

**Memorandum of Understanding for the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) Competency-Based Training System (CBTS) National Baseline and Full Deployment**

The following constitutes an agreement between the Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) and the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), AFL-CIO National VA Council (NVAC) #53, (Union) regarding the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) Competency-Based Training System at VA Regional and Out-based Offices.


1. The purpose of the VR&E VRC Competency-Based Training System (CBTS) is to allow VRCs to complete a 175 multiple-choice diagnostic assessment and receive tailored, individualized training based on the diagnostic assessment results. These results will not be used for performance evaluation purposes, but for identifying training needs.
2. Employees will have one month to complete the assessment and will receive five (5) hours of Talent Management System (TMS) credit toward their National Training Curriculum (NTC) requirement upon completing this assessment. The assessment and any assigned refresher training will occur on duty time.
3. The assessment is divided into seven small tests, or testlets, that cover the key knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) required of a VRC. Each testlet consists of 25 items. Testlets are not timed, but each testlet will take approximately 35 minutes to complete. Based on the testlet structure, the employee has the option to complete all testlets at once, or complete them over an extended period of time, not to exceed 30 days. If needed, employees may request additional time to complete the testlets. Employee requests will be handled on a case-by-case basis and will be non-punitive.
4. After the completion of the CBTS, VR&E Service will use national proficiency data from the baseline year (the first fiscal year) to identify and assign badges to employees spaced out over the following three fiscal years. Two or three badges will be assigned each year, for three years. Employees will be required to complete the assigned refresher training that is linked to each assigned badge and will receive a badge prior to the end of each fiscal year upon completion of the refresher training.
5. Each year, VR&E Service will identify badges to be assigned to the employee based on the baseline year national proficiency data. Employees will receive all necessary communication and material to learn how to maintain and keep badges. If an employee scores in the advanced range for any or all testlet(s) during the baseline year, the employee will be assigned minimal to no refresher training for the next three years. For an employee who scores in the “intermediate” or

“entry” proficiency range(s) for any or all testlet(s) during the baseline year, the employee will be assigned the refresher training identified to address training needs over the next three years. The CBTS three-year cycle will begin again during the fourth year of its administration. During the fourth year, employees will be assigned and complete all seven CBTS testlets to create a new national baseline and refresher training will be completed throughout the following three years as assigned. Should VBA determine that new badges are to be added or existing badges removed or combined, they will meet its bargaining obligations prior to enacting such changes.

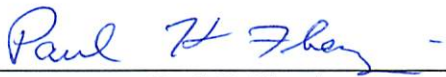
6. It is understood by both parties that these badges will be used only for employee development and to assess training needs. It is also understood that these badges are not to be used as part of evaluating an employee for performance rating purposes. Any changes to the use/purpose of these badges will be presented to the AFGE VBA Midterm Bargaining Team and management will meet its bargaining obligations prior to making any changes to the use/purpose of these badges.
7. In accordance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), special accommodations are available when required. Employees will discuss individual requirements with RO management to determine appropriate accommodations. The Local union will be able to act on behalf of all of its bargaining unit employees, should the need arise.
8. As the assessment is completed, the results will be stored in TMS. The employee will have access to his or her progress and results at any time by logging into TMS and viewing the individualized feedback reports. Management and Training Managers will have access to summary reports that include a range of proficiency scores.
9. Informational materials will be sent to each participating RO and local union prior to the launch of the CBTS to ensure employees are given a full opportunity to complete this training. At each facility where CBTS will be utilized, Management and Labor will meet with the Bargaining Unit to discuss this program and its implementation and plan outcomes.
10. Management will not hold employees accountable for factors or extenuating circumstances that affect performance and are beyond the employee’s control.
11. At the completion of each fiscal year, VR&E Service will provide a briefing to the AFGE VBA Mid-Term Bargaining Committee in order to discuss the results and any recommendations, along with any employee concerns, upon request.
12. After implementation, if either party is made aware of issues that may adversely affect employees, both parties agree to discuss the issues and work to mutually resolve the issues for

the employees. Should discussions not resolve the issues, the parties will implement the negotiating process.

13. Local bargaining may take place at individual facilities and may include substantive bargaining that does not conflict with negotiated national policy and agreements.
14. Management shall provide a copy of this MOU to the local president and/or designee at each AFGE local within 10 days of the date this MOU is signed.

  
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Kevin D. Nelson  
For the Agency

05/02/19  
Date

  
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Paul H. Fleming  
For AFGE/NVAC