



**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 19, 2010

Shinseki Announces Winners of Innovation Competition for Improving Claims Processing *VA to Implement Employees' Ideas to Transform Services*

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs selected 10 winners in a competition that solicited ideas from VA employees and co-located Veterans service organizations to improve claims processing and provide greater transparency to Veterans.

“I commend the innovative employees who submitted these creative ideas,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “The men and women of VA and the veterans service organizations who understand the challenges in our claims processing systems have stepped up to deliver tangible results for our Nation’s Veterans.”

The Innovation Initiative winners are the Milwaukee VA Regional Office, Philadelphia/Wilmington VA Regional Office, Atlanta VA Regional Office, Pittsburgh VA Regional Office and Togus (Maine) VA Regional Office. Development of plans for implementation of these proposals will begin immediately.

Additional winners are the St. Louis Records Management Center, San Diego VA Regional Office (two winning entries), VA Central Office/St. Paul Pension Management Center, and Phoenix VA Regional Office. These ideas are identified for future implementation.

More than 3,000 ideas from VA employees and co-located Veterans service organizations were submitted to the competition. The finalists were selected by Adm. Patrick W. Dunne, former VA Under Secretary for Benefits; Craig Newmark, the founder of craigslist and a well-known technology visionary; Dr. Peter Levin, Senior Advisor to the Secretary and Chief Technology Officer; and Garry Augustine, Deputy National Service Director for Disabled American Veterans.

- More -

VBA Innovations 2/2/2/2

President Obama announced the innovation competition while speaking to the Veterans of Foreign Wars in August. “We’re going to fund the best ideas and put them into action, all with a simple mission: cut those backlogs, slash those wait times, deliver your benefits sooner,” said Obama.

Veterans Benefits Administration Innovation Competition Winners

- Milwaukee VA Regional Office: Streamline the administrative process for documenting actions to obtain evidence for disability claims.
- Philadelphia/Wilmington VA Regional Office: **Simplify the evaluation process for Veterans claiming pension benefits with aid and attendance.**
- Atlanta VA Regional Office: Establish an expedited claims process for Veterans who claim an increase in their service-connected disability based on worsening symptoms.
- Pittsburgh VA Regional Office: Lessen the need for VA medical examinations by providing Veterans with standardized medical questionnaires to be completed by their treating physicians.
- Togus (Maine) VA Regional Office: Align employee performance standards with Department of Veterans Affairs' goals.
- St. Louis Records Management Center: Provide regional offices with digital images of claims-related records held in VA’s centralized storage facility in St. Louis.
- San Diego VA Regional Office: Develop a computer application to calculate entitlement to additional benefits payable to Veterans with the most serious injuries.
- San Diego VA Regional Office: Update VA’s computer systems to facilitate communication between VA employees and Veterans.

- More -

VBA Innovations 3/3/3/3

- VA Central Office/St. Paul Pension Management Center: Implement rules-based processing for VA pension programs and other benefits.
- Phoenix VA Regional Office: Make it easier for Veterans to establish service connection for specific medical conditions.

#