

VA GEAR REPORT

- ▶ Goals–Engagement–Accountability–Results
- ▶ Department of Veterans Affairs
- ▶ VA National Cemetery Administration



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- **NCA Mission:** To provide burial spaces for veterans and eligible family members, to maintain national cemeteries and to provide grants to state veterans cemeteries.
- Top Customer Service in Government (American Customer Satisfaction Index)
- Maintains 3.1 million gravesites in 131 cemeteries



VA's GEAR Report on Improving Performance Management National Cemetery Administration (NCA)

Five Recommendations and Related Key Actions:

RECOMMENDATIONS	KEY ACTIONS	How
<p>1</p> <p>Reinforce NCA's High Performance Culture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish NCA's Performance Management Integration Board (PMIB). • Announce heightened focus on strategic goals and describe NCA's High Performance Culture to the workforce. • Include monthly updates on G.E.A.R. initiatives in NCA's monthly newsletter—NCA NEWS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A group of NCA's top level executives, who make up the new Performance Management Integration Board, are overseeing the implementation of G.E.A.R. • NCA's monthly newsletter will announce the new Board, its members and its charter. • The Board will emphasize the importance of "extraordinary performance". • The newsletter will keep employees apprised of G.E.A.R. initiatives as the pilot progresses.

VA's GEAR Report on Improving Performance Management (continued)

RECOMMENDATIONS	KEY ACTIONS	How
<p>2</p> <p>Align Employee Performance Management with Organizational Performance Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align performance expectations of NCA employees with NCA's strategic goals and objectives. • Standardize all performance plans for mission critical positions. • Educate employees on NCA's strategic goals and 4-5 most critical performance measures. • Demonstrate for employees the impact of their contributions on NCA's performance and keep them informed about NCA's successes, challenges. • Invite labor unions to fully engage predecisionally in all efforts to implement G.E.A.R in NCA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCA leaders and subject matter experts will revise performance plans for three mission critical positions, to enhance alignment and define both <i>fully successful</i> and <i>outstanding</i> performance levels. New plans will be effective October 1, 2012. • Performance measures will address, quality, quantity, timeliness and customer service, and the expectations and needs of the families of Veterans. • The new performance plans will replace current plans for <i>all</i> NCA employees in those occupations, when all labor obligations are fulfilled. • SME's will develop a Performance Data Board template, identify 4-5 critical performance measures and display national and local performance data in a visually pleasing manner at cemeteries currently engaged in the G.E.A.R. pilot. • NCA's Labor Forum, which includes labor representatives from two national unions, meets to collaborate, share information and encourage input and predecisional involvement of labor representatives.

VA's GEAR Report on Improving Performance Management (continued)

RECOMMENDATIONS	KEY ACTIONS	How
<p>3 Implement Accountability at All Levels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a three step performance management progress review process. • Provide tools to support the performance management process • Provide supervisors and employees with training to enhance their understanding of their role in the performance management process. • Hold supervisors accountable for effectively managing the performance of their employees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The three step progress review process will require no less than three meetings (Oct/Feb/May) to discuss the organization's performance, the employee's performance, and how s/he contributed (or failed to do so). • Tools, such as guides, templates and checklists will be developed and made available to supervisors and employees to aid them during performance management cycle. • NCA will take advantage of the training offered on OPM's online HR University. Training plans, utilizing the ODNI online performance management training modules, will be developed to ensure "just-in-time" training for NCA supervisors and employees. • Supervisor performance plans will be refined to clearly describe responsibilities for developing employees and managing their performance. • A formal recognition program will be established to recognize the results and contributions of NCA's outstanding supervisors.

VA's GEAR Report on Improving Performance Management (continued)

RECOMMENDATIONS	KEY ACTIONS	How
<p>4</p> <p>Create a Culture of Engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance employees' perceptions regarding engagement and organizational commitment. • Establish a formal NCA Mentoring Program for new employees and newly appointed supervisors. • Establish a formal NCA On-Boarding Program for new employees to accelerate time-to-productivity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on employees' responses to VA's All Employee Survey results (2011/2012), supervisors and OD experts will determine what actions are needed to enhance employee experiences and perceptions and develop a plan of action to address gaps. • A Pilot Mentoring Program will be established at two to three NCA cemeteries. Efforts will be focused on: 1) developing a process to pair mentors and mentees, 2) identifying training that promotes effective relationships, 3) providing support for the pairs, and 4) evaluating the impact of the program on the cemeteries' business results. • Current orientation of newly appointed supervisors will be reviewed to determine how formally appointed mentors can assist and support new supervisors during the first six-months in their new positions. • A new NCA On-Boarding Program will be created to integrate new talent and provide new hires with the tools and information they need during their first year with NCA.
<p>5</p> <p>Improve the Assessment, Selection, Development and Training of Supervisors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the best methods for assessing, selecting and developing supervisors critical to NCA's success in 2015 and beyond. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current methods used to assess, develop and train NCA's supervisors will be evaluated. This will include: 1) review of retirement projections, vacancies and workforce needs, 2) identification of competencies critical for success in supervisory positions in 2015 and beyond, and 3) research and evaluation of best practices in private and Federal sector organizations. • Recommendations that address short and long term workforce needs, including methods used to select supervisors will be developed, evaluated and, as appropriate, implemented to complement NCA's strategic goals.

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- ▶ Pilot program in one MSN (region)
- ▶ Evaluate Results
- ▶ Expand program to remainder of NCA

