



## U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Benefits Administration

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# Tele-counseling

## Tele-counseling Description

The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Service now provides Veterans the opportunity to meet with their Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRC) via “Tele-counseling,” reducing the need for Veterans to travel for counseling appointments, and in some cases enabling Veterans to get their benefits faster.

VR&E’s Tele-counseling application was developed through a partnership with [Veterans Health Administration’s \(VHA\) VA Telehealth Services](#). VRCs can virtually meet with and counsel Veterans utilizing secure video teleconferencing. This technology will increase VA’s responsiveness to Veterans’ needs, reduce travel costs and time for both Veterans and VRCs, while improving Veterans’ access to necessary VR&E services.

Veterans participating in most VR&E rehabilitation plans of services may utilize Tele-counseling and are encouraged to speak with their VRCs about participating in Tele-counseling. Participation in Tele-counseling is voluntary and not required.

## Implementation

VR&E tested Tele-counseling in seven VA Regional Offices (ROs). Each RO measured performance, identified improvements, and evaluated the initiative’s impact on reducing the time a Veteran waits for a counseling session with his or her VRC. VR&E was also able to identify best practices to facilitate consistency, quality, and standardization in the use of Tele-counseling.

VR&E has expanded Tele-counseling services nationwide to over 1,000 counselors. VRCs now have more tools to effectively provide personalized face-to-face communication

and case management to Veterans residing in rural areas or those who may have transportation barriers.

## **Direct Benefits for Veterans**

Tele-counseling fosters an interactive and readily available communication platform for Veterans to regularly meet with their VRCs. It provides Veterans more diverse options for communicating with their VRCs to discuss their progress, concerns, rehabilitation needs, and consequently obtain assistance and guidance. For many Veterans, this means faster and easier access to their counselor without travelling, no matter where they live.

## **VA Transformation**

VRCs at every RO have been provided access to the VR&E Tele-counseling system to schedule and conduct appointments with Veterans.

Tele-counseling will reduce travel requirements for both Veterans and VRCs alike, facilitate better case management, and serve as another avenue to enable Veterans to obtain their benefits more efficiently. This is one of many modernization initiatives currently underway to improve counseling services and provide the highest level of individualized customer service possible to Veterans. Many of these initiatives are based on innovative ideas from industry and employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

For more information:

- Visit your local VA Regional Office to speak with a VR&E representative. You can find your closest VA Regional Office here:  
<https://www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/offices.asp>.
- Call 800-827-1000.