

Strategic Goal 2

***Ensure a smooth transition for veterans
from active military service to civilian life***

Objective 2.1

Ease the reentry of new veterans into civilian life by increasing awareness of, access to, and use of benefits and services during transition



Objective 2.3

Improve the ability of veterans to purchase and retain a home through a loan guarantee program

Objective 2.2

Assist veterans in readjusting to civilian life by enhancing their ability to achieve educational and career goals

***To ensure a
smooth
transition...***

Veterans will be fully reintegrated into their communities with minimum disruption to their lives through transitional health care, readjustment counseling services, employment services, vocational rehabilitation; education assistance, and home loan guarantees.



Strategic Goal 2

Ensure a smooth transition for veterans from active military service to civilian life

Purpose and Outcomes:

The purpose of this objective is to provide increased information and access to benefits and services for servicemembers during and prior to their becoming eligible veterans.

Active duty military and reserves are eligible for certain VA benefits. This will continue to have an impact on the type of benefits and services VA provides, particularly in the areas of access and outreach. The ultimate outcome of this objective is a smooth transition from military service to civilian life for every individual being discharged from active military duty.

Strategies and Processes:

VA will provide information and access to benefits at the time service members enter military service. Information about Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) and the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) are provided at entry-on-duty. At various periods during military service, servicemembers are provided additional information related to education benefits and housing assistance benefits administered by VA. A comprehensive Transition Assistance Program (TAP) is provided to servicemembers about to be discharged from military service. In addition, Internet web sites provide information about veterans benefits.

VA will ensure that all TAP presentations, jointly sponsored by VA, DoD, and DoL, include information and assistance for separating service members. VA will assess the quality of information and ensure that program content includes relevant

*Objective 2.1
Ease the reentry of new veterans into civilian life by increasing awareness of, access to, and use of benefits and services during transition*

VA health care and benefit program information and assistance for both men and women departing military service. To ease the reentry of new veterans into civilian life, VA will undertake the following additional strategies:

- VA will provide veterans with easy access to information and the opportunity to interact with VA for benefits and services, at a convenient time and place.
- VA will build or enhance partnerships with the DoD, DoL and other organizations to improve the transition to civilian life.
- VA will inform servicemembers and veterans of the benefits and services to which they may be entitled. VA will enhance outreach to transitioning servicemembers through alliances with other federal agencies and enhance outreach for servicemembers with disabilities and other special groups of individuals transitioning to civilian life.
- VA will provide eligible veterans at risk for psychological trauma from active military duty in combat theaters of operations, and/or from military-related sexual assault, access to clinically effective readjustment counseling that is culturally sensitive and results in positive customer feedback.

VA regional offices are working with military and VA medical center personnel to establish a

presence at major military separation points. VA is currently active at 81 military installations in 32 states. There are 31 out-based claims processing centers staffed by VA personnel (with plans for up to 20 more by the end of 2000) to provide on-site disability determinations, vocational rehabilitation counseling, and assistance with all VA benefits within 30 days of military separation. VA also has plans to support 30 additional sites on an itinerant basis. At many of these locations, military physicians are providing medical

examinations that meet military separation criteria as well as VA disability evaluation criteria.

External Factors:

To ensure a smooth transition from military to civilian life requires the cooperation of external partners such as DoD.

Performance Measures

Objective 2.1 Outcome Measures		FY 2006 Performance Targets
Transition Benefits Briefing Participation --	Percent of veterans separating/retiring who participate in benefits briefing prior to discharge.	85%
Service Delivery Measures		FY 2006 Performance Targets
Vet Centers ó	Percent of veterans using Vet Centers who report being satisfied with services and respond that they would recommend the Vet Center to other veterans	95%



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Purposes, Outcomes and Projections:

The GI Bill of 1944 is often regarded as one of the most significant pieces of legislation in the history of the Nation. This legislation established the precedent for providing educational assistance to veterans of military service. Overall, VA administers six education and training programs for veterans, servicemembers, and reservists, in addition to the vocational rehabilitation and employment program. The Montgomery GI Bill active duty and reserves programs account for over 99 percent of the participants. A small number of veterans participate in four programs that were established between the end of the Vietnam Era GI Bill and enactment of the Montgomery GI Bill.

The purposes and outcomes of the education programs are to:

- Assist in readjustment to civilian life;
- Assist in obtaining affordable higher education;

*Objective 2.2
Assist veterans in readjusting to civilian life by enhancing their ability to achieve educational and career goals*

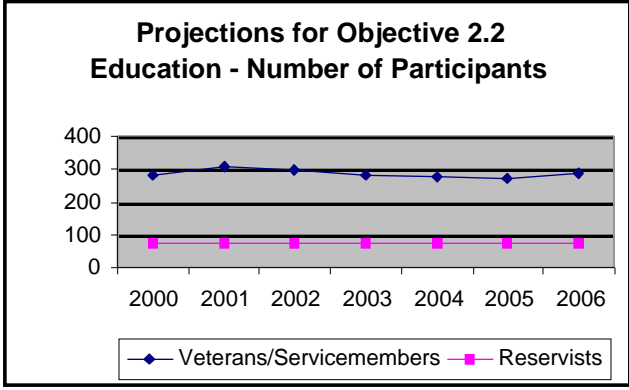
- Provide vocational readjustment and restore lost educational opportunities;
- Assist in the recruitment and retention of active duty personnel and reserves; and
- Enhance the nation's competitiveness through the development of a more highly educated and productive work force.

The number of veterans and active duty military receiving education and training benefits increases early in the planning period and then declines as the number of separations from active service declines slightly. The number of reservists receiving benefits will increase slightly during the period.

Strategies and Processes:

The following is a discussion of issues facing the education programs and VA's strategies and processes to address these issues and achieve this objective.

The primary source population for the education programs is recently discharged veterans or reservists. Although servicemembers may begin to receive education benefits while on active duty, very few do. Over the next ten years, we project the number of separations from active military service to remain fairly constant at approximately 183,000 per year, but declining to about 181,000 by 2010. Nearly all eligible servicemembers participate in the Montgomery GI Bill program. Through FY 1999, nearly 56 percent have used at



least a portion their entitlement. Today's veteran is different from veteran populations under previous GI Bills. More are women and minorities. They are older at the time of separation from active duty and more are likely to be married and have dependents. This suggests that today's education and training needs are different from previous programs.

A recently completed program evaluation of VA education programs found that the current program has continued the success established by the GI Bill of Rights and, in general, meets the intent of the legislation. Compared to those who had not taken advantage of VA education programs, those who participated have lower unemployment rates, higher attainment of career and education goals, and higher earnings. However, the study also showed that the monthly benefits have not kept pace with education costs. Since 1985, the cost of education has increased by 160 percent, but benefits have increased only 79 percent. The current benefit covers about half of the out-of-pocket costs of a typical four-year college education.

The long-term strategies for the education program are to provide the level of services and benefits the veterans need to achieve their goals. VA will :

- Provide veterans with easy access to information and the opportunity to interact with VA for benefits and services, at convenient time and place. Veterans, servicemembers, and educational institutions will have the opportunity to obtain information, apply for benefits and/or interact with VA through the Internet and toll-free telephone service.
- Simplify the administrative rules and regulations governing the application and

eligibility determination process.

- Assess the work processes, organizational structure, performance measures, and related workforce factors to improve operational effectiveness and efficiency. VA will use innovative information management and technologies, as well as partnerships with training institutions, to improve service to veterans.
- Build or enhance partnerships with the Department of Defense, educational institutions, and other organizations to improve delivery of education benefits.
- Provide information about the Montgomery GI Bill at entry on active duty. At various periods during military service, servicepersons are provided additional information related to educational benefits.
- Stakeholder involvement is critical in the determination and development of outcomes for all VA benefit programs. To date, VA has completed program evaluations and developed interim outcomes for the education programs. VA will finalize the program outcomes and develop associated performance measures and targets through further program reviews and consultations with stakeholders.

External Factors:

- Education Costs – Cost of education may continue to increase at current or higher rates.
- Statutory Changes – Benefits levels may not keep pace with education costs; thereby impacting on the program's ability to achieve the outcome "assist in obtaining affordable higher education." As a result,

statutory changes may be required to encourage greater participation by eligible veterans who are currently unable to use their benefits because of personal economic reasons.

- Technology – Emerging technologies are likely to increase the demand for education and training for veterans.
- Recruitment and Retention Variables –

Department of Defense recruitment and retention variables are affected by VA's education program.

- Demographics – Changing veteran characteristics and demographics suggest education and training needs are different for new veterans.

Performance Measures

Objective 2.2 Outcome Measures		FY 2006 Performance Targets
Education Program Usage Rate --	MGIB Usage Rate	70%
Service Delivery Measures		FY 2006 Performance Targets
Speed --	Number of days to process original claims	10
	Number of days to process supplemental claims	7
Accuracy --	Payment accuracy rate	97%
Customer Satisfaction --	Percent of high ratings received from customers	95%

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Purposes, Outcomes and Projections:

The purpose VA's Loan Guaranty Program is to help veterans and active duty personnel purchase and retain homes in recognition of their service to the Nation. The outcomes for the Loan Guaranty Program are to:

- Assist veterans and active duty personnel in purchasing a home;
- Assist veterans and active duty personnel who are seriously delinquent on their VA-guaranteed mortgage in retaining their homes; and
- Ensure home ownership for veterans at a rate equal to or higher than the general population;

Home loan origination volume will decline in FY 2000 and 2001 due to a decrease in the number of refinancing loans and then level off for the remainder of the planning period. VA guaranteed over 396,000 loans in FY 1999 and

*Objective 2.3
Improve the ability of veterans to purchase and retain a home through a loan guaranty program*

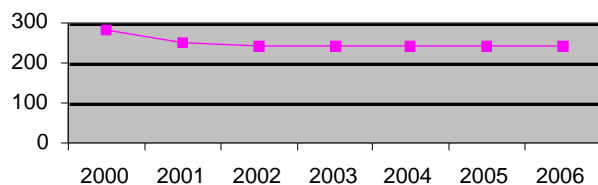
expects to guarantee approximately 240,000 loans in FY 2006.

Strategies and Processes:

VA will implement the following strategies to ensure that veterans receive the assistance they deserve when purchasing a home, have the opportunity to retain their homes, and receive world-class service:

- VA will provide veterans with easy access to information and the opportunity to interact with VA for benefits and services, at a convenient time and place.
- VA will build or enhance crosscutting partnerships with the private lending institutions and other organizations to improve delivery of housing benefits.
- VA will design and implement information systems that integrate with the systems of our lender partners and other key organizations to optimize service delivery of loan guarantee benefits.
- Stakeholder involvement is critical in the determination and development of outcomes for all VA benefit programs. To date, VA has developed outcomes for the Loan Guaranty program and will finalize these program outcomes and develop performance measures and targets through program evaluations, program reviews, and further consultations with our stakeholders.

**Projections for Objective 2.3
Loan Guaranty - Loans Closed**



External Factors:

- **Economy** — A significant downturn in the economy nationwide, or in specific areas

of the country, would have an adverse effect on the ability of veterans to obtain or retain their homes.

Performance Measures

Objective 2.3 Outcome Measures		FY 2006 Performance Targets
Home Purchase ó	Percent of active duty personnel and veterans that could not have purchased a home without VA assistance	80%
Foreclosure Avoidance ó	Foreclosure avoidance through servicing (FATS) ratio	40%
Service Delivery Measures		FY 2006 Performance Targets
Speed ó	Number of days to process eligibility certificates	5
Accuracy ó	Statistical quality control (SQC) index	98%
Customer Satisfaction ó	Veteran satisfaction index Lender satisfaction index	95% 80%