

**MEMORANDUM OF CLAIRFICATION  
BETWEEN  
CLEVELAND VETERANS SERVICE CENTER  
AND  
AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES LOCAL 2823**

The following constitutes an agreement between the Department of Veterans Affairs Cleveland Regional Office's Veterans Service Center (VSC) and American Federation of Government Employees, Local 2823 (Union) for the purpose of implementation of the new National VSR and RVSR performance standards, including a new local Super-Senior VSR performance standard (See attachment).

**1. Performance Standard Implementation:**

- Effective March 1, 2013, the attached National Veterans Service Representative (VSR) Performance Standard will be implemented;
- Effective March 1, 2013, the attached National Rating Veterans Service Representative (RVSR) Performance Standard will be implemented; and
- Effective March 1, 2013, the attached local Super-Senior Veterans Service Representative (SSVSR) Performance Standard will be implemented.

**2. Quality Reviews (QR):**

During the first 90-days of the performance standard's implementation (March 1, 2013-May 31, 2013), all traditional quality reviews will be recorded in ASPEN under "expanded review". More specifically, all quality reviews from March 1, 2013—May 31, 2013, are non-punitive for performance standard purposes.

Afterwards, a month-to-month determination will be made on the "expanded review" criteria by the VSCM in conjunction with consultation with the Union. A determination to continue the "non-punitive quality review process" will be made only after careful reflection of both local and national STAR data analysis.

**3. A Fresh Start:**

In the interest of employee morale and improving claims processing efficiency those we serve—Veterans—the VSCM agrees to forgive all employee performance issues that originated beginning October 1, 2012—February 28, 2013. More specifically, VSC management will view performance as though the fiscal year begins July 31, 2013 and ends October 31, 2013.

Initials: \_\_\_\_\_



## Cleveland VSC Performance Standard MOU

Solely for purposes of this agreement, the performance issues contemplated in this agreement are outlined as follows:

- Any VSC employee on the verge of being issued a performance improvement plan (PIP);
- Any VSC employee already being monitored under a PIP;
- Any VSC employee under consideration for reassignment, demotion, or removal for poor performance; or
- Any VSC employee who endured a WIGI (within-grade-increase) or grade increase withholding.\*

\*All grade and/or within-grade withholdings shall be forwarded to Human Resources (HR) for immediate processing.

#### 4. Further Understandings:

- This agreement addresses unique circumstances and shall not serve as precedent or past practice for any prior or future agreements;
- This agreement has no retroactive or future authority on employee performance beyond the months cited in this agreement October 1, 2012—February 28, 2013; and
- This agreement may not be modified except by a writing signed by both parties.

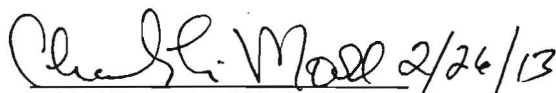
#### 5. Duration:

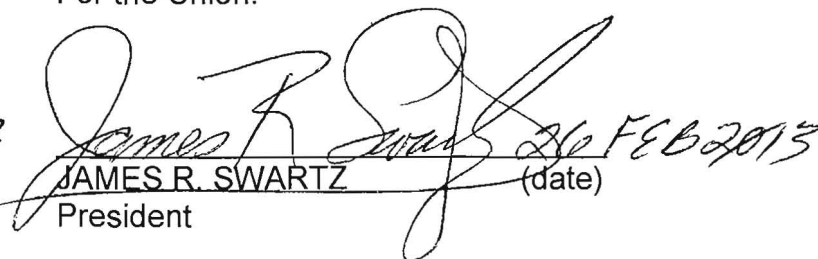
This Agreement is effective upon the signature of both parties below. Either party may elect to reopen this Agreement, in writing, after **May 31, 2013**, but no later than **August 31, 2013**, for this fiscal year (FY). This is solely to ensure employee end-of-year performance appraisals can occur without disruption.

After September 30, 2013, this agreement may be reopened, at any time between October 1 and August 31 of any year. Again, this is solely to ensure performance appraisals can be conducted timely without disruption.

For the Agency:

For the Union:

  
CHARLES L. MOORE (date)  
Veterans Service Center Manager

  
JAMES R. SWARTZ (date)  
President

***Making a Difference in VBA***

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**CLEVELAND LOCAL PERFORMANCE PLAN**  
**SUPER-SENIOR (SSVSR GS-12 VSR)**  
**Effective March 1, 2013**

**ELEMENT 1 – QUALITY (Critical)**

The SSVSR must consistently and conscientiously exercise sound, equitable judgment in applying stated laws, regulations, policies and procedures to ensure accurate information is disseminated to Veterans and accurate decisions are provided on all benefit claims administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

**Standard**

Quality of Work

**Successful Level**

GS-12: The accuracy rate for work produced during the evaluation period equals or exceeds 93% (cumulative)

**Indicators**

A random selection will be made of an average of 5 actions per month regardless of number of contentions claimed. Quality of action taken on each contention will be evaluated. The selection of actions, while random, must reflect an appropriate mix of work performed by the employee throughout the month (i.e. not from a single day or single week).

If a routine review of a SSVSR's work demonstrates the need for quality improvement, an expanded sample of an average of 10 actions per month will be reviewed for quality purposes.

The ASPEN checklist to be used will mirror the STAR worksheet and will include a component on systems compliance, which will be considered a substantive error.

Initials:



## **ELEMENT 2 – TIMELINESS/WORKLOAD MANAGEMENT (Critical)**

Timely processing of Veterans claims is of paramount importance, as it is highly correlated with customer satisfaction. The SSVSR will operate in an efficient manner to accurately finalize claims using all appropriate workload management tools and processes.

SSVSRs are responsible for the cycles/type of work respective to their assigned duties. If multiple timeliness sub-elements apply to a SSVSR (e.g. average days awaiting award, non-rating, and corrective actions) they must meet the fully successful level for all applicable sub-elements to be successful for the element.

Extenuating circumstances and notification to the employee's supervisor will be considered. An incident will not be called until after the first notification of non-compliance of the above standard.

### **Timeliness**

#### **Timeliness of Rating End Products (including EP 930 series)**

Fully successful: All grade levels must meet locally established timeliness requirements, which are to be derived from end of year station targets.

The percentage of claims in each cycle pending over the locally established cycle goal must align with station goals for percentage of claims greater than 125 days. Management for each station sets goals.

#### **Cycle Times**

- a. Average Days Awaiting Development
- b. Average Days Awaiting Evidence
- c. Average Days Awaiting Award
- d. Average Days Awaiting Authorization

Initials:



**Timeliness of Non-Rating & Control End Products (i.e. EPs 600, writeouts, 800 series)**

Fully successful: All grade levels must meet locally established timeliness requirements, which should be derived from station targets.

**Timeliness of Direct Services (i.e. IRIS, Congressional Inquiries, etc.)**

Fully successful: All grade levels must meet locally established timeliness requirements, which should be derived from station targets. There will be no more than 5 instances where the SSVSR fails to meet established timeliness, or failure of employee to notify their supervisor when cases cannot be worked within established time frames and reasons thereof.

**Timeliness of Special Projects & Duties (i.e. Women Veterans Coordinators, AEW Project, etc.)**

Fully successful: There will be no more than 3 instances of tasks not being worked within established time frames, or failure of employee to notify their supervisor when cases cannot be worked within established time frames and reasons thereof.

**Timeliness of Corrective Actions**

Fully Successful: There will be no more than 3 instances of failure to complete a returned corrective action, or failure of employee to notify their supervisor when cases cannot be worked, within three days of the case being returned to them for correction.


**Workload Management**

Fully successful: All grade levels must manage their workload in accordance with locally established workload management plans. There will be no more than 2 instances where the SSVSR fails to show compliance with established workload management procedures.

Local management will be responsible for creating and communicating a workload management plan that will identify the types of work to be completed.

**Indicators**

- VETSNET Operations Reports
- Local Tracking Reports
- Supervisory Observation

Initials: 



### **ELEMENT 3 – OUTPUT (Critical)**

Fully successful: SSVSRs process a minimum cumulative average number of outputs per day. Outputs will be counted as follows:

- Development (Initial Development, Subsequent Development, and Ready for Decision including rating Eps, EP 930s, administrative decisions, appeals, non-rating Eps, and EP 600s) – .7
- 1-2 contention claim development (Initial Development, Subsequent Development, and Ready for Decision including rating Eps, EP 930s, administrative decisions, appeals, non-rating Eps, and EP 600s) – .5
- Telephone development - .1
- Process award/decision (generate award, clear end product) - .7
- Authorize award - .33

Note 1: Subsequent development includes any actionable item, which moves the claim forward and is subject to quality review.

Note 2: Telephone development requires contact with claimant, representative, or medical facility to further the development of the claim. Credit for telephone development may be taken in addition to development credit.

Note 3: SSVSRs performing Post-Determination authorization duties will receive an additional .5 weighted action for more complex cases involving out of system payments or retroactive effective dates preceding 1982 (earliest generate line in VETSNET).

### **Successful Level**

GS-12: 5.5

### **Indicators**

- VOR
- ASPEN

There will be no output element expectation for 90 days following the completion of challenge training regardless of entry grade.

Duplicate credit will not be allowed for self-correction of a SSVSR's error.

Leave, union time, and special projects or assignments pre-approved at the discretion of the supervisor are considered deductible time. Unmeasured time, such as informal training, was considered in developing the successful level and is not reportable deductible time.

Initials:



#### **ELEMENT 4 – TRAINING (Critical)**

SSVSR will stay abreast of current laws and regulations, work processes, policies and procedures and computer applications in order to provide optimum service to our Veteran population.

Employees are encouraged to actively participate in self-developmental activities.

Performance for this standard will be mitigated when the SSVSR's supervisor has not allotted sufficient time for SSVSR to complete training requirements or if the SSVSR is not provided a schedule of available training and the deadline they are to complete.

It is the responsibility of supervisors to provide SSVSRs with a training schedule in advance so they can complete their training requirements.

The SSVSR is responsible for assessing team training needs, recommending appropriate training topics, mentoring, and providing technical guidance. This responsibility includes such activities as assisting other VSC employees in locating and understanding reference materials, identifying individual employee strength and weakness, and monitoring trainees' development toward their full performance level. The SSVSR may conduct formal and informal technical training. The SSVSR meets with the Coach regularly to discuss training needs for the team.

#### **Successful Level**

GS-12: Timely completion of nationally mandated training hours to include core requirements and mandated local training during evaluation period. Completes mandatory training within assigned deadlines with no more than 1 violation during evaluation period.

#### **Indicators**

- TMS
- Supervisory observations
- STAR checklists
- Supervisory reviews
- Training evaluation/feedback reports
- Valid Complaints or incidents

Initials:



\*A valid complaint or incident is one where a review by the supervisor, after considering both sides of the issue, reveals that the complaint/incident should have been handled more prudently and was not unduly aggravated by the complainant. Disagreeing, per se, does not constitute "discourtesy." Valid complaints or incidents will be determined by the supervisor and discussed with the employee.

### **ELEMENT 5 – Organizational Support (Non-critical)**

Functions as a team member to enhance resolution of claims and customer service contacts by work actions. Maintains professional, positive, and helpful relationships with customers by exercising tact, diplomacy, and cooperation.

Performance demonstrates the ability to adjust to change or work pressures, to handle differences of opinion in a businesslike fashion, and to follow instructions conscientiously. As a team member, contributes to the group effort by supporting fellow teammates with technical expertise and open communications and by identifying problems and offering solutions. Performance also demonstrates the ability to effectively communicate in a courteous manner with customers during the personal or telephone interview process.

### **Successful Level**

GS-12: No more than 3 instances of valid complaints or incidents.\*

### **Indicators**

- Verbal and/or written feedback from internal and/or external customers
- Observations by a supervisor with the complaint documented

\*A valid complaint or incident is one where a review by the supervisor, after considering both sides of the issue, reveals that the complaint/incident should have been handled more prudently and was not unduly aggravated by the complainant. Disagreeing, per se, does not constitute "discourtesy." Valid complaints or incidents will be determined by the supervisor and discussed with the employee.

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