**VBA Federal and Non-Federal Advances**

**Webinar**

**Question & Answer**

**Resource Guide**

**April 25, 2019**

**Sponsored by:**

* Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)
* Office of Financial Management (OFM)
* VBA Administrative and Loan Accounting Center (ALAC)

This resource guide provides answers to questions asked during the VBA Advances webinar delivered by VBA Administrative Loan and Accounting Center (ALAC) on April 25, 2019. The questions are listed in the order they were asked during the training.

| **Federal and Non-Federal Advances** **Question** | **Federal and Non-Federal Advances** **Answer** |
| --- | --- |
| Is minor construction considered a Federal Advance? | No, minor construction cannot be considered a Federal Advance. There are 2 types of payment methods for minor construction, Federal and Non-Federal. Federal construction payments are processed in FASPAC with FSC processing an expenditure transfer transaction (ET) to expense the construction obligation in FMS. Non- Federal payments are processed as certified payment transactions (CT) in CAATS expensing the construction obligation in FMS; the vendor submits invoices directly to the Regional Office (RO) for uploading to CAATS.As an example, Nashville Regional Office (RO) leases their building from GSA, and GSA exclusively manages all construction projects at all RO GSA leased buildings. A signed GSA Reimbursable Work Authorization (RWA) 2957 between VBA and GSA for construction services should include the construction obligation for GSA IPAC billing purposes. When the construction obligation is not referenced; an incorrect construction obligation is referenced; or there is insufficient funding on the construction obligation, a federal, construction ET advance transaction is created by FSC displayed on the RSD F859 Report. The RO station is responsible for obligating or increasing the construction obligation and for submitting a signed MTF to the ALAC accountant for offset of the construction ET Advance transaction in FMS. |
| It is my understanding that GSA vehicle bills are not processed through CAATS anymore. We are supposed to do a= MISC TRANS FORM in order to clear them. What information is required on this form and where do we find that specific information? Is there an example that can be sent for reference? | At the beginning of BFY2019, ALAC provided Financial Services Center (FSC) with a listing of all RO GSA Motorpool 1358 obligations for monthly billing offsets. GSA Motorpool IPAC billings do not include the 1358 obligation, and therefore, FSC agreed to process the advance offsets for all RO stations. If GSA Motorpool ET Advances are on your station's RSD F859 Report, please notify the ALAC accountant with your station's BFY2019 1358 obligation for FSC to process future offsets. A signed Miscellaneous Transfer Form (MTF) is required to offset GSA Motorpool ET Advance transactions; CAATS does not have all the required fields necessary to reconcile ET Advance transactions from the F859. The ALAC accountant can assist with providing required accounting information, as well as an MTF example, for appropriate offset of GSA Motorpool Advance transactions. |
| Is there a future mechanism to clear out our own advances through CAATS (or the new system)? | The CAATS System is no longer managed by ALAC. There is no earmarked IT funding to enhance CAATS, and the system is only being maintained for current functioning. Only outstanding CB and DV Advances on the RSD F855 Report can be offset in CAATS. All other types of federal and non-federal advances; ET, Travel, etc. must be submitted with a signed MTF to the ALAC accountant for offset in FMS. |
| Is there a set policy for collecting a travel debt from an employee? When collected, do we need to put the funds in suspense then process an MTF to offset? | According to [VA Policy Volume XII Ch 4 Employee Debts,](https://www.va.gov/finance/docs/VA-FinancialPolicyVolumeXIIChapter04.pdf) employee debts are due immediately. When an employee is overpaid with a travel advance, a Bill of Collection needs to be processed in CAATS for the overpayment and provided to the employee for collection. This action generates a BD transaction in FMS. The employee reimburses the VA with a check payable to the Agent Cashier, processed in Suspense Fund 3875. The station liaison submits a signed MTF to the ALAC accountant with reference to the outstanding travel advance and the funds in Suspense Fund 3875 for the offset in FMS. When the travel advance offset is complete, the Bill of Collection created in CAATS needs to be cancelled, as it's not possible for the BD transaction in FMS to be referenced for the offset. |
| When are Travel advances cleared by MTF? | When funds are collected from an employee for a travel advance overpayment and placed in Suspense Fund 3875, the station submits a signed MTF to the ALAC accountant for offset of the outstanding travel advance with the collected funds in FMS. However, the traveler would need to repay all overpayments immediately. |
| If we have access to FMS doesn’t that generally mean we have access to the web based RSD reports? Does FMS have the same login as RSD? | Although the same User ID and Password are used to access both Financial Management System (FMS) and Roger Software Development (RSD), a separate entry to obtain access to each on a signed VA Form 9957 is required. |
| What do the codes CB and DV stand for? | CB is the Transaction Type assigned to US Bank Convenience Checks transactions, and DV is the Transaction Type assigned to Direct Disbursement Advance transactions in FMS. They are both advance type transactions displayed on the RSD F855 Report. |
| Are all transactions available for view in FASPAC? | The IPAC document and associated billing documents are accessed and downloaded from FASPAC. The transactions associated with the billing documents are in FMS. |
| Is there a listing of the codes used in CAATS/FMS? Where are they located?  | A listing of FMS transaction codes are found in the Financial Management System (FMS) Basic Manual - [https://vaww.fsccollaboration.fsc.va.gov/training/Documents/ Financial%20Management%20System%20Basic%20Handout.pdf](https://vaww.fsccollaboration.fsc.va.gov/training/Documents/%20Financial%20Management%20System%20Basic%20Handout.pdf) For CAATS, the FMS transaction codes are hard coded and dependent upon on the module/sub module selected for processing.  |
| How do I get FASPAC access? | A VA Form 9957 is required for access to the FASPAC System. Regional Offices may contact the VAFSC IPAC Processing Group or the CUPS personnel at your station for specific instructions on completing the access form.  |