

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Benefits Administration

VBA - AFGE Memorandum of Understanding

Employee Transition Issues in the A-76 Study for Property Management

The following constitutes an agreement between the Department of Veterans Affairs and the American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO, National VA Council #53 regarding Employee Transition Issues in the A-76 Study for Property Management.

These proposals concern employee transition issues should the Most Efficient Organization win the A-76 competition for Property Management:

1. During the interim period before the A76 award external recruitment or internal placement of non-PM employees into PM positions should be minimized to reduce the potential that we will have more employees than required by the MEO. Loan Guaranty Service and the Office of Field Operations will continue to work with RO's and the RLC's to manage the workload. The Veterans Benefits Administration will notify the VBA Mid-Term Bargaining team of movement of work affecting more than one local.
2. VBA will reassign the existing PM staff currently working at the Sales Centers to jobs within the MEO at the same grade. Employees will be given an opportunity to indicate a job preference. Wherever possible, their preference will be granted.
3. A. VBA will seek volunteers nationwide from PM and C&V employees for reassignment or change to a lower graded position at the Sales Centers. Management will authorize the payment of relocation expenses to any employees willing to voluntarily relocate. Employees will be permitted to relocate voluntarily to any Sales Center not just the one that will assume their work.

B. At the time V BA seeks volunteers for reassignment, VBA will survey all Property Management employees asking them which Sales Centers they would prefer employ them should directed reassignments become necessary. Completion of the survey does not mean that employee will receive a directed

reassignment.

C. After VBA seeks volunteers for reassignment, VBA will post jobs at the Sales Centers with the bargaining unit being the first area of consideration. VBA will honor the appropriate sections of the Master Agreement concerning expanding the areas of consideration.

4. VBA may authorize the payment of relocation bonuses to any employees willing to voluntarily relocate. When VBA leadership determines the amounts of relocation bonuses that it will be offering PM employees willing to relocate, they will advise the Mid-Term Bargaining Committee on distribution criteria and methodology. AFGE reserves the right to bargain as appropriate.

5. When employees apply for promotions into bargaining unit positions, the principles of Merit Promotion specified in Article 22 of the Master Agreement will apply.

6. When employees volunteer for reassignment or a change to a lower grade, should more employees volunteer than there are positions available, senior qualified employees would be chosen first. Seniority will be defined as time spent in the employment of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

7. Employees who volunteer and are selected for a change to a lower grade at a site in the MEO will receive pay retention in accordance with government wide rules and regulations.

8. Positions based in locations other than the Sales Centers will be posted in accordance with the areas of consideration section of the Master Agreement, Article 22, Section 8.C.

9. Directed reassignments of employees outside of their commuting area shall be avoided when the Department has alternatives. Remotely managed positions in Property Management should be filled through merit promotion.

10. A. Management will seek available alternatives to place as many of the potentially displaced employees in positions within their current facility. Unless the positions are in the professional bargaining unit, Management agrees to waive any qualifications requirements when it can be reasonably determined that the employee is able to perform the duties of the position within the normal time frame that it takes a new employee to complete training and learn the duties of the position.

B. Should displaced PM employees who competed under local Merit Promotion announcements not be selected and no other positions are available within the facility, the following actions will be followed:

- The facility Director will provide copies of the selection certification and listing of candidates to his/her supervisor prior to a final decision effecting the non-selection of a PM employee.
- VBA management will notify the AFGE Mid-Term Bargaining Committee of the number of and locations of any non-selections.
- PM Employees who are not selected will be afforded employment assistance for other federal employment opportunities within the commuting area.

11. Should a facility be unable to reassign all its PM employees to other jobs within the Regional Office, which presently employs them, VBA may seek directed reassignments. Directed reassignments may occur only at the same grade level the employees now possess. As part of the directed reassignment planning process, employees will be asked to indicate their geographic preferences. The employee's request will be honored provided there are positions within the MEO available at the site he or she prefers. If an employee's request or preference cannot be honored, a written notice will be provided to the employee and the VBA AFGE Mid-Term Chairperson.

12. Should employees be subject to directed reassignment, they will receive at least 14 calendar days to decide whether to accept the reassignment. Should they refuse the directed reassignment, the employees will be subject to involuntary separation for failure to accept the reassignment. Should a facility be unable to reassign these employees to other areas of the operation, local management will provide the local president and the affected employees a written explanation of the reasons why.

13. Employees who accept directed reassignments will be notified as soon as possible and will have 60 - 120 days from date of acceptance of directed reassignment to relocate unless extenuating circumstances exist. Additional time may be provided to better coordinate workload transition.

14. Employees receiving directed reassignments outside their commuting area will receive information on relocation benefits

as well as information on the new community. To assist in making a decision employees will also receive full information on entitlements should they decline the reassignment.

15. Should the only positions available for displaced PM employees at a facility be at a lower grade than their present grade, those employees will be given pay retention in accordance with government wide rules and regulations.

16. Should PM employees be unable to relocate and there be no position available for them at their facility, the Department will assist them in outplacement activities. These activities will be conducted onsite and will assist employees in finding both private sector and public sector jobs. VBA will directly assist and/or contract with specialists in career transition. Employees in this situation will be allowed to access personal computers and the internet and use government phones and faxes to perform job search activities. This will occur on duty time. The displaced employees will be able to schedule and participate in job interviews while on duty time. Any employee scheduled to be displaced or displaced will be entitled to the full benefits of the Department of Veterans Affairs and Federal Transition Assistance Programs.

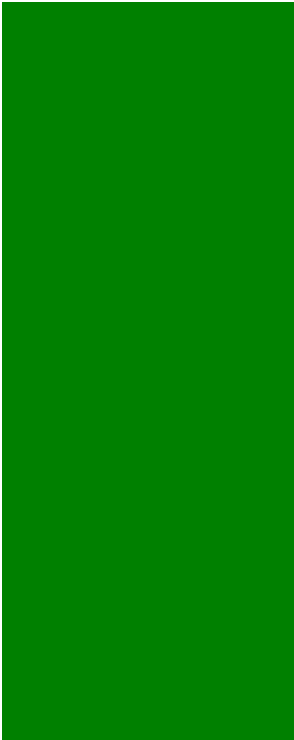
Whether the A-76 competition be awarded to the MEO or the Private Sector:

17. If VBA intends to have a RIF, it will freeze all Property Management vacant positions sixty days prior to the effective date of a reduction in force.

18. Before a RIF begins, VBA will train a national union representative designated by the VBA Mid-Term Bargaining Team and a representative at each of the affected Locals on reduction in force procedures.

19. A national RIF team will be established. This team will identify where there continues to be more PM employees than required by VBA. The team will evaluate local request for RIFs. They will prepare all notifications and requests for approval. This team will also develop a communication plan for keeping impacted employees and stakeholders informed.

20. There will be a national outplacement team to deal with the issues of career transition assistance for employees who are displaced. This outplacement team will use the same strategies and techniques mentioned for employees displaced due to a directed reassignment.



21. Facilities will seek available alternatives to place PM employees into existing vacant positions to minimize the disruptive effects of a RIF. Opportunities for PM employees to change career fields should be encouraged through the use of upward mobility positions and application of saved grade and pay retention provisions. Management and labor are encouraged to work together to implement these solutions.

/S/ Crystal D. Wiggins
For Veterans Benefits Administration
For AFGE NVAC

Date: January 18, 2002

[VA Home Page](#) / [Search](#) / [Site Map](#) / [Facilities Locator](#) / [Disclaimer](#)
[Privacy & Security Statement](#) / [Freedom of Information Act](#) / [Contact the VA](#)

Reviewed/Updated: February 15, 2002