



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Veterans Benefits Administration
Washington, D.C. 20420

July 13, 2018

VBA Letter 20-18-05

Director (00)

All VBA Services, Staff Offices, Regional Offices, and Centers

SUBJ: Decision Review Operations Centers

Purpose

The purpose of this letter is to establish three new Decision Review Operations Centers (DROCs) under the operational control of the Appeals Management Office (AMO).

Background

To support VA's appeals modernization initiatives, VBA Letter 20-17-02 realigned VBA's national appeals policy and operations under the Director of the AMO.

To assist in the reduction of VBA's legacy appeals inventory and its February 2019 transition to decision reviews under the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017 (Modernization Act), VBA requested 605 additional appeals FTE in the FY 2019 President's Budget.

Current Organizational Structure

Under VBA Letter 20-17-02, the AMO Director has all necessary decision-making authority and accountability regarding VBA's appeals program policy and operations, and reports directly to the Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits.

Regional office directors are accountable to the AMO Director for field appeals team activities. This letter does not change the current organizational structure, and AMO must implement it consistent with VBA's January 4, 2017, realignment of its appeals program under the Appeals Management Office. See the enclosed organizational chart and VBA Letter 20-17-02 for further information on this structure.

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Decision Review Operations Centers

Effective October 1, 2018, AMO will establish three new DROCs. Two will be at the St. Petersburg and Seattle Regional Offices, and the third will be created by renaming the Appeals Resource Center in Washington, DC. Effective February 1, 2019, and subject to further AMO guidance, the AMO will consolidate the processing of Board of Veterans' Appeals (Board) remands in the legacy appeals process, Board full grants in the legacy and new processes, and new process higher-level reviews and remands at the DROCs, while regional office appeals teams will continue to process legacy appeals and Rapid Appeals Modernization Program (RAMP) claims.

New process supplemental claims will be under the operational control of the Office of Field Operations.

Questions

Please appropriately share the information in this letter with your employees and local stakeholders. Direct any questions related to the implementation of this letter to the AMO Director's corporate mailbox: VAVBAWAS/AMO/DIR (dir.vbaamo@va.gov).

/s/

Paul R. Lawrence, Ph.D.
Under Secretary for Benefits

Enclosure