**PENSION MANAGEMENT CENTERS INSTRUCTOR LESSON PLAN TIME REQUIRED: 1.5 HOURS**

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| **LESSON DESCRIPTION** |
| The information below provides the instructor with an overview of the lesson and the materials that are required to effectively present this instruction. |
| **LMS #** | 1344985 |
| **PREREQUISITES** | There are not any prerequisites for this introductory course. |
| **TARGET AUDIENCE** | The target audience for lesson is Entry Level Claims Assistants and VSRs.Although this lesson is targeted to teach the Claims Assistants and VSR employee, it may be taught to other VA personnel as mandatory or refresher type training. |
| **TIME REQUIRED** | 1.5 hours |
| **MATERIALS/ TRAINING AIDS** | Lesson materials:* Pension Management Center PowerPoint Presentation
* Pension Management Center Trainee Handouts
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| **TRAINING AREA/TOOLS** | The following are required to ensure the trainees are able to meet the lesson objectives:* Classroom or private area suitable for participatory discussions
* Seating, writing materials, and writing surfaces for trainee note taking and participation
* Handouts, which include a practical exercise
* Large writing surface (easel pad, chalkboard, dry erase board, overhead projector, etc.) with appropriate writing materials
* Computer with PowerPoint software to present the lesson material

Trainees require access to the following tools:* VA LMS to complete the two assessments
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| **PRE-PLANNING** | * Become familiar with all training materials by reading the Instructor Lesson Plan while simultaneously reviewing the corresponding PowerPoint slides. This will provide you the opportunity to see the connection between the Lesson Plan and the slides, which will allow for a more structured presentation during the training session.
* Become familiar with the content of the trainee handouts and their
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association to the Lesson Plan.

* Practice is the best guarantee of providing a quality presentation. At a minimum, do a complete walkthrough of the presentation to practice coordination between this Lesson Plan, the trainee handouts, and the PowerPoint slides and ensure your timing is on track with the length of the lesson.
* Ensure that there are copies of all handouts before the training session.
* When required, reserve the training room.
* Arrange for equipment such as flip charts, an overhead projector, and any other equipment (as needed).
* Talk to people in your office who are most familiar with this topic to collect experiences that you can include as examples in the lesson.
* This lesson plan belongs to you. Feel free to highlight headings, key phrases, or other information to help the instruction flow smoothly. Feel free to add any notes or information that you need in the margins.

**TRAINING DAY** □ Arrive as early as possible to ensure access to the facility and

computers.

* Become familiar with the location of restrooms and other facilities that the trainees will require.
* Test the computer and projector to ensure they are working properly.
* Before class begins, open the PowerPoint presentation to the first slide. This will help to ensure the presentation is functioning properly.
* Make sure that a whiteboard or flip chart and the associated markers are available.
* Provide a sign in sheet and at the conclusion of the session, ensure that all trainees sign in.

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| **INTRODUCTION TO PENSION MANAGEMENT CENTER** |
| **INSTRUCTOR INTRODUCTION** | Complete the following:* Introduce yourself
* Orient learners to the facilities
* Ensure that all learners have the required handouts
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| **TIME REQUIRED** | 15 minutes |
| **PURPOSE OF LESSON***Explain the following:* | This lesson is intended to introduce Pension Management Centers and pension eligibility criteria to the trainees. This lesson will contain discussions and exercises that will allow you to gain a better understanding of:* History of the PMC
* Pension Criteria for Eligibility
* Specialized Work of the PMCs
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| **LESSON OBJECTIVES***Discuss the following: Slide 2**Handout 2* | In order to accomplish the purpose of this lesson, the learner will be required to accomplish the following lesson objectives.The learner will be able to:* Given the appropriate manual and regulatory references and handouts, identify the locations and jurisdiction of the three PMC’s.
* Given the appropriate manual and regulatory references and handouts, identify pension eligibility criteria.
* Given the appropriate manual and regulatory references and handouts, identify the programs processed at the PMC’s.
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| *Explain the following:* | Each learning objective is covered in the associated topic. At the conclusion of the lesson, the learning objectives will be reviewed. |
| **MOTIVATION** | It is important to be knowledgeable about the Pension Management Center’s functions, eligibility criteria, and programs. |
| **STAR ERROR CODE(S)** | There are currently on STAR errors codes associated with this lesson. |
| **REFERENCES***Slide 3**Handout 3* | Explain where these references are located in the workplace.* [M21-1, Part V, Subpart iv, Chapter 2,](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014950/M21-1%2C%20Part%20V%2C%20Subpart%20iv%2C%20Chapter%202%20-%20Pension%20Maintenance%20Center%20%28PMC%29%20Procedures) Pension Maintenance Center (PMC) Procedures
* [M21-1, Part V, Subpart i, Chapter 1](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014359/M21-1-Part-V-Subpart-i-Chapter-1-Overview-of-Requirements-and-Development-for-Pension-and-Parents-Dependency-and-Indemnity-Compensation-DIC?query=pension), Service Requirements for Pension
* [M21-1, Part V, Subpart i, Chapter 2,](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014360/M21-1%2C%20Part%20V%2C%20Subpart%20i%2C%20Chapter%202%20-%20Original%20Disability%20Pension%20Claims#1) General Information on Original Disability Pension Claims
* [M21-1, Part V, Subpart iii, Chapter 1,](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/topic/554400000003182/Chapter-1-The-Effect-of-Income-and-Net-Worth-on-Pension-and-Parents-Dependency-and-Indemnity-Compensation-DIC)  The effect of Income/NW & Dependency on Pension
* [M21-1, Part X, Chapter 9](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000073437/M21-1-Part-X-Chapter-09-Federal-Tax-Information-FTI), Federal Tax Information (FTI)
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| **TOPIC 1: HISTORY OF THE PMC** |
| **INTRODUCTION** | This topic will allow the trainee to identify the three (3) PMCs, their jurisdictions and their main work types. |
| **TIME REQUIRED** | 15 minutes |
| **OBJECTIVES/ TEACHING POINTS** | Topic objective:* Given the appropriate manual and regulatory references and handouts, identify the locations and jurisdiction of the three PMCs and their main work types.

The following topic teaching points support the topic objective:* History
* Locations and Jurisdiction
* Main Programs at the PMCs
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| **HANDOUTS** | Ensure that the trainees have access to Attachment B: PMC Jurisdiction Chart, which will be discussed later in the lesson. |
| **History***Slide 4**Handout 4* | The Pension Management Centers (PMCs) were incorporated in fiscal year 2002 to process all VA Pension claims and were originally called Pension Maintenance Centers.Their primary purpose for consolidating VA Pension was to allow the Home Regional Offices to focus primarily on Compensation claims. By consolidating the Pension related work, VA was able to focus on having increased accuracy based on skills and enhancement of computer program edits.When the PMC’s were created in 2002, they only processed Pension related claims with running awards. All Original or Rating related work was still processed at the Home Regional Offices (HRO). Original claims and Survivors Benefits claims became jurisdiction of the Pension Management Centers in 2007. |

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| **Locations and Jurisdiction***Slide 5**Handout 4* | Currently, three PMCs process Original Disability and Survivor’s Pension Claims, Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC), Burial Benefits, and Accrued Benefits.The three PMC’s are located in:1. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
2. Milwaukee, Wisconsin
3. St. Paul, Minnesota Jurisdiction outside the United States:
* Philadelphia is responsible for claims received from all other foreign countries
* St. Paul is responsible for all claims received from Central and South America, including the Caribbean
* The Manila RO processes all Philippines claims
 |
| **Review*****Refer to Attachment B*** | Quick review the Attachment B: PMC Jurisdiction Chart in the Trainee Handout Packet to ensure the trainees understand PMCs jurisdiction within the United States. |
| **Main Programs at the PMCs***Slide 6**Handout 4* | Currently, the PMCs perform work related to pension awards and all survivors claims. Limited disability compensation issues may be processed at the PMCs. For the full list of pension work performed see M21-1.V.iv.2. Some of the work performed by PMCs is listed below, the remaining types of specialized work are included in topic 3; * Original and new Veterans and Survivors Pension claims
* Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)
* Accrued Benefits
* Burial Benefits
* income adjustments, including adjustments based on VA Form 21P-8416, Medical Expense Report
* changes in dependency for pension and/or DIC awards
* awards of special monthly pension (SMP)
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| **TOPIC 2: PENSION CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY** |
| **INTRODUCTION** | This topic will allow the trainee to identify pension eligibility criteria. |
| **TIME REQUIRED** | 30 minutes |
| **OBJECTIVES/ TEACHING POINTS** | Topic objective:* Given the appropriate manual and regulatory references and handouts, identify pension eligibility criteria.

The following topic teaching points support the topic objective:* Eligibility
* Disability Age
* Special Monthly Pension
* Aid and Attendance (A&A)
* Housebound (HB)
* Qualifying Service
* Income Criteria
* Maximum Annual Pension Rate
* Income for VA Purposes (IVAP)
* Net Worth Criteria
* Dependency
 |
| **HANDOUTS** | Ensure that all trainees have access to Attachment C: Wartime Period Chart, which will be discussed later in this topic. |
| **Eligibility***Slide 7**Handout 5* | VA pension is an income-based program for non-service connected wartime Veterans who are permanently and totally disabled. The Veteran must qualify on the terms listed below.The basic eligibility criteria are:* Disability/Age
* Qualifying Service
* Income
* Net Worth
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| **Disability or Age Criteria***Slide 8**Handout 5* | The Veteran must be considered permanently and totally disabled to be eligible for Pension:* Be 65 years or older,
* Or in a nursing home receiving skilled or intermediate care
* Or in receipt of Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

If the Veteran does not qualify based on the above criteria a rating decision must be made to determine if the Veteran is permanently or totally disabled. |
| **Special Monthly Pension***Slide 9**Handout 5* | An additional allowance for Special Monthly Pension (SMP) is available to claimants who are more seriously disabled, in addition to basic Pension rate. In order to be eligible for SMP, the Veteran or surviving spouse must meet the eligibility requirements for basic pension benefits. |
| **Aid and Attendance (A&A)***Slide 9**Handout 5* | A&A is payable to a Veteran or surviving spouse who require the aid of another person in order to perform activities of daily living; bedridden; patient in a nursing home due to mental or physical incapacity; or have corrected visual acuity of 5/200 or less in both eyes, or concentric contraction of the visual field to 5 degrees or less.A&A may be granted via:* Rating, **or,**
* Administratively if the Veteran or surviving spouse is a patient in a qualified nursing home or a patient in a VA Nursing Home care unit or contracted nursing home.
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| **Housebound (HB)***Slide 9**Handout 6* | Housebound:* Is payable to a Veteran or surviving spouse who is substantially confined to his or her home because of permanent disability.
* **MUST** be granted by a Rating.
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| **Qualifying Service***Slide 10**Handout 6***Have students refer to Attachment C for Wartime Period** | The Veteran is considered to have met the minimum active duty requirement for improved pension purposes if he/she entered service:* *Prior* to September 7, 1980 and has completed a continuous period of active duty of at least 90 days, or
* After September 7, 1980 and has completed a continuous period of active duty of at least **24 months** or the full period for which a person is called or ordered into active duty.

In addition to the minimum active duty requirements, the Veteran must have at least **one** day of wartime service. |
| **Income Criteria***Slide 11**Handout 6* | Countable income determines the rate of benefits that can be paid. The higher the claimant’s countable income, the lower the rate of Improved Pension benefits payable.Examples of countable income: wages, Social Security benefits, and retirement income.Unreimbursed medical expenses may be used to reduce the countable income for VA purposes.Examples of allowable medical expenses: Nursing home fees, prescriptions, private medical insurance, etc.\*\*\*NOTE: Medical Expenses must exceed the 5% deductible in order to be countable. |
| **Maximum Annual Pension Rate (MAPR)***Slide 12**Handout 6* | The maximum annual pension rate (MAPR) is the yearly income limit set by Congress each year. These rates can be located under [Rate Tables](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/topic/554400000003364/Pension) in the Compensation and Pension Knowledge Management Portal (CPKM). |
| **Income for VA Purposes (IVAP)***Slide 13**Handout 7* | IVAP Formula:Annualized countable income – medical expenses + 5% medical deductible = income for VA purposes (IVAP)VA pays the difference between the MAPR rate and the claimant’s income for VA purposes (IVAP). |

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| **Net Worth Criteria***Slide 14**Handout 7* | The market value, less mortgages or other encumbrances, of all real and personal property owned by claimant except the claimant’s single- family dwelling and reasonable personal effects.Net Worth requirements:* M21-1, Part V, Subpart iii, Chapter 1, Section J, Net Worth Requirements
* VA Form 21-527EZ, Application for Pension
* VA Form 21P-8049, Request for Details of Expenses
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| **Dependency***Slide 15**Handout 7* | Remember the following:* The number of dependents increases the MAPR.
* Dependent’s income information is required because it is used to determine the Veteran or surviving spouse’s IVAP.
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| **TOPIC 3: SPECIALIZED WORK OF THE PMCS** |
| **INTRODUCTION** | This topic will allow the trainee to identify the different types of work performed at the PMCs |
| **TIME REQUIRED** | 15 minutes |
| **OBJECTIVES/ TEACHING POINTS** | Topic objective:* Given the appropriate manual and regulatory references and handouts, identify the programs processed at the PMCs.

The following topic teaching points support the topic objective:* Federal Tax Information (FTI) Matches
* Other Types of Work Performed at the PMCs
* Document Storage
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| **Federal Tax Information (FTI) Matches***Slide 16**Handout 8* | The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) provides VA with unearned income records including retirement income.  The Social Security Administration (SSA) provides VA with earned income records. VA uses FTI for upfront verification and Income Verification Matches (IVM), which are generally processed annually at the PMCs. These matches compare income reported to The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) by pension and Parent’s Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) recipients with IRS and SSA income. |

# Other Types of Work Performed at the PMCs

*Slide 16*

*Handout 8*

* Social Security verification matches
* Social Security number (SSN) matches
* prison and fugitive felon matches
* total disability income provision (TDIP) review matches
* adjustments based on VA Form 20-6560, Notice of Benefit Payment Transaction, or VA Form 20-8270, C&P Master Record-Audit Writeout not requiring a rating decision
* incompetency and competency determinations
* Loan Guaranty claims based on service-connected (SC) death, and
* hospital adjustments to pension awards.

*NOTE: The list above does not contain all of the functions of the PMCs*

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| **Document Storage***Slide 17**Handout 8* | The PMCs have primarily used Legacy Content Manager (LCM), formerly Virtual VA, as a Veterans electronic claims folder or e-Folder. The PMCs are now transitioning into the VBMS system for document storage and claims processing.  |
| **REGIONAL OFFICE SPECIFIC TOPICS** | At this time add any information pertaining to:* Station quality issues with this lesson
* Additional State specific programs/guidance on this lesson

What Pension Claims are currently being worked at your Regional Office? |

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| **PRACTICAL EXERCISE** |
| **TIME REQUIRED** | 10 minutes |
| **EXERCISE** | Allow trainees 10 minutes to complete the exercise and then, review the correct answers with the class.Ask if there are any questions about the information presented in the exercise, and then proceed to the Review. |

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| **LESSON REVIEW, ASSESSMENT, AND WRAP-UP** |
| **INTRODUCTION***Discuss the following:* | The Pension Management Center lesson is complete.Review each lesson objective and ask the trainees for any questions or comments. |
| **TIME REQUIRED** | 5 minutes |
| **LESSON OBJECTIVES** | You have completed the Pension Management Center lesson. The trainee should be able to:* Given the appropriate manual and regulatory references and handouts, identify the locations and jurisdiction of the three PMCs.
* Given the appropriate manual and regulatory references and handouts, identify pension eligibility criteria,.
* Given the appropriate manual and regulatory references and handouts, identify the programs processed at the PMCs.
 |
| **TMS ASSESSMENT** | Remind the trainees to complete the on-line assessment in TMS to receive credit for completion of the course.The assessment will allow the trainees to demonstrate their understanding of the information presented in this lesson. |