



## FAQs for VR&E Service Providers e-Authorization and e-Invoicing

### General Questions

- 1. Will e-Invoicing impact any other VA education benefits beyond VR&E or other Vocational Rehabilitation programs?**

This initiative is only applicable to the VA VR&E program. Any other Vocational Rehabilitation (e.g., State Rehab programs) or VA programs (e.g. Post-9/11 GI Bill) are not affected.

- 2. What are common terminology translations between Tungsten Network and Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E)?**

Tungsten Network	Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment
Purchase order	Authorization (formerly VA 28-1905)
Supplier	Service provider
Customer	VA FSC VBA VRE
Buyer	VA Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) or Case Manager

- 3. Why electronic invoicing?**

The VA Office of Management and Budget Memorandum M-15-19, Improving Government Efficiency and Saving Taxpayer Dollar Invoicing, required all federal agencies transition to electronic invoicing for appropriate Federal procurements by the end of Fiscal Year 2018. VR&E has partnered with the Tungsten Network to bring VA VBA into compliance with this mandate.

- 4. Is participation required?**

Yes, effective 1/1/2020, all service providers must utilize the Tungsten Network to send invoices to the VR&E program. Invoices received by VR&E via any other method will be considered invalid and returned unpaid to sender.

- 5. How will this process affect bookstores located on a campus?**

If the school and bookstore are different entities, a separate Authorization will be sent to each service provider. In this case, the school will not have access to the bookstore Authorization and the bookstore will not have access to the school's Authorization.



## **e-Authorizations**

- 1. Will the 28-1905 forms be available through the electronic system as well or will they still be sent to the SCOs via fax, email, or mail?**

SCOs will receive a system-generated email indicating an Authorization is available in the Tungsten Network. This Authorization will be provided in lieu of the VA 28-1905. This is the only way to receive Authorizations, which is why it is imperative to get added to the service provider's Tungsten account.

- 2. Define an "Authorization Number" and a "PO Number". Are the numbers the same?**

Authorization Number is synonymous with PO Number and is used to track status and report status of individual Authorizations.

- 3. Is the Authorization Number a unique identifier? Can it be used more than once (within a term, year or years)?**

Yes, it is unique and will never be repeated.

- 4. Can a student have more than one Authorization form or PO?**

Yes, the Case Manager will create as many Authorizations as needed to supply the Veteran with the necessary services. Authorizations are limited to a one-year period, so at least one per year.

- 5. Are Authorizations only created for one student?**

Yes, the Authorization is for an individual student.

- 6. Can additional funding on an existing Authorization occur?**

The Authorization does not restrict the funding, and VA will pay for all approved purchases submitted on an invoice associated with an Authorization.

- 7. Are the Authorizations in a standard format?**

Yes, the Authorizations will display in Tungsten consistently.

- 8. How soon are the Authorizations shared with the service provider? (How far in advanced of the term start date)?**

Authorizations will continue to be done in advance of the term. However, VA will strive to have all Authorizations completed about four weeks prior to the term start date.



## 9. What will the Authorization email look like?

<!-- This is an auto generated email. Please do not respond ---!>

An authorization for payment of training, services, books, and/or supplies at your facility for a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E) participant is available in the [Tungsten Network](#). If this is the first authorization you are receiving, you will need to register by contacting [VAFSCEnterpriseSupport@va.gov](mailto:VAFSCEnterpriseSupport@va.gov) or by phone at (866) 372-1141.

For questions regarding the authorization, please contact the VR&E case manager at [firstname.lastname@va.gov](mailto:firstname.lastname@va.gov). For all other questions, please contact the Financial Services Center at [VAFSCEnterpriseSupport@va.gov](mailto:VAFSCEnterpriseSupport@va.gov) or by phone at (866) 372-1141.

### Chapter 31

The authorization approves required costs for Chapter 31 training including tuition, fees, books, and supplies for the program identified in the "Name of Service" section of the authorization. Please note that VA will pay all invoices for the required tuition, fees, books, and supplies directly to the institution in arrears. The authorization also serves as notification to the School Certifying Official that training time should be certified for Chapter 31 claimants. In addition, this notification, if applicable, must be forwarded to the responsible party at your facility to alert them of the available authorization in the system to initiate the certification process using VA-ONCE.

### Chapter 35

This authorization approves training, education, and services for Chapter 35 claimants under Specialized Vocational Training or Special Restorative Training. VA will pay only for the Special Restorative Training services listed in the "Name of Service" section of the authorization for Chapter 35 claimant. If applicable, detailed information for specific training courses and services during the authorized period may be listed under the specific "Notes" section of the authorization.

### Chapter 18

The authorization approves required costs for Vocational Training for Certain Children with Spina Bifida or Other Covered Birth Defects under Chapter 18, which include tuition, fees, books, and supplies for the program identified in the "Name of Service" section of the authorization.

Thank you.

## 10. Can a service provider invoice under the same Authorization number more than once throughout the term or over the Authorization period?

If VA has kept the Authorization open, a service provider can invoice multiple times against one Authorization for the same student. In many situations, the Authorization may even cover two-three terms (or up to a calendar year).

## 11. Is the VA notified when a service provider rejects an authorization?

The system does not generate a notification when a service provider rejects an authorization. Please send an email directly to the VR&E Case Manager explaining that the authorization was rejected and the reason why the authorization was rejected.



## **Registration**

### **1. How does a service provider get started?**

For large system service providers or organizations that do not have a centralized billing process, please call the Tungsten Network for guidance on setting up an account. Otherwise, register at Tungsten Network or email [VAFSCEnterpriseSupport@va.gov](mailto:VAFSCEnterpriseSupport@va.gov) with the name of the organization. After setup, a "Ready to Transact" email will be sent from Tungsten Network, permitting invoicing of the VA VR&E program.

### **2. What is the next step after the pre-registration form was sent in to VAFSC Customer Service?**

It takes about 3-5 business days for staff to process an add/update to a service provider's file after submitting a VA 10091. After processing, the service provider can then register with Tungsten. Please choose the VA buyer. Also, ensure that the same tax ID number, name and address are used in Tungsten registration as on the VA 10091. VA and Tungsten perform a quick validation and if there are no issues, Tungsten will send an email indicating that the service provider is ready to transmit invoices. For questions or issues regarding the VA 10091, contact VA's FSC at 877-353-9791.

### **3. Does every VR&E service provider need to submit a VA 10091?**

Service providers must be in the VA financial system. If providers are not registered, they will need to complete a VA 10091. Some current VR&E service providers are in our financial system, have registered with a different tax ID number or name, or have registered a different address. This has slowed down the validation process. For questions or issues regarding the VA 10091, contact VA's FSC at 877-353-9791.

## **Tungsten Network**

### **1. What does the electronic system look like?**

The best way to see the Tungsten System is to register for one of the upcoming webinars:

10/1/2019 at 10:00 AM EST

10/2/2019 at 11:00 AM EST

10/8/2019 at 3:00 PM EST

### **2. Do the School Certifying Officials need access to the Tungsten account?**

Yes, the account administrator must add all SCOs as authorized users to the service provider's account. The Tungsten Network account is the only way to receive the electronic Authorization from VR&E. The information contained in the Authorization is necessary permit VR&E students to enroll and for SCOs to accurately certify training hours.

### **3. Is there an upload feature to provide receipts or copies of the original invoice?**

Yes, Tungsten Network allows adding attachments to the invoice data.



**4. What will need to accompany the invoice?**

Invoice requirements have not changed however VA understand that some offices may have be operating with their own local rules. This initiative will ensure standardized consistent processes for all service providers. In addition to basic demographic information about the service provider and students, the invoice will need to include:

- Description, price and quantity of goods and/or services rendered with the charges grouped under categories (e.g., tuition, books, fees and supplies)
- Date(s) goods were delivered, or services were provided
- Supporting detailed information, if applicable (e.g., receipts listing itemized costs for books, fees and supplies)

**5. Should the service provider contact Tungsten with questions regarding registration?**

Yes, Tungsten is the best source of information on registration. Staff can also read the Tungsten-Network FAQs and general information at <https://www.tungsten-network.com/vre/>.

**6. On the Tungsten website, when selecting the Register link, the information says providers will automatically receive 52 free transactions. Are suppliers charged for submitting invoices?**

As a VA VR&E program supplier, the service provider will not be charged for any invoices, regardless of the volume.

**7. Can service providers only invoice through Tungsten?**

Yes, this is the only way service providers will be able to invoice VA VR&E for services after 1/1/2020.

**8. Is it possible to delegate responsibilities in Tungsten Network?**

The account administrator can assign users and set up permissions. Navigate to 'My Account' > 'Users' > 'View your users and their rights'. From here administrators can add new users, define their account capabilities and transfer administrator rights, if necessary.

**9. Will the Tungsten Network generate invoice numbers?**

No, the service provider must create a unique invoice number for each invoice.

**e-Invoicing**

**1. Our organization has an invoice for VR&E that needs to be paid before 12/31/2019. How should the invoice be submitted?**

Except for the pilot service providers (Strayer and University of California-San Diego), continue to invoice using the existing process. The VA VR&E program encourages sending the current invoices to VA as soon as possible to ensure processing prior to the end of the calendar year. If an invoice is outstanding after 12/31/2019, the Case Manager will need to submit a new Authorization electronically and the service provider must resubmit the invoice electronically.



**2. Where does the service provider find the PO number?**

Service providers can only invoice via Tungsten after first receiving an Authorization electronically from VA. That email will include an Authorization Number in the subject line, which serves as the PO number. The PO number will be the easiest way to locate that exact Authorization. VA plans to start sending electronic Authorizations in early November for terms that start on or after 1/1/2020. In this interim, please continue to invoice VA in the existing manner.

**3. Must the Authorization Number display on the invoice?**

Yes, the Authorization number must be on the invoice, however, Tungsten will link them automatically when an Authorization is “flipped” into an invoice.

**4. Must an invoice be based on Authorization or student?**

Yes, every invoice must be based on an individual student and Authorization. Service providers cannot send an invoice for multiple students and/or Authorizations.

**5. Once an invoice is submitted, is there confirmation that it has been sent, received, pending payment or rejected by the VA?**

Yes, service providers will be able to generate reports to see invoice statuses as well as search for the status of an individual invoice.

**6. How quickly will the providers be paid?**

This will be dependent on workload for each Case Manager, but it is our objective to pay under 30 days.

**7. How will the service provide be paid?**

Payments should be processed in the same way they were paid previously. The benefits to e-Invoicing include faster delivery, elimination of lost invoices, and expedited payment.

**8. What if the service provider needs to make a refund to the VR&E?**

Service providers must initiate a credit note or memo in Tungsten Network via the “create invoice” page. The Case Manager will review the credit note and forward to the local Support Services Division (SSD). SSD will create the debt and request payment from the service provider.

**9. Who does the service provider contact for questions about payment?**

For questions about payment, contact VA’s FSC at 877-353-9791.