VA MISSION Act of 2018:
Section 505 – Personnel Transparency
Quarter Ending March 31, 2026

Executive Summary
June 10, 2026

This report is submitted under section 505, Personnel Transparency, of the *VA Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks Act of 2018* (VA MISSION Act), P.L.115-182 (38 U.S.C. § 301 note). Under section 505(a), the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary shall make publicly available on a quarterly basis information pertaining to staffing and vacancies, specifically including the number of personnel encumbering positions, the number of accessions and separation actions processed during the prior quarter, the number of vacancies by occupation, and the percentage of new hires hired within the time-to-hire target of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). The *Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020*, P.L.116-315 § 3008, added an additional requirement that VA report certain information concerning the time it takes to hire employees appointed under 38 U.S.C. § 7401(1) and § 7401(3).

As of March 31, 2026, VA had 434,636 onboard employees (includes full-time, part-time, and seasonal employees), representing a total of 426,179 onboard full-time equivalent employees (FTEs).[1] VA's net loss of onboard employees during the 2nd quarter (Q) of fiscal year (FY) 2026 was 1,421.[2]

VA continues to attract and retain talent to meet mission demands to provide top-quality health care, benefits, and burial services to the Nation's Veterans. VA facility leadership may use recruitment, retention, and relocation incentives to attract and attain high-quality talent for specialized occupations. These incentives can be used to fill title 5, title 38, or hybrid title 38 positions, which are often hard to fill or necessary to retain due to being mission-critical or shortage occupations. VA maximizes the use of many other compensation flexibilities, e.g., superior qualifications appointments (also known as appointments above the minimum rate), special salary rates, student loan repayment, education debt reduction program and incentives for health care occupations, nurses, and police officers across VA medical centers who have demonstrated recruitment and retention needs.

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[1] Department of Veterans Affairs, VA MISSION Act Section 505 Data. https://www.va.gov/Employee/va-mission-act-section- 505-data/. The data exclude Office of the Inspector General, Veterans Canteen Service (VCS), intermittent employees, residents, interns, fellows, students, trainees, and employees in a non-pay status.

[2] Net new employees are determined by the difference between new employee accessions of 6,637 and 8,058 losses, representing a net decrease of 1,421 employees. As this is a point-in-time report, additional personnel actions may continue to be executed in HRSmart after the data is extracted for prior fiscal quarters. This may result in discrepancies between the gains and losses reported for the fiscal quarter vs the overall onboard numbers. Comparing the onboard of the most recent fiscal quarters there is a decrease of 2,196 (FY 2026 Q2 onboard 434,636 minus FY 2026 Q1 onboard 436,832).

Note that these reported data represent a point in time (March 31, 2026) and may not align with data presented from other sources reflecting different points in time and different baseline measures. The reported vacancies are a best estimate based on available data in VA's position management data system. Efforts to resolve issues impacting position and staffing data quality, and to improve data systems, continues into FY 2026 to ensure position data accurately reflect VA's budget and requirements.

VA remains committed to accurate position management together with efficient staffing to fill vacancies and to meet Veteran demand for health care, benefits, and memorial services. Historical staffing and vacancy data are available on VA's website at https://www.va.gov/employee/va-mission-act-section-505-data/.

How do I interpret the data?

Accessions (Hiring) and Separations

Accessions are personnel actions that result in an employee's addition to VA (i.e., transfers-in from another agency and new hires to the Federal Government) and contribute to increases in onboards.[3] Separations are personnel actions resulting in the loss of an employee from VA (i.e., transfers-out, resignations, retirements, terminations or removals, death, and other separations).

Full-time equivalents (FTEs)

Full-Time Equivalent refers to the total number of regular straight-time hours worked by employees divided by the number of compensable hours applicable to each fiscal year (regular method), or the total regular hours worked in a fiscal year (2,080 hours) divided by 26 biweekly pay periods (pay period method). OMB A-11 Circular § 85.5(c).

Onboard Employees

Onboards (i.e., the number of personnel encumbering positions) are the number of employees (i.e., headcount) onboard when the data are reported. Note, "onboards" differ from "FTE," which is a budgetary term based on compensable hours as opposed to headcount. VA hires some part-time employees (i.e., partial FTEs), as such, onboard figures consistently exceed FTE figures. Onboard counts do not include employee categories excluded from VA MISSION Act reports (intermittent staff, non-salaried health professional trainees, COVID-19 hires, employees in a non-pay status, or other volunteers).

Time-To-Hire

Time-To-Hire represents the percentage of new hires for the Department hired within the 80 calendar-day time-to-hire targets of the OPM, disaggregated by Administration. Per OPM's Mission Critical Occupation (MCO) Resource Chart guidance, all hires in USA Staffing are included in the time-to-hire calculation, including new hires that are simply onboarded in USA

[3] Accessions and separations data reflects VA MISSION Act exclusion criteria.

Staffing and are not associated with an announcement (i.e., non-competitive hiring actions). In Q2 FY 2021, VA added additional data on time-to-hire (T2H) to comply with requirements in the Isakson and Roe Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 (P.L. 116-315 § 3008). Effective in Q2 FY 2022, that data was refined and displayed in the last two tabs on the spreadsheet to better reflect the information requested in the law.

As amended, VA MISSION Act section 505(a)(1)(E)(iii) asks VA to report "the average number of days potential hires or new hires appointed under paragraphs (1) and (3) of section 7401 of such title spent in each phase of the Time to Hire Model, or successor model." Due to current data system limitations, VA is not able to report data on potential hires. This is due to the lack of a functioning application programming interface (API) with a set of definitions and protocols required to pull data directly from OPM's USA Staffing data warehouse to present details on potential hires. VA is hopeful that when additional system capability is operational the data on potential hires can be added to the VA MISSION Act reports.

Vacant FTE

A vacant position is one that does not have an employee in the position, measured by the total number of compensable hours associated with that position (with one FTE equaling 2,080 hours). Vacant FTE does not include positions where the incumbent is in a non-pay status. Vacant positions may be funded or unfunded. As referenced earlier in this executive summary, work is ongoing to put controls in place to enhance position management processes with better data integrity and gain fidelity in the reported positions, particularly vacant positions. This work will improve the data quality of manpower and position funding data.

Applying for a position at VA

VA is strategically recruiting committed professionals who are dedicated to serving the Nation's Veterans. Employment at VA provides a competitive salary and benefits package and a strong work/life balance. Above all else, the highest honor in working at VA is the opportunity to serve the brave persons who have served our Nation. Additional information regarding careers at VA can be found at https://www.vacareers.va.gov/.