# SPM

**Strategic Program Management Office**
Veterans Benefits Administration

**Introduction
to the
VBA VSignals (VVSR) Service Recovery Program**

**Resource Guide**

**Duration:** 30 minutes

**Audience:**

This lesson is intended for new service recovery practitioners and service recovery analysts.

**Purpose**

The purpose of the training is to provide new service recovery practitioners (SRPs) and service recovery analysts (SRAs) an overview of the VVSR program and the responsibilities associated with the SRP and SRA roles.

**Objective**

Upon completing this lesson, trainees will be able to:

- Define the role of the SRA and SRP.
- Provide a basic understanding of the VVSR program strategy and VBA's approach to service recovery.

# VBA Veterans Signals Service Recovery Program

**VBA Veterans Signals Service Recovery (VVSR) Program**

- Launched October 3, 2022, with the goal of listening to Veterans and leveraging their insights to make process improvements (PIs).
- VBA established the VVSR program to meet statutory, regulatory, and policy requirements to use qualitative and quantitative data relating to customer experience (CX) and satisfaction.
- Business lines (BL) and program offices (PO) use Veteran, dependent, survivor, and caregiver feedback to identify PIs.

**Service Recovery Practitioners (SRPs)**

- A subject matter expert within a BL/PO who has the ancillary duties of initiating telephone calls with survey respondents to discuss their experience and document their feedback.

**Service Recovery Analysts (SRAs)**

- A subject matter expert within a BL/PO who has the ancillary duties of reviewing and analyzing service recovery data for insights and trends that may lead to the development of process improvements.

The VVSR program allows VBA to meet statutory, regulatory, and policy requirements to use qualitative and quantitative data relating to customer experience (CX) and satisfaction. It also provides BLs/POs opportunities to use Veteran feedback to identify PIs.

| Quantitative Data | Qualitative Data | Qualitative Data | Intended Outcome |
|---|---|---|---|
| VSignals Surveys | Service Recovery | Insights from Veterans CX for decision-making | Continuous Process Improvements |

VSignals survey information (quantitative data) and insights from service recovery calls and free-text comments (qualitative data) are leveraged to drive continuous process

improvements. The quantitative data provides measurable metrics on performance and customer satisfaction, while the qualitative data offers detailed insights and feedback from the service recovery respondents. By analyzing these data sources together, we can identify trends, uncover the root causes of issues, and develop strategies and/or PIs to enhance our services and processes, ultimately leading to better outcomes for our customers.

As an SRP, you are participating in this month's training cohort because your BL/PO has identified you as someone who would be a good candidate to speak with Veterans and/or stakeholders to learn more about their experience.

In the program, individuals who initiate calls to Veterans and/or stakeholders are called SRPs. As an SRP, you play an important role in helping VBA obtain information on how we are doing and what we can improve upon as we provide services to Veterans and their dependents. As an SRA, you play a crucial role in analyzing the data to help your BL/PO identify insights and trends that can drive process improvements.

## A New Way of Doing Business for VBA

### STATUTORY AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

**Public Law 115-336**

The *21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act* established that all Executive agencies have a responsibility to use qualitative and quantitative data obtained from the experience and satisfaction of customers to identify areas of concern that need improvement and improve the delivery of customer service.

**38 CFR § 0.603 - Customer Experience Principles**

VA will use CX data and insights in strategy development and decision-making to ensure that the voice of Veterans, service members, their families, caregivers, and survivors inform how VA delivers care, benefits, memorialization, and services.

There are statutory and regulatory requirements regarding the customer's experience for all federal agencies.

Through the *21st century Integrated Digital Experience Act* VA has the responsibility to use CX data and insights to identify areas of concern that need improvement and use this information in strategy development and decision-making.

This is a new way of doing business for VA and VBA because, for the first time, Veterans and their stakeholders will inform us (*VA, VBA, the government*) on how we deliver benefits and services to them.

### INFORMATION FROM MIKE FRUEH, PDUSB

*"CX is an expressed priority of the Secretary and the President, with policy governed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in OMB Circular A-11, Section 280. VA CX policy is outlined in VA Directive 0010, dated December 7, 2020. VBA has identified CX, feedback, and continuous improvement as part of our strategic priorities… and included CX as a critical element in Senior Executive performance standards."*

*"CX remains a top priority across government, in VA, and especially within VBA. I am proud that Veterans are at the center of every decision we make in VBA."*

VBA's Principal Deputy Undersecretary for Benefits, Mr. Frueh has stated that VBA has identified CX, feedback, and continuous process improvements as part of our strategic goals and Veterans are at the center of every decision that we make in VBA.

Because of the statutory and regulatory requirements, the Secretary of VA and VBA's commitment to CX, the Deputy Under Secretary for benefits, along with SPMO's input, developed a VVSR strategy.

## VBA VSignals Service Recovery Strategy

**Service Recovery Practitioners will:**

- Identify survey participants who assigned one or more low (Likert scale) scores to perform service recovery (SR) using established scripts and open-ended questions.

- Identify survey participants who assigned one or more high (Likert scale) scores to identify potential PIs using established scripts and open-ended questions.

The required minimum number of completed SR contact calls per month for low Likert and high Likert scores per survey is described in the VVSR Policy. Surveys that include free text will have a reduced number of required monthly completed contacts, as the inclusion of free text provides an enhanced opportunity to obtain knowledge from the survey respondent about their CX in their own words.

The information captured by SRPs during an SR call is compiled and reviewed by a service recovery analyst within your BL/PO. The information obtained from those interactions helps to determine insights and explore interventions and innovations.

**Service Recovery Analysts (SRA) will**:

- Compile a monthly report identifying/summarizing pain points, bright spots, trends, concerns, analysis, and insights from SR contacts.
  - Assess insights and explore potential interventions and innovations.
- Submit data points for the quarterly report: key insights obtained from SR calls, proposed PIs, and a status summary of a current PI initiative.

The strategy addresses how SRPs will identify and contact individuals and how SRAs will use the information obtained from those interactions to determine insights and explore interventions and innovations.

During your training, we will discuss how to identify participants and we will go into great detail regarding respondent contact and what that entails during the SR calls.

This strategy applies to each VBA survey. Each survey asks questions about the respondent's CX during an interaction. Using the survey, respondents are provided an opportunity to rate those interactions with a Likert score of one through five; with a one being low and a five being high.

Low scores of one, two, or three indicate the respondent did not have an exceptional experience. For these, the BL/PO is required to make a specified minimum number of completed contact calls per month or make at least two attempts to reach each survey respondent for the given month. Surveys that include free text will have a reduced number of required monthly completed contacts, as the inclusion of free text provides an enhanced opportunity to obtain knowledge from the survey respondent about their CX in their own words.

*A completed contact is a SR call in which the survey respondent responds to one or more follow-up questions about the reason for the VSignals survey scores provided from their CX.*

High Likert scores of four or five, indicate the respondent had a pleasant experience. For these, your BL/PO is required to obtain feedback from a *specified minimum number of survey respondents per month* or make at least two attempts to reach each for the given month. The feedback provides an opportunity to obtain valuable insight to identify potential process improvements.

*Depending on your BL/PO, you will either be using a call list, which is an Excel spreadsheet, or working directly in the VSignals platform. In additional training, we will*

Once all information is gathered, the SRA will compile data for a monthly report that identifies and summarizes the pain points, bright spots, concerns, or any trends gained from the insights of the SR calls.

*The required minimum number of completed SR contact calls per month for low Likert and high Likert scores per survey is described in the VVSR Policy.*

## Results & Purpose: Continuous Process Improvements
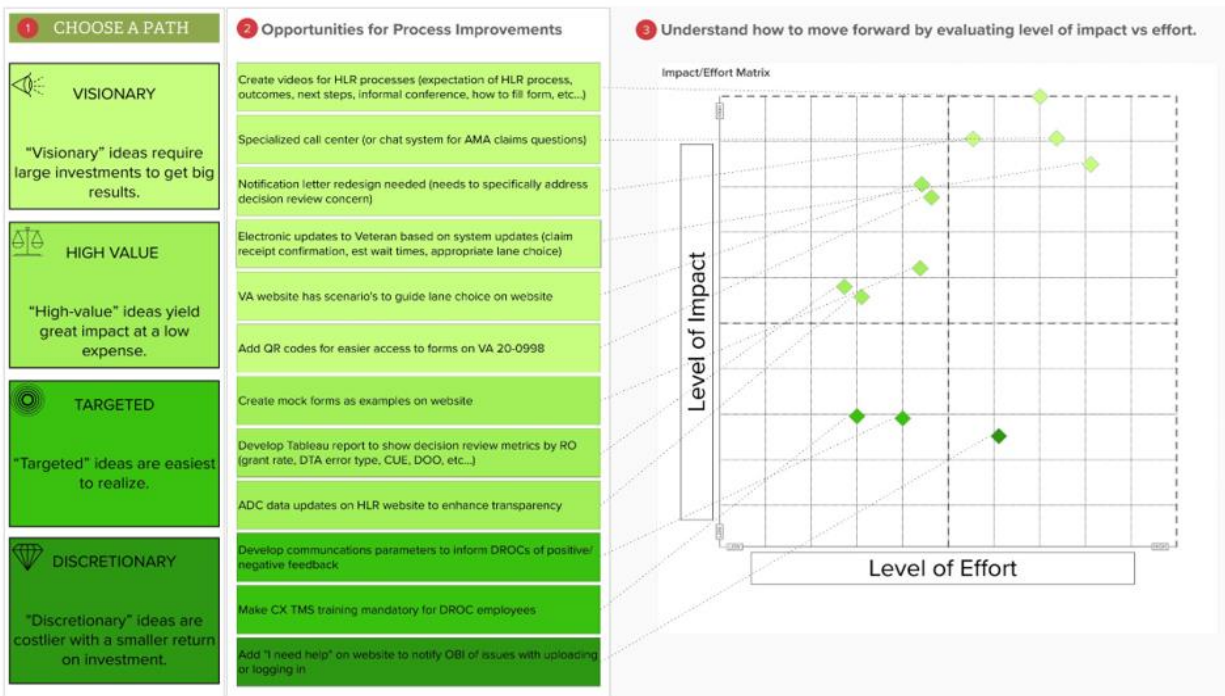


It is important to understand the information you capture during your calls is analyzed and categorized into different themes of the survey by SRAs. Each month, the data is reviewed by the analysts on your team for opportunities for PIs.

Shown above is one example of the results of a quarterly data session that used information from the SR calls. The information you obtain from SR calls will help your

business line identify PIs that will benefit your BL/PO, VBA, and the Veteran experience. Some ideas may even lead to VA-wide PIs.

## SRP Training Schedule

| Training | Format |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Customer Service Lite | TMS Pre-requisite |
| 2. Crisis Management Training | TMS Pre-requisite |
| 3. Own the Moment/VSignals 101 | TMS Pre-requisite |
| 4. Introduction to the VBA VSignals Service Recovery (VVSR) Program | TMS |
| 5. VVSR Program Kick-off | Teams |
| 6. Conducting Service Recovery Calls | TMS |
| 7. Documenting and Storing Service Recovery Call Information | TMS |
| 8. Conducting Service Recovery Calls and Documentation Assessment | Instructor-led 1:1 Assessment via Teams |

Shown above is a listing of the training provided in the SRP monthly training cohort.

There are a variety of training sessions utilizing TMS, instructor-led courses in Teams, and one-on-one assessments. This training is mandatory, and all modules must be completed before you can begin making SR calls.

If you have not completed the first three prerequisites, it is recommended that you do so as soon as possible and inform the SPMO Team and your BL/PO SR lead.

These courses must be completed prior to beginning the general modules as they lay the foundation that we will build upon.

## SRA Training Schedule

| Training | Format |
|---|---|
| 1. Introduction to the VBA VSignals Service Recovery (VVSR) Program | TMS |
| 2. VVSR Program Kick-off | Teams |
| 3. Learning Excel 2021 | TMS |
| 4. Learning Mural for Collaboration | TMS |
| 5. Thematic Analysis | TMS |
| 6. Monthly Reports | TMS |

Shown above is a listing of the training provided to SRAs. The training utilizes TMS and an instructor-led course in Teams.

*Leaning Excel 2021 may be assigned at the discretion of the BL/PO depending on the SRA's experience in Excel.*

## Technology Requirements

| Technology Required | Required Access | Follow-up Action |
|---|---|---|
| SOP to obtain Soft Phone | SRP | Submit an IT request for a softphone |
| VSignals Mailbox SOP | SRP | Utilize a VSignals mailbox for SR |
| Access to BL/PO case management portal i.e., VBMS, Salesforce | SRP | Verify your access; request access, if needed |
| Mural Access | SRA | Submit an IT request for a Mural account |
| VVSR Program Community of Practice | SRP/SRA | Verify your access; contact SPMO if you need assistance |

| VSignals Access | SRP/SRA | Verify your access; contact SPMO if you need assistance |
| --- | --- | --- |

Here is a listing of the technology requirements:

**SRPs**

- **Softphone**: Employees making VSignals SR calls are required to use a Softphone. A softphone is a software-based phone system that offers internet-based calling via a computer or laptop with the same features as a desk phone.
- **VSignals Group Mailbox**: Your BL/PO is required to maintain a mailbox dedicated to SR. It is important you obtain access and use this mailbox instead of your personal VA.gov mailbox. Take note this is the mailbox you will use for all email correspondence to survey respondents, such as thank you emails after completing SR calls.
- **VVSR Program CoP SharePoint page**: The CoP SharePoint site is where you will find many resources, including contact information for other BLs/Pos with VSignals surveys.
- **VSignals Access**: VSignals is a real-time digital survey platform used for the analysis of CX survey data. As we transition towards a more automated format, the VSignals platform will be used for identifying survey respondents and documenting feedback received during SR calls.
- **BL/PO Case Management Portal**: SRPs are required to have access to systems your BL/PO uses to provide services, such as VIEWS, VBMS, Salesforce, etc. Access to these systems will provide you with an opportunity to familiarize yourself with survey respondent information prior to and during a call.

**SRAs:**

- **VVSR Program CoP SharePoint page**: The CoP SharePoint site is where you will find many resources, including contact information for other BLs/Pos with VSignals surveys.
- **Mural**: a collaborative digital workspace designed to facilitate creative and interactive teamwork. It allows users to brainstorm, plan, and organize ideas visually in real time. The software provides a wide range of tools such as virtual sticky notes, diagrams, and drawing capabilities, making it versatile for providing an intuitive and visually engaging platform for ideation and problem-solving.

- **VSignals Access**: VSignals is a real-time digital survey platform used for the analysis of CX survey data. As we transition towards a more automated format, the VSignals platform will be used for identifying survey respondents and documenting feedback received during SR calls.

*For BL/PO using a call list, a basic knowledge of Excel is helpful. The electronic spreadsheet program known for storing, organizing, and manipulating data is used in the SR program for the creation or management of call lists and for documenting caller feedback. Having a basic knowledge of Excel will increase the ease of navigating the Excel template when completing SR activities. SPMO will let you know if your BL/PO is using the Excel call lists or if it has transitioned to the VSignals platform.*

## Resources

**Monthly CoP meeting hosted by SPMO**

In addition to the CoP SharePoint Site, we offer a CoP meeting where SRPs, SRAs, and SR leads come together each month.

The CoP monthly meeting is designed to bring together individuals from diverse departments and backgrounds who share a common passion for improving the customer experience. The focus of the meeting is not about SPMO providing information, but rather the opportunity for you to connect with like-minded colleagues, exchange valuable insights, and ultimately improve the customer journey.

The CoP consists of a dynamic network of passionate individuals who we know are eager to share their experiences, insights, and best practices with one another.

We encourage you to take full advantage of this unique forum that offers many opportunities for you to connect, collaborate, and grow alongside like-minded professionals who share your passion and commitment to improving the customer experience for Veterans, dependents, survivors, and caregivers.

We offer two optional TMS courses, entitled Own the Moment and VA Customer Service: Angry Caller, which may be taken at your leisure.

- **TMS VA 42980** – Own the Moment/Self Paced

- **TMS VA 12966** – VA Customer Service: Angry Caller

As a best practice, we recommend that you prioritize time to complete both since this month is dedicated to VVSR program information.

**VVSR Program CoP SharePoint site**

There are several resources in the **Toolkit** on the CoP SharePoint site for both difficult conversations and crisis management located in the SRP folder.
You are strongly encouraged to bookmark the site, as this will be the location where you will find all your resources.

# Acronyms & Definitions

| Full Name | Acronym | Definition |
|-----------|---------|------------|
| Customer Experience | CX | Pursuant to **38 C.F.R. § 0.603**, CX "is the product of interactions between an organization and a customer over the duration of their relationship. VA measures these interactions through Ease, Effectiveness, and Emotion, all of which impact the overall trust the customer has in the organization." CX is the customers' perceptions of their interactions with the VA, to include access and the delivery of VA care, benefits, and memorial services. |
| Community of Practice | CoP | An online learning environment and networking community. |
| Process Improvement | PI | The continuous process of identifying positive changes for an overall program or service and implementing them systemically |
| Service Recovery | SR | "…A fundamental element of VA's commitment to world-class CXs that empowers all staff to quickly acknowledge customer concerns, clearly communicate a resolution plan and make things right, thus fulfilling VA's duty to Veterans, Service members, their families, caregivers, and survivors. SR is integral to VA culture; is considered everyone's responsibility and reflects an opportunity to turn a potentially negative experience into a positive one." (**VA Directive 0010 dated December 7, 2020**). |
| Service Recovery Analyst | SRA | A government employee who is a subject matter expert (SME) within a BL/PO and has the ancillary duties of analyzing the data obtained from a SR call. |
| Service Recovery Practitioner | SRP | A government employee who is an SME within a BL and has the ancillary duties of initiating telephone calls with survey respondents to discuss their experience. They also document the survey respondents' feedback. |
| VBA VSignals Service Recovery Program | VVSR | Launched on Oct 3, 2022, VBA established the VVSR program to meet statutory, regulatory, and |

| | | policy requirements to use qualitative and quantitative data relating to CX and satisfaction. The program provides a structure for VBA to maximize insights from VSignals surveys and act upon customer feedback to drive performance improvements and service recovery while allowing each BL/PO flexibility to address its unique needs. |
|---|---|---|

*Reminder:* Complete the assessment questions and end-of-training survey to obtain TMS credit.