

# **VBA Obligations Webinar Training Frequently Asked Questions Resource Guide October 2017**

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- **Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)**
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This resource guide provides answers to questions asked during the Obligations Webinar Training delivered by Administrative Accounting Division (AAD) from VBA Administrative and Loan Accounting Center (ALAC) on October 26, 2017. The questions are listed in the order in which they were asked on the whiteboard during the training.

## VBA Obligations Questions and Answers (Q&A)

Obligation Question	Obligation Answer
Should the end date of the obligation be 12/08/2017 for the CR?	<p>Yes, the Continuing Resolution (CR) is from October 1 through December 8, 2017.</p> <p>This is based on information from Congress and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on the status of VA's FY 2018 appropriation, the Department issued operating guidance under a Continuing Resolution (CR) – VBA Discretionary Budget is funded at 18.90% of the FY 2018 President's Budget submission for General Operating Expenses and Housing.</p>
Do we still obligate for overnight travel for Veterans in CAATS?	Per VAF 1358 Policy, payments to Veterans and/or attendant or non-contract transportation vendors for travel related to medical care from medical services appropriation and other payments to Veterans from the General Post Fund are an approved use under Authority Code 11.
Is it possible for a small station to get Separation of Duties waiver for creating and approving 1358 obligations?	Yes, you may submit a request for a waiver to VA Central Office for review and a decision.
How to determine where to send funds from the Suspense fund 3875?	Research the transaction that placed the funds in suspense. Please work with your local RO staff for transactions initiated by your RO. Contact your ALAC accountant if the transaction did not originate within your RO.
How do I follow up with a debt sent to IPAC?	Research the IPAC transaction in the FASPAC system. If you need access to the FASPAC website, please contact the individuals listed on the FASPAC website: <a href="https://vaww.faspac.fsc.va.gov/login.aspx">https://vaww.faspac.fsc.va.gov/login.aspx</a> .

Obligation Question	Obligation Answer
What companies can we submit on a 1358?	Miscellaneous obligations (1358) may be used when obligations cannot be processed by authorized methods such as the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) - based contracting or inter/intra agency reimbursable process. 1358 obligations are not <i>vendor-restricted</i> , but are purpose-driven, wherein the request to obligate funds must be justifiable per one of the 23 approved uses in the <a href="#">VA 1358 Policy</a> , Appendix A.
If a 1358 gets rejected it will be great to send an email to the individual that created the 1358. Can this be done for easier resolution?	<p>Standard procedures require the Regional Offices to provide one point of contact (POC) who handles all RO inquiries i.e. rejects, travel, obligations and one POC for WV inquiries. The Finance Liaisons have historically served in these capacities. Because many e-mails flow between the RO and ALAC, having single POC per RO allows ALAC Accountants to easily manage communication &amp; track processing activity with their assigned stations.</p> <p>Our accountants are instructed to work through the station's SSD Chief and the Finance Liaison, who as facilitator ensures that inquiries are routed to and from the appropriate staff member. Because of the number of ROs each Accountant manages, it is in the best interest of the RO that we retain a streamlined list of individual POCs per RO.</p>
Purged numbers are not clear in CAATs, how do I search for numbers that will interface?	<p>For the Obligation module, the user creates the obligation number. However, CAATS will display an error message if the user selects an obligation number that has already been used.</p> <p>For the Requisition module, CAATS automatically generates purchase request numbers, and contracting assigns the purchase order number.</p>

Obligation Question	Obligation Answer
Do 1358 Travel Obligations for Benetravel need to have the funding established on line 002 and \$0.00 for line 001?	No. Benetravel obligations need to have funding established for line 002 only.
What is the policy for obligations under the \$3,500.00 threshold?	<p>Use the Government purchase card for purchases under the \$3,500 threshold.</p> <p>Per VA Office of Financial Policy, Volume XVI, Chapter 1, dated January 26, 2017: The standard micro-purchase threshold is currently \$3,500.</p>
How can you tell on the VEN2 FMS table if a vendor is blocked?	The Financial Services Center (FSC) places a note in the COMMENTS field that says "blocked".
What should be the turnaround time for ALAC to process modifications?	The turnaround time for ALAC to process modification is two days. Keep in mind that ALAC receives a high volume of obligations during September, October, and at the end of a Continuing Resolution period.
What does the SPDX FMS table stand for?	SPDX = Spending Control Document Cross Reference
Please explain when manual 2237's are needed? For only option years contracts?	ALAC processes manual 2237s for obligations with option years. The Contracting Office may advise when other situations will require a manual 2237.