

## PSSDC Information-Sharing Template – September 2020

*Information Sharing is collected for the purpose of the PSSDC Meeting of September 2020.*

**Information contained in this document cannot be shared outside of the PSSDC without the approval of the member jurisdiction (author).**

***Jurisdictions are kindly requested to limit information sharing to a maximum of 3 pages.***

| Jurisdiction:  | Contact   |
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| <p><b>1. <u>Priorities &amp; Accomplishments:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Briefly describe what your jurisdiction sees as its <b>top 2-3 service delivery priorities/initiatives over the next 6-12 months, and steps you intend to take to address these priorities.</b></li> <li>Briefly describe any significant <b>service delivery accomplishment, progress, and/or milestone achieved in these priority areas over the last 6-12 months.</b></li> </ul> | <p><b>Priorities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reducing wait times for disability benefit applications is the number one priority for Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC). To achieve this, we are focusing on a number of initiatives including:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retaining staff hired through Budget 2018 for another two years (approximately 160 people) and hiring/training approximately 300 more staff;</li> <li>Working with our Five Eyes partners, notably Australia, and leveraging their research/evidence to inform our tools. This will provide our decision-makers with faster access to the information they need to make decisions, and forms part of our efforts to develop a plan to meet the Minister's mandate commitment to implement a system of automatic approval for the most common disability applications;</li> <li>Developing additional simplified processes for administrative decision-makers so that nurse adjudicators can focus on complex applications;</li> <li>Exploring options, including digital solutions, to reduce the evidence required to adjudicate hearing loss and tinnitus applications, which are among the most common applications; and</li> <li>Continuing to leverage data and innovative approaches in service delivery to better understand issues and achieve improvements for Veterans.</li> </ul> </li> <li>To increase the use of technology and move forward on digital end-to-end services for Veterans across service delivery channels, we are:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing a fully integrated Service Management Plan to help identify digital gaps and to develop a holistic plan to address the gaps; and</li> <li>Building on progress made through (1) the digitization of back end systems through the Pension for Life project and (2) My VAC Account, an online portal that allows Veterans to submit all information through a guided process and contributes to faster processing times.</li> </ul> </li> <li>To improve the transition experience, we are working closely with DND on the following initiatives:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Transition Trial at the Canadian Forces Base Borden Transition Centre, a pilot project conducted with CAF to develop a professional standardized and personalized approach to transition that will be implemented nationally.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Trudie MacKinnon<br/>A/Director General<br/>Centralized Operations<br/>Division<br/>Veterans Affairs Canada<br/>Tel: (902) 368-0692<br/><a href="mailto:trudie.mackinnon@canada.ca">trudie.mackinnon@canada.ca</a></p> <p>Mitch Freeman<br/>Director General<br/>Service Delivery and Program<br/>Management<br/>Veterans Affairs Canada<br/>Tel: (902) 566-8808<br/><a href="mailto:mitch.freeman@canada.ca">mitch.freeman@canada.ca</a></p> |

- Closing the Seam, a project focusing on digital support, information sharing and alignment of benefits to improve continuity of care, reduce complexity and streamline the benefit application process.
- A “My Transition 101” training package on transitioning to civilian life to improve CAF members’ knowledge of VAC’s programs and services.

- Continue the operationalization of Pension for Life, a streamlined suite of benefits for Veterans launched in April 2019.

#### Accomplishments:

- In June 2020, we established the Veteran Benefit Teams structure. This brings together all of the resources required to complete a disability benefit application with the goal of processing it promptly and with fewer hand-offs.
- The Innovation Hub is a dedicated team created to provide VAC with innovation design services. The Hub facilitates direct collaboration (like workshops) with Veterans and their families, VAC employees and other professionals a Veteran or family member may interact with as part of their experience to define and frame problems, generate solution ideas and design prototypes that are tested to ensure all users’ needs are met. This approach will guide the implementation decisions and scaling of proven solutions to similar challenges faced by the Department. This engagement has begun. The Hub will continue reviewing user experiences, data and analytics to redesign business processes, leverage technology and reset policy, programs and services to improve wait times.
- To work towards end-to-end digital service, we have enabled additional letters for electronic view in My VAC Account as well as full digital signatures. Electronic letters are now the default for any new letter. This helps to provide Veterans with a paperless (online) option to receive their mail from VAC.
- Significant improvements to the transition process include:
  - Enhancements to the Borden Transition Trial;
  - Automated release notifications now being generated by the CAF, contributing to streamlined operations in VAC;
  - Agreement among VAC, the CAF and the Public Service Commission on steps to improve hiring Veterans into the federal public service;
  - Enhanced Transition Training made mandatory effective April 1, 2019;
  - Public release on the VAC and CAF websites of a Seamless Transition Roadmap that was developed using service design methods;
  - A new Alignment of Treatment Benefits service launched for medically releasing CAF members; and
  - Launch of the final stage for the production of the Veteran Service Card.

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|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As part of the Pension for Life project, six financial programs were streamlined into one program. As a result: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More than 80,000 Veterans, CAF members and their families were transitioned to the new suite of benefits on April 1, 2019;</li> <li>Over 9,300 Veterans and survivors received a Supplementary Retirement Benefit payment as part of the termination of that program; and</li> <li>GCcase, a new customer relationship management system, was successfully developed and launched to modernize system infrastructure. System development and implementation continues, resulting in over 70% of all Pension for Life benefit applications being received electronically through My VAC Account.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |   |
| <b>2. <u>Showcase Opportunity:</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List any significant <b>deliverable(s)</b>, <b>resource(s)</b> or <b>application(s)</b> that you would like to present as a <b>showcase item at an upcoming meeting or teleconference.</b></li> <li>Please provide a brief <b>description of the item(s) to profile</b>, time required and any other relevant information.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As part of Pension for Life implementation, we used a Nexus-scaled Agile project management approach to design and deliver GCcase. This approach relied on dynamic, cross-functional teams working together to identify system requirements and develop and implement solutions. It reduces up-front planning and design, builds in frequent opportunities to ensure work is on track, and allows the team to adapt quickly to changes.</li> <li>We also acquired a software application called WalkMe to support Pension for Life implementation and enable sustainable, cost-effective learning for employees. WalkMe provides real-time access to step-by-step guidance on processing applications effectively and efficiently. This represents a fundamental change in how VAC delivers system training.</li> </ul> | Jane Hicks<br>A/Director General<br>Pension for Life<br>Service Delivery<br>Modernization<br>Veterans Affairs Canada<br>Tel: (902) 370-8502<br><a href="mailto:jane.hicks@canada.ca">jane.hicks@canada.ca</a> |
| <b>3. <u>Issues / Needs:</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Briefly describe any <b>service delivery issue(s)</b> you are trying to solve that <b>interjurisdictional collaboration can help to advance</b> (e.g. pilot).</li> <li>If available, provide <b>details on problem statement, project scope and targeted outcomes/deliverables.</b></li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Reducing Wait Times for Benefit Applications:</b> We are currently reaching out to other federal departments, as well as Veterans Affairs departments in other countries, to exchange information and best practices.</li> <li><b>Presenting Wait Time Information:</b> We are also seeking best practices in this area, to increase transparency and self-service for Veterans. Our interest is in enhancing our Wait Time Tool, whose concept and design was inspired by a similar tool on Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's website.</li> <li>We believe interjurisdictional collaboration is integral to our success and welcome opportunities to learn from one another.</li> </ul>  | Mitch Freeman<br>Director General<br>Service Delivery and Program<br>Management<br>Veterans Affairs Canada<br>Tel: (902) 566-8808<br><a href="mailto:mitch.freeman@canada.ca">mitch.freeman@canada.ca</a>     |