Sprint 0 Product Brief - Travel Reimbursement

[Travel Reimbursement Epic](https://github.com/department-of-veterans-affairs/va-mobile-app/issues/1255)

### **Problem Statement**

Veterans are not able to easily discover, remember, monitor, submit, or track travel claims through fax, mail, kiosk (no longer supported) or BTSSS’ web tool. These challenges come from using a complex system, a complex user experience, and a slow and error prone system.

Difficulties in this process span from Veteran’s to the VA’s staff of Travel Clerks who are involved in manually reviewing travel claim submissions.

### Veteran Pain Points

* **Findability** -Veterans struggle to find BTS3 when they want to file a claim
* **Authentication Issues** -Veterans encounter login and time out issues in BTSSS
* **System Performance** -Veterans encounter errors and slow performance in submitting claims
* **Customer Service** - Veterans are unsure who to contact for help to their problems
* **Lack of Reminders** -Veterans forget to file within 30 days of their appointments as there are no reminder communications sent to Veterans
* **Lack Clarity** -Claims status (16 statuses) are not clear to Veterans after submission and some claim deposits do not have information related to what appointment the funds are for
* **Time to Resolution** -Reimbursements can take months due to claims being flagged for manual review; timing has increased as the # of manual reviews have increased for VA staff
* **Questions the Value** - Experience and perception of the process being too difficult or complex make Veterans wonder if it's worth the effort to file a Travel Claim

**Opportunity and Impact:**

Based on the VA Octo + 18F Path Analysis

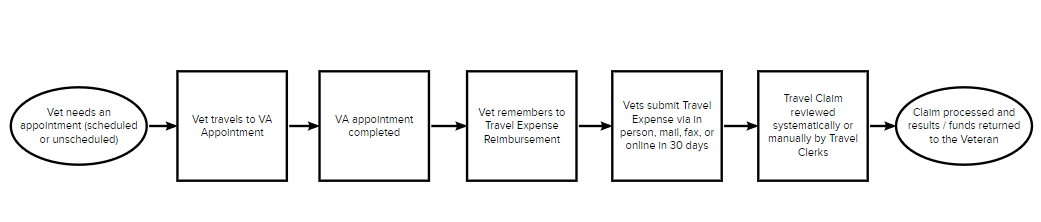
* **The cost of the Beneficiary Travel (BT) program was estimated to be $1B in 2020**
* **Estimated ~11.1MM Travel Claim submissions expected for 2022**
* **Mail / Fax is the preferred method for submitting travel claims** 
  + Mail / Fax accounts for 57% (6.3MM) submissions requires VA staff review
  + Online submissions account for 43% (4.8MM) require manual / system review
* **70% (3.4MM) of online submissions require a manual review by VA staff**
  + 30% (1.4MM) were systematically completed
* **87% of all ~11.1MM travel claims submission in 2022 required manual review taking up to and sometimes longer than 45 days to resolve** 
  + 1.4MM from online submissions + 6.3MM from mail / fax submissions
* **Only 13% of travel claims return funds to the Veteran in 3-5 days**
* **By moving mail / fax submissions to online, we can reduce manual reviews by 30%**
  + Every 100 mail / fax claims moved to online would lead to 30 system resolutions
* **Travel claim submission opportunity is larger than the data shows** 
  + Not all Veterans remember to submit travel claims in 30 days
  + Some Veterans believe Travel Claim submission is not worth it

| **Submission Channels** | **Apr 2022 YTD** | **Est 2022 Annual\*** | **Ratio** | **Review type** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Claims via mail / fax (VistA)** | 2.09MM | 6.3MM | 57% | Only manual |
| **Online claims (BTS3)** | 1.6MM | 4.8MM | 43% | Manual & Systematic |
| **Est total claims submitted** | 3.69MM | 11.1MM |  |  |

| **Online Claims (BTS3)** | **Apr 2022 YTD** | **Est Annual** | **Ratio** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Manual Reviews** | 1.12MM | 3.4MM | 70% |
| **Systematic Resolution** | 0.48MM | 1.4MM | 30% |
| **Est total online claims** | 1.6MM | 4.8MM |  |

| **Total Claim Review Method** | **Apr 2022 YTD** | **Est Annual** | **Ratio** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Manual Review (mail, fax, online)** | 3.21MM | 9.7MM | 87% |
| **Systematic Resolution** | 0.48MM | 1.4MM | 13% |
| **Est total claims submitted** | 3.69MM | 11.1MM |  |

### **Current Experience**



**Steps:**

1. **Veteran needs an appointment**
   1. Scheduled or unscheduled
2. **Vet travels to the VA Appointment**
   1. VA health facility or for VA-approved care at a non-VA health facility
3. **VA Appointment is completed and is checked out** 
   1. Not all appointment types get checked out
4. **Veterans remembers the Travel Reimbursement availability, if eligible**
5. **Veterans submits Travel Reimbursement within 30 days of appointment**
   1. Must have direct deposit set up first via Form 10091
   2. Online using BT3 - a stand alone web application that allows Veterans to submit and manage claims to be paid back for mileage and other travel expenses to and from approved health care appointments, and to manage associated data.
   3. Form 10-3542 - submit in person, fax, or by mail
   4. If appointment is not checked out then online claims will be manually reviewed
   5. If multiple appointments in 1 day, online only allows 1 a day or manually reviewed
6. **Travel claims will be reviewed by the system or by a Travel Clerk**
   1. 30% of web claims claims do not flag any rule violations
      1. Noted that system has falsely flagged claims to be reviewed
7. **Travel claim request is processed and Veteran receives results / funds** 
   1. 13% resolved in 3-5 days; rest taking up to or longer than 45 days
   2. Minus deductible VA has to assess per regulations

**Other important notes on this process:**

* Travel reimbursement may include non-Veterans (caregivers) based on certain requirements
* Not all Veterans are eligible for Travel benefits ; they have to meet [certain criteria to qualify](https://www.va.gov/health-care/get-reimbursed-for-travel-pay/)
* There are also special reimbursement items for approved circumstances

### **Assumptions and Level of Confidence**

1. Travel Claim questions are the same for every Veteran
2. Modification to BTSSS system / errors / performance are out of scope
3. Changes to improve VA staff’s software performance is out of scope
4. Impacted Teams (BTS3, Check In, etc) are interested in coordinating within us
5. Gain knowledge and insight from Check-In experience team’s work on eCheckIn incorporating travel reimbursement MVP
6. No notifications in BTS3
7. Unable to check Veteran’s eligible prior to claim submission
8. Veterans do not clearly understand or are aware of travel reimbursement eligibility
9. Travel Claim has a unique association with an appointment or visit
10. Veterans will find value in being able to submit travel claims via the mobile app and use it to submit their claims.

### **Risks**

1. Travel Reimbursement report findings may be outdated
2. Increasing awareness & communication may lead to increases in calls, claims, cost etc
3. Overlapping work or rework of what the Check-In experience team has been doing since Q3’22.
4. As of Sept 2022, BTS3 API was deemed a proof of concept, not used by anyone, and is not super fast - increases risk in performance, usage, functionality limitations
5. Travel claim may turn into any other claim in the system
6. Limited number of BTS3 licenses to access BTS3 API, makes us more reliant on API team to review / get info

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### **Business Goals**

Deliver a seamless and positive experience for any Veteran who needs to submit or manage travel claims via the mobile app while aligning to OCTOC’s Objectives and Mobile Flagship OKRs.

**Possible solutions:**

These are not prescriptive solutions, only some possibilities on what could be done to reduce some of the identified pain points within our realm of Assumptions.

| **Possibility** | **Description** | **Ext team** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Travel Claim Submission | Enable Veterans to submit travel claims through mobile UX using BTS3 APIs.  Learn from the Check-In team’s work. | Yes |
| Informational Section | Enable Veterans to find info on Travel Claim reimbursement in the mobile app. Information exists already on Va.Gov - Link to online submission, customer service, faqs, etc. Drive Veterans to the BTS3 site for online submissions. | No |
| Notifications | Proactively remind Veterans to submit a travel claim and provide updates / transparency into the process | Yes |
| Claims Tracker / Status Check | Enable Veterans to input a claim id and get the latest status / history for improved transparency and awareness of their claims | Yes |
| Claims Enhancement | Enable Veterans to more easily see Travel Claims in Mobile Apps Claim functionality. | Yes |
| Add Claim Info to Appointments | Enable Veterans to see travel claim info/indicator on an Appointment | Yes |
| Storage place for receipts / docs | Ability to store receipts and documents for future reference for claims | Yes |

### **Measuring success**

* Increase the number of online submissions to BTSSS / reduce manual submissions
* Improve Veteran visibility and findability of Travel Pay Reimbursements
* Improve Veteran communications and transparency
* Reduction of manual claim reviews by VA Travel Clerks

### **Assumed Stakeholders**

* VA Business Partners:
  + BTSSS team
    - Chester Peyton
    - Daryl Richardson
    - Ben Willaims
* Key BTSSS Team Members
  + Michelle Ortiz (BTSSS PM, BAH)
  + Abi Bruce, (Claims API PM, BAH)
  + Lesley Brown (Lead Engineer for Claims API and BTSSS System, BAH)
* Key Check-In Team Members
  + Lori Pusey (Product Manager)
  + Sarah Knopp (Delivery Manager)
  + Ben Brasso (UX Research)
  + Zack Park, Ya-Ching Tsao, Kelly Smith (UX/UI Design)
  + Gaurav Gupta (BE Engineer)
  + Adrian Rollett (FE Engineer)
* VistA - needed for testing

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### **Important Links**

* [VHA’s Beneficiary’s Travel Video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=49jWVWMj7bw)
* [VA.com travel reimbursement page](https://www.va.gov/health-care/get-reimbursed-for-travel-pay/)
* [VHA’s Beneficiary’s BTSSS Intro Video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7lNUiyQT4gM) 1 through 6
* [VA OCTO + 18F Beneficiary Travel Self-Service System Path Analysis](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VbouEQdj6ZlXFywaTrkypujv3f4qUBQJYDGNe4caFtM/edit)
* [Check In Team’s Travel Reimbursement Discovery](https://github.com/department-of-veterans-affairs/va.gov-team/tree/master/products/health-care/checkin/discovery/travel-reimbursement)

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### General Questions:

* Do Travel Reimbursement Claims appear in the VA Health and Benefits App filter claims we display?
  + We suspect so but do not have an example. FE/BE does not do filtering so what we are sent we display.
* What is the Check-In team doing with Travel Reimbursement?
  + They are testing a MVP involving Check In and Travel Reimbursement. TR is only encompassing certain expenses and situations. Displaying a claim number at check in
* Wheres does the BTS3 system end and VistA system begin?

### Data Questions:

* What is the total number of Travel Reimbursement claims for 2022?
* What is the maximum amount of appointments that were eligible for Travel Reimbursement in 2022?
* What is the total number of Veteran’s eligible for Travel Reimbursement in 2022?
* What is the total number of VA Health and Benefit App users that are currently eligible for Travel Reimbursement?
* What percentage of travel reimbursements are for miles, parking, tolls, auth lodge, auth meal, air travel, common carrier, other
  + Break out in Personal car to drive to appointment, took common carrier, pre-approved for meals/lodging breakout as well
* What percent of challenged mile measurements are overturned
* What percent of travel claims get reimbursed systematically do not have any interrupted claim state
  + 16 claim states
  + Claim Initiation -> Approved for Payment -> Submitted for Payment -> Claim Paid (funds transfer complete - payment in 3-5 business days)
* How many manual reviews were due to the appointment not being checked out?

Timeline:

* Sprint 0 review 1/31/2023
  + Next steps: Meet with Mark Dewey, Steven, Patrick who is currently engaged with Octo and Check In team who is engaged with BTS3

### Travel Pay Road Map

**Objective:** Simple Claim, a round trip claim for a single appointment that a Veteran used their own vehicle to travel to and from.

Version 1

* Claims API that can accept a simple claim
* Integrated experience to submit with inside the Check In app
* Able to know the analytics around
* How many claims are being submitted via the API
* How many of those claims went into manual review vs auto approved

Future Versioning:

* Disclaimer: dependent on feedback and research results
* Text Veteran a link to submit a claim post appointment
* Submit claim after appointment
* Determine how we can handle eligibility and enrollment status to refine workflow
* Submit more complex claim that can help the major of Veterans that do not do the simple claim
* Check claim status from the API for a Veteran based on ICN / Appt ID