

Approved By: Tommy Baker Commissioner	Policy Number: VS301
Signature: 	Supersedes: All other department policy on this issue
Application: Department Employees; Any Other TDVS Accredited Individuals	Effective Date: March 6, 2023
Authority: TCA § 58-3-109; § 58-3-111; 38 U.S.C. 5901-5905; 38 C.F.R. 14.626 - 14.637	

Department Policy: Accreditation

I. Purpose

This document establishes policy for the accreditation of individuals with the Tennessee Department of Veterans Services (TDVS) and those who would seek to become accredited with TDVS.

II. TDVS Accreditation Policy – General

Tennessee Code Annotated, 58-3-111, requires that all Veterans Service Officers successfully complete training and be issued TDVS accreditation by VA's Office of General Counsel within one year from the date of their appointment. This document establishes policy for the accreditation of individuals with TDVS.

Accreditation is the authority granted by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to representatives that is necessary to assist claimants in the preparation, presentation and prosecution of claims for VA benefits.

III. TDVS Accreditation Policy - Requirements

In order for an individual to be recommended for accreditation with the Tennessee Department of Veterans Services they must meet the following criteria:

1. Be a paid employee of the state of Tennessee working in a position designated by the Commissioner that requires accreditation or be a paid employee of a county working as a Veterans Service Officer for no less than 1,000 hours annually.
2. Complete the TDVS Veterans Services Accreditation Course, which is an initial course of training and examination that has been approved by the VA District Chief Counsel with jurisdiction for the state.
3. Receive both regular supervision and monitoring as well as mandatory training to assure continued qualification as a representative in the claims process.
 - a. Regular supervision and monitoring will include the filing of claims through TDVS's Appeals Division or other method of filing approved by the Commissioner in order to ensure quality review prior to filing. This applies to claimants represented by

TDVS and other VA recognized Veterans Service Organizations supported by TDVS through a Memorandum of Understanding.

4. Not be employed in any civil, military department or agency of the United States.
5. Be of good character and reputation and have a demonstrated ability to represent claimants before the VA.

Notwithstanding these requirements for accreditation, the Commissioner may recommend individuals not employed by the state of Tennessee or a county to be accredited with TDVS if the individual is already an accredited representative of another VA recognized Veterans Service Organization if such recommendation would further the representation of claimants within Tennessee.

IV. Obtaining and Maintaining TDVS Accreditation

As required by 38 C.F.R. 14.629, TDVS shall certify that representatives continue to meet the accreditation criteria of 38.C.F.R. 14.629(a)(1), (2), and (3) and TDVS's accreditation policy every five years. In furtherance of the recertification requirement of 38 C.F.R. 14.629, TDVS shall audit the accreditation of all representatives annually to ensure representatives continue to meet the accreditation standards necessary to provide high quality representation and customer service to Veterans and claimants.

V. Revocation of Accreditation

All accredited representatives are subject to the standards of conduct for persons providing representation before VA outlined in 38 C.F.R. 14.632.

Accreditation of a TDVS representative may be cancelled at any time on volition by the General Counsel of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Accreditation of a TDVS representative may be cancelled upon a recommendation to the General Counsel of the Department of Veterans Affairs for such action by the Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Veterans Services, or designee, for the reasons outlined in 38 C.F.R. 14.633. In addition, accreditation of a TDVS representative may be cancelled upon a recommendation to the General Counsel of the Department of Veterans Affairs for failure to comply with TDVS's accreditation policy and procedures to include accreditation training standards.



Accreditation Procedures

VS301.1

To Accompany VS301 (Accreditation)

March 6, 2023

Table of Contents

PURPOSE	2
APPLICABILITY	2
ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES	3
Accreditation Procedures	3
Accreditation Recertification and Audit Procedures	5
Accreditation Termination Procedures.....	9
Other Accreditation Matters.....	10
PROCEDURES.....	11
TDVS Powers of Attorney.....	11
TDVS Representation – Duties, Responsibilities, and Scope of Practice	12
VA Systems Access	13
Sensitivity Level Access	13
CAG Print or CAG Copy / Paste Privileges	14
TDVS Quality Review Program	14
Representation at the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims or Federal Courts.....	14
RESOURCES	15
APENDIX.....	15

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to implement policy and provide procedures for individuals accredited with the Tennessee Department of Veterans Services (TDVS).

APPLICABILITY

These procedures apply to all TDVS employees, County Veterans Service Officers (CSO) and other individuals holding TDVS accreditation.

ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES

Accreditation Procedures

I. Obtaining Accreditation

A. The Assistant Commissioner, Appeals & Accreditation, is TDVS's certifying official and has been delegated the authority to recommend TDVS accreditation to VA's Office of General Counsel.

B. Accreditation with other VA recognized Veterans Service Organizations must be recommended by that specific organization and meet the accreditation requirements established by that organization.

II. The Process

A. The Assistant Commissioner for Benefit Operations, or supervisor of a position designated by the Commissioner that requires accreditation, will submit a request on behalf of TDVS employees and CSOs for admission to the Veterans Services Accreditation Course.

B. The TDVS Training Officer will administer training and an initial accreditation examination to course participants. Course participants must achieve a minimum score of 70% to be recommended for accreditation. TDVS's training consists of successful completion of VA's Training, Responsibility, Involvement and Preparation of Claims (TRIP) on-line training and a one week in-person learning opportunity.

C. Course participants who do not receive a minimum score of 70% will be afforded one opportunity for remedial training and re-testing provided sufficient time remains for recommendation for accreditation within one year of hire.

D. Names and Veterans Services Accreditation Course completion and examination scores will be provided to TDVS's certifying official for preparation of the VA Form 21 (Application for Accreditation).

E. TDVS employees and CSOs will provide TDVS's certifying official with copies of all DD214s. In addition, CSOs will provide TDVS's certifying official with a letter (template at Appendix B) from the County Mayor or Executive certifying:

1. Service as a CSO no less than 1,000 hours per year.
2. Is of good character and reputation and has demonstrated an ability to represent claimants before the Department of Veterans Affairs.
3. Is not employed in any civil or military department or agency of the United States.

4. Will complete the training necessary to assure continued qualification as a representative in the Department of Veterans Affairs claims process.

F. Within 5 business days of receipt of all required information, TDVS's certifying official will submit the recommendation for accreditation and completed VA Form 21 to VA's Office of General Counsel.

G. Appeals and Accreditation staff, in consultation with the Assistant Commissioner for Benefit Operations, shall conduct post-accreditation reinforcement training within 180 days and again within 365 days for a total of two visits. A post-accreditation reinforcement training checklist is included as Appendix K.

H. TDVS's certifying official will maintain accreditation records in accordance with the Records Destruction Authority SW32, Accreditation Records, approved February 25, 2016.

III. Maintaining Accreditation

A. TDVS employees and CSOs shall be required to attend four quarterly training sessions with dates and locations to be determined by TDVS's Training Officer in consultation with Regional and TDVS leadership and published annually. Training may be administered via webinar, teleconference, in-person or by other approved means. The annual training conference and examination will be conducted in an in-person, virtual or blended setting.

B. The Assistant Commissioner for Benefit Operations, or supervisor of a position designated by the Commissioner that requires accreditation, may excuse attendance at a quarterly or annual training session for compelling reasons. Regional Directors or supervisor shall provide written justification when requesting an excused absence of a TDVS employee. CSOs shall provide written justification from a County Mayor when requesting an excused absence. A copy shall be provided to the certifying official for the accreditation record. A sample written justification from a County Mayor is included at Appendix L.

1. The Training Officer in consultation with appropriate leadership shall provide a make-up opportunity within 90 days of an excused absence.

a. The Assistant Commissioner of Benefit Operations and Appeals & Accreditation shall send written correspondence to the following when a service officer needs make up training.

i. At 30 days, to the service officer that needs make up training.

ii. At 60 days, to the County Mayor or Executive or supervisor of the service officer that needs make up training.

iii. At 90 days, regional leadership shall schedule an in-person visit with the County Mayor or Executive of the service officer that has not completed make up training.

b. Failure to attend a quarterly training or make-up opportunity within 90 days of an excused absence may result in revocation of accreditation.

c. Attendance at a web-based event shall include:

- i. Log in and remaining for the entirety of the web-based training, Calling in without ability to view slides, presenter and other interactive features of the web-based event does not constitute attendance.
- ii. Sign-in roster for group viewing with the name of who accessed the training for group access.

C. TDVS employees and CSOs shall maintain an average score of seventy percent on the annual examination. The average will be based on the last three annual examinations. Those who fail to maintain an average score of seventy percent will be afforded remedial training and one opportunity for reexamination within 90 days of the last failed examination.

D. Annually and no later than June 30th, CSOs will provide TDVS's certifying official with a letter (template at Appendix B) from the County Mayor or Executive certifying:

1. Service as a CSO no less than 1,000 hours per year.
2. Is of good character and reputation and has demonstrated an ability to represent claimants before the Department of Veterans Affairs.
3. Is not employed in any civil or military department or agency of the United States.
4. Will complete the training necessary to assure continued qualification as a representative in the Department of Veterans Affairs claims process.

Accreditation Recertification and Audit Procedures

I. Recertification

A. As required by 38 C.F.R. 14.629, TDVS shall certify that representatives continue to meet the accreditation criteria of 38.C.F.R. 14.629(a)(1), (2), and (3) and TDVS's accreditation policy every five years.

38 C.F.R. 14.629 requires that a representative is –

1. Is of good character and reputation and has demonstrated an ability to represent claimants before the VA;
2. Is either a member in good standing or a paid employee of such organization working for it not less than 1,000 hours annually;
3. is accredited and functioning as a representative of another recognized organization; or, in the case of a county Veterans service officer or tribal Veterans

service officer recommended by a recognized State organization, meets the following criteria:

- a. Is a paid employee of the county or tribal government working for it not less than 1,000 hours annually;
- b. Has successfully completed a course of training and an examination which have been approved the appropriate District Chief Counsel; and
- c. Will receive either regular supervision and monitoring or annual training to assure continued qualification as a representative in the claim process;
- d. and Is not employed in any civil or military department or agency of the United States.

TDVS requires that a representative –

- 1. Maintain an average passing score of 70 percent on an annual examination administered by the Department; and
- 2. Attend four quarterly training sessions annually.

II. 5 Year Recertification

A. No later than January 31st of each calendar year, the Department's certifying official shall conduct the following review:

- 1. TDVS Employees
 - a. Annual Examination – An average score of 70 percent on the annual examination. The average will be based on the last three annual examinations.
 - b. Training Attendance – Attend all quarterly training sessions annually.
 - c. Other – Ensure no information calls into question the representative's good character and reputation or demonstrated ability to represent claimants before the VA. Examples include, but are not limited to, a conviction of a felony, conviction of a misdemeanor involving fraud, bribery, deceit, theft, or misappropriation. Demonstrated ability to represent claimants will include reviewing information from various sources to include the number and frequency of complaints about service to claimants and TDVS quality review reports.
- 2. CSOs
 - a. County Mayor or Executive Certification – A letter signed by the county mayor or executive certifying that the CSO continues to work a minimum of 1,000 hours each year is of record. This letter is required each year no later than June 30th or the end of the State's Fiscal Year.
 - b. Annual Examination – An average score of 70 percent on the annual examination. The average will be based on the last three annual examinations.
 - c. Training Attendance - Attend all quarterly training sessions annually.

d. Other - Ensure no information calls into question the representative's good character and reputation or demonstrated ability to represent claimants before the VA. Examples include, but are not limited to, conviction of a felony, conviction of a misdemeanor involving fraud, bribery, deceit, theft, or misappropriation. Demonstrated ability to represent claimants will include reviewing information from various sources to include the number and frequency of complaints about service to claimants and TDVS quality review reports.

B. Upon completion of the aforementioned review and a review of annual audit checklists and no later than the due date of the 5 year recertification, the certifying official shall provide VA's Office of General Counsel with a completed VA Form 21 confirming that representatives continue to meet the accreditation criteria of 38.C.F.R. 14.629(a)(1), (2), and (3).

C. Recertification dates shall be maintained in the Department's accreditation tracker by TDVS's certifying official or designee.

III. Annual Review

A. In furtherance of the recertification requirement of 38 C.F.R. 14.629, TDVS shall audit the accreditation of all representatives annually to ensure representatives continue to meet the accreditation standards necessary to provide high quality customer service to claimants.

B. The annual review shall begin on January 1 and conclude on December 31st of each calendar year. The Department's certifying official shall provide Regional Directors with a list of representatives that require an annual review no later than January 31st of each calendar year.

C. For those representatives that do not require the five-year certification by the Department's certifying official, Regional Directors shall conduct the following review:

1. TDVS Employees

a. Annual Examination - An average score of 70 percent on the annual examination. The average will be based on the last three annual examinations.

b. Training Attendance - Attend all quarterly training sessions annually.

c. Other - Ensure no information calls into question the representative's good character and reputation or demonstrated ability to represent claimants before the VA. Examples include, but are not limited to, conviction of a felony, conviction of a misdemeanor involving fraud, bribery, deceit, theft, or misappropriation. Demonstrated ability to represent claimants will include reviewing information from various sources to include the number and frequency of complaints about service to claimants and TDVS quality review reports.

2. CSO

a. County Mayor or Executive Certification – A letter signed by the county mayor or executive certifying that the CSO continues to work a minimum of 1,000 hours each year is of record. This letter is required each year no later than June 30th or the end of the State’s Fiscal Year.

b. Annual Examination – An average score of 70 percent on the annual examination. The average will be based on the last three annual examinations.

c. Training Attendance – Attend all quarterly training sessions annually.

d. Other - Ensure no information calls into question the representative’s good character and reputation or demonstrated ability to represent claimants before the VA. Examples include, but are not limited to, conviction of a felony, conviction of a misdemeanor involving fraud, bribery, deceit, theft, or misappropriation. Demonstrated ability to represent claimants will include reviewing information from various sources to include the number and frequency of complaints about service to claimants and TDVS quality review reports.

D. No later than November 30th, provide written confirmation and completed audit checklists through Assistant Commissioner for Benefit Operations or supervisor to the TDVS’s certifying official continue to meet the accreditation criteria of 38.C.F.R. 14.629(a)(1), (2), and (3) and TDVS’s accreditation policy.

E. At least annually, the Assistant Commissioners for Benefits Operations and Appeals & Accreditation shall communicate annual audit results to County Mayors or Executives using a consistent feedback tool. This feedback may include:

1. Workload and productivity metrics;
2. Quality review feedback;
3. Annual audit results and information concerning accreditation status.

IV. Resources

A. Accreditation folders shall be maintained electronically, and access provided to the Assistant Commissioners for Benefits Operations and Appeals & Accreditation, Regional Directors, Assistant Commissioner’s Administrative Assistants, and the Training Officer.

B. An accreditation tracker shall be maintained electronically by TDVS’s certifying official, or designee. . Any necessary updates following the annual audit should be directed to the certifying official, or designee.

A template recertification cover letter is attached as Appendix A.

A template county mayor or executive certification letter is attached as Appendix B.

An audit checklist is attached as Appendix C.

Accreditation Termination Procedures

I. Termination

A. When an accredited service officer leaves their position as an employee of the state or county, it is necessary to revoke their accreditation through TDVS.

II. Process

A. Regional Director's, or supervisor of a position designated by the Commissioner that requires accreditation responsibilities:

1. Submit the TDVS Accreditation Removal Memorandum (Appendix D) to TDVS's certifying official.
2. Collect the employee's PIV card and turn-in to TDVS's certifying official.
3. Obtain employee's signature on the Information Security Topics for TDVS Accredited Representative Clearance (Appendix E) and submit to TDVS's certifying official.

B. TDVS Certifying Official or designees responsibilities

1. Send the Notification of Termination Letter (Appendix F) to the VA's Office of the General Counsel via email. The VA's Office of the General Counsel will acknowledge the removal of accreditation by email.
2. Request the VA's Change Management Agent remove the employee's access to the Talent Management System and Remote Access Portal via the Change Management Agent Notification Email (Appendix G). TDVS will receive email confirmation that TMS is deactivated, and RAP has been deleted.
3. Send the Accreditation Termination Confirmation Memorandum (Appendix H) with off-boarding checking to Regional Director to confirm termination.
4. Track all steps of the termination process on the Accreditation and Systems Access Removal Checklist (Appendix I). File the Accreditation Removal confirmation email in the employee's accreditation file.
5. File the email confirmation of the removal from the Talent Management System and Remote Access Portal in the employee's accreditation file.
6. Submit request to VetraSpec to deactivate the employee's VetraSpec profile.
7. As the DPRIS manager, deactivate the employee's DPRIS profile.
8. Submit CSEM Exit VA Request.
9. File the CSEM Exit VA Implementation email in the employee's accreditation file.
10. Submit the Your IT Active Directory Removal request.
11. Turn in PIV card to the VA Logistics Office. Obtain hand receipt that PIV card was

received.

12. File PIV Card Hand Receipt in the employee's accreditation file.

13. File the Accreditation Termination Confirmation Memorandum in the employee's accreditation file.

14. Move employee's accreditation file to the "inactive" folder.

Other Accreditation Matters

A. National Guard and Reserves

1. TDVS accredited representatives who are members of the National Guard or Reserves that are called to active-duty orders are prohibited from providing claims assistance during the period of active duty in accordance with 38 C.F.R. 14.629(a)(3).

PROCEDURES

TDVS Powers of Attorney

Frivolous Claims

TDVS accredited representatives have the authority to and should decline to represent clients that seek to file a frivolous claim. According to 38 C.F.R. 14.633(c)(4), a claim, issue, or argument is frivolous if the individual providing representation is unable to make a good faith argument on the merits of the position taken or to support the position taken by a good faith argument for an extension, modification, or reversal of existing law.

Examples include, filing for VA's pension program without wartime service.

TDVS Representation and Attorneys

A TDVS accredited representative may accept a power of attorney if a prospective client provides a written statement attesting that representation by an attorney or agent has been revoked. TDVS accredited representatives should counsel prospective clients that although representation may have been revoked the attorney or agent may still be entitled to a fee based on an existing fee agreement.

TDVS Representation and Non-Tennessee Veterans

TDVS accredited representatives should use a national organization's power of attorney, such as The American Legion or Veterans of Foreign Wars, to serve non-Tennessee Veterans. At present, both VA Regional Offices and the Board of Veterans' Appeals schedule in-person hearings at the Regional Office in the state where the Veteran resides. TDVS does not travel to other states to provide in-person representation.

Despite this general rule, accredited representatives should use TDVS's power of attorney to serve servicemembers participating in the Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) program. When packaging any forms or documents in support of a servicemember participating in the BDD program, annotate the Package A Claim Note screen with "BDD Claim."

FORMS TO ATTACH	DOCUMENTS TO ATTACH	NOTES
<input type="checkbox"/> 200995	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2122		BDD Claim
<input type="checkbox"/> 214138_122017		
<input type="checkbox"/> vacics		

TDVS accredited representatives shall counsel clients on the need to update power of attorney if they disagree with VA's decision on the initial BDD claim and relocated outside Tennessee following their separation from service.

TDVS Representation and Disclosure of Information

TDVS accredited representatives shall not release information concerning a claimant to any non-TDVS accredited representative without annotating in VetraSpec's "ADDITIONAL NOTES:" filed that a valid VA Form 21-0845 (Authorization to Disclose Personal Information to a Third Party) is of record in VBMS. Non-TDVS accredited representatives include but are not limited to spouses, other family members, friends, or caregivers.

Language verifying a third-party release is of record is "Verified 21-0845 is of record in VBMS for NAME on DATE. NAME OF SERVICE OFFICER."

The screenshot displays a software interface for VetraSpec. At the top, there is a text area labeled 'ADDITIONAL NOTES:' containing the text: 'Verified 21-0845 is of record in VBMS for NAME on DATE. Travis Murphy'. Below this is a 'Path, p' field. The 'OFFICE AND CVSO INFORMATION' section includes several dropdown menus: 'REGION/OFFICE/COUNTY:' set to 'Mt Home Field Office', 'CSO:' set to 'CSO vet is working with', and 'CLAIM MANAGED BY:' set to 'Claims Office person handling claim'. Below these are two lines of text: 'RECORD LAST EDITED BY: Lynn Valdez (Mt Home Field Office) on Oct. 20, 2021' and 'RECORD ORIGINALLY ENTERED BY: David Balchelder (Mt Home Field Office), on Sep. 03, 2015'. There is also a field for 'IS THIS RECORD CONFIDENTIAL?' with a 'No' selection. A 'Save' button is located at the bottom right of the form area. The footer of the interface contains the text: 'VetraSpec | www.ity2rtech.com | 1-877-568-7732 | Help Use constitutes agreement of the TOS'.

Other inquiries related to a release of information, such as from a law enforcement entity or request related to civil litigation should be directed to TDVS's Assistant Commissioners for Benefit Operations and Appeals and Accreditation.

TDVS Representation and Contested Claims, i.e., Apportionment

TDVS accredited representatives can provide representation to non-Veterans – i.e., a spouse -- in contested claims. Accredited representatives should check power of attorney for all parties to the contested claims in order to avoid a conflict of interest. TDVS will not represent both parties in a contested claim – i.e., a Veteran and his/her spouse. In the event TDVS receives a power of attorney from more than one party to a contested claim, it will accept the first Power of Attorney received and facilitate representation for the other party.

TDVS Representation – Duties, Responsibilities, and Scope of Practice

A. The following TDVS employees require accreditation to perform their essential job functions.

1. Assistant Commissioner for Benefit Operations, Assistant Commissioner for Appeals and Accreditation, Veterans Service Officer, Regional Director, Appeals Advocate, Quality and Appeals Specialist, Training Director, Training Officer, and Veterans Outreach Coordinator.

B. The following TDVS employees may be accredited at the request of their supervisor but must adhere to TDVS's VetraSpec limited use policy and will not assist claimants in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims for VA benefits.

2. Administrative Assistant, Customer Service Representative, Executive Leadership personnel including but limited to General Counsel, Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, and Director of State Operations.

VA Systems Access

TDVS will facilitate VA remote systems access through the Department of Veterans Affairs for all accredited representatives. Representatives are expected to obtain and maintain remote systems access to perform the essential job functions of a TDVS accredited representative.

Sensitivity Level Access

TDVS's Accrediting Official works with the VA Regional Office to facilitate access to VA systems and applications, such as VBMS, by assisting TDVS employees and CSOs in obtaining a PIV card and access to systems and applications.

Within approved systems and applications, VA may assign a sensitivity level to certain records to ensure they are accessed and protected in the proper manner. The RO Director or Assistant Director is responsible for authorizing access to sensitive files.

TDVS shall request Access Level 7 be provided to Assistant Commissioner Appeals & Accreditation, Assistant Commissioner for Benefit Operations Training Officer, and the Appeals Advocate 2 and Quality and Appeals Specialist 2 co-located at the VA Regional Office.

TDVS shall request Access Level 6 be provided to Regional Directors Appeals and Accreditation Staff, and TDVS employees and CSOs that either have an office co-located with a VA health care facility or duty station in a County that contains a VA health care facility.

CAG Print or CAG Copy / Paste Privileges

As a user of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs remote access applications and Citrix Access Gateway (CAG), you can request CAG Print or CAG Copy / Paste privileges. TDVS facilitates this privilege on your behalf, but it requires certain user obligations.

Please work with your regional leadership to complete the "CAG Print User Acknowledgement" (Appendix J). Your regional leadership will notify you when the Acknowledgement has been associated with your accreditation record **and** VA has been notified by TDVS of your eligibility for this privilege.

Upon notification from your regional leadership, please request CAG Print and Copy/Past privileges by accessing the VA's Remote Access Self Service Portal -

<https://vaww.ramp.vansoc.va.gov/pages/dashboard.aspx>

Users who require print or copy/paste functionality need to initiate a request via the Remote Access Self Service Portal (**available from the VA intranet only**).

Users must have CAG enabled before they will see the option for 'CAG Print' and 'CAG Copy Paste'.

To request it, click Request Access, identify your device type, and then select 'CAG Print' and/or 'CAG Copy Paste'.

****Requesting CAG Print or CAG Copy/Past Privileges without following these steps will result in a denial of privileges by VA.**

TDVS Quality Review Program

The primary purpose of the Quality Review Program is to identify errors and omissions in applications for benefits that could result in a negative impact to the Veteran or claimant. A secondary purpose of the Quality Review Program is to identify trends in errors or omissions to strategically tailor training and development opportunities in order to support the Department's priorities of high-quality customer service and effective and efficient operations.

Representation at the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims or Federal Courts

TDVS does not represent individuals at the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC) or in other Federal Courts.

Through a Memorandum of Agreement with the National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSLP), TDVS has enhanced the scope of the appellate advocacy that it is able to provide. NVLSLP is reviewing adverse decisions issued by the Board of Veterans' Appeals to determine if there is an appealable error and provide no cost representation at the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. This agreement extends only to veterans and claimants that are represented by TDVS. It does not apply to Tennessee Veterans that are represented by another service organization, such as The American Legion or VFW, which TDVS supports.

Please see the [August 27, 2019 Fact Sheet](#), *TDVS Partnership with the National Veterans Legal Services Program*, for additional details.

RESOURCES

38 [Code of Federal Regulations](#) Sections 14.626 to 14.637
Tennessee Code Annotated, Sections 58-3-109 and 58-3-111
TDVS Policy Number: VS301

APENDIX

Appendix A – Recertification Cover Letter Template
Appendix B – Mayor or County Executive Letter Template
Appendix C – Audit Checklist
Appendix D – TDVS Accreditation Removal Memo Template
Appendix E – Information Security Topics for TDVS Accredited Representative Clearance
Appendix F - Notification of Termination Letter Template
Appendix G – Change Management Agent Notification Email Template
Appendix H – Accreditation Termination Confirmation Memorandum Template
Appendix I - Accreditation and Systems Access Removal Checklist
Appendix J – CAG Print User Acknowledgement
Appendix K – Post-Accreditation Reinforcement Training Checklist
Appendix L – Sample Request from County Mayor or Executive for Excused Training
Absence
Appendix M – Sample County Mayor or Executive Feedback Tool

Appendix A – RECERTIFICATION LETTER TEMPLATE

DATE

Richard J. Hipolit
Deputy General Counsel
Office of the General Counsel
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Mr. Hipolit:

The Tennessee Department of Veterans Services is requesting recertification of accreditation, as required by 38 C.F.R. 14.629(a), through the Tennessee Department of Veterans Services. Please find VA Form 21s for each of the below-named individuals:

NAME
NAME
NAME
NAME

Thank you for your prompt assistance with this matter.

Sincerely,

Appendix B - MAYOR OR COUNTY EXECUTIVE LETTER TEMPLATE

DATE

Tennessee Department of Veterans Services
Attention: Assistant Commissioner, Appeals and Accreditation
1109th Avenue South
Room C-166
Nashville, TN 37043

RE: Tennessee Department of Veterans Services Accreditation for NAME

Dear Assistant Commissioner,

This letter is to verify that NAME is currently serving as a paid employee of NAME OF COUNTY and will serve as a Veterans Service Officer no less than 1,000 hours per year. NAME is of good character and reputation and has demonstrated an ability to represent claimants before the Department of Veterans Affairs.

NAME is not employed in any civil or military department or agency of the United States and will complete the training necessary to assure continued qualification as a representative in the Department of Veterans Affairs claims process. Further, it is understood that failure to meet any of the above requirements could result in the suspension or removal of NAME's accreditation.

Sincerely,

County Mayor/County Executive

CC: Assistant Commissioner, Benefit Operations

Appendix C – AUDIT CHECKLIST

VRC or CSO Name: _____

DATE: _____

Audit Completed By: _____

1. YES / NO – (*COUNTY SERVICE OFFICER ONLY*) CSO is a paid employee of the County and works the required hours per year as evidenced by a letter signed by the county mayor or executive certifying that the county service officer continues to work a minimum of 1,000 hours each year is of record. This letter is required each year no later than June 30th.
2. YES / NO – (*TDVS EMPLOYEE ONLY*) Employee is a paid employee of the Tennessee Department of Veterans Services.
3. YES / NO – Has maintained an average score of 70 percent or above on the annual accreditation examination. The average will be based on the last three annual examinations.
4. YES / NO – Has participated in all proficiency training events.
5. YES / NO – Is there information that calls into question the representative’s good character and reputation or demonstrated ability to represent claimants before the VA? Examples include, but are not limited to, conviction of a felony, conviction of a misdemeanor involving fraud, bribery, deceit, theft, or misappropriation. Demonstrated ability to represent claimants will include reviewing information from various sources to include the number and frequency of complaints about service to claimants and TDVS quality review reports.

If the answer to question 5 is YES, please provide a brief description of the information.

If corrective action is required, please provide a brief description of recommended corrective action.

Appendix D – TDVS ACCREDITATION REMOVAL MEMORANDUM TEMPLATE

Memorandum

TO: Travis Murphy, Assistant Commissioner
Department of Veterans Services

FROM: Regional Director's Name, Regional Director
Department of Veterans Services

DATE: Click or tap to enter a date.

SUBJECT: **TDVS ACCREDITATION REMOVAL** – Employee's Name

Mr./Mrs. Employee's Name was the VRC/CSO for Enter Office location or County. Please remove their Tennessee Department of Veterans Services accreditation as well as access to Vetra Spec, DPRIS and VA Systems.

Thank you,

Appendix E - INFORMATION SECURITY TOPICS FOR TDVS ACCREDITED REPRESENTATIVE CLEARANCE

INFORMATION SECURITY TOPICS FOR TDVS ACCREDITED REPRESENTATIVE CLEARANCE

(THIS FORM SHOULD BE ATTACHED TO EMPLOYEE CLEARANCE FORM - REQUIRED PER FISMA PS-4)

AS A FORMER TDVS EMPLOYEE (VA AFFILIATE/CONTRACTOR) WITH ACCESS TO SENSITIVE INFORMATION, YOU ARE REMINDED OF THE FOLLOWING:

- APPLICABLE VA PRIVACY AND SECURITY RULES AND REGULATIONS ARE STILL IN EFFECT
- DO NOT DISCLOSE ANY INFORMATION YOU HAD ACCESS TO AS A VA EMPLOYEE/AFFILIATE/CONTRACTOR THAT YOU ARE NOT AUTHORIZED TO DISCLOSE
- IF YOU HAVE A NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT WITH THE AGENCY, YOU CONTINUE TO BE BOUND BY THOSE TERMS.
- THIS NOTICE DOES NOT GRANT ANY AUTHORIZATION TO SHARE OR USE VA SENSITIVE DATA.
- FROM VA3248: I certify that I am aware of the criminal penalties for the unlawful removal of Federal records (Title 18, U.S. Code 2071), and that I do not have any Government Records or property other than that which I am properly authorized to possess.

EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

IF EMPLOYEE IS UNAVAILABLE TO SIGN, ATTACH EMAIL/CERTIFICATION PROVING THAT THIS INFORMATION WAS SENT TO EMPLOYEE'S PERSONAL EMAIL OR HOME ADDRESS.

Appendix F – NOTIFICATION OF TERMINATION LETTER TEMPLATE

Click or tap to enter a date.

Richard J. Hipolit, Deputy General Counsel
Office of the General Counsel
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20420

Termination of Accreditation: Enter Employee Name

Accreditation Number: Enter Accreditation Number

Dear Mr. Hipolit:

The above-named individual is no longer serving as a County Service Officer and his accreditation is no longer endorsed by the Tennessee Department of Veterans Services. If you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 615-695-6385.

Sincerely,

Travis Murphy
Assistant Commissioner

Appendix G – CHANGE MANAGEMENT AGENT NOTIFICATION EMAIL TEMPLATE

Good afternoon,

TDVS has been notified that Terminated Employee's Name has retired as a County Veterans Service Office. Their last day way Click or tap to enter a date..

- We have initiated a request to remove/disable system and application access according to Appendix F of the Nashville – Employee Out-Processing SOP.
- A TDVS representative is attempting to obtain PIV and a completed "Information Security Topics for Employee Clearance" is attached.

Thanks,

Travis



Travis Murphy | Assistant Commissioner
Middle Tennessee Region
110 9th Avenue South, Room C-166, Nashville, TN 37203
p. 615-695-6329 f. 615-741-6231
travis.murphy@tn.gov
tn.gov/veteran
[Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

**Appendix H - ACCREDITATION TERMINATION CONFIRMATION MEMORANDUM
TEMPLATE**

Memorandum

TO: Regional Director's Name, Regional Director

FROM: Travis Murphy, Assistant Commissioner

DATE: Click or tap to enter a date.

Former Choose TDVS/CSO, Terminated Employee's Name, accreditation and systems access has been terminated. An off-boarding checklist is enclosed for your records.

Please refer questions to Jonathan Soto at 615-695-6331.

TM/js

Enclosure

Appendix I – ACCREDITATION AND SYSTEMS ACCESS REMOVAL CHECKLIST

Tennessee Department of Veterans Services
Accreditation and Systems Access Removal Checklist

Name:

Title: VRC or CSO/Assistant CSO

<u>Action</u>	<u>Date</u>
Notification of Employee Termination to Appeals Division	_____
Accreditation Removal Request Emailed to OGC	_____
Accreditation Removal Verified	_____
VetraSpec Deactivation	_____
DPRIS Deactivation	_____
VA Regional Office Out Processing Standard Operating Procedures	
Email Notification to VA Personnel	_____
Information Security Topics for Employee Clearance	_____
CSEM Exit VA Request	_____
CSEM Exit VA Request Implemented	_____
CSEM Exit VA Implementation Email in Accreditation Folder	_____
Your IT Active Directory Removal Request	_____
Talent Management System Deactivation Email	_____
PIV Card	
Turn-in to VA Logistics Office	_____
Hand Receipt in Accreditation Folder	_____
Removal Memorandum to Regional Director and Accreditation Folder	_____

Appendix J - CAG PRINT USER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

CAG Print User Acknowledgement

As a user of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs remote access applications and Citrix Access Gateway (CAG), I acknowledge the requirements outlined in **VA Handbook 6500** and **VA Directive 6371, Destruction of Temporary Paper Record** as they relate to the applicable VA security, storage, and disposal standards of printed materials. I further agree to the following:

1. I have been provided a copy and have read and understand the requirements contained in **VA Handbook 6500** and **VA Directive 6371, Destruction of Temporary Paper Record.**
2. I will follow the policies and requirements set forth in **VA Handbook 6500** and **VA Directive 6371, Destruction of Temporary Paper Record.**
3. I will not disclose or distribute documents, which are part of a federal system of records, printed from VA Applications to any person(s).
4. I acknowledge that any documents printed must be kept in a locked drawer or cabinet within a locked room to which only I have access.
5. I acknowledge that all documents printed from VA applications must be destroyed pursuant to **VA Handbook 6500** and **VA Directive 6371, Destruction of Temporary Paper Record** and that my office has means to comply with the requirements.
6. I understand that my failure to follow these policies and procedures may result in the loss of the ability to print and/or access to VA systems and applications.

By signing below, I acknowledge my obligation to properly store and dispose of the printed material and have read and agree to comply with the policies set forth herein.

Type or Print Name

Date

Signature

Appendix K – CHECK ON LEARNING CHECKLIST

180 Day Check on Learning

Access to and usage of Tools

VetraSpec _____

DPRIS _____

VA Systems

 VBMS (Including Print and Sensitivity Level if Applicable) _____

 SHARE _____

 Caseflow _____

Requesting DD214 or Other Military Documents

 NPRC _____

 Tennessee War Records _____

 DPRIS _____

Establishing / Updating Veteran Record in VetraSpec _____

Using VetraSpec’s Package-A-Claim Function

When and How to File VA Form 21-0966 (Intent to File) _____

365 Day Check on Learning

Filing a Claim for Benefits

 Disability Compensation _____

 Veteran Pension _____

 Survivor’s Benefits _____

Disagreeing with a VA Decision

Options (AMA) _____

Tools (VBMS, Caseflow & Claims Accuracy Review) _____

Office Management

Interviewing Clients and Tools _____

Data and Stakeholder Engagement – VA's GDX, VetraSpec Reports and Other Resources

Virtual BVA Hearing Capability – YES / NO / Further Engagement _____

Appendix L - Sample Request from County Mayor or Executive for Excused Training Absence

DATE

Tennessee Department of Veterans Services
Attention: Assistant Commissioner, Appeals and Accreditation
1109th Avenue South
Room C-166
Nashville, TN 37043

RE: Excused Absence from Mandatory

Dear Assistant Commissioner,

This letter is to justify an excused absence for (NAME OF ACCREDITED REPRESENTATIVE) from the (IDENTIFY REQUIRED TRAINING...I.E., date quarterly training, spring training conference, annual training conference). (NAME OF ACCREDITED REPRESENTATIVE) was unable to participate because (BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF REASON).

I would appreciate facilitation of a makeup training opportunity at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

County Mayor/County Executive

CC: Assistant Commissioner, Benefit Operations

Appendix M - Tennessee Department of Veterans Services County Feedback Tool

COUNTY:

MAYOR:

ADDRESS:

CSO:

**DATE OF VERIFICATION OF
EMPLOYMENT:**

PHONE:

ACCREDITATIONS: Tennessee Department of Veterans Services, The American Legion

Fiscal Year 2021

VETERAN POP. Per U.S. Dept of VA MONETARY AWARDS:

Fiscal Year 2020

VETERAN POP. Per U.S. Dept of VA MONETARY AWARDS:

TRAINING (Quarterly Proficiency)

Date		Attendance
TBD	Web Based Training Event	Present
TBD	In Person Training Event	Present
TBD	Web Based Training Event	Present
TBD	In Person Training Event	Present

Annual Certification Testing Score (2022): xx%

Veterans Claims (Disability, Pension, or Survivor) Submitted During Fiscal Year

July 2021:	January 2022:	Monthly Average #DIV/0!
August 2021:	February 2022:	
September 2021:	March 2022:	
October 2021:	April 2022:	
November 2021:	May 2022:	
December 2021:	June 2022:	

VETERANS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS ACCESS

VetraSpec SHARE
DPRIS VBMS
Caseflow

Notes:
CSO - County Service
Officer

REMARKS

Customer Service Feedback
(Positive or Negative); Lunch &
Learn Participation; Concerns Re:
Accreditation Status; Etc.

