

February VDC Educational Webinar

February 23, 2022

Menti Poll

- Go to www.menti.com and enter code: **6061 7436**

What state are you joining us from?



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Victoria Wright, Program
Officer for Veteran Directed
Care and Inclusive
Transportation Programs

Agenda

- Welcome and Announcements from the Administration for Community Living (ACL)**
- Announcements from the Veteran's Health Administration**
- Focused topic discussion: VDC Workers**
 - Overview**
 - Background Checks**
 - Identifying Personal Care Workers**
 - Supporting Veterans with Interviewing and Training Employees**
- Open Question and Answer (Q&A)**
- Closing**

Announcements from VHA Regarding VDC



Daniel Schoeps,
Director, VA Purchased
Long-Term Services and
Supports

VDC Workers: Roles and Responsibilities for Veterans and Person-Centered Counselors

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What challenges do you encounter with supporting Veterans as they are hiring their workers?



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VDC Workers: Role of VDC Provider

- Veterans are responsible for fulfilling employer requirements, with support from PCCs. This includes:
 - ▶ Identifying and Recruiting personal care workers;
 - ▶ Interviewing potential candidates;
 - ▶ Hiring;
 - ▶ Training;
 - ▶ Supervising their workers, including family or friends; and
 - ▶ Discharging their workers, as necessary.
- Additionally, the VDC provider:
 - ▶ Supports the Veteran with understanding their employer responsibilities as a VDC program participant.
 - ▶ Facilitates a person-centered assessment to develop a Veteran's spending plan which includes information on the workers hired by the Veteran.
- Included in the Veteran's Spending Plan is an individualized emergency back-up plan that assures services are delivered if a worker is unable to report for work for any reason (reference the [VDC Billing and Invoicing Guide](#) for additional information on the Veteran's Spending Plan.

Guidance for Initiating Services

- Initiating Services:

- ▶ Prior to using their flexible VDC, 365-day, case-mix budget authorization, the VAMC VDC Program Coordinator approves the VDC spending plan.
 - ❑ The VDC spending plan provides an in-depth breakdown of the Veteran spending in VDC.
 - ❑ A VDC Spending Plan Template is listed on the ACL NWD VDC website: <https://nwd.acl.gov/vdc.html>.
- ▶ Once the VDC spending plan is approved, the Veteran is responsible for coordinating and organizing the services, supports, and goods needed, and the worker(s) and/or vendors who will provide them with assistance.
- ▶ The Veteran is also responsible for establishing their worker's work schedule, providing worker training as needed, managing the day-to-day activities of their worker, and discharging their workers as necessary.

Guidance for Hiring Workers

- Hiring Workers:

- ▶ The Veteran is responsible for recruiting and interviewing staff, with support from the PCC, as desired by the Veteran. The Veteran hires employees who are legally eligible to work in the United States and may not be the Veteran's representative.
- ▶ Costs for recruiting and hiring employees can be included in the Veteran's VDC spending plan.
- ▶ The VDC provider specifies any additional hiring requirements, as dictated by state policy.
- ▶ Veterans as employers have the right to determine and establish hourly rates within the funds available in their spending plan.
 - ❑ Hourly rates cannot impact the Veteran's ability to use their VDC budget to meet their personal care needs.

Guidance for Use of Agency Services and Recruitment of Personal Care Workers

Guidance for Using Home Care Agency Services

- Aside from a few exceptions, Veterans enrolled in VDC cannot not use home care agencies for personal care services.
- Veterans enrolled in VDC may purchase personal care services from home care agencies for 90 days after enrollment, if necessary, or for planned or emergency respite.
- Veterans who prefer to use home care agencies should use VA's H/HHA Program which is available to Veterans at all VAMCs.

Guidance for Using Home Care Agency Services; Exceptions

- Limited exceptions when VAMCs may allow a Veteran in VDC to use agency services:
 - ▶ Veteran's overall need for personal care services is best met through a self-directed model of home care;
 - ▶ PCC assisted the Veteran in identifying candidates (either through existing worker registries or by other means such as preparing and issuing job postings) and *all attempts have been unsuccessful*; and
 - ▶ Veteran's use of agency services is a limited amount of the Veteran's overall monthly spending while most personal care services are provided by direct employees of the Veteran, or the Veteran's needs or geographic location require the use of a private home care agency. The VDC provider will consult with VA Central Office's (VACO) Geriatrics and Extended Care (GEC) prior to authorizing the use of traditional agency care due to the Veteran's needs or geographic location in VDC.
- VAMCs permit such exceptions only in the rare circumstances described above.

Supporting Veterans with non-Family Informal Supports

- Family members, close friends, and neighbors provide an immediate source of potential employment for Veterans in VDC.
- However, individuals without close informal supports can also thrive in self-directed programs.
- Can we think of examples where Veterans thrived in a self-directed model even though they didn't have informal support in the community?

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What strategies do you use to help Veterans identify non-family workers they could hire to provide personal care services?



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VDC Background Checks

Susan Flanagan, Westchester Consulting Group

VDC Background Checks

- The VDC provider specifies the requirements and policies and procedures for conducting background checks for Veterans' workers, which include:
 - ▶ Process and guidelines for conducting background checks of workers;
 - ▶ Having the worker candidate sign a release of information for sharing the results with the Veteran, if necessary;
 - ▶ Policy and procedures for discussing findings with the Veteran; and
 - ▶ Process for developing a risk mitigation strategy to address any findings from the background check that are of concern but not an automatic disqualifying event.
- How background checks are conducted can vary by state and VDC provider.
 - ▶ Usually the VF/EA FMS conducts the background checks on behalf of the employer and provides the information obtained from the check to the VDC provider and employer.

VDC Background Checks – Types

- State Level Background Check
 - ▶ Most common, however, if a worker has an issue that occurred outside of the state, the state level check will not pick up that event.
- Federal Fingerprint Background Check
 - ▶ More comprehensive and covers all the United States, no matter where an event might take place.
 - ▶ It is recommended that this check be run if a worker has not lived in the state where they will work for at least five years.
- National Sex Offenders System
- Registries
 - ▶ Nurse Aide
 - ▶ Adult and Child Abuse
- State OIG Excluded Parties
 - ❑ VF/EA FMS entities can check based on what exists and required in a state.

VDC Background Checks – Costs

- The cost of background checks varies by type and state.
- The cost of background checks are paid for in a number of ways:
 - ▶ Paid for out of the Veteran’s budget (preferred way)
 - ❑ The VDC provider must discuss the cost of the background check with the Veteran and include it in the Veteran’s Spending Plan.
 - ▶ Paid for by the VDC provider
 - ❑ The VDC provider absorbs the cost of the background check.
 - ❑ The VDC provider pays for the background checks through the monthly VF/EA FMS fee.

VDC Background Checks – Disqualifying Events

- What events are considered disqualifying events for hiring a worker and the length of time they are in place can vary by state.
- Major disqualifying events include:
 - ▶ Abuse;
 - ▶ Neglect; and
 - ▶ Exploitation of a person of any age.
- A worker cannot be hired if one of these disqualifying events are identified during a background check.

VDC State Example – Disqualifying Events

- Example: Alabama

- ▶ The following criminal activities will permanently disqualify a worker candidate from employment:
 - ❑ Convictions or pending charges for any crime of violence;
 - ❑ Any felony convictions; and
 - ❑ Any pending felony arrests.
- ▶ The following are events and specific times that a criminal conviction is active in Alabama:
 - ❑ Reckless endangerment in the past 5 years;
 - ❑ Stalking in the second degree in the past 5 years;
 - ❑ Criminal trespass in the first degree in the past 5 years;
 - ❑ Violating a protective order in the past 3 years;
 - ❑ Unlawful contact in the first degree in the past 3 years;
 - ❑ Criminal mischief in the first degree in the past 7 years; and
 - ❑ Unlawful contact in the second degree in the past year.

VDC Background Checks – Results and Next Steps

- Results from the background checks are reported to the VA VDC Program Manager and the Veteran is told if their worker has passed or not
 - ▶ If the worker does not pass, the VA VDC Coordinator may be informed and a discussion occurs with the Veteran/representative-employer.
 - ▶ If the results show other events that are not disqualifying but present a concern for Veteran health and safety, the PCC discusses them with the Veteran/representative-employer.
 - ❑ If the Veteran insists on the hire, the Veteran often is required to sign an Informed Risk Agreement or Waiver.
 - ❑ It is recommended that the Veteran develop a Risk Management Plan related to the hire with their VDC provider.
 - ❑ This plan should be monitored multiple times during the year (i.e., during onside visits with the Veteran) and updated, as appropriate, while the worker is employed by the Veteran.

VDC Provider Best Practice



- **Multnomah County Aging and Disability Resource Connection:**
 - Identifying Personal Care Workers
 - Supporting Veterans with Training and Interviewing Employees



How To Support Your Veteran with Hiring Workers for VDC

Lynn Schemmer-Valleau
VDC Program Manager

Monique Jimenez
VDC Service Coordinator

Multnomah County
Aging, Disability & Veterans Services
Portland, Oregon

Things To Consider



Veteran's Preference:

- * Non-smoker/smoker
- * Gender (avoid asking)
- * Has a vehicle/can drive
- * Special trainings/certifications
- * Vaccinated
- * Allergies/sensitivities (perfume)
- * Schedule (what time works best/split shift)

Tasks for the Veteran or Director to do in Preparation of Hiring a Worker

- Create a task list (duties) based on the Veteran's assessment (ADL's).
- Consider how long each task will take in order to develop an estimate of hours needed to provide care.
- Consider the budget/wage and what tasks are most important.
 - What is the market rate in the Veteran's community for a caregiver/home care worker?
- Write a brief job description.
- Prepare interview questions (phone interview/in-person interview).
- Ask for references.



Ideas on How to Find a Good Candidate

- Home Care Worker registry
- Craigslist (be careful with posting personal address and phone #)
- Facebook marketplace
- Care.com
- Nursing Students: community colleges/universities career centers
- Word of mouth- caregivers that worked with veterans that have passed
- Consider back-up worker- neighbors, family members, friends, church family



Interview and Selection Process

- Telephone screening (meeting basic needs)
- Face to face interviews
- Avoid asking questions that may be seen as discriminatory
- Ask for certificates from trainings or credentials
- Request references
- Trust your gut (trial period?)
- Once selection is made review job duties, hours and wage



When the New Worker Starts- How to Have it Be a Success

- Set clear expectations
- Use the task list to guide their work
- Allow time to let them get to know the Veteran
- Provide clear and reasonable expectations for household preferences
- Allow time for questions and their suggestions
- Keep good records of their start time/end time so there are no surprises when you review time entry
- Leave some time to check in after a few weeks
- Communication
- Don't micromanage



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Please share examples of how your VDC program helps Veterans recruit employees.



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Questions? Comments?



Closing

- **Post-event Survey:** <https://www.research.net/r/JPLQTYD>
- **ACL Technical Assistance (TA)-Community:** Continue the conversation using the discussion board located in the VDC Community on the [ACL TA-Community!](#)
- **VDC Monthly Reporting Tool Data Entry:**
<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/9bff196f995e4ddd82aa0fd246ae0501>
- Please email the VDC Technical Assistance Team with any questions: veterandirected@acl.hhs.gov