

Commanders Call

Seattle Regional Office Veterans Benefits Administration



Chantile Stovall, Assistant Director
December 6, 2023



Agenda

1. Introduction
2. VBA Business Lines
3. Seattle Operations Overview
 1. DRAS
 2. DROC
 3. VSC
 4. VRE
4. PACT Act Updates
5. VBA Big Picture
6. Outreach
7. Homelessness
8. Suicide Awareness
9. Q&A

Seattle Leadership



Pritz Navaratnasingam,
Seattle Regional Office
Executive Director



John Lombardo
Assistant Director



Chantile Stovall
Assistant Director

Seattle Regional Office

Veterans Service Center:

The VSC works compensation workload that requires a rating decision (Rating end products).

Veterans Readiness and

Employment:

Assisting Veterans with service-connected disabilities to prepare for, maintain and keep suitable employment.

“To fulfill President Lincoln's promise to care for those who have served in our nation's military and for their families, caregivers, and survivors.”

Disability Review Activity Site:

IDES works with service members in the Medical Evaluation Board process with single-source ratings between the Department and VA.

Decisions Review Operations Center:

DROC falls under the Office of Administrative Review and completes Higher Level Review, Appeals, and some pension related appeals.



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FY 2023 Highlights by the Numbers



VSC

49,291



Veteran's claims completed, exceeding its outstanding - level target by **7.7%**

VRE

493

Positive Outcomes completed , exceeded target by **11%** with **339** Employment Outcomes, exceeding target by **15%**

DRAS

21.4

Average Days to Complete



Surpassed the Final Rating ADC goal by over **8** days .

141

PACT Act events, reaching **2,148** attendees, intaking **753** claims & ITFs.

486

Job Ready Decisions completed , exceeding target by **22%**, and **912** new plans.

28,907

DRAS rating completions. Helping **15,000+** Veteran's receive the benefits they earned.

DROC

84,730

Rating decisions completed, a **3.40%** increase

SSD

\$3,037,373

Paid out in auto grants and adaptive equipment payments.

HR

345

Employees Onboarded FY23

28,852

Informal conferences completed a **9.40%** increase over FY22.

494

PIV Cards Issued

Attorney fee payments processed

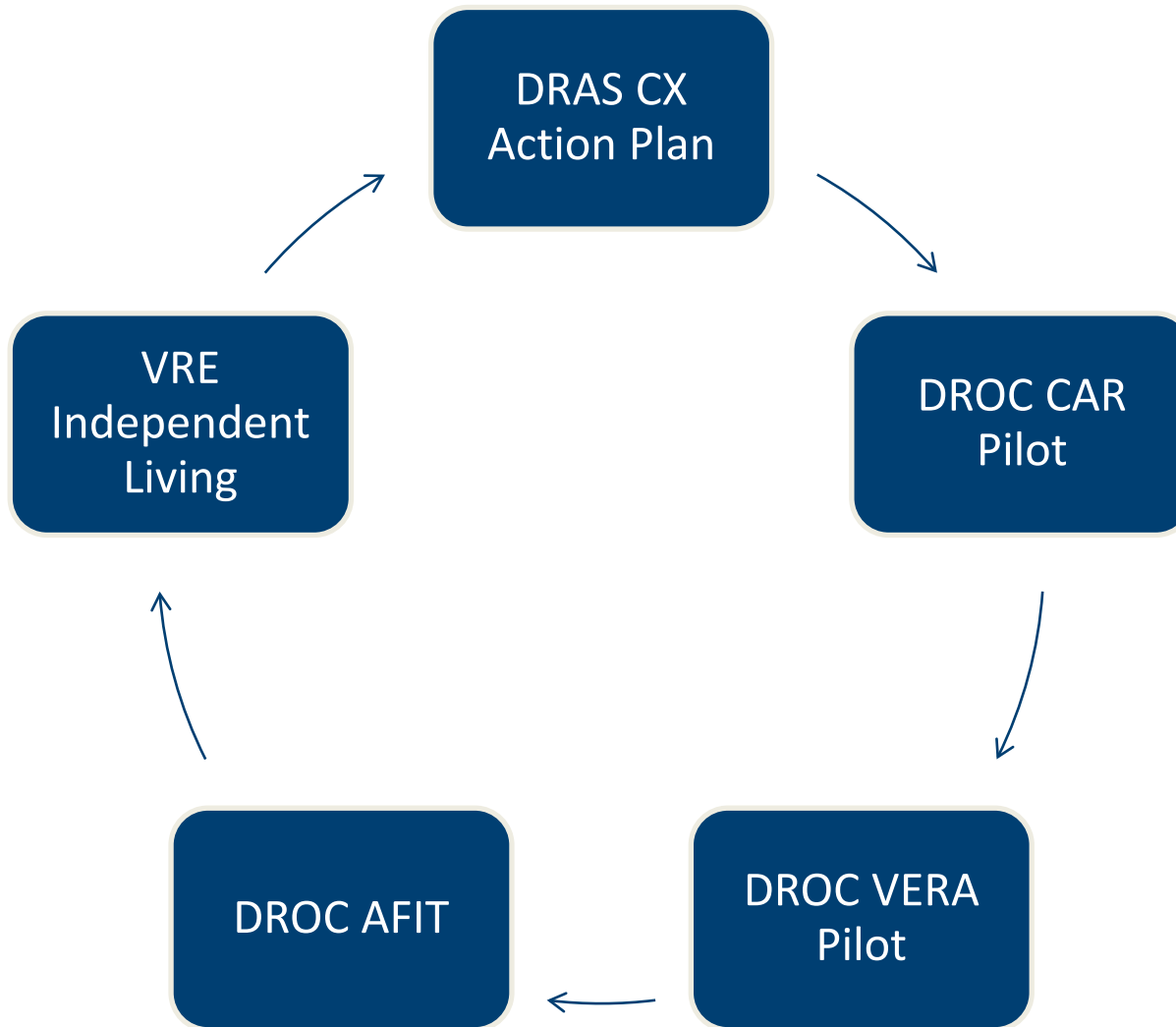
6,705

Met DPP hiring targets based on October FY23 RAM, ending FY23

with **101.4%** of October 2023 ceiling.

DPP= Directors Performance Plan

Looking Ahead to FY 24



What is the PACT Act?

The Sergeant First Class (SFC) Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act : PL 117-168



Vietnam



Gulf War Era



Post 9/11



The PACT Act is a new law that expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances

The Act **(1)** expands and extends eligibility for VA health care for Veterans with toxic exposures and Veterans of the Vietnam era, Gulf War era, and Post-9/11 era, and **(2)** expands eligibility for benefits for Veterans exposed to toxic substances



va.gov/pact



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PACT Act Processing

Expanding Benefits



574,731

Total PACT Act
Claims Approved
(08/10/2022–11/18/2023)



751,644

Cumulative Total
PACT Related
Claims Completed
(08/10/2022–11/18/2023)



76.5%

Approval Rate
for PACT Act
Related Claims
(11/18/2023)



155.6

Average Days
for PACT Act
Related Claim
Completion
(11/18/2023)



46.1%

PACT Act
Related Claims
Completed
<= 125 days
(11/18/2023)



155.6

Average Days For PACT Act
Related Claim Completion
(11/18/2023)



46.1%

PACT Act Related Rating Claims
Completed <=125 Days
(11/18/2023)

39.9%
PACT RELATED



60.1%
NON-PACT RELATED

Percentage of Claims Submitted
PACT Related vs. Non-PACT Related
(08/10/2022–11/18/2023)



531,373

Total Veterans/Survivors
with Approved PACT
Act Related Claims
(08/10/2022–11/18/2023)

524,145

Total Veterans with Approved
PACT Act Related Claims

7,240

Total Survivors with Approved
PACT Act Related Claims



666,825

Total Veterans/Survivors
with Completed PACT
Act Related Claims
(08/10/2022–11/18/2023)

653,735

Total Veterans with Completed
PACT Act Related Claims

13,116

Total Survivors with Completed
PACT Act Related Claims



1,208,443

Cumulative Total
PACT Related
Claims Submitted
(08/10/2022–11/18/2023)

1,187,331

Total Veteran PACT
Related Claims Submitted

21,112

Total Survivor PACT
Related Claims Submitted



751,644

Cumulative Total
PACT Related
Claims Completed
(08/10/2022–11/18/2023)

738,135

Total Veteran PACT
Related Claims Completed

13,509

Total Survivor PACT
Related Claims Completed



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PACT Act Processing

Washington

25,101 Distinct Claimants



Claim Data

Status

	Total
Completed Claims	17,086
Processing Time	157.0
Claim Grant Rate	78.3%
Granted Claims	13,371
Pending Claims	11,610
Sum of Net Awards	\$70,670,287.59

Most Common Granted PACT Act Disabilities

Counts are # of Distinct Decisions

Hypertensive vascular disease	3,863
Allergic rhinitis	2,987
Bronchial asthma	807
Maxillary sinusitis	783
Malignant growths of genitourinary ..	653

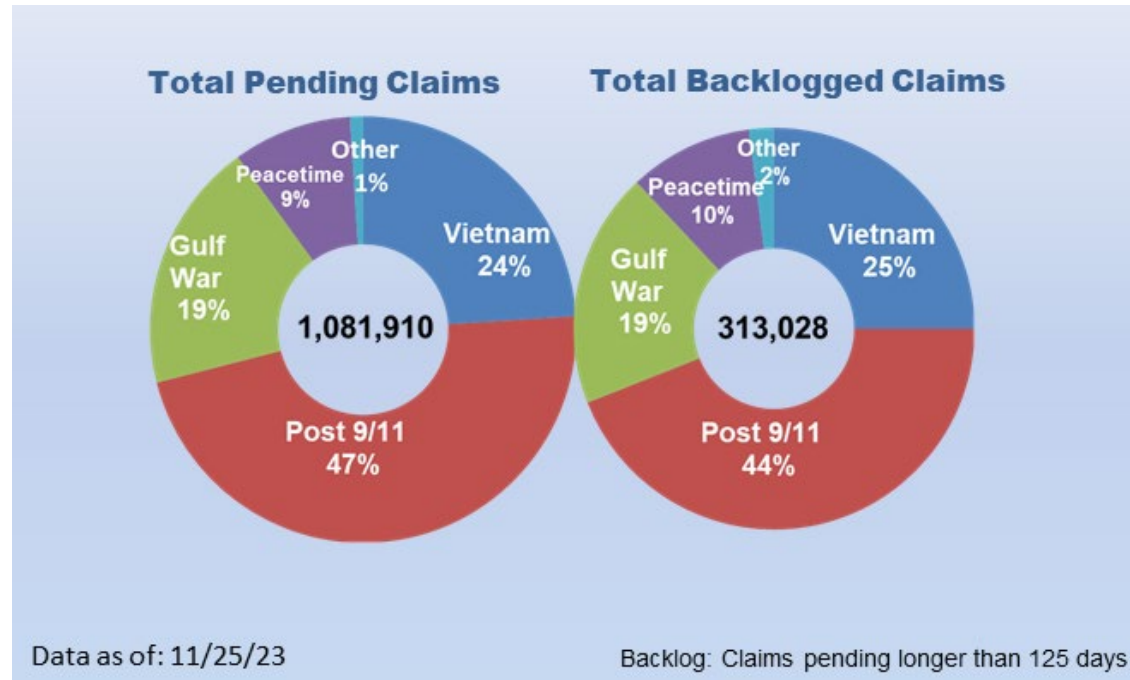
In FY23, VBA completed 1,981,854 C&P claims which is 15.9% more than last year's record total.

The number of claims filed and the number of claims processed are increasing at a rapid pace. VBA is hiring aggressively, and using new automated tools, to expand claims processing capacity to deliver benefits to Veterans as fast as possible.

VA/VBA Big Picture

Disability Claims Backlog:

As of November 25, the overall claims backlog is **313,028** claims. With the passage of the PACT Act last August, we've stated that the backlog would grow for a time. VBA has a robust, data-driven model and remains ahead of projections but anticipates higher backlog levels until 2024.



VISION: Delivering more to the Veterans and Survivors we serve

Increased Access

We are establishing VBA access points that create more direct connections *to* Veterans and *for* Veterans. These access points will be designed to better address the needs of local communities and create connections with more underserved Veterans.

Proactive Outreach

We are proactively engaging Veterans and survivors to connect them with their earned benefits – rather than waiting for them to come to us. We will expand our ability to understand and meet Veterans ‘where they are.’



Tools and Technology

We are equipping employees with innovative tools and technology that will let them operate at the ‘top of their license.’ Employee accountability and continuous technology improvements will help us reach accurate decisions for our Veterans, while serving them through their channels of choice (e.g., mobile app).

Empowering Employees

We are empowering employees to better meet the needs of Veterans and increase the impact they are having. We will provide a rich learning environment and support that will help employees grow in their careers while preserving our high quality standards through shared accountability.

We will deliver **more** of Veterans’ earned benefits **faster**, and **more accurately and equitably** than ever before, all while delivering a **world-class experience**

Outreach / Homeless Veterans

In FY 23 Seattle RO Attended more than 227 events for a total of more than 690 outreach hours

74% of these events were in-person

376 of our outreach hours were spent on Homeless Veteran Outreach at 137 events with 2,243 in attendance.

In FY 24 we are already on pace to complete more outreach – having attended 45 events since October 1.

The words “homeless” and “Veteran” should not exist together. VA is committed to ending homelessness among Veterans because it is our nation’s duty to ensure all Veterans have a place to call home.

•As of September 30, 2023

- 35,148 Veterans have been permanently housed, representing 92.5% of the goal. VA is on track to meet and exceed this goal by the end of the year.

Tragically, our nation's Veterans are at a higher risk for suicide compared to the general population. Everyone plays a role in suicide prevention

The Department of Veterans Affairs released the [National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report](#), the largest national analysis of Veteran suicides through 2021 (the latest year for which we have data). The report shows an increase of 114 Veterans who died by suicide from 2020.

At [VA.gov/REACH](https://va.gov/REACH), you can also find social media content to help spread the word to Veterans in your life.

Everyone can be part of the solution and help save lives.



Modernizing the Claims Process

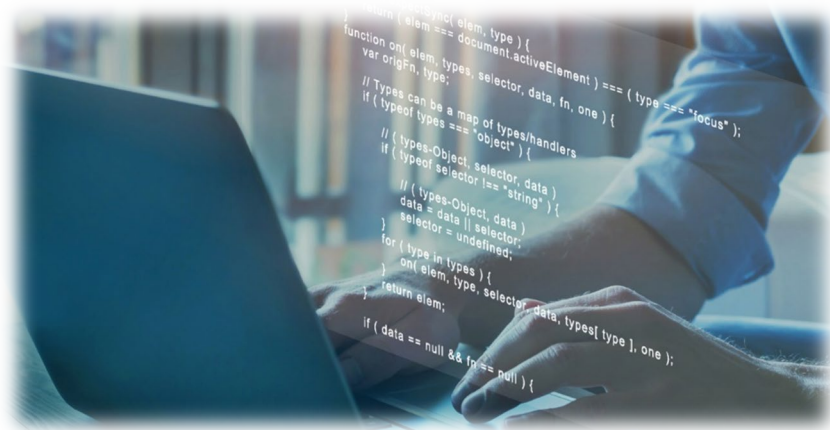
VBA is leveraging technology to modernize and improve the disability claims process

When a Veteran Files a claim there are administrative actions that must be taken like

Gathering Medical Records

Gathering Military Service Records

VA is automating those tasks which allows claims processors to focus on more complex and analytical duties



Automation is about reducing wait times and getting those decisions to Veterans and families in days rather than months.

Currently, ADS is limited in scope, but growing contentions each month.



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