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Chapter 4 SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT

4.01 Introduction

This chapter outlines the guidelines and determinations needed to purchase supplies and equipment for Veterans participating in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Program.

4.02 References and Resources

Regulations: 38 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 21.210 -21.222
38 CFR 21.216
38 CFR 21.219
38 CFR 21.222
38 CFR 21.364

Resources: Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) Handbook 4080,
December 3, 2010

VA Forms (VAF): VAF 28-1905, Authorization and Certification of Entrance or
Reentrance into Rehabilitation and Certification of Status
VAF 28-1905d, Special Report of Training
VAF 28-1905m, Request for Supplies
VAF 28-1905L, Disposition of Supplies (Chapter 31)
VAF 28-8861, Request for Medical Services
VAF 4107, Your Rights to Appeal our Decision

4.03 General Information

Supplies that VA determines are necessary for the Veteran's rehabilitation program are provided to enable a Veteran to pursue rehabilitation and achieve the goals of his/her program. Supplies necessary to accomplish the purposes of a Veteran's rehabilitation program may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Books
- Office supplies (e.g., paper; ink/toner; pens, pencils and markers; binders; tape; envelopes; shredders; anti-glare/anti-radiation screens [VDT]; and ergonomic products)
- Tools
- Consumable goods (e.g., Internet installation and usage; printer paper, toner

or ink cartridges; monitor cleaning fluid or wipes; CD ROM disks; and flash drives.)

- Computer packages (e.g., desk top or lap top computer, power source, memory, monitor, disk drives, video and sound cards, speakers, software, printers, scanners, fax/modems, surge protectors and extended warranties/service plans)
- Other materials or equipment that the Veteran needs to pursue training or achieve an employment or independent living goal

4.04 Policy

a. Determining When Supplies are Needed

VA must provide a Veteran with all the supplies, including consumable supplies that the Veteran needs for a program of rehabilitation services. In accordance with 38 CFR 21.210 through 21.222, VA may authorize supplies which are required only under the following conditions:

1. The supplies are to be used by similarly circumstanced individuals who do not have a disability in the same training or employment.
2. The supplies are to be used to mitigate or compensate for the effects of the Veteran's disability while he/she is being evaluated, trained, or assisted in gaining employment. This includes supplies to lessen a competitive disadvantage with other students or job seekers.
3. The supplies are to be used to allow the Veteran to function more independently and to lessen his/her dependence on others.

The VRC is solely responsible for determining the need for supplies. A facility may not require an item for a particular course but the VRC may determine that the Veteran needs the item to achieve a rehabilitation goal. The VRC may authorize the item if both of the following conditions apply:

- The item is generally owned and used by all students pursuing the course.
- Students who do not have the item would be placed at a distinct disadvantage in pursuing the course.

Example: a Veteran is competing in training or in an employment search with non-Veteran job candidates who are younger and have no disabilities. Many of these other candidates own and use computers to succeed in training and demonstrate job-related computer skills. This Veteran may well need a

computer package to remain competitive. The VRC may decide to purchase a computer package only after carefully analyzing the Veteran's situation and need for the computer package (e.g., the training facility does not have sufficient computer equipment on campus or the Veteran's situation does not allow adequate access to the facility's equipment).

The VRC should also take into consideration whether the Veteran already owns a computer before authorizing purchase of a computer package. There may be situations when a Veteran already owns a computer, but if it is used by others in the household, it may still be necessary to purchase a computer package for the Veteran. However, it may not be necessary to purchase Internet service in this situation if the Veteran already has Internet service provided for the use of his/her entire household. In general, supplies such as a computer package or Internet service should only be purchased when the VRC determines that the purchase is required or deemed necessary to assist the Veteran in completing the objectives of a rehabilitation plan.

The VRC must document the determination of need for supplies on VAF 28-1905d and file in the center portion of the Veteran's Counseling/Evaluation/Rehabilitation (CER) folder, or in Corporate WINRS (CWINRS) notes.

See Appendix O, VA Forms, for information on how to access all forms referenced in this chapter.

b. Authorizing Supplies

A Veteran's case must have been assigned to one of the following case statuses to be eligible to receive supplies:

- Rehabilitation to the Point of Employability
- Extended Evaluation
- Independent Living
- Employment Services

Supplies should generally be authorized after the date of enrollment in training or the beginning date of other rehabilitation services unless there are compelling reasons to authorize them earlier. A VRC may authorize delivery of supplies only after the Veteran signs his/her rehabilitation plan and is accepted to start training at a facility.

1. Prior Authorization Not Required

The VRC does not need to grant prior approval for an item if all of the following apply:

- The item is a standard book, tool, or material.
- The facility requires the item for all individuals in the Veteran's course or employment.
- The facility provides the item.

2. Prior Authorization Required

The VRC must approve in advance all supplies other than the supplies described above. Items such as computer packages and equipment (e.g., flash drives and hard drives), cameras and voice recorders must be approved in advance unless the facility requires all individuals pursuing the training course or program to own them personally. The VRC must determine that the Veteran needs the requested item before authorizing purchase of the item.

To ensure timely delivery of the supplies, the VRC should receive all requests for supplies within the first two weeks of a course or term. Requests for supplies must be received in writing from the Veteran (an email from the Veteran meets this requirement). VA must not reimburse a facility or campus bookstore for supplies purchased without prior VA approval unless the VRC determines that the Veteran was acting in good faith to obtain the supplies.

3. Reasons for Early Release of Supplies

Reasons for authorizing supplies before the start date may include one or more of the following circumstances:

- (a) The facility does not provide required supplies and the VRC must purchase the items using the government purchase card. Refer to section 4.05.b of this chapter for more guidance on using the government purchase card to purchase supplies.
- (b) The facility provides required supplies, but VA must submit orders for supplies to the facility before the date of enrollment or course commencement.
- (c) The risk of the Veteran failing in either training or employment will

increase if he/she does not have the necessary supplies before starting training or employment. Example: the Veteran will enter training and the VRC has determined that the Veteran needs a computer package. The Veteran needs to be proficient in the use of the equipment and software when the first term begins. The Veteran should receive the computer package before training begins to allow him/her time to learn to use it.

The reasons for early release of supplies must be documented on VAF 28-1905d and filed in the center portion of the Veteran's CER folder, or in CWINRS notes.

4.05 Methods of Providing Supplies

a. Training Facility

Whenever possible, VA will use VAF 28-1905 to authorize the purchase of supplies from the Veteran's training facility. This method ensures that supplies are available and can be secured in a timely manner. The VRC must only authorize supplies for approved periods. VAF 28-1905 outlines the approved periods and is the basis for the Finance activity to pay a facility for supplies. Refer to M28R.V.A.3 for guidance on the preparation of VAF 28-1905.

For VA purposes, a facility provides the supplies even when the facility itself does not directly provide the supplies but has a designated supplier, such as a campus bookstore. When a facility operates a bookstore for all students, payment to the bookstore for supplies issued to Veterans participating in the VR&E Program must be no greater than charges made to non-Veteran students. Reimbursement for supplies is governed by VAAR 831.7001-3. Refer to M28R.V.B.7 for administrative procedures and guidelines related to authorizing and processing payments for services.

VA may pay a handling fee of up to 10 percent of the cost of supplies, including books, equipment, or other supplies, to either of the following:

- Educational or training facilities
- A facility's designated supply provider (e.g., campus bookstore)

To be entitled to this fee, the facility or designated supplier must provide program participants or VA with administrative or special services beyond those they provide to other customers. The 10 percent handling fee must not be paid under the following conditions (VAAR 831.7001-3 (k)):

- When the tuition covers the charges for supplies or rentals, or a stipulated

fee is assessed to all students, a handling charge is not allowable.

- The handling charge is not allowable for Government-owned books that the facility procures from the Library of Congress.

b. Government Purchase Card

The government purchase card may be used as a procurement and payment method for supplies purchased for Veterans participating in the VR&E Program in accordance with the information and regulations established in Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), VA Acquisition Regulation (VAAR) and the VBA Handbook 4080, December 3, 2010. The government purchase card should be used by VR&E as a payment method for supplies not available at a local facility bookstore.

To ensure timely delivery of the supplies, the VRC should receive all requests for supplies within the first two weeks of a course or term. Requests for supplies must be received in writing from the Veteran (an email from the Veteran meets this requirement). When supplies must be purchased using the government purchase card, the Veteran must research at least three suppliers and submit a list showing comparative prices to the VRC. Refer to M28R.V.B.5 for administrative procedures and guidelines on the use of the government purchase card for official purchases.

VR&E staff should be aware of the Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative (FSSI) that governs the purchase of office supplies and is intended to cut procurement costs government-wide. This includes office supplies purchased on behalf of Veterans participating in the VR&E Program. If the government purchase card must be used to purchase office supplies, including some consumable goods listed in section 4.03 of this chapter, then the FSSI must be the first source consulted for these purchases. If the FSSI is not used, then the reason for not using FSSI must be clearly documented on VAF 28-1905d and filed in the center section of the Veteran's CER folder or in a CWINRS note. Refer to M28R.V.B.5 of this part for more guidance on FSSI requirements.

c. Direct Reimbursement

Direct reimbursement is appropriate when a facility bookstore does not carry required supplies or a vendor does not accept the government purchase card. Reimbursement to a Veteran for the purchase of supplies should be the last available option and should not be utilized unless there is no other way to obtain the supplies in a timely manner. A Veteran who is attending a facility that does not have a bookstore on campus or who is participating in an online training program should be given VAF 28-1905 to authorize payment for

supplies at a local facility bookstore that has been approved and has a valid facility code before considering direct reimbursement. Refer to M28R.V.A.3 for more information on direct reimbursement.

d. TeleCounseling Equipment and Technology

TeleCounseling uses Video-Teleconferencing (VTC) technology for the face-to-face communication between the case manager and the Veteran. This technology uses computer equipment, webcam, and internet access.

1. Conditions for Purchasing Telecounseling Equipment and Technology

- (a) Provision of computer equipment and/or internet access to the Veteran is only allowable if the equipment is necessary for the Veteran's successful completion of his/her rehabilitation plan.

Computer or laptop, webcam, and internet access may not be provided to Veterans for the sole purpose of participating in TeleCounseling.

- (b) Veterans who have not been provided with computer equipment and/or internet access as part of their rehabilitation plan, but who otherwise meet the requirements to participate in TeleCounseling may use their privately-owned equipment to do so, if practicable.

2. Furnishing VTC Technology and Equipment

- (a) The case manager must follow the guidelines outlined in sections 4.04, Policy, and 4.05 Methods of Providing Supplies, in this chapter for procedures in purchasing the necessary equipment.
- (b) As computer equipment is purchased, the case manager must ensure that the procured equipment has the capability to be used for TeleCounseling should the case manager determine that the Veteran's participation in TeleCounseling is appropriate.

Note: Refer to M28R.V.A.2 for Use of TeleCounseling equipment and technology.

4.06 Providing Supplies for Special Programs

a. Training in the Home

VA may provide the following supplies to Veterans training in the home:

1. Books, tools and supplies required by all facilities that train individuals for

the Veteran's objective, whether the training is at home or outside of the home.

2. Supplies and equipment that are essential because the Veteran is pursuing training at home. Equipment in this category may consist of items that are not required by facilities that train outside of the home.
3. Special equipment, such as a vise or drafting table.
4. Supplies needed to enable the Veteran to function more independently in his/her home and community.

b. Farm Cooperative Training

The books and related training supplies that VA may provide a Veteran in farm cooperative training depend upon the type of instruction he/she is receiving. The following conditions apply:

1. When group instruction is part of a Veteran's course, VA must provide books and supplies that the facility requires all students taking the course to own personally or on a rental basis.
2. When all instruction is given on the Veteran's farm by an individual instructor, VA must provide to the Veteran only those textbooks and other supplies that would ordinarily be required by a facility.

c. Employment Services

A Veteran receiving employment services may be provided with supplies in the following situations:

1. The employer requires similarly circumstanced non-Veterans to own the item upon beginning employment. This means that the items were not provided during the period that the Veteran was training for the objective, or that the items that were provided for training purposes are not adequate for employment.
2. VA determines that special equipment is necessary for the Veteran to perform his/her duties, subject to the obligation of the employer to make reasonable accommodation to the disabling effects of the Veteran's condition.

If the Veteran needs supplies to secure employment following training or while in a program consisting only of employment services, the VRC must take the following steps:

- Obtain VAF 28-1905m from the employer; the employer must identify the type of program and sign under Signature and Title of Official in Section B to certify that the requested items are necessary for the successful achievement of a vocational goal.
- Arrange for delivery of the required supplies during the period of employment services.

d. Self-employment

The VRC must determine what supplies and equipment the Veteran needs for self-employment while developing the self-employment plan and secure all necessary approvals before authorizing supplies. (Refer to M28R.IV.C.8 for guidelines related to self-employment.) The provision of service is based on category assignment. The VRC and the Veteran must prepare VAF 28-1905m to document the supplies that VA will provide. An item such as a tractor or other apparatus that is used for farming or other work activities is considered equipment and may be authorized as part of a self-employment plan if the need is justified and documented. The use of this equipment cannot be contraindicated to the Veteran's disability condition.

A program for establishing a business requires the Veteran to rely in part on his/her resources in developing and establishing the business. If the Veteran's business requires supplies greater in amount or kind than VA may authorize, the Veteran is responsible for securing these supplies.

The supplies and related assistance that may be provided to the Veteran are generally limited to the following supplies necessary to begin operations:

- Minimum stocks of materials (e.g., inventory of saleable merchandise or goods, expendable items required for day-to-day operations, and items that are consumed on the premises).
- Essential equipment, including machinery, occupational fixtures, accessories and appliances.
- Other related assistance such as business license fees.

The Veteran is responsible for the payment of certain items associated with a self-employment plan of services. This means that VA must not authorize the following items:

- Purchase of, or part payment for, land and buildings.
- Making full or part payment of leases or rentals.

- Purchase or rentals of trucks, cars, or other means of transportation.
- Stocking a farm for animal husbandry operations.

e. Independent Living (IL)

The need for any supplies or equipment being considered to address an IL need must be substantiated by results of both the preliminary and comprehensive IL assessments. The Veteran's rehabilitation plan must specify how the equipment will be used to overcome an identified barrier to independence in daily living, include criteria to measure the success of providing this service and explain how this success will be sustained after VR&E services are terminated. The use of the equipment cannot be contraindicated to the Veteran's disability condition. In no circumstance, should a tractor, mower, or similar equipment be authorized as part of a Veteran's IL plan of services since these items are not considered to be mobility devices.

If the comprehensive evaluation indicates that home modifications are needed to maximize the Veteran's independence, the VRC must coordinate those services with other VA programs. If the Veteran is eligible under one of the programs listed below, then the home modification must be provided under that program before VR&E can provide home modifications. Per 38 CFR 21.216, the Veteran must be found ineligible for needed special equipment, such as home modification to improve access, under other programs and benefits administered by VA before the service can be authorized and provided by VR&E. Refer to section 4.07 of this chapter for more guidance on providing special equipment. VA has four main grant programs to assist Servicemembers and Veterans who have disabilities with necessary home modifications. Included in these grants is a grant to assist with modifications to a temporary residence. VA housing grants for Veterans who have disabilities are listed as follows:

- Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) Grant
- Special Housing Adaptation (SHA) Grant
- Home Improvements and Structural Alterations (HISA) Grant
- Temporary Residence Assistance (TRA) Grant

f. On-the-Job Training (OJT)

VR&E may purchase necessary tools, uniforms and other required supplies for Veterans participating in OJT. The VRC must discuss with the employer any

tools, uniforms and supplies that are required of all journeymen employees on the job. This does not include tools that are normally owned by the employer. Uniforms that are normally rented must be rented as opposed to purchased. Tools and supplies that are normally required to be owned by the employee may be purchased for the Veteran, and must remain the property of the Veteran even if he/she leaves the employment. Refer to section 4.14 of this chapter for more guidance on determining when a Veteran must repay the value of supplies. If tools and/or supplies need to be purchased, a VAF 28-1905m must be completed and signed by the employer, the Veteran and the VRC.

g. Special Employer Incentive (SEI) Program

A Veteran who is eligible for the SEI Program may have significant challenges in finding employment and require additional attention from the employer that may not be given to the average employee. This will cost the company time and money and it is VA's responsibility under this program to provide the compensation for the extra effort. As the employer accommodates the Veteran, the VA must provide appropriate reimbursement for incurred costs. These tools and supplies would be items that are required by all employees on the job and would not be available to the Veteran from the employer.

VAF 28-1905m must be completed when supplies and equipment are procured outside of a training facility. This form must be used when making a purchase with the government purchase card or when providing direct reimbursement to a Veteran if there are supplies and equipment he/she would need while on the job.

See M28R.VI.A.7 for additional information about the SEI program.

h. Non-paid Work Experience (NPWE)

VR&E may purchase necessary tools, uniforms and other required supplies for Veterans participating in a NPWE. Tools and supplies that are normally required to be owned by the employee may be purchased for the Veteran in the same manner as supplies for Veterans participating in OJT.

See M28R.VI.A.12 for additional information about NPWE.

4.07 Special Equipment

Special equipment may be authorized as necessary to enable a Veteran to mitigate or overcome the effects of a disability in pursuing a rehabilitation program. If the Veteran needs special equipment and is eligible for the equipment under other VA programs, such as medical care and treatment at VA

medical centers, then the items must be provided under that program.

When the VRC establishes evidence that special equipment may be needed for a Veteran to begin, continue in, or complete a rehabilitation program, a referral to the Veteran's Health Administration (VHA) should be completed. The VRC should use VAF 28-8861 to describe the reason(s) he/she believes special equipment may be needed as part of the Veteran's rehabilitation plan, and to request that VHA conduct an evaluation and provide any necessary services. (Refer to M28R.V.A.5 for further guidance on completing VAF 28-8861.) The VHA physician must determine both of the following before the item may be purchased by VR&E:

- That the Veteran needs the special equipment.
- That the Veteran is ineligible for the needed special equipment under other programs and benefits administered by VA.

The major types of special equipment that may be authorized by VR&E include the following:

a. Equipment for Educational or Vocational Purposes

This category includes items that are ordinarily used by all individuals pursuing training but are modified to make more accessible to an individual who has a disability (e.g., a calculator with speech capability for a Veteran who is blind or visually impaired; a computer keyboard adapted for one-hand typing; or voice activation and speech recognition software).

b. Sensory Aids and Prostheses

This category includes items that are specifically designed to mitigate or overcome the effects of disability. They range from eyeglasses and hearing aids to closed-circuit TV systems that amplify reading material for Veterans with severe visual impairments.

c. Modifications to Improve Access

This category includes adaptations of environment not generally associated with education and training, such as adaptive equipment for automobiles or supplies necessary to modify a Veteran's home to make either training, self-employment or independence in daily living possible.

d. Mobility Aids

VR&E may provide mobility devices, such as wheelchairs or mobility scooters, as part of an IL plan of services when arrangements cannot be made to

provide these services through VHA. A wheelchair or mobility scooter is defined as a mobility device designed to accommodate a disability and must be prescribed by a physician. Consultation between VR&E staff and VHA prosthetics staff may be necessary to determine what type of mobility device a Veteran needs and to decide whether it can be provided by VHA. VR&E's authority to provide mobility services does not extend to the purchase or rental of automobiles, trucks, boats, or similar conveyances, such as golf carts or All-Terrain Vehicles (ATV). A tractor or mower must never be approved as a mobility aid.

4.08 Vehicles

The purchase or rental of vehicles for Veterans participating in the VR&E Program is prohibited under any circumstance. A vehicle is defined as a conveyance moving on wheels, runners, tracks, or the like, that is used for transporting people or goods. VA must not authorize assistance for the purchase or rental of cars, trucks, boats, or other vehicles. It is important to note that golf carts and ATVs are considered to be vehicles. This means that payment for those items must not be authorized. VR&E may provide essential equipment, such as a tractor, if the equipment is needed to establish a Veteran's business as part of an approved self-employment plan. Refer to section 4.06 for more guidance on determining what supplies a Veteran needs for self-employment.

4.09 Firearms

a. Requirements for Approving Purchase of Firearm

Authorization for purchase of firearms is addressed during evaluation and planning with the Veteran. The requirements for approving the authorization for purchase of firearms are outlined in M28R.IV.C.2. For authorizing purchase of firearm for a Veteran, the term "firearm" also refers to ammunition and firearm parts.

The completed and signed forms for Review Prior to Purchase of Firearms, and Conditions of Reimbursement for Purchase of Firearms, (refer to Appendix AZ and Appendix BA) must be filed in the Veteran's CER folder. A copy of the Conditions of Reimbursement for Purchase of Firearms must be provided to the Veteran.

b. Reimbursement for Purchase of Firearm

Upon purchase of the firearm, the Veteran may request reimbursement by providing the original receipt(s) of purchase. The case manager must make copies of the receipt(s) and certify that those are photocopies of the original(s) before entering the financial data in CWINRS. The case manager must submit the receipts and a copy of the Review Prior to Purchase of

Firearms, to the appropriate RO Finance activity to process direct reimbursement.

The case manager must follow the procedures outlined in M28R.V.A.3, Processing a Direct Reimbursement.

c. Completion of Rehabilitation Program

If the Veteran completes his/her rehabilitation program as planned, supplies are considered his/her property at the time the case is closed in Rehabilitated status. The Veteran may then replace, sell, or otherwise dispose the firearm.

If the Veteran does not complete his/her rehabilitation program as planned, follow the guidance in Section 4.16 of this chapter regarding repayment of supplies provided by VA, which includes the value of the firearm.

4.10 Companion Animals and Service Dogs

Payment for the purchase of service dogs, guide dogs, or companion animals for Veterans participating in the VR&E Program is prohibited under any circumstance. This also means that VR&E must not authorize payment for training or any other services related to companion animals or service dogs. While the VRC must not authorize payment for service dogs, guide dogs, or companion animals, a vocational goal requiring the possession of an animal may still be deemed appropriate in some instances. The Veteran must be informed of the costs associated with owning an animal prior to signing a plan of services that requires the animal.

See M28R.V.A.5 for further information related to the use of companion animals and service dogs.

4.11 Temporary Rental of Computer Equipment

Since the cost of renting computer equipment can quickly exceed purchase costs, the VRC should not generally consider rental for long-term use of this equipment. However, the VRC may consider temporary rental of computer equipment under either of the following conditions:

- To explore equipment suitability early in a program that requires either regular or special equipment before committing to a substantial investment.
- To meet a transitory need.

Otherwise, the VRC should purchase computer equipment using one of the purchase methods described in section 4.05 of this chapter.

4.12 Clothing, Magazines and Periodicals, and Items that May be Personally Used

a. Clothing

Protective articles or uniforms will be provided at VA expense, when the facility requires similarly circumstanced non-Veterans to also use these types of clothing. VA must not provide any other types of clothing (38 CFR 21.219 (a)).

b. Magazines and Periodicals

Appropriate past issues of magazines, periodicals, or reprints may be provided in the same manner as books when required for a course or training.

c. Items that May be Personally Used

Musical instruments, cameras, or other items that could be used personally by the Veteran may only be provided if required by the facility to meet requirements for degree or course completion.

4.13 Supplies for Special Projects and Theses

The amount of supplies that VA may authorize for special projects, including theses, may not exceed the amount generally needed by similarly circumstanced non-Veterans in meeting course or thesis requirements. The Veteran's committee chairman, major professor, department head, or appropriate dean must certify that the special project or thesis is a course requirement and that the expenses are reasonable and required to complete the project or thesis. These expenses may include research expenses, typing, printing, microfilming, or copying (VAAR 831.7001-3 (e)).

4.14 Upgrades and Maintenance

While the Veteran is in a rehabilitation program, VR&E must arrange for maintenance of computer or special equipment. VR&E may pay for upgrades to the computer or special equipment for the Veteran's program or to make the Veteran competitive in the employment market.

a. Extended Warranty/Service Plan

Often the best way to get system maintenance is to buy a reliable, comprehensive extended warranty/service plan on the equipment for the projected duration of the Veteran's program.

b. Upgrading to a New Computer System

Upgrading may involve buying a new computer system if the Veteran's current system cannot be adequately upgraded to meet either of the following:

- The current needs of the rehabilitation program course work.
- The projected use of the computer in the Veteran's planned employment.

Upgrading to a new system includes the transfer of the software and files from the old system onto the new system.

c. End of VR&E Responsibility

VR&E responsibility for maintenance and upgrading stops when the VRC places the Veteran in Rehabilitated or Discontinued case status.

4.15 Replacement of Supplies

a. Lost, Stolen, Misplaced, or Damaged Supplies

VA may replace items that are necessary to the further pursuit of the Veteran's program when they are lost, stolen, misplaced or damaged beyond repair through no fault of the Veteran. A request for replacement of an item previously purchased must be received in writing from the Veteran (an email from the Veteran meets this requirement) and must explain how the item was lost, stolen, misplaced, or damaged. A police report must be attached to a request for the replacement of a lost or stolen item and evidence that the Veteran investigated replacement through an extended warranty/service plan or homeowners insurance must also be presented by the Veteran along with the request, as appropriate. The VRC must determine that the Veteran needs the requested item to achieve a rehabilitation goal and must authorize the item before the Veteran can obtain it by following guidance in this chapter.

VA may make a loan from the revolving fund to a Veteran to purchase an item that VA will not agree to replace, if the Veteran is without funds to pay for the item. Refer to M28R.V.B.9 for more guidance on Revolving Fund Loans (RFL).

If a Veteran refuses to replace an item needed to pursue the program after VA determines that its loss or damage was his/her fault, the Veteran's refusal may be considered as noncooperation under 38 CFR 21.364. (Refer to M28R.III.C.6 for more guidance on actions following findings of unsatisfactory conduct and/or cooperation.) If the Veteran's program is discontinued under provisions of 38 CFR 21.364(b), he/she will be reentered

into the program only when the necessary items have been replaced.

b. Supplies Used in More Than One Part of the Program

VA will generally provide non-consumable supplies only one time, even though the same supplies may be required for use by the Veteran in another subject or in another quarter, semester, or school year. Examples of non-consumable supplies that VA will generally only provide one time include the following:

- Books
- Computer packages
- Voice recorders
- Cameras
- Tools

4.16 Repayment

With certain exceptions, if a Veteran does not complete the planned rehabilitation program, the Veteran must repay the value of the supplies that VA provided. The value of supplies authorized by VA will be repaid under the provisions of this section when a Veteran fails to complete the program as planned.

a. Consumable supplies

VA requires repayment for consumable supplies, unless one of the following applies:

1. The Veteran fails to complete the rehabilitation program through no fault of his/her own.
2. The employment objective of the rehabilitation plan is changed as a result of reevaluation by VA staff.
3. The total value of the supplies is less than \$100.
4. The Veteran dies.

b. Non-consumable Supplies

In accordance with 38 CFR 21.222(b) (1), VA will not require repayment for

non-consumable supplies if one of the following applies:

1. The Veteran and VA change the long-range goal of the rehabilitation plan and the provided supplies are not required for the Veteran's pursuit of the new goal.
2. The Veteran's failure to complete the program was not his/her fault.
3. The Veteran reenters the Armed Forces or is in the process of reentering the Armed Forces.
4. The Veteran satisfactorily completed one-half or more of a non-college degree course (or at least two terms in the case of a college course).
5. The Veteran certifies that he/she is using the supplies provided during training in current employment.
6. The total value of the supplies for which repayment is required is less than \$100.
7. The Veteran was provided supplies during a period of employment services but loses the job through no fault of his/her own.
8. A Veteran discontinued from an IL program is using supplies and equipment to reduce his/her dependence on others.
9. The Veteran dies.
10. The Veteran is declared rehabilitated.

The amount that a Veteran must repay will be the lesser of the current value of the supplies, or the original cost of the supplies. VA will accept the supplies instead of repayment of the value of the supplies when the Veteran and VA change the long-range goal of the rehabilitation plan and the provided supplies are not required for the Veteran's pursuit of the new goal.

c. Training in the Home and Self-employment

VA must not require a Veteran to pay for or return non-consumable supplies if one of the following applies:

1. A Veteran training in the home completes enough of his/her training program to be considered employable, and has been declared rehabilitated to the point of employability.

2. A Veteran in a self-employment program not in the home is declared rehabilitated.
 3. A Veteran dies and the Director of VR&E Service determines that the facts and equities of the family situation warrant waiver of all or a part of the requirements for repayment (e.g., the family is able to continue the business established by the Veteran).
- d. Transfers from Chapter 31 to Chapter 33

VA will not require repayment for non-consumable supplies when the Veteran transfers to the Chapter 33, Post/911 GI Bill program if one of the following applies:

- The Veteran transfers after completing at least one semester of a college program.
 - The supplies were provided to the Veteran specifically to overcome the effects of a disabling condition.
- e. Procedures

When a Veteran who has been provided non-consumable supplies discontinues training, the VRC must prepare a VAF 28 - 1905L. This form will present the facts, findings and recommendations in the case. The value will be the lesser of the current value of the supplies or the original cost. The VRC must document in item number 15 on VAF 28-1905L the method used to establish the current value (e.g., discussion with a supplier about the value of used tools). If the VRC determines that failure to complete the course was the Veteran's fault and none of the exceptions to repayment apply, the VRC must do the following:

1. Prepare a memo to the Finance Activity requesting that a 60B C&P CH31 Subsistence debt be established.
2. Forward VAF 28-1905L to the VR&E Officer for concurrence with the memo attached.
3. If the VR&E Officer concurs with the decision to request repayment, VAF 1905L and the memo will be sent to the Finance Activity for processing and dispatch of the collection request to the Veteran.
4. File a copy of VAF 1905L and the memo on the left side of the Veteran's CER folder.
5. Inform the Veteran of this adverse action following the procedures

outlined in M28R.III.C.2.

Note: After 90 days, if there is no running award and the Veteran has not repaid the debt or set up a payment plan, the debt will be forwarded to the Treasury Offset Program (TOP) for collection.

f. Turn-in of Non-consumable Supplies

Under certain conditions, a Veteran may turn-in non-consumable supplies to VA instead of repaying their value. To return non-consumable supplies, the following conditions must be met:

1. The supplies are in such good repair that another Veteran could use them in training.
2. The VRC determines that another Veteran will likely need the tools within six months.
3. The VRC and the Veteran both agree to the return of the supplies.
4. The regional office or a supporting VA facility can adequately store and maintain the supplies until their reissuance to another Veteran.

4.17 Prevention of Abuse

As stewards of taxpayers' money, VR&E staff are responsible for and held accountable for the appropriate authorization and processing of fiscal transactions. The VRC must ensure correct application of the laws and regulations concerning all fiscal transactions. Fiscal oversight provided within the VR&E Division ensures that the VRC authorizes and processes fiscal transactions with accountability, honesty and good judgment.

a. VRC Responsibilities

VA will provide supplies only after the VRC carefully reviews the Veteran's needs and determines what supplies the Veteran needs under 38 CFR 21.210 through 21.222. The VRC must also be proficient in the correct use of procurement procedures, especially in the use of the government purchase card.

b. VR&E Officer Responsibilities

The VR&E Officer is responsible for the assessment of quality and management control within his/her division. He/she should know the performance level of each employee assigned within his/her supervision to ensure that all fiscal transactions meet the acceptable level of quality. Refer

to M28R, Part VIII, Section A for information on VR&E Program oversight and internal control.