



NOTES FROM VBA AND VETERAN LEADERS MEETING – SEPTEMBER 10, 2020

The call was facilitated by Michael Stoddard, VBA VSO Liaison, Under Secretary for Benefits. Caleb Stone from William & Mary represented the NLSVCC.

- **VSO Support of Mail Automation Brief/Q&A (Various Presenters)**
 - This was part four of a continuing discussion.
 - VBA continues to push Direct Upload and ID.me.
 - Almost same-day mail processing at VBA. Can't speak to Board's efforts in this arena. **CAN submit BVA correspondence (specifically 101&2 Forms) through Direct Upload.**
 - Can register for Direct Upload as a non-accredited individual.
 - Group asked again to check quality on scanned documents—specifically DPI settings. Higher DPI is better.
 - VBA in the process of removing all references to faxes on everything. It is not yet making the related affirmative public announcements, though those are coming soon.
 - Consult previous call notes and attached PowerPoint for relevant contact information.
 - This group wasn't sure what the Debt Management Centers wanted, but they've created a DMC queue that will forward correspondence if submitted through Direct Upload. So it *might* work, but this group seemed reluctant to make any guarantees.
 - Direct Upload will eventually have pop-ups encouraging veterans to contact a VSO representative.
 - Mail will still be an option for submissions.
- **Mail FAQs**
 - **How many processes are currently automated?**
 - Automations have been deployed to process VA Forms 21-0966, 21-22, 21-526EZ, 27-0820, 21-0845, Returned Mail processes, as well as documents that provide supporting evidence to pending claims. To date, MAS has automatically processed over 250,000 mail packets.
 - **Why might a mail packet not be processed by Automation?**
 - Packets may not process due to containing documents that are not yet automated. For example, if the document is identified as an Appeals document or if the Automation cannot identify the Veteran/claimant.
 - **What happens when a packet is not processed by Automation?**
 - When a packet is not processed by Automation, it remains in the Centralized Mail Portal to be worked by a Regional Office employee.
 - **How will I know if a form has been automated?**
 - You should not be able to tell. The Automation processes were built around the same rules, regulations, and processes used by the Regional Office employees.
 - **After January 1, 2021, what if I use an outdated form(s)?**
 - Outdated forms will be off ramped from Automation, and a letter will be mailed out to ensure all necessary information is collected off of the latest version of the form. Using the latest form version ensures the automation can “read” the correct forms to process claims faster.



- **Veterans Banking Program/Direct Deposit (Charles Tapp)**
 - Fraud is a problem, so the VBA is discontinuing use of current direct deposit forms (VA Form 24-0296 and VA Form 24-0296a)—change effective January 1, 2021.
 - In limited cases (e.g. beneficiaries that are incarcerated, live overseas with limited access to the internet or phone service, or deemed incompetent), using Standard Form 1199A prescribed by Treasury Department.
 - To enroll in direct deposit, veterans will now have to use VA.gov or the National Call Center.
 - Forms like 21-526EZ will be changed to reflect this update. **Veterans will need to attach voided check or bank statement to original claim forms to avoid having to fix information later, though VBA promises not to hold up claim processing if it isn't provided.**