

Training Managers/Training Coordinator

National Conference Call Minutes

February 23, 2016

2 – 3:20 p.m. Eastern Time

Agenda items:

- Regina Yount – Benefits Assistance Service (BAS) – BAS National Training Curriculum
- James Marx – Education Service – On-the-Job Training for VSRs/RVSRs
- Christy Chesnut – TMS Searching Tips
- Christy Chesnut – Q&A and Pre-Call Activity Wrap-up

Reminders:

This call is recorded and available on the VBA Virtual Schoolhouse. Today's PowerPoint presentations are also available on the Schoolhouse and will be available on the Training Managers Resource Center website calendar shortly.

Presentations:

Regina Yount

Ms. Yount, from Benefits Assistance Service, spoke about the National Training Curriculum for BAS. Highlights included:

Regina reviewed the training page on the BAS website, located at <http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/BAS/quality-training/training/index.asp>

The training page contains all of the BAS training information for the Public Contact Team as well as the National Call Center, National Pension Call Center, and the National IRIS Response Center.

- Helpful information on the page includes:
 - The Knowledge Management (KM) area includes a link for a video demonstration on using the KM system. Regina stressed the importance of having the Public Contact Team become very familiar with use of the KM system.
 - The BAS Video area includes several training videos produced by BAS that are available through VBA's YouTube channel.
- Public Contact Training:
 - The Public Contact training page can be located in the Training Curriculum area and lists all instructor-led courses for the position.
 - All courses include a link to the training item in TMS.
 - Courses that have already been held include links to applicable materials and a video recording of the live training session.

- Links to upcoming training sessions are not distributed via email; instead, they are embedded within the webpage, along with the schedule for each training session as it becomes available.
- Regina attached a list of courses that will be facilitated by BAS this fiscal year. The attachment is available on the VBA Virtual Schoolhouse.
- Each month an email with upcoming training dates and times is sent to OFO for distribution to each of the regions.
- BAS is committed to facilitating all instructor-led training for Public Contact employees before the end of the fiscal year. If stations would like to conduct the training locally, please reach out to BAS for assistance in gathering any necessary materials.
- The Public Contact Curriculum (VBA-396) is for all members of the Public Contact Team including Outreach Staff. The Outreach Staff Curriculum (VBA-423) is targeted for the BAS Outreach Staff and is not required by the Outreach Staff at the local ROs.

Question: *Do the TMS items have content or level one surveys, specifically those without a recording?*

Response: Currently the TMS item only includes a level one survey for credit.

Question: *Has the BAS FY16 curriculum been updated to include these items, and have old items been removed from the curriculum?*

Response: Regina believes the curriculum is current for FY16 and will address any specific concerns directly with Julie Murphy.

Concern: *I have found that 'The Face Behind the File' items on the curriculum go straight to self-certification, except the Prisoner of War item, which was deactivated.*

Response: Regina is aware there have been problems with these items and will look into it further.

Question: *When will the NFED courses be assigned?*

Response: The NFED items are included in the curriculum so they should appear on the To-Do Lists when the curriculum is assigned. Several training managers indicated problems with the FY16 curriculum not matching the curriculum in TMS. Christy Chesnut will have the Curriculum Support Team look into this problem.

Question: *What training is available for Intake Specialists?*

Response: Currently intake specialists are working in a claims processing capacity. Regina recommended assessing the individual's duties and reaching out to Comp Service for appropriate training items.

Question: *What training is available for Legal Administrative Specialist?*

Response: As part of the Public Contact Team they should be assigned the VBA-396 curriculum.

Question: *What quarterly training reports do you run on the Public Contact team?*

Response: BAS runs a learning hours report based on the curriculum each quarter.

Question: *Last week the outreach reporting tool video had problems. Is this now corrected for the PCT staff to review?*

Response: Regina will take that back for the Outreach Team to address.

In closing, Regina asked the training managers to continue communicating their ideas to improve training in the upcoming fiscal year. One idea brought forth, which is in the early stages of discussion, is the development of a training curriculum for PCT new hires.

James Marx

Mr. Marx is the Lead Education Liaison Representative for Education Service. Mr. Marx spoke about the On the Job Training (OJT) program available for VSRs and RVSRs. Highlights included:

- Mr. Marx presented slides outlining the program and the forms required to implement it:
 - The OJT program is an alternate way for Veterans to use their VA education benefits to learn a trade or skill while working rather than attending formal classroom instruction.
 - The program helps to supplement the Veteran's income while working in a lower paying training position.
 - The Education Liaison Representatives (ELRs) at the state and national level are available to assist with training certifying officials, assigning facility codes, entering approval in WEAMS, and maintaining approval folders.
 - The Certifying Official (SCO) will be the point of contact for the VA Education Processor, ensure close supervision of the trainee, ensure records are maintained, and report number of hours worked in the program.
 - The required forms for the program are uploaded on the VBA Virtual Schoolhouse and available on <http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/>
 - Both the VSR and RVSR programs are certified for 24 months (4,000 hours).
 - There are OJT training plans for both the VSR and RVSR position available on Compensation Service's website at http://cptraining.vba.va.gov/C&P_Training/Trng_Plans/

Question: *Can a person hired as a VSR or RVSR go through the program and get their regular salary from VA and still get paid from OJT?*

Response: Yes, if they have VA education benefits.

Question: *Is there a limit on the number of hours the trainee can work?*

Response: No, however, only 120 hours per month will be credited to OJT. Only regular work hours are reported. OJT hours should not include sick leave, vacation, or overtime.

Question: *Where can I find information about the OJT program?*

Response: Information on the OJT program is included in the GI Bill. You can also talk to your ELR. The forms are also located on the Education Service Intranet.

Question: *How do you find your ELR?*

Response: Go to the GI Bill website, click on school resources, click on Find Your ELR, and then click on your state, and your ELR will be listed. You can also contact the VA Education hotline for SCOs at 1-855-225-1159.

Question: *Where do the candidates for the OJT program come from?*

Response: If a Veteran who qualifies for VA education benefits is hired, he or she can submit an application for the OJT program.

Question: *Are training managers responsible for ensuring that new hire Veterans are aware of this benefit?*

Response: James could not say specifically how HR handles briefings on Veterans benefits. Some TMs offered that their RO covers OJT during new employee orientation.

Question: *Do they count as an FTE?*

Response: Yes, they are a regular full-time employee, brought on through normal hiring practices. OJT is just an additional benefit offered to eligible Veteran hires.

Question: *Can employees submit their monthly certification hours online?*

Response: No. The hours must be submitted by the certifying official on the appropriate form.

Question: *Is the Public Contact position approved for OJT?*

Response: Currently the only nationally approved VBA positions are VSR and RVSR. You can contact the ELR for your state to inquire about other positions that are approved on the state level.

Christy Chesnut

Ms. Chesnut of the VBA Curriculum Support Team gave a brief overview and demonstration of TMS searching tips. Highlights included:

- Useful resources for locating training items:
 - VBA Learning Catalog
 - VALU Course Catalog
 - SkillSoft Course Catalogs on VALU site
- TMS Searching Tips:
 - Use “contains” for item title searches
 - Mark “Has Online Content” box
 - Add parameters to the further narrow search (e.g., Delivery Method)
- Additional suggestions from TMs included narrowing the search by:
 - Item type, such as VA
 - Domain, such as VBA

Question: *How do we know if training in TMS developed by other domains is applicable or approved for use by VBA?*

Response: Christy suggested the TMs screen the content by self-assigning and previewing the course.

Question: *Can credit be given for learning in Books 24/7?*

Response: Yes. For example, a local item can be created with a content link to Books 24/7, and hours can be assigned with a self-certification.

Andreana (Dre) Bertani

Ms. Bertani is a training specialist with EDT’s Training Management Division (TMD). Dre spoke briefly about the upcoming TM symposium:

- The save-the-date email for the symposium on May 16-20, 2016 went out on 2/22/16. If there are any TMs who did not receive the email, please contact Dre. If you will not be able to attend but will send a representative from your RO in your place, please pass that information to Dre so the employee can be added to the participant list.

Pre-Call Activity Wrap-up:

Christy Chesnut

Christy recapped the two questions posted during the pre-call activity.

1. You decide to check up on employee training compliance, so you run a report that returns the curriculum assigned to each user and their curriculum status. What report did you run?

Answer: Curriculum Item Status Report.

2. An employee asks you for help locating an Excel course. Which of the following location is the **best** place to start your search?

Answer: SkillSoft Course Catalog.

Christy closed by asking the TMs to continue reaching out to her and Dre with topics for upcoming calls and to consider giving a presentation in order to share their experience and expertise with the group.

**The next TM/TC National Conference Call is March 22, 2016
2 – 3 p.m. Eastern Time**