"Requirements for Recognition as a VA Accredited Organization"

OMB 2900-0850

Summary of Changes from Previously Approved Collection

- In response to a comment received during the 60-day comment period, VA is increasing the estimated annual burden from 50 hours to 250 hours and the estimated average burden per respondent from 5 hours to 25 hours. There are no other key changes from the previously approved collection.

A. Justification

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection of information.

For an organization to assist Veterans or their survivors with their claims for benefits, the organization must be recognized by VA for that purpose. Section 5902(a) of title 38, United States Code, authorizes VA to recognize organizations for the limited purpose of ensuring competent representation of veterans in claims for benefits administered by VA. VA implemented this authority in 38 C.F.R. § 14.628. An organization must apply for VA recognition, supplying information as specified in section 14.628 to demonstrate that it satisfies the legal requirements for recognition. (Organizations may provide services to veterans without VA recognition if the services do not include the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims for VA benefits.) For an organization to request VA recognition, the director or leader of the organization should submit a letter to the Secretary of VA through the Office of General Counsel. The letter should address all the requirements laid out in 38 C.F.R. § 14.628 and include documentation to support the request.

Pursuant to § 14.628(d), an organization requesting recognition must have as a primary purpose serving veterans. In establishing that it meets this requirement, an organization requesting recognition shall submit a statement establishing the purpose of the organization and that veterans would benefit by recognition of the organization. The organization must also demonstrate a substantial service commitment to veterans either by showing a sizable organizational membership or by showing performance of veterans' services to a sizable number of veterans. In establishing that it meets this requirement, an organization requesting recognition shall submit: the number of members and number of posts, chapters, or offices and their addresses; a copy of the articles of incorporation, constitution, charter, and bylaws of the organization, as appropriate; a description of the services performed or to be performed in connection with programs administered by VA, with an approximation of the number of veterans, survivors, and dependents served or to be served by the organization in each type of service designated; and a description of the type of services, if any, performed in connection with other Federal and State programs which are designed to assist former Armed Forces personnel and their dependents, with an approximation of the number of veterans, survivors, and dependents served by the organization under each program designated.

An organization requesting recognition must commit a significant portion of its assets to veterans' services and have adequate funding to properly perform those services. In

establishing that it meets this requirement, an organization requesting recognition shall submit: a copy of the last financial statement of the organization indicating the amount of funds allocated for conducting particular veterans' services (VA may, in cases where it deems necessary, require an audited financial statement); and a statement indicating that use of the organization's funding is not subject to limitations imposed under any Federal grant or law which would prevent it from representing claimants before VA.

An organization requesting recognition must maintain a policy and capability of providing complete claims service to each claimant requesting representation or give written notice of any limitation in its claims service with advice concerning the availability of alternative sources of claims service. In establishing that it meets this requirement, an organization requesting recognition shall submit evidence of its capability to represent claimants before VA regional offices and before the Board of Veterans' Appeals. If an organization does not intend to represent claimants before the Board of Veterans' Appeals, the organization shall submit evidence of an association or agreement with a recognized service organization for the purpose of representation before the Board of Veterans' Appeals, or the proposed method of informing claimants of the limitations in service that can be provided, with advice concerning the availability of alternative sources of claims service. If an organization does not intend to represent each claimant requesting assistance, the organization shall submit a statement of its policy concerning the selection of claimants and the proposed method of informing claimants of this policy, with advice concerning the availability of alternative sources of claims service.

An organization requesting recognition must take affirmative action, including training and monitoring of accredited representatives, to ensure proper handling of claims. In establishing that it meets this requirement, an organization requesting recognition shall submit: a statement of the skills, training, and other qualifications of current paid or volunteer staff personnel for handling veterans' claims; and a plan for recruiting and training qualified claim representatives, including the number of hours of formal classroom instruction, the subjects to be taught, the period of on-the-job training, a schedule or timetable for training, the projected number of trainees for the first year, and the name(s) and qualifications of the individual(s) primarily responsible for the training.

In addition, the organization requesting recognition shall supply: a statement that neither the organization nor its accredited representatives will charge or accept a fee or gratuity for service to a claimant and that the organization will not represent to the public that VA recognition of the organization is for any purpose other than claimant representation; and the names, titles, and addresses of officers and the official(s) authorized to certify representatives.

2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purposes the information is to be used; indicate actual use the agency has made of the information received from current collection.

The information is used by VA in reviewing accreditation applications to determine whether organizations meet the requirements for VA accreditation under § 14.628.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses, and

the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.

Most responses will be by mail, but some may be submitted electronically. The form of submission would not reduce any burden.

4. **Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.**

The information sought is specific to each applying organization. This information is not available publicly.

5. **If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities, describe any methods used to minimize burden.**

VA believes this collection may affect small entities but certifies that any such effect will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities as they are defined in the Regulatory Flexibility Act, 5 U.S.C. 601-612. It does not require any action on the part of any entity but merely provides an opportunity for organizations to become recognized by VA for the purpose of assisting VA claimants in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims for VA benefits.

To evaluate the competency of an organization requesting to become an accredited organization, that organization must state that it meets the requirements in § 14.628(d). To reduce the burden on the organization, VA does allow for the submission to be done electronically, via email. VA encourages applications that are as succinct as possible.

6. **Describe the consequences to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.**

VA relies on this information to ensure that it is accrediting organizations that can provide long-term, competent representation to VA claimants.

7. **Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted more often than quarterly or require respondents to prepare written responses to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it; submit more than an original and two copies of any document; retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records for more than three years; in connection with a statistical survey that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study and require the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB.**

There is no special circumstance requiring collection in a manner inconsistent with 5 CFR 1320.6 guidelines.

8. **a. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the sponsor's notice, required by 5 CFR**

1320.8(d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the sponsor in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.

A 60-Day Federal Register Notice (FRN) for the collection was published on Friday, July 31, 2026. The 60-Day FRN citation is 91 FR 45508. Five public comments were received during the 60-Day Comment Period. VA's responses to the comments are in the supplemental document attached to this request. In response to one of the comments, VA is increasing the estimated annual burden from 50 hours to 250 hours and the estimated average burden per respondent from 5 hours to 25 hours. A 30-Day Federal Register Notice for the collection published on Thursday, October 22, 2026. The 30-Day FRN citation is 91 FR 66775.

b. Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure or reporting format, and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed or reported. Explain any circumstances which preclude consultation every three years with representatives of those from whom information is to be obtained.

No additional consultation apart from soliciting public comments through the Federal Register was conducted for this submission.

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

No payment or gift has been authorized for respondents.

10. Describe any assurance of privacy, to the extent permitted by law, provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

VA complies with the provisions of 38 U.S.C. § 5701 and the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. § 552a).

Assurances of confidentiality are provided in the systems of records identified as Compensation, Pension, Education and Veteran Readiness and Employment Records—VA, 58VA21/22/28; Veterans Appellate Records System—VA, 44VA01; and Accreditation Records—VA, 01VA022.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature (Information that, with a reasonable degree of medical certainty, is likely to have a serious adverse effect on an individual's mental or physical health if revealed to him or her), such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private; include specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.

None of the information solicited for this collection is of a sensitive nature.

12. Estimate of the hour burden of the collection of information:

Estimate of Information Collection Burden:

a. Number of Respondents: 10 applicants per year.

b. Frequency of Response: This is a one-time collection.

c. Estimated Completion Time: 25 hours.

d. Annual Burden Hours: 250 hours per year.

e. Estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories.: $22,337.50

According to the May 2025 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Wage Code's Average Hourly Earnings, the hourly cost to the respondent is $89.35, making the total cost to a respondent is $2,233.75 (25 burden hours x $89.35 (23-1011) per hour). This is based on occupational code: 23-1011 (Lawyers). https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm. Multiplied by ten respondents, the total cost is $22,337.50.

If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form and aggregate the hour burdens in Item 13 of OMB Form 83-I.

No forms are used for this collection. Respondents will respond in a letter format.

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to respondents or recordkeepers resulting from the collection of information. (Do not include the cost of any hour burden shown in Items 12 and 14).

There are no annualized costs to respondents other than the labor burden costs addressed in Section 12 of this document to complete this collection.

14. Provide estimates of annual cost to the Federal Government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operation expenses (such as equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information. Agencies also may aggregate cost estimates from Items 12, 13, and 14 in a single table.

Total cost to the Federal Government is $42,032.80

10 responses for paralegal review	**X**	$43.67 (GS 11/3) x 12 hours/response	=	$5,240.40

10 responses for staff attorney review	**X**	$78.15 (GS 14/5) x 30 hours/response	=	$23,445.00
10 responses for supervisory review	**X**	$94.49 (GS 15/7) x 12 hours/response	=	$11,338.80
10 responses for additional level of supervisory review	**X**	$100.43 (SES Level 3) x 2 hours/response	=	$2,008.60

Note: The hourly wage information above is based on the hourly 2026 General Schedule (Base) Pay that includes the applicable locality adjustment for the locality pay area of Washington-Baltimore-Arlington, DC-MD-VA-WV-PA (https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/pdf/2026/DCB_h.pdf).

15. Explain the reason for any changes in burden.

In response to one of the comments received during the 60-Day Comment Period, VA is increasing the estimated annual burden in item 12 from 50 hours to 250 hours and the estimated average burden per respondent from 5 hours to 25 hours.

16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.

There are no plans to publish the information collected.

17. **If seeking approval to omit the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.**

Currently, there is no VA form for submitting the requested information. VA understands that should it issue a form in the future the form must display the control number. If VA issues any guidance to the public on how to comply with these requirements, including on its website, VA will list the control number and expiration date.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19, "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions," of OMB 83-I.

This submission does not contain any exceptions to the certification statement.

B. Collection of Information Employing Statistical Methods

This collection of information does not employ statistical methods.