(VSR VIP Post-D)

Dependency Effective Dates and Awards

Instructor Lesson Plan

Time Required: 3 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. |
| TMS # | 4486662 |
| Prerequisites | Prior to this lesson, the Veteran Service Representative (VSR) should have completed Entry-level VSR Pre-determination training; (VSR VIP Post-D) Reviewing Ratings & Notification Requirements; Reviewing Ratings & Notification Requirements exercises; (VSR VIP Post-D) Award Processing for Ratings (VBMS-A/RADL); Award Processing for Ratings (VBMS-A/RADL) Demo Simulation; Award Processing for Ratings (VBMS-A/RADL) Interactive Simulation; (VSR VIP Post-D) Dependency Development for Post-Determination; (VSR VIP Post-D) Introduction to Personal Computer Generated Letter (PCGL). |
| target audience | The target audience for Dependency Effective Dates and Awards is VSR Entry Level.Although this lesson is targeted to teach the VSR Entry Level employee, it may be taught to other VA personnel as mandatory or refresher-type training. |
| Time Required | 3 hours |
| Materials/TRAINING AIDS | Lesson materials:* Dependency Effective Dates and Awards Presentation
* Dependency Effective Dates and Awards Trainee Handout
* Dependency Effective Dates and Awards Lesson Plan
* Dependency Effective Dates and Awards Trainee Answer Key
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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 ability to present the lesson material

Trainees require access to the following tools: * VBA Learning Catalog
* VBMS Core
* VBMS-A
* Share
* PCGL
 |
| Pre-Planning  | * Become familiar with all training materials by reading the Instructor Lesson Plan while simultaneously reviewing the corresponding presentation 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 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 presentation 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 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.
* The instructor completes a roll call attendance sheet or provides a sign-in sheet to the students. The attendance records are forwarded to the Regional Office Training Managers.
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| Introduction to Dependency Effective Dates and Awards |
| 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 | 0.25 hours |
| Purpose of LessonExplain the following:Slide 2 | This lesson is intended to teach trainees how to associate dependents to a Veteran, grant or deny additional compensation for dependents, and notify the Veteran of the decision, using VBMS Core, VBMS-A, and RADL functionality within VBMS-A. This lesson will contain discussions and exercises that will allow the trainee to gain a better understanding of: * Dependency Effective and Payment Dates
* Adding Dependents to the Corporate Record
* Entering Dependency Decisions in VBMS-A
* Decision Notices Regarding the Addition/Removal of a Dependent
 |
| MotivationSlide 2 | It is important to ensure Veterans are paid properly and receive all benefits to which they are entitled at the earliest possible point. As a VSR, correctly inputting all dependent information and properly granting, denying, and/or removing dependents is imperative in achieving this goal. |
| Lesson ObjectivesDiscuss the following:Slide 3Handout p.2 | In order to accomplish the purpose of this lesson, the VSR will be required to accomplish the following lesson objectives.The VSR will be able to: * Identify effective and payment dates for establishing and removing dependents.
* Demonstrate establishing dependents in the Veteran’s corporate record using VBMS.
* Create dependency decisions in VBMS-A.
* Identify favorable findings as they pertain to denying entitlement to additional benefits for a dependent.
* Prepare a dependency decision notice using VBMS-A and PCGL.
 |
| Explain the following: | Each learning objective is covered in the associated topic. At the conclusion of the lesson, the learning objectives will be reviewed.  |
| STAR Error code(s) | Tasks 6, 8, & 10 |
| ReferencesSlide 4Handout p.3 | Explain where these references are located in the workplace.* [PL 115-55](https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/2288/text/pl?overview=closed) — Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act 2017
* [§ 3.31](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=f22ed2993130183235703263d78e96c0&mc=true&node=se38.1.3_131&rgn=div8) — Commencement of the period of payment
* [§ 3.401(b)](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=f22ed2993130183235703263d78e96c0&mc=true&node=se38.1.3_1401&rgn=div8) —Veterans, *Dependent, additional compensation or pension for.*
* [M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, 5.A](https://www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ssnew/help/customer/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001018/content/554400000015798/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-iii-Chapter-5-Section-A-General-Information-on-Relationship-and-Dependency) — General Information on Relationship and Dependency
* [M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, 5.B](https://www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ssnew/help/customer/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001018/content/554400000015799/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-iii-Chapter-5-Section-B-Establishing-the-Validity-of-a-Marriage-for-Department-of-Veterans-Affairs-VA-Purposes) — Establishing the Validity of a Marriage for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Purposes
* [M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, 5.G](https://www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ssnew/help/customer/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001018/content/554400000015802/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-iii-Chapter-5-Section-G-Biological-Children-Adopted-Children-and-Stepchildren) — Biological Children, Adopted Children, and Stepchildren
* [M21-1 Part III, Subpart iii, 5.L](https://www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ssnew/help/customer/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001018/content/554400000032212/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-iii-Chapter-5-Section-L-Adjusting-Awards-for-Dependents) — Adjusting Awards for Dependents
* [M21-1, Part III, Subpart iv, 5.C](https://www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ssnew/help/customer/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001018/content/554400000067390/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-iv-Chapter-5-Section-C-Effective-Dates) — Effective Dates
* [M21-1 Part III, Subpart v, 2](https://www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ssnew/help/customer/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001018/topic/554400000004122/Chapter-02-Decision-Authorization-and-Notification) — Decision Authorization and Notification
* [Share Online Help](http://css.vba.va.gov/SHARE/) (accessed in Share)
* [VBMS Core User Guide](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/VBMS/Resources_Technical_Information.asp)
* [VBMS-A User Guide](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/VBMS/Resources_Technical_Information.asp)
* [Approved Language for Favorable Findings – Dependency](https://vbatraining.adobeconnect.com/ptl6rvl048lm/default/connect.pdf) Job Aid
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| Topic 1: Dependency Effective and Payment Dates |
| Introduction | This topic allows the trainee to understand effective dates and payment dates as they pertain to adding and removing dependents |
| Time Required | 0.25 hours |
| OBJECTIVES/Teaching PointsTopic begins on Slide 5 | Topic objectives:* Identify effective and payment dates for establishing and removing dependents

The following topic teaching points support the topic objectives: * Establishing Dependents
* Effective & Payment Dates
* Qualifying Evaluation
* Removing Dependents
* End-of-Month Rule
* End-of-Month Rule Exceptions
* Other Exceptions to the End-of-Month Rule
 |
| Establishing Dependents: Effective & Payment DatesSlide 6Handout p.4 | *Discuss the following potential effective dates for establishing dependents.*The effective date for adding dependents is the ***latest*** of the following: (see explanations on handout, and *M21-1 III.iii.5.L.2.d & f* for examples):* Date dependency arose/date of event
* Date of qualifying evaluation
* Date of commencement of award
* Date of claim (DOC)

The payment date, or payment start date, for adding dependents is the first of the month following the effective date of entitlement. |
| Establishing Dependents: Qualifying Evaluation*Slide 7**Handout p.4-5* | *Explain the following to trainees:*When promulgating a rating decision that assigns a combined disability evaluation of at least 30 percent, concurrently award additional disability compensation to which the Veteran is entitled for his/her dependents, even if the Veteran has not specifically claimed dependents with the claim for service connected compensation. In this situation, there does not need to be a claim for dependents pending and they should be added under the controlling rating EP. *Explain the 8-Year Rule to the trainees.*Information that is already of record regarding the status of the dependents of a Veteran in receipt of disability compensation is considered valid for the purpose of making entitlement determinations for up to eight years from the date VA received it. This policy coincides with the requirement for Veterans in receipt of additional compensation for dependents to verify their status every eight years.*Note*: For compensation claims received on or after March 24, 2015, a prescribed form for dependency must also be of record and less than eight years old. For a list of prescribed forms for dependency claims, refer to *M21-1 III.ii.2.B.1.b*.Development is required if the dependent information is over eight years old or a prescribed form is required, as noted above. For additional instructions, refer to *M21-1 III.iii.5.L.1.c*.Evidence that is more than eight years old can still be considered when resolving missing or inconsistent dependency information. Copies of Social Security cards, birth certificates, marriage certificates, or any document containing names or event dates (such as birth, marriage, divorce or death) are used to supplement a dependency claim, regardless of when it was added to the Veteran’s eFolder. Sometimes, dependent information can be found on older versions of *VA Form 21-526* or dependency verification forms (i.e. *VA Form 21-0538*). Another potential source of dependent information or records can be the Veteran’s Official Personnel Management File (OMPF) obtained through DPRIS or PIES. |
| Removing Dependents: End-of-Month RuleSlide 8*Handout p.5* | TheEnd-of-Month Rulestates that the effective date of *reduction* or *discontinuance* of an award is the last day of the month in which the event occurs ***if*** the reduction or discontinuance is due to the loss of a:* + spouse due to divorce, a voided or annulled marriage or death, or
	+ child due to marriage, adoption (out of the Veteran’s household), death or discontinuance of school attendance.

*Explain that the payment date is the first of the month following the event.**Ensure that you stress to the trainees the following:*Under the End-of-Month Rule, for award processing purposes in VBMS-A, the event date (or effective date) is the date of the event, and the award effective date (or payment start date) is the first of the month following the event.*Explain why the CFR and manual are different when it comes to last day of the month vs first of the following month:****Important:*** The last day of the month in which the event took place that resulted in the loss of a dependent represents the *last* date benefits are payable to or for the dependent. For award-processing purposes, the first day of the following month represents the first date of non-payment or reduced payment. |
| Removing Dependents: Exceptions to End-of-Month RuleSlide 9Handout p.6 | If a beneficiary loses a dependent for any reason ***other than those falling under the End-of-Month Rule***, remove the dependent on the date of the event that caused dependency to cease. Examples include:* date a minor child turns 18,
* date a school child turns 23, and
* date a school child begins receiving DEA benefits.

*Note*: When processing awards in VBMS-A for the situations above, the event date (or effective date) and award effective date (or payment date) are the same day. |
| Removing Dependents: Other Exceptions to End-of-Month RuleSlides 9*Handout p.6* | *Explain to the trainees the other exceptions to the End-of-Month Rule:** *Stepchildren*: The first full day that a stepchild is no longer a member of the Veteran’s household (day after the stepchild leaves the Veteran’s household). *For award processing purposes in VBMS-A, the event date is the date the child left the Veteran’s household, and the award effective date is the next day.* Refer to *M21-1 III.iii.5.G.6.h-k.*
* *Child adopted out of the Veteran’s household*: The requirement to remove a child from an award of disability compensation that was given up for adoption went into effect on *September 14, 2015*. For children adopted out of the Veteran’s household *prior to* that date, remove the child from the Veteran’s award effective September 14, 2015. *For award processing purposes, the event date and award effective date would both be September 14, 2015.* For children adopted out of the Veteran’s household after September 14, 2015 – *for award processing purposes, the event date is the date the Veteran gave the child up for adoption, and the award effective date is the first of the following month*. Refer to *M21-1 III.iii.5.G.5.a.*
 |
| Knowledge CheckSlide 10Use knowledge check questions to reinforce information provided in this topic. | *Present the following poll questions to the trainees and discuss the answers:* 1. Today’s date is August 1, 2020. While promulgating a rating decision which will increase a Veteran’s combined disability evaluation from 20% to 30%, effective June 15, 2020, you discover a complete *VA Form 21-686c* in the eFolder, received October 1, 2015. On the *VA Form 21-686c*, the Veteran claimed a spouse and a newborn child. Do you:
	1. Develop to the Veteran to verify/confirm status of dependents
	2. Request an updated *VA Form 21-686c* from the Veteran
	3. **Grant dependency for the spouse and child on the Veteran’s award**
	4. Deny additional benefits for the spouse and minor child
2. Given the previous scenario, what would be the *effective* date for adding the dependents?
	1. **June 15, 2020**
	2. August 1, 2020
	3. October 1, 2015
	4. July 1, 2020
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| Topic 2: Adding Dependents to the Corporate Record |
| Introduction | This topic will allow the trainee to add dependents into the Veteran’s Corporate Record. |
| Time Required | 0.25 hours |
| OBJECTIVES/Teaching PointsTopic begins on Slide 11 | Topic objectives:* Demonstrate establishing dependents in the Veteran’s corporate record using VBMS

The following topic teaching points support the topic objectives: * Adding Dependents to the Corporate Record
* Adding Dependents in VBMS Core
 |
| Adding Dependents to the Corporate RecordSlide 12Handout p.7 | *Inform the trainees that:*Prior to establishing a dependent on a Veteran’s award in VBMS-A, you must first enter the dependent on the Veteran’s corporate record in VBMS Core. When adding dependents to the corporate record through VBMS Core, you might see already associated dependents listed. If the dependent is already listed, do not add the same dependent again.Attempt to establish/edit dependents in VBMS Core before using Share. The best system to use is VBMS Core. This reduces the likelihood of creating duplicate dependent profiles and the system has better functionality overall for this process. Always check the corporate record first to determine if the dependent has already been associated to the Veteran.*Explain to the trainees that adding dependents to the Corporate Record in Share will not be discussed specifically; however, instructions are included in the trainee handout in case they need this information.* |
| Adding Dependents in VBMS CoreSlide 13-15Handout p.7-11 | Review the following steps with the trainees:* Under the **Veteran** drop-down menu, select **Dependents**.
* Select **Create New Dependent**.
* Enter *all required information*, then select the **Save** icon.

*The trainee handout and presentation include screenshots from the VBMS Core Dependents screen to demonstrate adding dependents to a Veteran’s corporate record. The trainee handout also includes screenshots from Share for trainee reference purposes only.* |
| Knowledge CheckSlide 16*Use knowledge check questions to reinforce information provided in this topic.* | *Present the following poll questions to the trainees and discuss the answers:*1. Which system should primarily be used to enter/edit dependent data in the Veteran’s corporate record?
	1. Share
	2. VBMS-A
	3. **VBMS Core**
	4. MAP-D
2. Which alternative system can be used to add dependent data to the Veteran’s corporate record?
	1. MAP-D
	2. VBMS-A
	3. VBMS Core
	4. **Share**
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| Topic 3: Entering Dependency Decisions in VBMS-A |
| Introduction | This topic will allow the trainee to enter dependency decisions in VBMS-A and generate an award for dependency adjustments. |
| Time Required | 0.5 hours |
| OBJECTIVES/Teaching PointsTopic begins on Slide 17 | Topic objectives:* Create dependency decisions in VBMS-A
* Identify favorable findings as they pertain to denying entitlement to additional benefits for a dependent

The following topic teaching points support the topic objectives: * Entering Dependency Decisions in VBMS-A
* Adding a Spouse in VBMS-A
* Adding a Minor Child in VBMS-A
* Denying Entitlement to Additional Benefits for Dependents
* Denying Dependents in VBMS-A
* Removing Dependents in VBMS-A
* Removing a Spouse *After* Initial Establishment
* Removing a Minor Child Prior to 18th Birthday
* Generating the Award in VBMS-A
 |
| Entering Dependency Decisions in VBMS-ASlide 18Handout p.12\*The trainee handout and presentation include screenshots from the VBMS-A Record Decisions and Dependency screens, to demonstrate the first steps in adding dependents to a Veteran’s award. | *Explain that in order to add any dependent in VBMS-A, the user must go to the* ***Record Decisions*** *screen and select the* ***Dependency*** *tab from the list of decision screens on the left.*Once the user has selected on the Dependency tab, the screen will open. *Discuss the different fields with the trainees:** Person– the name of the dependent based upon whom a decision is being made. Only dependents that have been added to the Veteran’s corporate record will show in this list.
* Relation Subtype– if it is a spouse, the field will auto-populate; if it is a minor child, the user must select Adopted, Biological or Stepchild.
* Event Date – the ***effective date*** for VA purposes.
* Award Status – allows the selection of the award status as a regular *Spouse* or *A&A Spouse*.
* Decision – allows the selection of the decision.
* Award Eff. Dt. – the ***payment date/payment start date*** for VA purposes. The Award Eff. Dt. field often auto-populates; however, *it is the user’s responsibility to ensure it is correct*.
* Relation, SSN, Date of Birth, File Number and Decision Date fields – auto-populates based on the information entered in the corporate record.
 |
| Adding a Spouse in VBMS-ASlide 19Handout p.13*\*The trainee handout and presentation include a screenshot from the VBMS-A Dependency screen, to demonstrate establishing a spouse.* | *Review the following steps:** Begin by selecting the spouse’s name from the **Person** drop-down. If this is not available, select **Add** and the fields should become available for editing.
* The **Relation Subtype** will auto populate as *Spouse*
* Enter the **Event Date** – the ***effective date*** for VA purposes
* Enter the **Award Status** as *Spouse* or *A&A Spouse*
* Enter the **Decision** as *Dependency Established*
* The **Award Eff. Dt.** – ***payment date/payment start date*** will populate based on the *Event Date* entered. Review for accuracy and update if necessary.
* Select **Add** to add more dependents or **Done** to save and return to the Record Decisions screen.
 |
| Adding a Minor Child in VBMS-ASlide 20Handout p.13-14*\*The trainee handout and presentation include screenshots from the VBMS-A Dependency screen, to demonstrate establishing a minor child.* | *Review the steps for adding a minor child and the automatic removal of the child effective his or her 18th birthday:** Begin by selecting the minor child’s name from the **Person** drop-down. If this is not available, select **Add** and the fields should become available for editing.
* **Relation Subtype** – the user must select either *Adopted***,** *Biological***,** or*Stepchild*.
* Enter the **Event Date** – the ***effective date*** for VA purposes.
* Enter the **Award Status** as *Minor Child.*
* Enter the **Decision** as *Eligible Minor Child.*
* the **Award Eff. Dt.** – ***payment date/payment start date*** will populate based on the *Event Date* entered.
* At this time, VBMS-A will automatically establish a line to remove the minor child effective his or her 18th birthday. *It is the VSR’s responsibility to ensure this information is correct.*
* Select **Add** to add more dependents, or **Done** to save and return to the Record Decisions screen.
 |
| Denying Entitlement to Additional Benefits for DependentsSlide 21Handout p.14 | *Explain to the trainee:*On August 23, 2017, the Veterans Appeals Modernization Act (AMA), Public Law 115-55, was signed into law, creating a new decision review process that allows VA to improve the delivery of benefits and service to Veterans and their families. Regarding dependency claims, if we deny entitlement to additional benefits for a dependent, we must provide the Veteran with the reason for the denial – and the favorable findings in our decision.A favorable finding is a determination of fact, based on applicable laws and regulations, made by the adjudicator on an issue under review. Favorable findings should relate to a material element that would be required to grant the benefit sought.Favorable findings only apply when *denying* entitlement to additional benefits for a dependent. |
| Denying Dependents in VBMS-ASlide 22-24*Handout p.14-15**\*The trainee handout and presentation include screenshots from the VBMS-A Dependency screen, to demonstrate denying entitlement to additional benefits for a dependent in VBMS-A and selecting favorable findings.* | *Explain that even if we are denying entitlement to additional benefits for a dependent, a decision and an award must be generated in VBMS-A:*When a Veteran claims a dependent for which VA cannot pay additional benefits, an award must be generated in VBMS-A. Doing so provides an official record that the claim has been addressed, as well as allows the VSR to generate a Redesigned Automated Decision Letter (RADL) for notification.To deny entitlement to additional benefits for a dependent in VBMS-A: * Select **Add.**
* Select the dependent’s name from the **Person** drop-down menu.
* Relation Subtype – Select **type** of dependent.
* Event Date – Actual date of the event affecting the dependency
* Select the **Award Status** of *Not an Award Dependent*.
* Under Decision, Select **Edit,** which will list the **favorable findings** – select the decision elements as “met” or “not met.”
* Enter or update the **Award Effective Date** or leave blank.
* Select **Done** to save the decision and close the screen.

*Explain that VSRs must select each decision element as “Met” or “Not Met,” as applies to the claim and dependent. Advise that a decision must be entered in every element category and that the options will vary depending on the relationship subtype of the dependent.* |
| Removing Dependents in VBMS-ASlide 25Handout p.16 | *Explain how to remove a dependent in VBMS-A:** Enter a new decision, or edit the existing removal decision, with an Award Status of ***Removal of Dependent*** with the applicable event date and award effective date of removal.
* There are NO favorable findings for a removal of a dependent.

*Explain it is possible to “delete” the historical decision that established the dependent, however this is only used when the dependent never should have been established to begin with (lacked the status of dependent at establishment). In addition, deleting the original decision line that established a dependent will remove him/her from the entire award, as if he/she never existed, and will create a large overpayment of benefits. This option is rarely used because the Veteran is usually entitled to payment for a certain period for that dependent.* For award processing purposes, when removing a dependent, the *Event Date* will be the actual date of event of loss of the dependent, even if the *Award Eff. Dt.* (payment date) is the end-of-month, because of the way the written explanation generates in the RADL.*Note*: If removing a dependent due to death, you must update the dependent in the corporate record in VBMS Core to add the date of death. |
| Removing a Spouse *After* Initial EstablishmentSlide 26Handout p.16-17\*The trainee handout includes a screenshot from the VBMS-A Dependency screen, to demonstrate adding a new line to remove a spouse. | *Review the following steps:* To remove a dependent spouse *after* the initial eligibility date for the dependency: * Select **Add.**
* Person – Select the person.
* Relation Subtype (auto populates).
* Enter the **Event Date.**
* Select the **Award Status** of ***Removal of Dependent.***
* Select the **Decision** reason that supports removing the dependent
* Enter the **Award Effective Date** - will auto populate to the 1st of the following month. Always verify this is correct.
* Select **Done** to save the decision and close the screen.

*For an example, refer to pg. 17 of the trainee handout. Discuss the scenario with the trainees.* |
| Removing a Child *Prior to* 18th BirthdaySlide 27Handout p.17-18 | *Review the following steps:*To remove a minor child from a date earlier than the 18th birthday:* Select the line on the screen that *removes* the minor child on his/her 18th birthday.
* Edit the **Event Date.**
* Update the **Award Status** – ***Removal of Dependent***.
* Select the **Decision** reason that supports removing the minor child.
* Enter the new **Award Effective Date** or verify if auto populated.
* Select **Done** to save the decision and close the screen.

*Remind trainees that the Event Date and Award Effective Dates for removing a minor child may vary, depending on the reason for the removal. VSRs should always verify the Event Date and Award Effective Dates are entered and auto-populate correctly.* |
| Generating the Award in VBMS-A*Slide 28**Handout p.18* | *Inform the trainees that:*Once all decisions have been entered, select **Generate Award**.*\*The trainee handout and presentation include a screenshot from the VBMS-A Record Decisions screen, to show the* ***Generate Award*** *button.* |
| Knowledge Check*Slide 29**Use knowledge check questions to reinforce information provided in this topic.* | *Present the following poll questions to the trainees and discuss the answers:*1. True/False: When adding a biological minor child in VBMS-A, the removal of the child will be automatically established based on the child’s 18th birthday.

**True.** VBMS-A will automatically establish a line to remove the minor child on his/her 18th birthday. The VSR must review this date for accuracy. 1. True/False: Favorable findings must be included in notification when granting additional benefits for dependency in VBMS-A.

**False.** Favorable findings apply only to denying entitlement to additional benefits for a dependent. 1. A Veteran called the VA on July 2, 2020, to inform us that he divorced his wife on May 15, 2020. What is the *Award Effective Date (payment date)* for the removal of the spouse from the Veteran’s award?
	1. May 15, 2020
	2. **June 1, 2020**
	3. July 2, 2020
	4. August 1, 2020

**Note:** For award purposes, the VSR must input May 15, 2020 in the *Event Date (effective date)* field. The *Award Effective Date* field will auto-populate to the 1st of the following month: June 1, 2020. |

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| Topic 4: Dependency Decision Notices |
| Introduction | This topic instructs the trainee how to create a Redesigned Automated Decision Letter (RADL) for notice of a decision involving a Veteran’s dependents. It informs them of actions to take, if RADL fails or is insufficient, and provides instructions on creating a decision notice using PCGL. |
| Time Required | 0.25 hours |
| OBJECTIVES/Teaching PointsTopic begins on Slide 30 | Topic objectives:* Prepare a dependency decision notice using VBMS-A and PCGL

The following topic teaching points support the topic objectives: * Creating the RADL for Dependency Decision Notices
* Adding/Modifying Evidence
* Import Evidence List Tab
* Evidence List Tab
* Required Elements of a Dependency Decision Notice
* Favorable Findings Requirements
* Example of a Dependency Grant
* Examples of a Dependency Denial
* Example of the Removal of a Dependent
* Using PCGL to Generate a Decision Notice
* PCGL/Letter Templates
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| Creating the RADL for Dependency Decision NoticesSlide 31*Handout p.19* | *Explain how to get to the Letter Interview Screen to build the RADL:*After generating the award in VBMS-A, the user will be on the *Current/Proposed* Screen. To create the RADL, select **Gen Letter** at the bottom of the screen, which takes the user to the *Award Letter Interview* screen to complete the decision notice. The process for using RADL to generate a decision notice regarding dependents is the same as the process for generating a decision notice for a rating decision; however, the user must *always* *list evidence* when generating a decision notice regarding dependents.*Inform the trainees that they may refer to the prior lesson entitled* Award Processing for Ratings (VBMS-A/RADL) *located in the VBA Learning Catalog for a refresher on the specific Award Letter Interview screens in VBMS-A.* |
| Adding/Modifying EvidenceSlide 32-34Handout p.19-20 | *Inform the trainees that they can use either the* Import Evidence List *or* Evidence List *tabs (or both) in the VBMS-A Award Letter Interview pane to list the evidence considered.* *Explain the difference between the two tabs:*The *Import Evidence List* tab will contain a catalogue of the VBMS eFolder documents from which the user may select. The *Evidence List* tab will allow the user to manually enter the evidence considered or modify or delete evidence imported from VBMS via the *Import Evidence List* tab.*Discuss the steps in using the Import Evidence List tab:*1. Select the eFolder document on the left.
2. Click **Add** to move the document to the *Available Evidence* pane on the right.

*Note*: If the documents are incorrectly labeled in the VBMS eFolder, they will be labeled incorrectly in the *Import Evidence List* tab on the Letter Interview screen in VBMS-A. Always ensure documents are identified correctly in the eFolder prior to processing awards in VBMS-A.*\*The trainee handout and presentation include a screenshot from the VBMS-A Award Letter Interview screen – Import Evidence List tab, to demonstrate adding evidence.**Discuss the steps in using the Evidence List tab:*1. Select the existing evidence, then click **Edit** or **Delete**; or click **Add** to add new evidence.
2. Enter/edit the **Evidence Type**.
3. Choose *Received on* or *Dated* – enter the corresponding date.
4. Add any necessary Free-Text.
5. Click **Accept** to save.

*Note*: ensure documents are correctly labeled in the VBMS eFolder and use the *Import Evidence List* tab to pull the evidence list into the RADL. The *Evidence List* tab should be utilized as a last resort to add/edit/delete evidence.*\*The trainee handout and presentation include a screenshot from the VBMS-A Award Letter Interview screen – Evidence List tab, to demonstrate adding, editing, and deleting evidence.* |
| Required Elements of Dependency Decision NoticeSlide 35-37*Handout p.21* | *Discuss the following:*When making dependency determinations, written notification must be provided to the Veteran for each dependent claimed. Decision notices may address only dependency issues or both rating issues and dependency issues at the same time. Since dependency is an authorization (i.e. non-rating) issue, the decision notice serves as the entire legal document of the entitlement determination and must include *all* the required elements of notification pertaining to the dependency claim. The VSR must create the decision notice using the RADL functionality in VBMS-A, or use PCGL if the RADL fails, is incorrect, or is insufficient beyond the addition of minor free text. VA decision notices addressing authorization issues, such as dependency, must include all the following elements:* inform the claimant of the issues adjudicated,
* summarize the:
	+ evidence VA considered,
	+ laws and regulations applicable to the claim, and
	+ applicable review options the claimant may use to seek further review of the decision,
* explain how to obtain or access evidence used in making the decision,
* identify for denied claims:
	+ the element(s) required to grant the claim that were not met, and
	+ a listing of findings that are favorable to the claimant under *38 CFR 3.104(c)*, if any exist.

*Remind trainees of the following additional notification requirements:*If granting entitlement to dependency for one or more dependent, or otherwise adjusting the Veteran’s running award, the decision notice must *also* notify the Veteran of:* the monthly rate of payment,
* the effective dates of entitlement and payment, and
* the amount of any benefits VA is withholding and the reason for withholding.

Finally, if the enactment of the dependency decision results in the creation of an overpayment to the Veteran’s account, notify the Veteran of his/her right to request:* a waiver of the overpayment, and/or
* a repayment plan.
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| Favorable Findings RequirementsSlide 38*Handout p.22* | Each notice of a decision affecting benefits must address any findings made by the adjudicator that are favorable to the claimant. When granting dependency claims, all applicable regulations will be summarized in the decision notice. If we are denying a claim for additional benefits for a dependent, the favorable findings will be displayed in list format in the decision notice.  *Note*:* Not all claims will have favorable findings.
* Element selection generates favorable finding language in the RADL.
* Elements are specific to dependent type, for example:
	+ spouse,
	+ minor child (biological child, stepchild and adopted child), or
	+ school child.
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| Example of a Dependency GrantSlide 39*Handout p.22* | The following language will be in the decision notice regarding a grant of additional benefits for a dependent *(the example on the slide is for a grant of additional benefits for a spouse)*:“< Dependent’s Name> has been added to your award effective <Event Date>, because you submitted all the required information and meet the eligibility requirements for the dependency allowance. (38 CFR 3.4, 38 CFR 3.50, 38 CFR 3.57, 38 CFR 3.204, 38 CFR 3.205, 38 CFR 3.216)”*Note*: There will be different regulations (CFRs) for different dependent subtypes. The approved language for grants, denials and removals is within the enclosed job aid. |
| Example of a Dependency DenialSlide 40-41*Handout p.22-23* | *Explain that the PPT shows an example of a decision notice regarding a denial of entitlement to additional benefits for a spouse:*If we denied a claim to add a dependent spouse, the decision notice identifies the element(s) not met with a summary of applicable laws and regulations. Then, the notice will list the element(s) met that are favorable to the Veteran. The decision notice will state:“We couldn’t pay for <Dependent’s Name> as a dependent, because not all required elements were met. The following list contains an explanation of the elements required to establish entitlement to additional compensation for your dependent:* You failed to provide the date and place of the marriage. (38 CFR 3.204).

Even though we aren’t able to pay additional compensation for your dependent, the following findings were favorable to your claim:* You are rated 30% or greater service connected.
* Your relationship with <Dependent’s Name> has been established.
* You provided your spouse's name.
* You provided <Dependent's Name> social security number.
* You provided marital history, as requested.
* You provided your spouse’s date of birth.”

*Note*: Favorable findings will be displayed in a list format in the decision notice. |
| Example of the Removal of a DependentSlide 42*Handout p.23* | *Explain the language for removal of a dependent. Favorable findings are NOT required for a removal. The example is the language that will be in the decision notice for a removal of a spouse due to a divorce:*“We have removed <Dependent’s Name> effective <Award Effective Date> for the following reason:* You and <Dependent’s Name> divorced on < Event Date>.”
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| Using PCGL to Generate a Decision NoticeSlide 43*Handout p.23-24* | *Explain when to use PCGL in lieu of RADL:*If the RADL in VBMS-A does not generate correctly and cannot be corrected using the Free-Text feature, or RADL fails to generate, PCGL must be used to generate the decision notice. The primary PCGL template compensation service employees use to address dependency is **CG4 RFW Comp Grant/Denial**.The **CG4 PCGL** template allows for input of withholding and offsets in the payment chart and language selection, such as for military retirement pay. This template can be used for notifying a claimant of a rating decision, both a rating decision and a decision regarding a Veteran’s dependent(s), or by selecting *Authorization Only* when prompted for a decision that only addresses a Veteran’s entitlement to additional benefits for his/her dependent(s). When using this template, the VSR must always free-text an explanation of the decision regarding the Veteran’s dependents, including the name of each dependent claimed, the effective date to add or remove the dependent (if applicable), favorable findings (if denying entitlement to additional benefits for a dependent) and a list of each piece of evidence relevant to the decision. *Note:* When using the CG4 template for a decision notice that only addresses a Veteran’s entitlement to additional benefits for a dependent, the VSR will also need to remove language and paragraphs that are not required or relevant to this category of decision, such as reference to a rating decision, *VA Form 21-8764*, and/or additional benefit information. |
| PCGL/Letter TemplatesSlide 44-45*Handout p.24*  | In addition, the following paragraphs must be amended when providing notice using PCGL:* **“What We Decided”**
	+ Include any favorable findings, if applicable, for each issue decided.
	+ Include applicable laws and regulations for each issue decided.
* **“Evidence Used to Decide Your Claim”**
	+ List any documents from the Veteran’s eFolder used to help decide the claim.
* **“What You Should Do If You Disagree with Our Decision”**
	+ Include approved text that explains AMA review options.
	+ Include text that explains how to access or obtain evidence.
* **“Enclosures”**
	+ Include *VA Form 20-0998,* *Your Rights to Seek Further Review of Our Decision*
	+ Delete *VA Form 21-8764* and Rating Decision (if only addressing dependency)

Examples of PCGL decision notice paragraphs for dependency decisions are provided in the *“Approved Language for Favorable Findings – Dependency”* job aid. See the references section for the link.*Note*: A sample PCGL is available in the handout. |

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| Knowledge Check*Slide 46**Use knowledge check questions to reinforce information provided in this topic.* | *Present the following poll questions to the trainees and discuss the answers:*1. When preparing an RADL in VBMS-A, which tab pulls evidence considered from the eFolder into the decision notification letter?
	1. Dependency Development
	2. Soliciting Claims
	3. **Import Evidence List**
	4. Correspondence Summary
2. Which resource provides examples of applicable language and CFR references for dependency grants, denials (including favorable findings), and removals?
	1. **Approved Language for Favorable Findings – Dependency Job Aid**
	2. VBMS Awards User Guide
	3. PCGL Master Letter
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| 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
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| Practical Exercise |
| Time Required | 0.25 hours |
| EXERCISE | *Option 1*: Have the trainees turn to pg. 30 of the trainee handout and complete the questions. Once done, review the answers and answer any questions.*Option 2*: Review the questions as a class and have the trainees answer aloud. |

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| Demonstration |
| Time Required | 1 hour |
| EXERCISE | Find a live claim in the VBMS Core work queue. Review the claim to become familiar with its attributes. Demonstrate how to add dependents to the corporate record, how to add dependents to the award, and how to notify the Veteran of the decision made.Ask if there are any questions about the information presented in the demonstration. |

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| Lesson Review and Wrap-up |
| IntroductionDiscuss the following: | The Dependency Effective Dates and Awards lesson is complete. Review each lesson objective and ask the trainees for any questions or comments. |
| Time Required | 0.25 hours  |
| Lesson ObjectivesSlide 48 | The trainee should be able to: * Identify effective and payment dates for establishing and removing dependents.
* Manage dependents in the Veteran’s corporate record using VBMS.
* Create dependency decisions in VBMS-A.
* Recognize favorable findings as they pertain to denying entitlement to additional benefits for a dependent.
* Generate a dependency decision notice using VBMS-A and PCGL.
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