered or created by the contract is not destroyed without prior written approval by the COTR?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Are you aware that making copies of Veterans' sensitive information is not permitted, except as necessary to perform efforts in support of as agreed upon by the VA?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Is the protection of Veterans' sensitive information commensurate with the FIPS 199 security categorization?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



Contractor Security Control Assessment (CSCA)



Question	Response: (Select One)		Comment
	YES	NO	
7. If hard drives or other removable media contain VA sensitive information, is the data sanitized (three time wipe) consistent with NIST SP 800-88, <i>Guidelines for Media Sanitization</i> , and returned to the VA at the end of the contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. Does the organization sanitize Veterans' sensitive information, both paper and digital, prior to disposal or release for reuse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9. Are you identified and authorized to transport Veterans' sensitive information outside of controlled areas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10. Are there policies and procedures documented for protecting Veterans' sensitive information during transport?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
11. Is the information device located within an area that minimizes potential damage from physical and environmental hazards?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
12. Is the information device positioned within an area that minimizes the opportunity for unauthorized access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
13. Does the organization employ appropriate management, operational, and technical information system security controls at alternate work sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Security Incident Investigation

Question	Response: (Select One)		Comment
	YES	NO	
1. Does your company have a security incident reporting process?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Do you and/or your employees know to immediately report a security/privacy incident that involves Veterans' sensitive information to their supervisor?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Does your company know to report a security/privacy incident that involves Veterans' sensitive information to the COTR and the appropriate law enforcement entity, if applicable?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Does the company collect the information concerning the incident (who, how, when, and where) and provide it to the COTR?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Training

Question	Response: (Select One)		Comment
	YES	NO	
1. Does the organization employ a formal sanctions process for personnel failing to comply with established information security policies and procedures?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



Contractor Security Control Assessment (CSCA)



Question	Response: (Select One)		Comment
	YES	NO	
2. Have all contractors/subcontractors signed the VA National Rules of Behavior?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Have all contractors/subcontractors completed the VA approved security training?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Have all contractors/subcontractors completed the VA approved privacy training?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

**Contractor Security Control Assessment (CSCA)**

Appendix A. References

Department of Veterans Affairs

VA Directive 6500, *Information Security Program*.

VA Handbook 6500, *Information Security Program*

VA Handbook 6500.1 *Electronic Media Sanitization*

VA Handbook 6500.3 *Certification and Accreditation*

Federal Information Processing Standards

FIPS 140-2, *Security Requirements for Cryptographic Modules*

FIPS 190, *Guideline for the Use of Advanced Authentication Technology Alternatives*.

FIPS 199, *Standards for Security Categorization of Federal Information and Information Systems*.

FIPS 201-1, *Personal Identity Verification for Federal Employees and Contractors*.

National Institute of Standards and Publications

NIST SP 800-30, *Risk Management Guide for Information Technology Systems*.

NIST SP 800-40, *Creating a Patch and Vulnerability Management Program*.

NIST SP 800-53A, *Guide for Assessing the Security Controls in Federal Information Systems*.

NIST SP 800-60, *Guide for Mapping Types of Information and Information Systems to Security Categories: (2 Volumes) - Volume 1: Guide Volume 2: Appendices*.

NIST SP 800-73, *Interfaces for Personal Identity Verification (4 parts): 1- End-Point PIV Card Application Namespace, Data Model and Representation, 2- End-Point PIV Card Application Interface, 3- End-Point PIV Client Application Programming Interface, 4- The PIV Transitional Data Model and Interfaces*.

NIST SP 800-76, *Biometric Data Specification for Personal Identity Verification*.

NIST SP 800-78, *Cryptographic Algorithms and Key Sizes for Personal Identity Verification*.

NIST SP 800-88, *Guidelines for Media Sanitization*.

Veterans Health Benefits Handbook
Content

Chapter 1 Welcome

You have enrolled in the country's largest and most comprehensive health care system. The goal of the VA health care system is to achieve excellence in patient care and customer satisfaction. Our mission is singular — to serve Veterans by providing the highest-quality health care available anywhere in the world. America's Veterans and their families deserve nothing less.

Think of this **Veterans Health Benefits Handbook** as an extension of our relationship with you as a member of the VA community. We have organized the contents so that you can find the information you need quickly, and we have made it easy to reach us if you need more guidance.

1.2 Overview of VA's Nationwide Health Care System

You can expect VA's highly qualified and dedicated health care professionals to meet your needs, regardless of the treatment program, regardless of the location. New locations continue to be added to the VA system, with the current number of treatment sites now standing at more than 1,400 nationwide.

Today's Veterans receive a Medical Benefits Package, which VA administers through a patient enrollment program. Along with your enrollment in the VA health care system comes the assurance that health and treatment services will be available when and where you need them.

VA's state-of-the-art electronic medical records allow your health care benefits to be completely portable throughout the system. If you are traveling or living temporarily at an address far away from your primary treatment facility, you can seek care at any VA health care facility across the country — without the hassle of having to reapply.

We have also developed a Website — My HealtheVet — especially for Veterans. Through My HealtheVet, access to important information about your health is at your fingertips, 24 hours a day. First, you need to register on the website and be authenticated in person at a VA facility. The authentication process protects your privacy and your personal health information. Here's what to do:

1. Go to the website: <http://www.myhealth.va.gov>
2. Click on the "Register Today" button and follow the instructions.
3. Go back to the My HealtheVet home page.
4. Click on the "In-Person Authentication" link.
5. Watch the brief orientation video.
6. Print out, complete, and sign the My HealtheVet release of information form (Form 10-4344a-MHV).
7. Call your health care facility and ask where you can be In-Person Authenticated. Remember to take your Form 10-4344a-MHV and a photo ID (Veterans ID card or driver's license).

Once your identity has been verified through the In-Person Authentication process, you will have access to portions of your medical information online through your MHV account. Initially, prescription names for Rx Refills are available. Later, the ability to see appointments, lab reports, and additional functions will also be available.

1.3 Overview of VA's Medical Benefits Package

VA's comprehensive medical benefits package offers care and services that are designed to:

- Promote good health
- Preserve your current health
- Restore you to better health

This includes treating illnesses and injuries, preventing future health problems, improving functional abilities and enhancing quality of life.

We provide a full spectrum of medically necessary services, based on the judgment of your VA primary care provider and in accordance with generally accepted standards of clinical practice. These services include:

- Primary Care
- Health Promotion
- Disease Prevention
- Diagnosis
- Palliative Care
- Surgery
- Prescriptions For Medications
- Prosthetics
- Critical Care
- Mental Health Care
- Women's Health Care
- Orthopedics
- Radiology
- Physical Therapy
- Rehabilitation

1.4 VA Provides Health Services at Facilities across the Nation

VA strives to ensure that you have access to all of your needed services wherever you receive your VA health care. This may be on-site during inpatient hospitalization, at one of our primary or specialty care clinics, at a Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC), in a Community Living Center (formerly known as a VA nursing home), or in a residential care facility. However, all services may not be available at every location. Sometimes, you may need to travel to another VA facility or a community care facility to receive the necessary treatment. If that is the case, your VA provider will work with you to find the place best suited for you to obtain the required services.

1.5 What Do I Need to Know About Primary Care?

Primary Care serves as the foundation of the VA health care system. Through Primary Care, you have easy access to skilled medical professionals who are familiar with the health care needs of Veterans, and who understand the importance of developing long-term relationships with patients.

EXHIBIT D
Sample Pages of Health Benefits Handbook

Among other things, your Primary Care Team will:

- Educate you and your family about the health care services available.
- Coordinate care across a spectrum of treatment options
- Keep you informed about disease prevention programs

You will be assigned a Primary Care Provider when you come for your first Primary Care appointment. If you have a spinal cord injury/disorder (SCI), your Primary Care Provider will be a member of the trained SCI Primary Care Team.

EXHIBIT D
Sample Pages of Health Benefits Handbook

1.6 Your Primary Care Provider and Team Information

After your first Primary Care appointment, fill in the following information for future reference:

Your Primary Care Provider is _____

Your Primary Care Team is _____

You can reach your Primary Care Team by calling _____

1.7 Your Eligibility Information

The information in this *Veterans Health Benefits Handbook* reflects the benefits and services available to you at the time it was published. Since VA policies are governed by law, changes to programs or your eligibility may occur. We will send you updates that reflect these changes. If you have questions, contact your local Enrollment Coordinator or call us at 1 877-222-VETS (8387).

1.8 Health Benefits Are Different for Each Veteran — Including You

While all enrolled Veterans enjoy access to VA's comprehensive medical benefits package, certain benefits (for example, dental care) may vary from individual to individual, depending on each Veteran's unique eligibility status. This *Veterans Health Benefits Handbook* has been tailored specifically for you:

1.8.1 Mr. <Variable: First Name> <Variable: Last Name,> <Variable: Suffix>.

1.8.2 Ms. <Variable: First Name> <Variable: Last Name,> <Variable: Suffix>.

1.9 Important Phone Numbers

Subsection (note: do not print this column)		
1.9.1	Veterans Crisis Line	1-800-273-TALK (8255), press 1
1.9.2	National Call Center for Homeless Veterans	1-877-424-3838.
1.9.3	Health Enrollment Information or Questions about Bills for your VA Health Care	1-877-222-VETS (8387)
1.9.4	VA Compensation, Pension, Education and Loan Guaranty Programs	1-800-827-1000
1.9.5	<rule: if SC=YES> Foreign Medical Program	303-331-7590
1.9.6	<rule: if SC=YES and %=100% and P&T = YES> Health Care Coverage for Eligible Dependents of Veterans (CHAMPVA)	1-800-733-VETS (8387)
	Your Local Health Care Facility Phone Numbers	

EXHIBIT D
Sample Pages of Health Benefits Handbook

1.9.7.1	Main Hospital	
1.9.7.2	After Hours	
1.9.7.3	Patient Advocate	
1.9.7.4	Pharmacy	
1.9.7.5	Enrollment Coordinator	

|



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

**Member Services
Health Eligibility Center**
2957 Clairmont Rd., NE Suite 200
Atlanta GA 30329-1647

<Date Printed>

<VPID/EDIPI>

<First Name> <Middle Name or Middle Initial> <Last Name><, Suffix>

<Address 1>

<Address 2>

<City> <State>, <Zip>

Dear <First Name> <Last Name>,

I am pleased to present your personalized Veterans Health Benefits Handbook. This handbook provides information about your VA health care benefits and other important information.

Ruleno = if E08 = "6" And M01 = "Y" And M02 => "10012022" And M02 <= "09302023", then print
On August 10, 2022, Public Law 117-168, titled PACT Act of 2022, provided an expanded enhanced enrollment period for Combat Veterans who had not previously enrolled for VA health care and who were discharged or released between September 11, 2001, and October 1, 2013.

You are placed in Priority Group 6 until October 1, 2023 unless qualified for a higher Priority Group, after which you will be placed in Priority Group 8c unless qualified for a higher Priority Group.

You will receive free care for combat related issues until October 1, 2023, after which time you will be responsible for copayments for any treatment received.

<end variable>

What if you have questions about the information in your handbook?

Your eligibility factors or copay status may have changed since your handbook was published. If you believe the information in your handbook is incorrect, contact VA at **1-877-222-VETS (8387)** Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. EST or file an appeal. Information about how to file an appeal is included in the handbook.

How can you provide feedback?

Your input regarding the handbook is important. You may receive a survey to help us identify how to make the handbook more useful to you and other Veterans. Please take the time to complete and return the survey.

VA can connect you to mental health care, regardless of your enrollment status. Visit your nearest VA Medical Center or Vet Center and ask for mental health care. For immediate help in dealing with suicidal thoughts, please call 988 and Press 1, chat online at www.VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat, or text 838255.

Thank you for your service to our country.

Sincerely,

Director, Health Eligibility Center
VHA Member Services



<Date>

<VPID/EDIPI>

<First Name> <Middle Name or Middle Initial> <Last Name><, Suffix>

<Address 1>

<Address 2>

<City> <State>, <Zip>

Dear <First Name><Last Name>:

Important Information Regarding Your VA Benefits

The information used to establish your benefits for VA health care has recently changed. As a result, you are enrolled in Priority Group <E08 Enrollment Priority Group> effective <E04 Date of change>. Your new copay, if applicable, and benefits information are provided on the reverse of this letter.

Your unique eligibility factors are:

Ruleno = If F01 = Y and F02=0 and F03 > 0 or F02 > 0, then print Service Connected

Ruleno = If F01 = Y and F02 = 0 and F03 = 0, then print Zero percent non-compensable service-connected

Ruleno = If F01 = N, then print Non-service-connected

Ruleno = if F01 = Y and F05 = Y, then print Rated as having a total disability permanent in nature resulting from your service-connected condition(s)

Ruleno = if F01 = Y and F04 = Y, then print Assigned a total disability rating for compensation based on unemployability

Ruleno = if F01 = N and F06 Y, then print Recipient of non-service-connected VA pension

Ruleno = if G01 = Y, then print Recipient of Aid and Attendance benefits

Ruleno = if G02 = Y, then print Recipient of Housebound benefits

Ruleno = If F09 = Y, then print Former Prisoner of War

Ruleno = if F10 = Y, then print Awardee of the Medal of Honor

Ruleno = if F07 = Y, and F08 = confirmed, then print Awardee of the Purple Heart

Ruleno = if M01 = Y, then print Recently discharged Combat Veteran

Ruleno = if E08 = "6" And M01 = "Y" And M02 => "10012022" And M02 <= "09302023", then print Combat Veteran entitled to expanded enrollment period under the PACT Act of 2022

Ruleno = if M03 = Y, then print Discharged from the military for a disability that was incurred or aggravated in the line of duty

Ruleno = if M04 = Y, then print Medically retired from the military

Ruleno = if M05 = Y and M06 = Atmospheric Nuclear Testing or Nagasaki/Hiroshima or H/N and Atmosphere Testing, then print Exposed to Ionizing Radiation while in the military

Ruleno = if M07 = Y, then print Project 112/SHAD participant

Ruleno = if M11 = Y and M12 = Vietnam, then print Vietnam-era herbicide-exposed Veteran

Ruleno = if M13 = Y, then print Served on active duty in the Southwest Asia Theater of operations during the Persian Gulf War

Ruleno = if M14 = Y, then print Found by VA to be Catastrophically Disabled

Ruleno = if G07 = Y, then print Recipient of Medicaid benefits

Ruleno = if G08 = Y, then print American Indian and/or Alaska Native Veteran

<List as needed>

Ruleno = if E08 = "6" And M01 = "Y" And M02 => "10012022" And M02 <= "09302023", then print
On August 10, 2022, Public Law 117-168, titled PACT Act of 2022, provided an expanded enhanced enrollment period for Combat Veterans who had not previously enrolled for VA health care and who were discharged or released between September 11, 2001, and October 1, 2013.

You are placed in Priority Group 6 until October 1, 2023 unless qualified for a higher Priority Group, after which you will be placed in Priority Group 8c unless qualified for a higher Priority Group.

You will receive free care for combat related issues until October 1, 2023, after which time you will be responsible for copayments for any treatment received.

<end variable>

If you have questions, you can call VA toll free at **1-877-222-VETS (8387)** Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. EST or visit your local VA medical health care facility. You can find more information on eligibility and enrollment on VA's website at **www.va.gov/health-care/**.

VA can connect you to mental health care, regardless of your enrollment status. Visit your nearest VA Medical Center or Vet Center and ask for mental health care. For immediate help in dealing with suicidal thoughts, please call 988 and Press 1, chat online at **www.VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat**, or text 838255.

Sincerely,

Director, Health Eligibility Center
VHA Member Services

<Copays At A Glance>

<Benefits At A Glance>



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Member Services
Health Eligibility Center
2957 Clairmont Rd NE STE 200
Atlanta GA 30329-1647

<Date>

<VPID/EDIPI>

<First Name> <Middle Name or Middle Initial> <Last Name><, Suffix>

<Address 1>

<Address 2>

<City> <State>, <Zip>

Dear <First Name> <Last Name>:

Our records indicate your primary VA health care facility recently changed to:

Rule: For each Preferred Facility Print the following Address and Facility Phone Numbers for the Parent Station Number

Facility

<Facility Name>

<Facility Address 1>

<Facility Address 2>

<City, State ZIP>

Important facility Phone Numbers

Main Hospital <000-000-0000>

After Hours <000-000-0000>

Patient Advocate <000-000-0000>

Pharmacy <000-000-0000>

Enrollment Coordinator <000-000-0000>

Note: if multiple preferred facilities add them here...

For your convenience, you may file this update with your latest Handbook.

If you have questions about this facility change or did not request this change, you may contact VA toll-free number at **1-877-222-VETS (8387)** or visit your local VA medical health care facility. You may also find additional information on eligibility and enrollment on VA's website at **www.va.gov/health-care/**.

VA can connect you to mental health care, regardless of your enrollment status. Visit your nearest VA Medical Center or Vet Center and ask for mental health care. For immediate help in dealing with suicidal thoughts, please call 988 and Press 1, chat online at **www.VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat**, or text 838255.

Sincerely,

Director, Health Eligibility Center
VHA Member Services

EXHIBIT H Sample File Layouts

VA Health Benefit Communications – Supplemental specifications

Record and File Layouts

Request File Layout: The contractor's Content Management System must be capable of retrieving and processing Health Benefit Communication Request files containing one or more records from VA. VA intends to provide files to the contractor on a weekly basis and anticipates that the average weekly volume of records will approximate 50,000 to 100,000 during the first year of operation. The proposed record layout is provided below:

Data Element	Name	Maximum Length – Fixed (F) or Variable (V)	Required or Optional Data Element	Example
Form Number	Beginning – of –New –Form	10 (F)	Required	FORM=H999L
Form Type	Version	10(V)	Required	400H = Handbook, 400B = Benefits at a Glance, 400F = Facility Insert
Q01	Delivery Preference	10(V)	Required	Mail, electronic
Q02	Unique Communications Id	15 (V)	Required	000000111222333
A00	Client -Prefix	10 (V)	Required	Mr
A01	Client - Last Name	30 (V)	Required	BEASLEY
A02	Client - First Name	30 (V)	Required	JAMES
A03	Client Middle Name or Init.	30 (V)	Optional	LEE
A04	Client –Name -Suffix	30 (V)	Optional	JR
A15	Client -UID	17 (F)	Required	VPID
B01	Client Address Line 1	35 (V)	Required	3602 SNOWBIRD LN
B02	Client -Address Line 2	35 (V)	Optional	PO BOX 23
B03	Client -Address Line 3	35 (V)	Optional	RR #3
B04	Client-City	15 (V)	Required	CLIFTON PARK
B05	Client –State	2 (F)	Required if US	NY
B06	Client - Country Code	3 (F)	Required	USA
B06	Client –Zip Code	10 (V)	Required if US	12065-1234
B07	Postal Code for foreign address		Optional	8E423X
B08	Client –County	30 (V)	Optional	SARATOGA
B09	Province for foreign address		Optional	Quebec

EXHIBIT H
Sample File Layouts

B10	Email Address	25 (V)	Optional	username@provider.com
B11	Bad Address Indicator (if set to Y, a hardcopy will not be printed and mailed to the Veteran even if the delivery preference is "Mail")	2 (F)	Optional	Y/N
P01	Preferred Facility Station Number	4 (V)	Required	574GA (note – can be a multiple)
P13	Nearest Vet Center to Preferred Facility	30 (V)	Optional	10 Peachtree St., Atlanta, GA 30056
P14	Suicide Prevention Call Center Phone Number	13(F)	Optional	(800)555-5555
P15	Health Benefits Service Center Phone Number	13(F)	Optional	(800)555-5555
P16	Foreign Medical Program Phone Number	13(F)	Optional	(800)555-5555
P17	VBA Call Center Phone Number	13(F)	Optional	(800)555-5555
P18	CHAMPVA Call Center Phone Number	13(F)	Optional	(800)555-5555
E01	Application Date	8 (F)	Optional	10011999 (MMDDYYYY)
E02	Enrollment Date	8 (F)	Optional	10011999 (MMDDYYYY)
E03	Enrollment End Date	8 (F)	Optional	10011999 (MMDDYYYY)
E04	Earliest Effective Date of Change	8 (F)	Optional	06301999 (MMDDYYYY)
E05	Most Recent Effective Date of Change	8 (F)	Optional	06301999 (MMDDYYYY)
E06	Enrollment Category	1 (F)	Optional	E (Enrolled), N (Not Enrolled) I (In Process)
E07	Enrollment Status	45 (V)	Optional	Rejected; Below Enrollment Group Threshold
E08	Enrollment Priority	1 (F)	Optional	8
E09	Enrollment Subpriority	1 (F)	Optional	e

EXHIBIT H
Sample File Layouts

F01	Service-Connected?	1 (F)	Optional	Y/N or null
F02	Service-Connected % (if SC = YES, then SC % must be populated)	3 (V)	Optional	0-100
F03	Total Check Amount	12 (V)	Optional	9,999,999,00
F04	Unemployable Indicator	1 (F)	Optional	Y/N or null
F05	P&T indicator	1 (F)	Optional	Y/N or null
F06	VA Pension Indicator	1 (F)	Optional	Y/N or null
F07	Purple Heart Indicator	1 (F)	Optional	Y/N or null
F08	Purple Heart Status	15 (V)	Optional	Confirmed
F09	POW Indicator	1 (F)	Optional	Y/N or null
F10	Medal of Honor Indicator	1 (F)	Optional	Y/N or null
G01	A&A Status	1 (F)	Optional	Y/N or null
G02	Housebound Status	1 (F)	Optional	Y/N or null
G03	Primary Eligibility Code	30 (V)	Optional	Service Connected Less Than 50%
G04	MT Status	18 (V)	Optional	GMT Copay Required
G05	RX Copay Status	18 (V)	Optional	Rx Copay Required
G06	Hardship Status	8 (V)	Optional	10152010 (MMDDYYYY)
G07	Medicaid Status	1 (F)	Optional	Y/N or null
M01	Combat Veteran Eligibility Status	1 (F)	Optional	Y/N or null
M02	Combat Veteran Eligibility End Date	8 (V)	Optional	10152014 (MMDDYYYY)
M03	Discharged due to Disability	1 (F)	Optional	Y/N or null
M04	Military Disability Retirement	1 (F)	Optional	Y/N or null
M05	Radiation Exposure Indicator	1 (F)	Optional	Y/N or null
M06	Radiation Exposure Method	30 (V)	Optional	Atmospheric Nuclear Testing
M07	Project 112/SHAD Indicator	1 (F)	Optional	Y/N or null
M08	NTR Indicator	1 (F)	Optional	Y/N or null
M09	NTR Verification Method Station Number	5 (V)	Optional	574GA
M10	NTR Verification Method	30 (V)	Optional	Medical Records
M11	Agent Orange	1 (F)	Optional	Y/N or null

EXHIBIT H
Sample File Layouts

M12	Agent Orange Location	30 (V)	Optional	Vietnam
M13	SW Asia Indicator	1 (F)	Optional	Y/N or null
M14	Catastrophic Disability	1 (F)	Optional	Y/N or null
Field Separator		1 char		^

Facility Reference File

Data Element	Name	Maximum Length – Fixed (F) or Variable (V)	Required or Optional Data Element	Example
P01	Preferred Facility Station Number	4 (V)	Required	574GA (note – can be a multiple)
P02	Preferred Facility Name	30 (V)	Optional	Lilliput CBOC
P03	Preferred Facility Phone Number - Main	13(F)	Optional	(800)555-5555
P04	Preferred Facility Phone Number – After Hours	13(F)	Optional	(800)555-5555
P05	Preferred Facility Phone Number – Patient Advocate	13(F)	Optional	(800)555-5555
P06	Preferred Facility Phone Number - Pharmacy	13(F)	Optional	(800)555-5555
P07	Preferred Facility Street Address Line 1	35 (V)	Optional	3602 SNOWBIRD LN
P08	Preferred Facility Street Address Line 2	35 (V)	Optional	PO BOX 23
P09	Preferred Facility Street Address Line 3	35 (V)	Optional	RR #3
P10	Preferred Facility City	15 (V)	Optional	CLIFTON PARK
P11	Preferred Facility State	2 (F)	Optional	NY
P12	Preferred Facility Zip	10 (V)	Optional	12065-1234

EXHIBIT H Sample File Layouts

Files received from the Contractor: Sample Response File Layouts

Communications File from Contractor: Error File Layout (.err)

This file is a response to the Handbook request file that is sent to the contractor. It contains the records that failed the validation checks. Each validation check will be represented by a code. The codes received in VA's Enrollment System will populate the Error File Reason. A record can have one or more errors. No Handbook will be created when a record fails the validation checks.

Data Element Name	Length	Example	Note
Form Requested	5 chars (F)	F400H	Has a 'F' Lead Character
Unique ID	12 chars (V)	123456789	Returned from CMS; associate to Handbook request
VPID	17 chars	2004341118V132456	Returned from CMS; associate to Veteran
Data Element that failed	3 chars	B05	-
Field Separator	1 char	^	

Record Example: F400H ^123456789^2004341118V132456^B05

Record Example for a Handbook that has multiple error codes:

F400H ^123456789^2004341118V132456^B05

F400H ^123456789^2004341118V132456^G04

F400H ^123456789^2004341118V132456^M06

EXHIBIT H Sample File Layouts

Communications File from CMS: Code 1 Reject File Layout (.rej)

This file is a response to the Handbook request file that is sent to CMS. It contains the records that failed the address validation (CASS Certified) checks or if the record has a Bad Address Reason populated. The codes received populate the Code 1 Reject Field. Only one code per Handbook request will be received. While records that are included on the .rej file will not have the Handbook printed in paper form, an electronic version of the Handbook will be created and provided to VA.

Data Element Name	Length	Example	Note
Form Number	5 chars	H400H	Has a 'H' lead char
Unique ID	12 chars (V)	123456789	Returned from CMS; associate to handbook request
VPID	17 chars	2004341118V132456	Returned from CMS; associate to Veteran
Code 1 Reject Error Code	1 char	S	S=Street Name Not Found
Field Separator	1 char	^	-

Record Example: H400H ^123456789^2004341118V132456^S

Code 1 Codes – the following are Code 1 reject/error codes that are to be returned to VA.

A	Apartment number missing or not found in database, and an apartment level match was required.
B	Insufficient (or blank) address information for a match.
H	House/Box number not found on this street.
S	Street name not found in ZIP Code.
Z	ZIP Code was not found on database.

Exhibit I

VHA Office of Health Information (OHI) Section 508 Section 508 Checklist for Web-based Internet Information and Applications

Below are the checklist and best practices for providing web pages, web-based documents (including formats such as PDF, Microsoft Word and PowerPoint) and web applications that conform to Section 508.

For questions or assistance completing this document, contact the [VHA 10P7A Section 508](#) mail group.

Application Name/Version #	Project Manager Name/Signature	508 Compliance Name/Signature	Date

1194.22	Checkpoint	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
(a)	A text equivalent for every non-text element shall be provided (e.g., via "alt", "longdesc", or in element content).				
a.1	Are ALT attributes provided for all images?	*	*	*	
a.1.a	Is alternative text provided for image-type buttons in forms?	*	*	*	
a.1.b	Are complex images (such as charts or graphs) accompanied by appropriately descriptive text (such as with the longdesc attribute)?	*	*	*	
a.1.c	Are ALT attributes provided for area elements of client-side image maps?	*	*	*	
a.2	Does the alternative text concisely convey the meaning and/or intent of the image it accompanies?	*	*	*	
a.2.a	Are empty ALT attributes ("") provided for images used for decorative and/or layout purposes (including spacers)?	*	*	*	
a.2.b	Are empty ALT attributes ("") provided for images that are list bullets?	*	*	*	
a.2.c	For PDF documents, are artifacts and remnants grouped and tagged appropriately?	*	*	*	
a.2.d	Are mathematical formulas provided through appropriate mark up or as text?	*	*	*	
a.2.e	Do simulated controls like tree and outline components, page tabs and menus provide textual name, type, state and level information?	*	*	*	
a.3	Are text equivalents provided for background, animated and interactive content?	*	*	*	
a.3.a	Is alternative text provided for progress bars and progress images?	*	*	*	
a.3.b	Do CSS background images that convey meaning have textual equivalents?	*	*	*	
a.3.c	Are ALT attributes provided for animated images?	*	*	*	
a.3.d	Is a non-animated equivalent or method to step through animated content available?	*	*	*	
a.3.e	Does screen transition animation settle within 5 seconds?	*	*	*	
a.3.f	Are there text equivalents for audio information (including transcripts of spoken information)?	*	*	*	
a.3.g	Do video files have audio equivalents or full-text descriptions?	*	*	*	
a.3.h	Are ALT attributes provided for applets?	*	*	*	

Exhibit I

1194.22	Checkpoint	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
a.3.i	Are electronic files (such as .pdf, .doc and .ppt) accessible or do they have text equivalents?	*	*	*	
a.3.j	Are text equivalents provided for embedded elements that are not detected by assistive technologies?	*	*	*	
a.3.k	Are text equivalents provided for scanned information, including handwritten documents?	*	*	*	
(b)	Equivalent alternatives for any multimedia presentation shall be synchronized with the presentation.				
b.1	Is synchronized captioning provided for audio content in videos?	*	*	*	
b.2	Are clear and meaningful audio descriptions of visual content provided and synchronized in the video?	*	*	*	
(c)	Web pages shall be designed so that all information conveyed with color is also available without color, for example from context or markup.				
c.1	Where color is used to convey meaning, are text, icons or symbols provided to convey the same meaning? For example: ▪ Task 1 ▪ Task 2 (*IMPORTANT*) ▪ Task 3	*	*	*	
c.2	Does the page or document avoid using color alone to convey non-textual information?	*	*	*	
c.2.a	Is a text or symbolic indicator provided along with color to show whether an item or control is selected?	*	*	*	
c.3	Is information that has been conveyed with color available to users who cannot see the screen?	*	*	*	
c.3.a	Is information that has been conveyed with color still available when display colors and contrast have been changed?	*	*	*	
c.4	Where instructions are given, are actions or controls described in terms other than color? For example: “Press green Start button” rather than “Press green button”.	*	*	*	
(d)	Documents shall be organized so they are readable without requiring an associated style sheet.				
d.1	Is the reading order of content and elements correct when viewed without style sheets or when read with assistive technology?	*	*	*	
d.2	With style sheets turned off, is dynamic content rendered inline with controls that change it?	*	*	*	
d.3	Can user-defined styles be used in the application?	*	*	*	
(e)	Redundant text links shall be provided for each active region of a server-side image map.				
e.1	If the page uses a server-side image map, is there a separate set of links that duplicates the functionality provided by activating regions of that image map?	*	*	*	
(f)	Client-side image maps shall be provided instead of server-side image maps except where the regions cannot be defined with an available geometric shape.				

Exhibit I

1194.22	Checkpoint	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
f.1	Are client-side image maps being used instead of server-side except where the clickable region cannot be defined by a circle, rectangle or polygon?	*	*	*	
(g)	Row and column headers shall be identified for data tables.				
g.1	Are the header elements for a data table provided in the same table as the content?	*	*	*	
g.2	Are row and column header cells identified with the <TH> tag?	*	*	*	
g.3	Do header cells defined for data rows and columns have content?	*	*	*	
g.4	When it is necessary, such as for row headers, is the scope attribute used and appropriately implemented and defined?	*	*	*	
g.5	Do all data cells use a <TD> tag?	*	*	*	
g.6	Does each table cell contain only one cell's worth of information?	*	*	*	
g.7	Do data and header cells that visually span multiple columns or rows use colspan and/or rowspan?	*	*	*	
g.8	For multi-page tables in PDF documents, do column headers repeat across page breaks?	*	*	*	
g.9	Do calendar components presented in tabular format use data table elements?	*	*	*	
(h)	Markup shall be used to associate data cells and header cells for data tables that have two or more logical levels of row or column headers.				
h.1	Do tables with more than one level of header cells (e.g., using the colspan or rowspan attributes) use either the scope attribute or the combination of headers and id attributes to associate data and header cells?	*	*	*	
h.2	Do complex tables with more than one level of header cells use the combination of headers and id attributes to associate data and header cells?	*	*	*	
(i)	Frames shall be titled with text that facilitates frame identification and navigation.				
i.1	Do all frames (including blank ones) have descriptive titles using both the name and the title attribute for identification and navigation?	*	*	*	
i.2	Do the name and title attributes identify each frame and facilitate user navigation?	*	*	*	
(j)	Pages shall be designed to avoid causing the screen to flicker with a frequency greater than 2 Hz and lower than 55 Hz.				
j.1	Is the flicker so fast that it is unnoticeable?	*	*	*	
j.2	Is the flicker twice per second or slower?	*	*	*	

Exhibit I

1194.22	Checkpoint	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
(k)	A text-only page with equivalent information or functionality, shall be provided to make a web site comply with the provisions of this part, when compliance cannot be accomplished in any other way. The content of the text-only page shall be updated whenever the primary page changes.				
k.1	If a page cannot be made accessible, is there an alternate text-only page?	*	*	*	
k.2	If so, is the content of that page updated whenever the primary page changes?	*	*	*	
k.3	Does the text-only page provide equivalent functionality?	*	*	*	
(l)	When pages utilize scripting languages to display content, or to create interface elements, the information provided by the script shall be identified with functional text that can be read by assistive technology.				
1.1	Can the functionality of scripted elements or tagged PDF elements (including links in documents) be used with only a keyboard? (i.e., no mouse installed)	*	*	*	
1.1.a	Can menus and sub-menu items be opened from the keyboard?	*	*	*	
1.1.b	Can sortable table columns be sorted with the keyboard?	*	*	*	
1.1.c	Are selectable rows selectable from the keyboard?	*	*	*	
1.1.d	Are calendar components accessible from the keyboard?	*	*	*	
1.1.e	Are tree and outline node components accessible from the keyboard?	*	*	*	
1.1.f	Can embedded elements be navigated through or past with the keyboard?	*	*	*	
1.1.g	Does the tab order of elements make sense?	*	*	*	
1.2	Is keyboard focus visually and programmatically discernable?	*	*	*	
1.2.a	If there are forced focus changes, are they clearly indicated to users of assistive technology?	*	*	*	
1.2.b	Are event handlers that trigger focus changes avoided?	*	*	*	
1.2.c	When simulated dialogs and calendars are activated within the same window, does focus move to the new information?	*	*	*	
1.2.d	When the simulated dialog or calendar is closed, does focus return to an appropriate position?	*	*	*	
1.3	Is all content information of the scripted element available to users of assistive technology?	*	*	*	
1.3.a	Can assistive technology detect change in content?	*	*	*	
1.3.b	Do simulated dialogs and calendars indicate the beginning and end of content?	*	*	*	
1.3.c	For simulated dialogs and calendars, do the coding and the generated elements appear after the controls that activate them?	*	*	*	
1.3.d	Do links that spawn simulated dialogs and/or calendars indicate that to the user?	*	*	*	

Exhibit I

1194.22	Checkpoint	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
l.4	Where settings exist to enable access to assistive technology users, are they used correctly?	*	*	*	
l.5	If the answers to l.1 thru l.4 are No, then can all of the web page functionality be accessed with JavaScript turned off?	*	*	*	
(m)	When a web page requires that an applet, plug-in or other application be present on the client system to interpret page content, the page must provide a link to a plug-in or applet that complies with §1194.21(a) through (l).				
m.1	If a page uses plug-ins, applets, etc., are links to those plug-ins, applets, etc. provided? NOTE: Verify that the product is on the VA approved tools list at http://www.va.gov/viewer.htm .	*	*	*	
m.2	Does that software meet the applicable software applications and operating system standards in §1194.21 (a) to (l)?	*	*	*	
(n)	When electronic forms are designed to be completed on-line, the form shall allow people using assistive technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the form, including all directions and cues.				
n.1	Are buttons labeled using a value attribute that describes the purpose of the button?	*	*	*	
n.2	Are form fields explicitly labeled using unique and meaningful labels and/or title tags that provide important information (including “Required”) and the expected input format)?	*	*	*	
n.3	Are related elements grouped using the appropriate structure (such as with the fieldset element with an appropriate legend in HTML, or the grouping functions in PDF)?	*	*	*	
n.3.a	Are radio buttons grouped and labeled using the appropriate structure?	*	*	*	
n.4	Is information laid out so that it is accessed in a logical tabbing and reading order?	*	*	*	
n.5	Where it exists, is instructive text placed at the beginning of a form?	*	*	*	
n.6	When error messages are generated, are they easily discoverable and clearly indicated to users of assistive technology?	*	*	*	
n.7	Are there text alternatives to audio cues?	*	*	*	
n.8	Are there audio and visual alternatives provided for security measures like CAPTCHA?	*	*	*	
(o)	A method shall be provided that permits users to skip repetitive navigation links.				
o.1	If a group of links is repeated over more than one page, is there a way to skip over those links?	*	*	*	

Exhibit I

1194.22	Checkpoint	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
o.2	Is a valid skip link target present and located before the unique content of the page?	*	*	*	
(p)	When a timed response is required, the user shall be alerted and given sufficient time to indicate more time is required.				
p.1	If the page includes automatic redirects, automatic refreshing, etc., is there a warning that alerts the user?	*	*	*	
p.2	Is there sufficient time for the user to indicate that additional time is required?	*	*	*	

Exhibit J

PreAward and Pre-production Various Timelines/Deadlines

(Vendor is cautioned this list is not comprehensive.

This is a supplement for informational use only.)

1. SECURITY REQUIREMENTS: Protection of Confidential Information

The contractor shall submit a completed Background Investigation Request Worksheet for each contractor employee who will be working on this contract within seven calendar days of contract award. VA will process all required background checks. Contractor employees are required to be fingerprinted within fourteen calendar days of contract award, unless otherwise notified by VA.

The contractor is responsible for updating the background investigation template as personnel are added to the contract. The contractor must submit the updated roster to the Contracting Officer within seven calendar days after the added personnel are approved by VA. The background investigation forms and fingerprinting must be completed within seven calendar days of the personnel being added to the contract.

- 2. Security Training:** The contractor shall provide to the Contracting Officer a copy of the training certificates for each applicable employee (for the required training as stated above) within seven (7) calendar days of notification of contract award and annually thereafter, as required.
- 3. under PREAWARD SURVEY: NOTE:** If award is predicated on the purchase of systems equipment to meet the file transmission requirements, the contractor must provide purchase order(s) with delivery date(s) at least 45 calendar days prior to the established production date. *PRODUCTION PLANS* - The contractor shall present, in writing, to the Contracting Officer within ten (10) work days of being notified to do so by the Contracting Officer or his/her representative, detailed plans for each of the activities below.
- 4. under Security Control Plan:** The contractor shall review the security plan at least quarterly and update it as soon as changes are indicated. The security plan will be maintained throughout the life of the contract. After acceptance of the security plan, the contractor shall inform the VA representative in writing, within seven (7) calendar days of changes made to the document.
- 5. under Security Control Plan:** The Government will approve, conditionally approve, or disapprove the plan(s) within five workdays. If the Government conditionally approves the plan(s), the prospective bidder will be notified of the deficiencies of the plan(s) and allowed five workdays to respond to the issues identified by the Government in a revised Plan.

6. **ONLINE HANDBOOK:** Must be operational and in compliance with all VA system access procedures by October 1, 2024.
7. under ***Populate the Content Management System Environments (English)*** Additionally, VA will provide the initial facility reference file, which will be used in the Pre-Production Validation Test. Population of the Content Management System shall be completed within 20 calendar days of the Pre-Production meeting.

Populate the Content Management System environments (Spanish) VA expects to provide the contractor with the Spanish version content within six (6) months after beginning Full Production. Population with the Spanish version content will be completed within **21 calendar days** after provision by VA.

8. under ***Operational Management of VA's Style Sheets, Content and Rules*** After the initial population of the Content Management System, the contractor shall receive and execute changes to style sheets, content and rules furnished by the designated VA office. The contractor shall implement the changes in a test environment within five (5) calendar days of provision by VA and without disrupting ongoing production, unless otherwise specified by VA.

Populate the Content Management System Environments with Clinical Inventory Information VA will provide the contractor with clinical inventory information to be added to the Content Management System approximately six (6) months after the Pre-Production meeting. The contractor shall implement those changes within **21 calendar days** of receipt.

Populate the Content Management System Environments with Veteran's Non-Health Related Benefits Information VA will provide the contractor with the non-health related benefits information to be added to the Content Management System approximately 12 months after the preproduction meeting. The contractor shall implement those changes within **21 calendar days** of receipt.

9. ***Transmission Test*** The contractor must demonstrate that it is capable of receiving and processing Health Benefit Communication Request files in the peak anticipated volume (100,000 records per week) by performing a Transmission Test prior to retrieving live production data files. The contractor will be required to provide VA a verification message detailing the record count received/processed broken down by segments within one (1) workday after the complete transmission of the test files. (NOTE: The Transmission Test records will be sent over two (2) consecutive days.)

Provide VA Staff Access to the CMS Access to the CMS shall be provided no later than 21 calendar days after the preproduction meeting, and thereafter, within three (3) calendar days of receipt of new VA staff information. The total number of VA users will not exceed 15 users.

Provide Training to Business Users The contractor shall begin to train the business users in: a) authoring/ communicating business rules; b) module for testing and promoting/releasing content and rules changes; and, c) module for product administration tailored to the support staff responsible for granting access and managing the environment and its components within 30 calendar days of the Pre-Production meeting.

Provide Training to Support Staff – The contractor shall perform administrative training to the support staff responsible for granting access and managing and troubleshooting the environment and its components within 30 calendar days of the Pre-Production meeting.

Provide On-Site Desk-Side Coaching Sessions – The contractor shall provide four (4) separate on-site desk-side coaching sessions to business users and administrative support. The training requirements for these sessions should be defined by the VA Project Manager (PM) and the contractor. The purpose of this on-site training is to address any questions regarding the product functionality and features, and implementation of best practices. These sessions shall be scheduled by VA, with the first session beginning no earlier than 30 calendar days of the preproduction meeting.

Transmission Test – The transmission test will be accomplished 15 calendar days after the preproduction meeting.

Pre-production Validation Test – Twenty-one calendar days after the Pre-Production meeting, VA will transmit a Test File containing no more than 250 test records to the contractor for their use in producing product samples.

- 10. *Online Handbook Samples*** – For each record in the Test File, the contractor shall provide a coded text file (ex.: HTML Mark-up) of the Handbooks to VA (on the contractor's secure server for retrieval by VA) within three calendar days of receipt of the test file.

Mail Management Files - These files will be retrieved from the contractor's server by VA, within three calendar days of the Pre-Production Validation Test, for processing and approval of the Test file.



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
PERSONNEL SECURITY ADJUDICATION CENTER

Self Certification of Continuous Service

I hereby certify my break in service from my last federal employment is indicated by the block checked below.

Federal employment is defined as any branch of the United States military (Active, Guard or Reserve), federal government civilian employee (any federal government agency), or a contractor working for the federal government.

(Check One)

- I have NOT had a break in service.
- My break in service was less than 60 days.
- My break in service was greater than 60 days, but less than two (2) years. (You are required to submit the OF 306, Declaration for Federal Employment, with this form.)
- My break in service is greater than two (2) years; or I have never had federal employment as defined above.

Print Name:

Social Security Number:

Signature:

Date:

VA Personnel Security/HR Use Only:

Current Investigation in PIPS:

Date:

Risk level of current position:

Verified by:

Declaration for Federal Employment*

Form Approved:
OMB No. 3206-0182

(*This form may also be used to assess fitness for federal contract employment)

Instructions

The information collected on this form is used to determine your acceptability for Federal and Federal contract employment and your enrollment status in the Government's Life Insurance program. Most applicants are asked to complete this form after a tentative offer of employment has been made; however, depending on your position, you may be asked to complete this form earlier during the hiring process. Follow instructions that the agency provides. Before you are appointed you will be asked to update your responses on this form and on other materials submitted during the application process and then to recertify that your answers are true.

All your answers must be truthful and complete. **A false statement on any part of this declaration or attached forms or sheets may be grounds for not hiring you, or for firing you after you begin work. Also, you may be punished by a fine or imprisonment (U.S. Code, title 18, section 1001).**

Either type your responses on this form or print clearly in dark ink. If you need additional space, attach letter-size sheets (8.5" X 11"). Include your name, Social Security Number, and item number on each sheet. We recommend that you keep a photocopy of your completed form for your records.

Privacy Act Statement

The Office of Personnel Management is authorized to request this information under sections 1302, 3301, 3304, 3328, and 8716 of title 5, U. S. Code. Section 1104 of title 5 allows the Office of Personnel Management to delegate personnel management functions to other Federal agencies. If necessary, and usually in conjunction with another form or forms, this form may be used in conducting an investigation to determine your suitability or your ability to hold a security clearance, and it may be disclosed to authorized officials making similar, subsequent determinations.

Your Social Security Number (SSN) is needed to keep our records accurate, because other people may have the same name and birth date. Public Law 104-134 (April 26, 1996) asks Federal agencies to use this number to help identify individuals in agency records. Giving us your SSN or any other information is voluntary. However, if you do not give us your SSN or any other information requested, we cannot process your application. Incomplete addresses and ZIP Codes may also slow processing.

ROUTINE USES: Any disclosure of this record or information in this record is in accordance with routine uses found in System Notice OPM/GOVT-1, General Personnel Records. This system allows disclosure of information to: training facilities; organizations deciding claims for retirement, insurance, unemployment, or health benefits; officials in litigation or administrative proceedings where the Government is a party; law enforcement agencies concerning a violation of law or regulation; Federal agencies for statistical reports and studies; officials of labor organizations recognized by law in connection with representation of employees; Federal agencies or other sources requesting information for Federal agencies in connection with hiring or retaining, security clearance, security or suitability investigations, classifying jobs, contracting, or issuing licenses, grants, or other benefits; public and private organizations, including news media, which grant or publicize employee recognitions and awards; the Merit Systems Protection Board, the Office of Special Counsel, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Federal Labor Relations Authority, the National Archives and Records Administration, and Congressional offices in connection with their official functions; prospective non-Federal employers concerning tenure of employment, civil service status, length of service, and the date and nature of action for separation as shown on the SF 50 (or authorized exception) of a specifically identified individual; requesting organizations or individuals concerning the home address and other relevant information on those who might have contracted an illness or been exposed to a health hazard; authorized Federal and non-Federal agencies for use in computer matching; spouses or dependent children asking whether the employee has changed from a self-and-family to a self-only health benefits enrollment; individuals working on a contract, service, grant, cooperative agreement, or job for the Federal government; non-agency members of an agency's performance or other panel; and agency-appointed representatives of employees concerning information issued to the employees about fitness-for-duty or agency-filed disability retirement procedures.

Public Burden Statement

Public burden reporting for this collection of information is estimated to vary from 5 to 30 minutes with an average of 15 minutes per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of the collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Reports and Forms Manager (3206-0182), Washington, DC 20415-7900. The OMB number, 3206-0182, is valid. OPM may not collect this information, and you are not required to respond, unless this number is displayed.

Declaration for Federal Employment*

Form Approved:
OMB No. 3206-0182

(*This form may also be used to assess fitness for federal contract employment)

General Information

1. FULL NAME (Provide your full name. If you have only initials in your name, provide them and indicate "Initial only". If you do not have a middle name, indicate "No Middle Name". If you are a "Jr.," "Sr.," etc. enter this under Suffix. First, Middle, Last, Suffix)



2. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER



3a. PLACE OF BIRTH (Include city and state or country)



3b. ARE YOU A U.S. CITIZEN?

YES NO (If "NO", provide country of citizenship) ◆

4. DATE OF BIRTH (MM / DD / YYYY)



5. OTHER NAMES EVER USED (For example, maiden name, nickname, etc.)



6. PHONE NUMBERS (Include area codes)

Day ◆

Night ◆

Selective Service Registration

If you are a male born after December 31, 1959, and are at least 18 years of age, civil service employment law (5 U.S.C. 3328) requires that you must register with the Selective Service System, unless you meet certain exemptions.

7a. Were you born a male after December 31, 1959?

YES

NO (If "NO", proceed to 8.)

7b. Have you registered with the Selective Service System?

YES (If "YES", proceed to 8.)

NO (If "NO", proceed to 7c.)

7c. If "NO," describe your reason(s) in item 16.

Military Service

8. Have you ever served in the United States military?

YES (If "YES", provide information below) NO

If your only active duty was training in the Reserves or National Guard, answer "NO."

If you answered "YES," list the branch, dates, and type of discharge for all active duty.

Branch	From (MM/DD/YYYY)	To (MM/DD/YYYY)	Type of Discharge

Background Information

For all questions, provide all additional requested information under item 16 or on attached sheets. The circumstances of each event you list will be considered. However, in most cases you can still be considered for Federal jobs.

For questions 9,10, and 11, your answers should include convictions resulting from a plea of *nolo contendere* (no contest), but omit (1) traffic fines of \$300 or less, (2) any violation of law committed before your 16th birthday, (3) any violation of law committed before your 18th birthday if finally decided in juvenile court or under a Youth Offender law, (4) any conviction set aside under the Federal Youth Corrections Act or similar state law, and (5) any conviction for which the record was expunged under Federal or state law .

9. During the last 7 years, have you been convicted, been imprisoned, been on probation, or been on parole? (Includes felonies, firearms or explosives violations, misdemeanors, and all other offenses.) *If "YES," use item 16 to provide the date, explanation of the violation, place of occurrence, and the name and address of the police department or court involved.* YES NO

10. Have you been convicted by a military court-martial in the past 7 years? *(If no military service, answer "NO.") If "YES," use item 16 to provide the date, explanation of the violation, place of occurrence, and the name and address of the military authority or court involved.* YES NO

11. Are you currently under charges for any violation of law? *If "YES," use item 16 to provide the date, explanation of the charges, place of occurrence, and the name and address of the police department or court involved.* YES NO

12. During the last 5 years, have you been fired from any job for any reason, did you quit after being told that you would be fired, did you leave any job by mutual agreement because of specific problems, or were you debarred from Federal employment by the Office of Personnel Management or any other Federal agency? *If "YES," use item 16 to provide the date, an explanation of the problem, reason for leaving, and the employer's name and address.* YES NO

13. Are you delinquent on any Federal debt? (Includes delinquencies arising from Federal taxes, loans, overpayment of benefits, and other debts to the U.S. Government, plus defaults of Federally guaranteed or insured loans such as student and home mortgage loans.) *If "YES," use item 16 to provide the type, length, and amount of the delinquency or default, and steps that you are taking to correct the error or repay the debt.* YES NO

Declaration for Federal Employment*

Form Approved:
OMB No. 3206-0182

(*This form may also be used to assess fitness for federal contract employment)

Additional Questions

14. Do any of your relatives work for the agency or government organization to which you are submitting this form? (Include: father, mother, husband, wife, son, daughter, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, first cousin, nephew, niece, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, stepfather, stepmother, stepson, stepdaughter, stepbrother, stepsister, half-brother, and half-sister.) *If "YES," use item 16 to provide the relative's name, relationship, and the department, agency, or branch of the Armed Forces for which your relativeworks.* YES NO
15. Do you receive, or have you ever applied for, retirement pay, pension, or other retired pay based on military, Federal civilian, or District of Columbia Government service? YES NO

Continuation Space / Agency Optional Questions

16. Provide details requested in items 7 through 15 and 18c in the space below or on attached sheets. Be sure to identify attached sheets with your name, Social Security Number, and item number, and to include ZIP Codes in all addresses. If any questions are printed below, please answer as instructed (*these questions are specific to your position and your agency is authorized to ask them*).

Certifications / Additional Questions

APPLICANT: If you are applying for a position and received a tentative/conditional job offer or have not yet been selected, carefully review your answers on this form and any attached sheets.

APPOINTEE: If you are being appointed, carefully review your answers on this form and any attached sheets, including any other application materials that your agency has attached to this form. If any information requires correction to be accurate as of the date you are signing, make changes on this form or the attachments and/or provide updated information on additional sheets, initialing and dating all changes and additions. When this form and all attached materials are accurate, read item 17, complete 17b, read 18, and answer 18a, 18b, and 18c as appropriate.

17. **I certify** that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, all of the information on and attached to this Declaration for Federal Employment, including any attached application materials, is true, correct, complete, and made in good faith. **I understand that a false or fraudulent answer to any question or item on any part of this declaration or its attachments may be grounds for not hiring me, or for firing me after I begin work, and may be punishable by fine or imprisonment.** I understand that any information I give may be investigated for purposes of determining eligibility for Federal employment as allowed by law or Presidential order. **I consent** to the release of information about my ability and fitness for Federal employment by employers, schools, law enforcement agencies, and other individuals and organizations to investigators, personnel specialists, and other authorized employees or representatives of the Federal Government. **I understand** that for financial or lending institutions, medical institutions, hospitals, health care professionals, and some other sources of information, a separate specific release may be needed, and I may be contacted for such a release at a later date.

17a. Applicant's Signature: _____ Date: _____
(MM / DD / YYYY)

17b. Appointee's Signature: _____ Date: _____
(MM / DD / YYYY)

Appointing Officer: Enter Date of Appointment or Conversion MM / DD / YYYY

18. **Appointee (Only respond if you have been employed by the Federal Government before):** Your elections of life insurance during previous Federal employment may affect your eligibility for life insurance during your new appointment. These questions are asked to help your personnel office make a correct determination.

18a. When did you leave your last Federal job? _____ Date: _____
(MM / DD / YYYY)

18b. When you worked for the Federal Government the last time, did you waive Basic Life Insurance or any type of optional life insurance? YES NO DO NOT KNOW

18c. If you answered "YES" to item 18b, did you later cancel the waiver(s)? If your answer to item 18c is "NO," use item 16 to identify the type(s) of insurance for which waivers were not canceled. YES NO DO NOT KNOW