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VETSUCCESS ON CAMPUS (VSOC)

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## Chapter 4 VETSUCCESS ON CAMPUS (VSOC)

### 4.01 Introduction

The VetSuccess on Campus (VSOC) program is a collaborative effort between the host university and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The VSOC program aims to help student Servicemembers, student Veterans, and their eligible dependents succeed in completing their educational program and preparing them to enter the labor market in viable careers through a coordinated delivery of on-campus benefits assistance and counseling. VSOC VRCs are Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRC) who brings years of experience to the program to provide educational and vocational counseling services under the authority of title 38 of the United States Code (U.S.C.) section 3697A. VSOC VRCs have a unique role in providing vocational rehabilitation services on college or university campuses instead of a regional or out based Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) office. This chapter covers the background of the program, the role of the VSOC VRC, program partnerships, reporting and documentation requirements, and maintenance of students' information.

### 4.02 References and Resources

Laws:	5 U.S.C. 552a, the Privacy Act of 1974 38 U.S.C. 3697A 42 U.S.C. 12571 Public Law 104-191, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)
VA Forms (VAF):	VAF 22-1990, Application for VA Education Benefits VAF 28-1902n, Counseling Record – Narrative Report (Supplemental Sheet) VAF 28-8606, Notes from Counseling and Next Steps VAF 28-8832, Educational/Vocational Counseling Application
References:	Records Control Schedule (RCS) VB-1, Part I, Section VII, 07-701.000.
Websites:	<a href="http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill">www.benefits.va.gov/gibill</a> <a href="http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/survivor_dependent_assistance.asp">www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/survivor_dependent_assistance.asp</a> <a href="http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/workstudy.asp">www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/workstudy.asp</a> <a href="http://www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/index.asp">www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/index.asp</a> <a href="http://www.myhealth.va.gov">www.myhealth.va.gov</a>

[www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/vsoc.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/vsoc.asp)  
[www.finaid.org/otheraid/partnerships.phtml](http://www.finaid.org/otheraid/partnerships.phtml)  
[www.ebenefits.va.gov](http://www.ebenefits.va.gov)  
[www.mentalhealth.va.gov/studentveteran/vital\\_programs.asp](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/studentveteran/vital_programs.asp)

#### 4.03 VSOC Program Background

The VSOC program began as a pilot program in June 2009 at the University of South Florida in Tampa, Florida. By the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2013, the program expanded to provide on-campus counseling at 94 colleges and universities across the United States. A listing of current VSOC sites and VSOC VRC contact information is maintained at [www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/vsoc.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/vsoc.asp)

A VRC is assigned to at least one college or university campus in each of the nation's five districts. VSOC VRCs assist student Servicemembers, Veterans, and dependents (SM/V/D) in resolving VA benefit issues that may impact their ability to complete their educational program. VSOC VRCs also provide vocational testing; referrals to VA and community resources; and career, academic and adjustment counseling to resolve problems that may interfere with a student SM/V/D's ability to complete a training program and secure employment.

Strong partnerships and a well-developed network of resources allow the VSOC VRC to offer the full scope of services required to deliver timely and effective assistance to student SM/V/D. The VSOC program is supported by partnerships with the host university; on-campus programs and services; the Vet Center; local Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) and Veterans Health Administration (VHA) contacts; the Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership (VITAL) program; VA Work Study participants; community service providers; and prospective employers.

#### 4.04 Office Setup and Administration

The VSOC VRC plays an important role in improving the coordination of services between student SM/V/D, VA, and the educational facility. Thus, VSOC VRCs are assigned to work on campus and within close proximity to the existing SM/V/D support services offered by the host university. The VSOC VRC should be provided a dedicated office space with access to Information Technology as noted in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Host University and VA.

##### a. Information Security

The VSOC VRC must have access to VBA applications via remote access to

the VA network. The VSOC VRC, as an employee of VA, should abide by the VA Rules of Behavior, and take every precaution to ensure that Personally Identifiable Information (PII) is fully protected. Written documents must be secured in locked file cabinets accessible only to the VSOC VRC. These file cabinets should be provided by the host campus. If the host campus is unable to provide file cabinets, the local VA Regional Office (VARO) should provide them. Computer systems must be locked when the VSOC VRC is not within the vicinity, and email communications containing PII must be encrypted.

The VSOC VRC must have access and be authorized to view Veteran and eligible beneficiary records to provide benefits counseling to recipients of benefits under Chapters 18, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, and 36 of title 38 U.S.C., and Chapters 1606 and 1607 of title 10 U.S.C. See M28R.VII.A.4 for benefit descriptions for each of these benefit chapters.

The VSOC VRC must have access to the following VA applications:

- Virtual Private Network (VPN) – provides remote access to VA server.
- Corporate WINRS (CWINRS) –VR&E case management system for Chapter 31, Chapter 36, Chapter 35, and Chapter 18 records.
- Long Term Solution (LTS) – system for Chapter 33 award processing and benefit delivery.
- Veterans Services Network (VETSNET) Share – application utilized by VBA staff to track claims and access the Beneficiary Identification and Records Locator System (BIRLS); Compensation and Pension Master Records; Pending Issue File (PIF); Payment History File (PHF); Corporate database; Social Security Administration (SSA); and Control of Veterans Record System (COVERS) records.
- Customer Relationship Management – Unified Desktop (CRM-UD) – application utilized by VBA call center staff that provides a centralized view of 11 different VA systems.
- Compensation and Pension Record Interchange (CAPRI) – access to Veteran VA medical records.
- Veterans Benefit Management System (VBMS) – new web based claims processing system for VBA.

- Oracle Business Intelligence Enterprise Edition (OBIEE) – a suite of reports for VR&E workload at the national and local level.
- Web Enabled Approval Management System (WEAMS) – database of approved training facilities, facility codes, and contact information.

b. Maintenance of Student SM/V/D Personal Information

An official manila VA folder must be established at the time of the first one-on-one contact with a student SM/V/D. The folder must include documentation that outlines the services provided, issues requiring follow-up, and actions taken to resolve concerns and identification of desired student SM/V/D goals. All official student SM/V/D tracking documents or claims-related documents must be kept in an individual manila folder and annotated with the student SM/V/D's name and claim number. All manila folders will be stored in locked file drawers specifically provided for VSOC VRCs. All information from interviews, counseling, testing, and assessments will be secured and will be shared only with documented consent from participants, in accordance with Public Law 104-191, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA); the Privacy Act of 1974; and other applicable regulations. See M28R.II.A.2 and M28R.II.A.5 for additional information on employee access to PII and security requirements for VA folders containing PII.

If basic eligibility for Chapter 36 benefits is not confirmed, the VSOC must not process the application in CWINRS, or provide Chapter 36 Services or Chapter 36 Counseling. If an associated VA claims folder exists, the VSOC VRC must forward all materials, including the application and copies of any communications with the claimant, to the Veterans Service Center (VSC) for inclusion in the individual's claims folder. If no claims folder exists, the VSOC VRC must maintain the application and copies of any communications in a locked cabinet for audit and record keeping for no less than one year, in accordance with the Records Control Schedule (RCS) VB-1, Part I, Section VII, 07-701.000.

c. Office Personnel

It is recommended that, at a minimum, each VSOC program office should consist of a VSOC VRC, full or part-time VA Vet Center Outreach Coordinator, and a VA Work Study student.

4.05 Establishing a Campus Presence

It is important that the VSOC program becomes an integrated part of the campus and the surrounding community. The VSOC VRC is expected to perform the actions listed below.

a. Identify Stakeholders and Key Resources

The VSOC VRC must explore the campus and community to identify the key stakeholders and. Contact information should be established and kept up-to-date for each campus and community resource. The VSOC VRC should make initial contacts with each of these key resources:

- VA/VBA Contacts – VHA Patient Services, Vet Centers, VBA business lines, and Veteran service organizations.
- Campus Contacts – Veteran certifying official; student and Veteran organizations, such as Student Veterans for America; and campus departments, such as Student Counseling Center, Career Center, Veterans Resource Centers, etc.
- Community Contacts – local social service organizations and local and state government agencies.

b. Network to Develop Critical Partnerships

Establishing, maintaining, and strengthening strategic partnerships is vital to building an effective VSOC program. Successful networking and partnership activities are necessary, not only to market the program, but also to improve the capacity of the VSOC VRC to make the full scope of services available to student SM/V/Ds. The VR&E Officer is responsible for ensuring that successful partnerships are maintained.

To achieve a sustainable campus presence, the VSOC VRC must routinely engage all levels of stakeholders by communicating frequently; building two-way communication; enhancing customer service beyond the standard; and attending special events on campus in order to maintain and strengthen partnerships.

#### 4.06 VSOC VRC Role

A VSOC VRC is the on-campus face of VA. As such, he/she is tasked with carrying out the mission of VA. The VSOC VRC is expected to understand the mission, vision, and values of the VA, and to represent the VA with professionalism. The VSOC VRC is responsible for promoting positive and helpful

relationships with internal and external customers that support the VA mission. The VSOC VRC must provide technical expertise, open communication, and assistance with identifying problems and offering solutions. When performing official duties or attending events as a representative of VA, the VSOC VRC must be a strong advocate for VA by providing positive information that promotes VA programs and must have the ability to effectively communicate in a courteous and timely manner with student SM/V/D, faculty, and host institution administrative staff members.

The VSOC VRC must reach out to all student SM/V/Ds to the maximum extent possible to provide information about and access to VA benefits and services. As such, the VSOC VRC must have a working knowledge of all VA programs and benefits. This knowledge will come from a combination of prior experience as a VR&E VRC; trainings assigned in the Talent Management System (TMS); and attendance at national training sessions conducted by VR&E Service. VSOC VRCs must also have access to VA benefits experts who are available to assist them in effectively resolving any VA benefit issues impacting student SM/V/Ds. The VSOC VRC serves as a liaison with school officials and represents VA on all matters under VA's jurisdiction.

The role of a VSOC VRC is different than that of a traditional Chapter 31 VRC. Thus, separate performance standards are established to measure the success of the VSOC program, as noted in Appendix BK.

The primary functions of the VSOC VRC are highlighted below.

a. Outreach

Effective outreach and motivational activities are critical to the success of the VSOC program. The VSOC VRC must actively seek out student SM/V/Ds to inform them of the wide range of potential services available to them and how to access these services. Ongoing efforts must be sustained to encourage all student SM/V/Ds to seek out the VSOC VRC for assistance in resolving any issues impacting their educational progress. Outreach activities may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Outreach to all student SM/V/Ds via new student orientations, Veteran expos, career day events, workshops, and job fairs.
- Outreach, advocacy, educational and liaison activities directed at host university officials and the greater campus community for the purpose of raising awareness of student SM/V/Ds' issues and needs, and coordinating on-campus solutions.



- Providing in-service trainings to campus officials to enhance the campus environment for student SM/V/Ds.
- Partnering with on-campus career centers, local Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists, Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER), VA employment programs, and others to provide job search and job placement services.
- Coordination with on-campus Veterans groups and national Veterans groups, such as Student Veterans of America.
- Assisting in the coordination of services offered by on-campus programs, such as tutoring/learning center assistance; mentoring services; students with disabilities services; financial aid; or the controller's office to reduce barriers preventing student SM/V/Ds from completing their educational programs.
- Provide outreach services to student SM/V/Ds who are on academic probation by advising them of available counseling, mentoring, and tutoring services.

The VSOC VRC must also engage in follow-up activities to evaluate the effectiveness of resolutions and to determine the need for further assistance. The VSOC VRC must conduct outreach and follow up in accordance with guidance provided in M28R.III.B.1, to include the appropriate use of social media.

b. Benefits Coaching

The VSOC VRC is expected to possess a working knowledge of all VA benefits and to develop sufficient contacts and resources to effectively assist student SM/V/Ds with their VA benefits needs. VSOC VRCs may engage in the following types of benefits coaching:

- Assistance in applying for VA benefits and in resolving any individual VA benefit issues.
- Provision of referrals for VA medical and mental health services.
- Transition support, including participation in orientation programs designed for student SM/V/Ds.
- Development of community, on-campus, and VA resources to fill any gaps in needed services to student SM/V/Ds.

Areas of benefits coaching services include all of the following:

- VA Compensation, Education, and VR&E benefits.
- VA Insurance, Pension, Fiduciary, and Loan Guaranty.
- VHA services and referrals.
- Registration and site navigation guidance for [www.eBenefits.va.gov](http://www.eBenefits.va.gov) and [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)
- Other related community, state, and government programs.

Note: See M28R.IV.A.4 for additional guidance on eBenefits; M28R.V.A.5 for additional information on the coordination of available medical and dental services through VHA; and M28R.VII.A.4 for additional direction on providing services in conjunction with other VA education benefits and services.

c. Readjustment Counseling and Transitional Support

The VSOC VRC must be able to assess a student SM/V/D's current circumstances and psychosocial needs in order to provide the most appropriate services. In partnership with the on-campus counseling center, the VA Outreach Coordinator, and other appropriate service providers, the VSOC VRC must assess and address the needs of student SM/V/Ds. The identified needs should be addressed through direct service delivery and/or referral for services, such as adjustment and mental health counseling, to help prevent problems from interfering with the completion of an education program.

Collaboration with other programs and services administered by VA; the host university, e.g. tutoring and learning assistance, students with disabilities services, mentoring services, student health services, financial aid, etc.; and the local community are necessary to ensure that student SM/V/Ds are receiving all needed services and support to successfully transition to the college environment and complete their educational goals.

d. Educational and Career Counseling

The VSOC VRC must provide educational and career counseling services directly to student SM/V/Ds when requested. Educational and career counseling and services provided under Chapter 36 may include:

- Career assessment and interest and aptitude testing, as described in M28R.IV.B.3.
- Educational and career counseling to choose an appropriate occupation and develop a training program.
- Academic and adjustment counseling to resolve barriers that impede success in training or employment.
- Goal Mapping activities and coaching.
- Review of any applicable articulation agreements. Please see [www.finaid.org/otheraid/partnerships.phtml](http://www.finaid.org/otheraid/partnerships.phtml) for additional information on articulation agreements.

Any individual who wishes to receive Chapter 36 Counseling is required to complete a VAF 28-8832, Educational/Vocational Counseling Application; VAF 22-1990, Application for VA Education Benefits; or an online application submitted through eBenefits. M28R.VII.A.1 specifies the requirements for determining Chapter 36 eligibility; sending CWINRS letters, specifically VR-04, Ed-Voc Counseling Appointment, VR-08, Ch36 - Closed with Counseling, and VR-53, Ch36 – Closed without Counseling; and procedural requirements for processing a Chapter 31 application when an individual has an open application for Chapter 36.

All individuals receiving Chapter 36 Counseling must have an active CWINRS record. All case actions must be documented in CWINRS. Once counseling activities are completed, the VSOC VRC must close the CWINRS record as either “Completed with Counseling” or “Closed without Counseling.” If additional Chapter 36 Counseling is needed once the case is closed, a new VAF 28-8832 must be submitted and a new eligibility determination made. If the individual is eligible, the case status must be moved back to Applicant status to provide counseling. The VSOC VRC must document the CWINRS record accordingly.

M28R.VII.A.1 also outlines the requirements for using VAF 28-8606, Notes from Counseling and Next Steps, as well as the Narrative Report, which is completed on VAF 28-1902n or in a CWINRS note, that must be completed for any individual who receives Chapter 36 Counseling. Templates are available to assist with completing VAF 28-8606.

The VSOC VRC is required to provide the individual with three documents as part of a Chapter 36 Counseling “Goal Map” package:

- VAF 28-8606, Notes from Counseling and Next Steps.
- Vocational Assessment Summary, which must include, but is not limited to, an analysis and explanation of testing results – do not provide raw test scores; assessment of aptitude, interests, and abilities; employment goals; and training options discussed. See Appendix BY and/or Appendix BZ, as appropriate.
- *'My Transition to School'* or *'My Transition to the Workforce'* Handout, Appendix CB, which serves as a resource tool for individuals transitioning into school or the workforce and provides a notes/contacts section for the individual to notate contacts and information gathered.

To ensure Chapter 36 benefits are provided consistently to each eligible applicant, the Chapter 36 Checklist (Appendix BV) must be used by the VSOC VRC to document the counseling and/or services provided. If a CWINRS record exists, the information in the checklist may be copied into a CWINRS note; or the VRC may complete a hard copy of the Chapter 36 Checklist, which must be placed in the file. The checklist is a tool for use by the VSOC VRC, and should not be provided to the individual receiving Chapter 36 benefits.

Follow-up contacts with student SM/V/Ds and other service providers are equally important to ensure that required services are delivered and to determine the need for further services.

For additional information on these processes, see Appendix CA, Guidance Document for VAF 28-8606, Notes from Counseling and Next Steps (CH36); Appendix BY, Educational/Vocational Assessment Narrative Template; and Appendix BZ, Educational/Vocational Career Counseling Narrative Template.

e. Oversight of VA Work Study Program Participants

The VSOC VRC must refer qualified student Servicemembers and Veterans (SM/V) for VA Work Study student and Work Study Mentor positions on campus. VSOC VRCs should utilize VA Work Study students to provide clerical support to assist in office management activities. The VSOC VRC is responsible for selecting a qualified VA Work Study student and providing training and oversight to fulfill the VSOC program. VSOC VRCs must provide guidance and technical support to the VA Work Study student on VSOC program issues, sign, and submit the Work Study student's time sheet to the appropriate VA Regional Processing Office (RPO).

Participants in the VA Work Study benefit may also perform duties as Work Study Mentors, if the qualifications for these positions are met (see Appendix BM, VA Work Study Mentor Position Description). The VSOC VRC is responsible for selecting, training, and providing oversight to VA Work Study Mentors, when utilized. VSOC VRCs may use the following process to build a new mentoring program or strengthen an existing one:

- Recruitment – mentoring programs must realistically portray the benefits, practices, and challenges of becoming a mentor and clearly describe program expectations to mentees
  - Mentor Screening – screen prospective mentors to determine whether they have the time and personal commitment to be an effective mentor
  - Training – train prospective mentors in the basic knowledge and skills needed to build an effective mentoring relationship
  - Matching – pair the mentor based on similarities with the mentee, such as age, gender, etc.
  - Monitoring and Support – monitor mentoring relationships and milestones, and support mentors with ongoing advice and problem solving
- f. Support of Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Services

Most VSOC VRCs are subject matter experts (SME) for VR&E, as they previously worked in a VRC capacity in an RO. These VSOC VRCs can easily offer expert-level assistance regarding Chapter 31 benefits to student SM/V/Ds as necessary. However, VSOC VRCs that are new to VA will need to expand their knowledge of the VR&E program by working closely with their VR&E Officer (VREO) and local VRCs. Additionally, the VSOC VRC has limited authority when working on behalf of the primary VRC for a Chapter 31 participant. All VR&E program laws, regulations, directives, and procedures must be adhered to and all services must be delivered in coordination with the primary VRC. All decisions involving active VR&E participants need to be made by the primary VRC. The VSOC VRC must always involve the primary VRC in any interaction with a VR&E student SM/V/D. The VSOC VRC should assist the primary VRC in the following ways:

- Develop and submit referrals for VHA medical and mental health services on behalf of, or at the request of, the primary VRC
- Provide guidance on accessing transitional support services from on-campus and local community resources

- Provide limited face-to-face counseling sessions as discussed with the primary VRC
- Complete entitlement determinations for the Chapter 31 program to expedite access to benefits

g. VSOC Chapter 31 Workload Clarification

VSOC VRCs are expected to manage a reasonable Chapter 31 caseload as necessary (recommended no more than 50), so as to not diminish or compromise the mission of the VSOC Program. In addition, VSOC VRCs should not provide counseling or case management services to an individual who is receiving services under an Independent Living plan or pursuing a plan for Self-Employment. A VSOC VRC's Chapter 31 workload is also limited to only those students who are attending training at the VSOC VRC's assigned school(s). VSOC VRCs may not conduct recurring case management meetings with Chapter 31 participants assigned to other VRCs at the RO or another out based office location.

h. Use of Contract Counselors

VSOC VRCs may not make a referral to a contract counselor for the Initial Educational and Vocational Assessment under Contract Line Item Number (CLIN) D-1, or for Educational and Vocational Career Counseling using the D-2 CLIN.

i. Employment Assistance

The VSOC VRC must make every effort to inform student SM/V/Ds of the services available to them in securing employment, including services available through VA, on campus, and through other local community and government-sponsored programs. Special attention should be focused on student SM/Vs with disabilities in regards to the availability of employment assistance. Referrals for services will be submitted to the local VR&E Office for those student SM/Vs with service-connected disabilities who are not already participating in the Chapter 31 program.

The VSOC VRC must also take advantage of every opportunity to market student SM/Vs to employers attending or participating in job fairs or other on campus activities. In addition, VSOC VRCs should assist student SM/Vs with job seeking skills and job placement services as needed throughout their educational pursuits,

#### 4.07 VSOC Partnerships

VSOC VRCs perform their duties with the support and collaboration of various partners, both on-campus and off. Partnerships vital to the success of the VSOC program are discussed below. Each VSOC VRC must also develop partnerships and resources to assist student SM/Vs in the local community.

##### a. Host University

The Host University is the postsecondary educational facility that has invited VA to implement the VSOC program at their facility. The VSOC VRC must work closely with officials at the Host University to establish a campus presence and gain access to campus events for student SM/V/Ds and VA beneficiaries. The VSOC VRC must assist the Host University in obtaining information on building Veteran-friendly programs and effectively supporting student SM/Vs. The Host University will provide the following:

1. Use of office space for VA personnel to provide services and assistance at no cost to VA.
2. Inclusion of VSOC VRCs in new student programs, such as new student orientation and Welcome Week activities, as appropriate.
3. Practical training on current services provided by the Host University, including career counseling; vocational assessment; employment assistance; financial aid; financial services; psychological counseling and health services; services for students with disabilities; learning assistance; and academic advising.
4. Inclusion of the VSOC VRC on the Host University's Veterans Support Committee.
5. Inclusion of the VSOC VRC during campus activities and events to provide outreach opportunities to student SM/V/Ds.
6. On-campus points of contact for the VSOC VRC.
7. Comprehensive information on college student development and the college-student experience, as it specifically relates to the Host University.
8. Information on the enrollment status persons utilizing VA Educational benefits, to records of academic progress, program pursuit, etc., as required by the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Host University and VR&E.

b. Vet Center Outreach Coordinator

In addition to the VSOC VRC, a full or part-time Vet Center Outreach Coordinator should be stationed at VSOC sites to provide peer-to-peer counseling and referral services, as necessary. The Vet Center Outreach Coordinator is available to refer student SM/Vs for healthcare services, including mental health treatment through the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) medical centers; college or university counseling centers; student disability services centers; community based outpatient clinics or Vet Centers.

c. Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership (VITAL)

The VITAL initiative supports VA's mission to provide world-class healthcare and improve the mental health well-being of Veterans, while supporting their successful integration into college and university campuses through seamless access to VA healthcare services and on-campus clinical counseling. VITAL provides outreach and mental health services on campus; faculty training on Veteran-specific issues; peer support; referral training; and Veterans transition support classes. It also provides efficient care coordination of all available services, and promotes positive cohesion between Veterans and the entire learning community through campus and community clinical education and training. VSOC VRCs are encouraged to utilize VITAL to supplement supportive services for student Veterans. A listing of current VITAL sites is maintained at [www.mentalhealth.va.gov/studentveteran/vital\\_programs.asp](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/studentveteran/vital_programs.asp)

d. VA Work Study Student

A VA Work Study student is an individual who is currently enrolled in training under a VA education benefit, who qualifies for the VA Work-Study Allowance program. Program criteria include full-time or  $\frac{3}{4}$ -time rate of pursuit in a college degree, vocational, or professional program. VSOC VRCs will utilize VA Work Study students to provide clerical support to assist in office management activities. VA Work Study students may not have access to VA information systems containing PII. The application for VA Work-Study, VAF 22-8691, is available on the GI Bill website, and/or instructions on how to access the form can be found in Appendix O, VA Forms. Additional information on the VA Work Study benefit can be found at [www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/workstudy.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/workstudy.asp)

e. VA Work Study Mentor

VSOC program mentoring services are designed to help student SM/Vs succeed in their academic and career pursuits. The program's goal is to



increase the retention of student SM/Vs by providing incoming freshmen and at-risk students opportunities to learn from mentors who serve as coaches, role models, advisors, guides, and referral agents.

VSOC mentoring programs are based on the campus location and needs of student SM/Vs at the campus. Some VSOC sites are able to utilize established school mentoring programs if these programs are Veteran-centric. Mentoring programs that are focused on both academics and Veteran needs can assist student SM/Vs with overcoming transitional challenges, applying for benefits, and providing referrals to the VSOC VRC for intervention and counseling.

See Appendix BM, VA Work Study Mentor Position Description, for additional information.

#### 4.08 VSOC Documentation and Reporting Requirements

##### a. Documenting Outreach Activities

VSOC VRCs must complete an Event Outbrief report within 48 hours of participating in an outreach event. The report must be signed by a designated campus official and forwarded to the VREO. VSOC VRCs must also track outreach efforts made to engage student SM/V/Ds on academic probation.

##### b. Documenting Chapter 36 Services

Activities that do not require a formal application or request for benefits are referred to as Chapter 36 Services. These activities are limited to basic assistance and do not require one-on-one comprehensive counseling and guidance. Chapter 36 Services may include, but are not limited to, activities such as:

- Assistance with registration for eBenefits.
- Assistance with accessing the Veterans Employment Center.
- Assistance with registration for VA Healthcare (my HealtheVet).
- Identification of on-campus resources available to all students.
- Identification of work-study opportunities.
- Referral to campus mentoring programs.

- Review of any applicable articulation agreements.

If an individual needs Chapter 36 Counseling, then the individual will need to submit a formal application, VAF 28-8832. Appendix BV, Chapter 36 Checklist, serves as a guide to assist in documenting provision of Chapter 36 services. The checklist must be used by the VSOC VRC to document the activities and services provided. If counseling is not provided, then an application does not need to be processed and a CWINRS record is not created; however, eligibility for Chapter 36 must still be established. The checklist documenting the Chapter 36 Services provided must be filed in a manila folder and placed in a locked cabinet for audit and record keeping for no less than one year per the RCS.

c. Documenting Chapter 36 Counseling

Any individual who wishes to receive Chapter 36 Counseling is required to complete a VAF 28-8832, or choose the option to apply online after logging on to eBenefits. Other requests for Chapter 36 Counseling may be accepted, to include the receipt of VAF 22-1990 or written request that includes name, social security number, and discharge date.

Chapter 36 Counseling is more specialized, and involves assessment of needs, interpretation of test results or transferable skills, and goal mapping activities. Chapter 36 Counseling must be conducted in an individual setting, and may not be provided to groups. Chapter 36 Counseling may include, but is not limited to, activities such as:

- VA benefits coaching.
- Adjustment counseling.
- Assessment and exploration of interests and aptitudes.
- Assistance in identifying educational goals and training facilities.
- Assistance determining employment goals.
- Discussion of impact of grades and/or assistance identifying resources to resolve academic probation.
- Assistance with change in major or field of study.
- Goal mapping activities and coaching.

- Review of any applicable articulation agreements.

If the individual needs Chapter 36 Services within the scope of Chapter 36 Counseling, then both may be provided. All individuals receiving Chapter 36 Counseling must have an active CWINRS record with case actions documented in CWINRS. Review of information contained in the CRM-UD is one way to determine eligibility for a Chapter 36 applicant. The Chapter 36 Checklist must be completed to document the Chapter 36 benefits provided.

Upon completion of Chapter 36 Counseling within a school term, the case should be closed and archived in CWINRS. Services should be provided as specified in the VSOC VRC performance standards, as described in Appendix BK. If the Veteran returns for additional counseling within the same term and the case has been closed, the CWINRS record must be activated without changing the case status. No new application required in this situation; however, counseling must be documented in CWINRS and the VSOC Access Database. Once the case is closed in CWINRS, if additional services are requested and it is in a new term, the SM/V/D must submit a new application, and a new eligibility determination must be made. If the SM/V/D is eligible, the case must be reopened in Applicant status to provide counseling services, and the VSOC VRC must document the CWINRS record accordingly.

VSOC VRCs should refer to section 4.06.d of this chapter and M28R.VII.A.1 for guidance on administering and documenting Chapter 36 Counseling services provided.

d. Documenting Chapter 31 Counseling

Entitlement determinations must be made and documented in accordance with M28R.IV.B.5. CWINRS case notes should be made in accordance with M28R.II.A.2.

e. VSOC Monthly Student Tracking Report

All VSOC VRCs must document outreach, advocacy, referral, counseling, and benefits-related activities. VSOC VRCs must submit a monthly report to VA Central Office by utilizing the "Monthly to VACO" button on the VSOC Access Database switchboard. These monthly reports are due to the Outreach Mailbox at VAVBAWAS/CO/VREOUTREACH by close of business (COB) on the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month to report the previous month's data. If the 5<sup>th</sup> falls on a holiday or weekend, reports must be submitted by COB on the last business day prior to the holiday or weekend. The VSOC Monthly Student Tracking

Report is utilized to track the number of contacts and referrals generated by the VSOC VRC.

#### 4.09 Program Management and Oversight

##### a. Personnel Management

VSOC VRCs are considered employees of the local RO. Each VREO with jurisdiction over a VSOC site(s) is responsible for employee training and development, as well as oversight and personnel management of VSOC VRCs. The VREO will conduct performance evaluations for VSOC VRCs in accordance with the VSOC-specific performance standards provided in Appendix BK.

##### b. Staff Development and Training

Staff development and training activities provides the opportunity for enriching and improving the quality of the VSOC program. Training is the primary tool to ensure the VSOC VRC remains current and well-informed on new developments in the counseling, rehabilitation, and Veteran benefits field. A program of ongoing professional training and development conducted by VA and other resources are available to VSOC VRCs to ensure that services for SM/V/D are provided with the most advanced knowledge, methods, and techniques available.

In addition, annual VSOC training will be conducted to encourage VSOC VRCs to expand their foundations of knowledge and stay up-to-date on new developments. The training consists of online live meetings and webinars, including TMS courses. The annual training also allows experienced VSOC VRCs to share their knowledge and best practices with newer VSOC VRCs, and to develop peer mentoring relationships. Beyond the initial standard training offered to new VSOC VRCs, local RO training should be developed and provided to the counselors on an as-needed basis. The Host University and VA also provide access to adequate joint cross-training materials to ensure maximum delivery of both VA and on-campus services. The information exchanges should be used to facilitate the education, training, and delivery of services to participating Veterans. VR&E Service coordinates monthly VSOC conference calls to discuss emerging issues and program updates.