

Office of Administrative Review

Automated Agent/Attorney Fee Deduction Job Aid

Purpose



Effective July 25, 2022, new functionality in the Veterans Benefits Management System-Awards (VBMS-A) and Enterprise Management for Payment and Workload Reporting (eMPWR) systems will allow automation of the agent/attorney fee deduction. Prior to the update, VBA required agent and attorney fee coordinators (AAFC) to send a memo to finance to establish an agent/attorney fee deduction prior to authorization of the award. Now, the AAFC will enter the deduction directly into VBMS-A.

This Job Aid reflects the procedures for entering a deduction within VBMS-A.

Audience



Veterans Service Representative (VSR) and Senior Veterans Service Representative (SVSR) AAFCs

References



- [eMPWR Help \(va.gov\)](#)
- *VBMS-Award User Guide*: Within the VBMS-A application, navigate to the **Awards Help** tab
- [M21-5, Chapter 8, Section B, Processing a Case Seeking Direct Payment of Fees](#)

Instructions



1. VSR AAFC determines the fee deduction amount utilizing the *Agent/Attorney Fee Calculator*.
2. VSR AAFC enters the entire fee deduction amount, including the assessment fee into VBMS-A under the **Other Adjustments** tab as outlined below.
 - a. from the **Record Decisions** page, click the **Award Adjustments** link
 - b. click the **Other Adjustments** tab
 - c. click **Add**
 - d. click **Adjustment Reason** and select the reason **Attorney Fee** for adjustment
 - e. for **Adjustment Amount**, enter the entire fee deduction amount including the assessment fee
 - f. for **From Date**, enter the date the AAFC generated the award

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- g. for **To Date**, enter the next calendar date, and
 - h. click **Done**.
3. VSR AAFC generates the award.
4. VSR AAFC routes the award along with the calculator to an SVSR AAFC for review.
5. SVSR AAFC
 - a. verifies accuracy of the calculator
 - b. digitally signs the calculator
 - c. verifies the correct fee deduction amount was entered under the **Other Adjustments** tab
 - d. takes a screenshot of the **Other Adjustments** tab showing the entered fee deduction amount (see [important reminder](#)),
 - e. takes a screenshot of all applicable current award lines from the “Award Information” screen, and
 - f. uploads the calculator and screenshots into VBMS.
6. SVSR AAFC authorizes the claimant’s award if the calculator and fee deduction amount is correct.
7. SVSR AAFC will return the case using the deferral functionality in VBMS if corrections are required.

Record Decisions - Other Adjustments

★ Main
Adjustments

Disability Pay Separation Pay Retired Pay Drill Pay Other Adjustments

| Select | Decision Date | Adjustment Reason | Disability Pay Type | * Adjustment Amt | Add to Withholding | * From Date | To Date | Add |
|--------------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------|------------|--------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 07/13/2022 | Attorney Fee | | \$2,665.00 | | 03/01/2022 | 07/01/2022 | Delete |

Basic Eligibility
Dependency
Elections

Undo

Important Reminders

- The fee deduction amount entered in the **Other Adjustments** tab will not function like a typical withholding (retired pay, drill pay, etc.).
 - No withholding will appear on the award print or the award information screen.
 - Subsequent deletion (after authorization) of the fee deduction entry will not release any benefits or reverse the fee deduction action.
- If a fee deduction that has been previously authorized is in VBMS-A while processing a subsequent award, that prior deduction amount will not impact current award processing.



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- However, if a fee deduction entry is inadvertently deleted from VBMS-A after the award has been authorized, re-entering the prior fee deduction (amount, dates, etc.) will trigger a new deduction.
 - Authorization personnel should pay close attention to the decision date and ensure it aligns with the current award they are processing.
 - The decision date is the date the user enters the adjustment into VBMS-A. That date is system generated and cannot be modified by the user.
 - Options for taking a screenshot include, but are not limited to, Print Screen, Snipping Tool, and Snip & Sketch as discussed in this PC Magazine article, "[How to Take Screenshots in Windows 10.](#)"
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Other Resources

VA 4629273, *Overview of Agent Attorney Fee Awards and eMPWR Functionality*