

VA MISSION Act of 2018: Section 505 – Personnel Transparency Quarter Ending June 30, 2019

Executive Summary

August 22, 2019

With approximately 386,000 employees onboard as of June 30, 2019, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) remains the second largest Federal Agency in the United States. Under section 505(a) of the VA Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks Act of 2018 (VA MISSION Act) (Public Law 115-182), the VA Secretary shall make publicly available on a quarterly basis information pertaining to “VA Personnel Transparency.” This information shall include the number of personnel encumbering positions, the number of accessions and separation actions processed during the prior quarter, the number of vacancies, and the percentage of new hires hired within the time-to-hire target of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

In the 3rd quarter of Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 (i.e. the quarter ending June 30, 2019), VA’s talent acquisition strategies resulted in a net increase of 3,765 onboard⁽¹⁾ strength since the 2nd quarter FY 2019 MISSION Act Personnel Transparency report, while maintaining turnover and vacancy rates below industry standards. **VA’s approximate 9% turnover rate compares favorably with other large Cabinet-level agencies, which averaged 11% turnover in recent years.**⁽²⁾

The 3rd Quarter FY 2019 VA Personnel Transparency report shows the following:

- **VA** reports 385,761 total onboard employees (i.e., personnel encumbering positions); 10,379 accession actions and 7,578 separation actions; and a total of 49,127 vacant Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)⁽³⁾. 58% of all new hires were hired within the OPM time-to-hire target of 80 calendar days. Total onboards increased by 3,765 during 3rd quarter, and vacancies decreased by 1,074.
 - **VHA** reports 346,166 total onboard employees; 9,321 accession actions and 6,836 separation actions; and a total of 43,031 vacant FTEs. 57% of all new hires were hired within the OPM time-to-hire target of 80 calendar days. Total onboards increased by 3,255 during 3rd quarter, and vacancies decreased by 1,382. VHA accounts for approximately 90% of positions in the VA.
 - **VBA** reports 23,569 total onboard employees; 476 accession actions and 454 separation actions; and a total of 2,425 vacant FTEs. 67% of all new hires were hired within the OPM time-to-hire target of 80 calendar days. Total onboards increased by 108 during 3rd quarter, and vacancies increased by 125.
 - **NCA** reports 2,038 total onboard employees; 98 accession actions and 62 separation actions; and a total of 157 vacant FTEs. 81% of all new of all new hires were hired within the OPM time-to-hire target of 80 calendar days. Total onboards increased by 46 during 3rd quarter, and vacancies decreased by 4.
 - **Staff Offices** report 13,988 total onboard employees; 484 accession actions and 226 separation actions; and a total of 3,514 vacant FTEs. 65% of all new hires were hired within the OPM time-to-hire target of 80 calendar days. Total onboards increased by 356 during 3rd quarter, and vacancies decreased by 179.

Several enhancements were made to the VA Personnel Transparency report for 3rd quarter in cooperation with the Office of Inspector General (OIG) review and recommendations set forth in a report dated June 25, 2019. Specifically, the vacancy data are now being reported down to the 4-digit occupational series (e.g., 0610 Nurse) as opposed to the occupation family data previously reported (e.g., 0600 Medical and Dental). In addition, the accession and separation data are now being reported for the quarter of the report rather than cumulatively for the fiscal year up to and including the reporting period quarter to allow for quarter to quarter comparisons. Also, historical staffing and vacancy data are available on VA's Web site at <https://www.va.gov/employee/va-mission-act-section-505-data/>.

Further, VHA implemented an aggressive action plan to address recent increases in the position inventory and to ensure that vacant position data are an accurate reflection of authorized and budgeted positions approved for recruitment. VA is committed to accurate position management together with efficient staffing to fill vacancies and increase the size of the workforce to meet Veteran demand for healthcare, benefits, and memorial services.

How do I interpret the data?⁽⁴⁾

Onboards

Onboards (i.e., the number of personnel encumbering positions) are the number of employees (i.e., headcount) onboard at the time the data are reported. Note that "onboards" differ from "FTE," which is a budgetary term based on compensable hours as opposed to headcount.

Accessions (Hiring) and Separations

Accessions are personnel actions that result in the addition of an employee to an agency's staff (i.e., transfers-in from another agency, and new hires to the Federal government) and generally lead to onboards. Separations are personnel actions resulting in the loss of an employee from the agency's staff (i.e., transfers-out, quits, retirements, terminations or removals, death, and other separations).

Vacancies

Unencumbered positions with a valid workload requirement that are budgeted and approved by a resources board.

Time-To-Hire

OPM's 80 calendar day time-to-hire target is used for positions filled through a Job Opportunity Announcement (JOA) posted to USAJobs. The count begins when a hiring need is validated and ends with the employee's actual start date.

Applying for a position at VA

The Section 505(b) MISSION Act Annual Report (June 2019) identifies the steps VA is taking to achieve full staffing capacity. VA is continuously recruiting for committed professionals who are dedicated to serving our Nation's Veterans. Employment at VA provides a competitive salary and benefits package and a strong work/life balance. Above all else, the highest honor in working at VA is the opportunity to serve the brave men and women who have served our

Nation. Additional information regarding careers at VA can be found at <https://www.vacareers.va.gov/>.

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1. Onboard is the number of employees in a pay status at the end of a quarter (the head count by a particular date including full-time, part-time, and seasonal employees).
 2. OPM Fedscope data retrieved in July 2018 <https://www.fedscope.opm.gov/index.asp>
 3. Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) is the total number of regular straight-time hours worked by employees divided by the number of compensable hours applicable to each fiscal year. OMB A-11 Circular §85.5(c)
 4. Onboards, accessions, separations and vacancies exclude trainees, medical residents, intermittent, non-pay status, OIG, and Veterans Canteen Service employees.
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