

TSA MD 1100.53-6 Handbook

Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA)

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APPROVAL

Signed

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NOTE: This Handbook and all related attachments implement the provisions of [TSA MD 1100.53-6, Voluntary Early Retirement Authority](#). Until such time as TSA MD 1100.53-6, is rescinded, the Management Directive, Handbook, and attachments are considered TSA policy, and must be applied accordingly.

Summary of Changes:

Section A, added definitions; Section B, added to further explain purpose of Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA); Section C, expanded eligibility requirements; Section D revised to clarify changes to the scope and authority; Section E, added language to further clarify options for using VERA and the responsibility of the agency to ensure that a decision to retire under VERA was not based on erroneous or misleading information; Section F, revised to add VERA point of contact will be assigned by Business Management Office (BMO), more details with VERA personnel processing, updated point of contact information, and TSA Form 1148 was updated; Section G (Retirement and Insurance) and Section H (Frequently Asked Questions and Answers) were deleted. Administrative changes made throughout the handbook.

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A. Definitions:

- (1) Involuntary Workforce Reduction (IWR): The elimination of positions resulting in the need for one or more involuntary separations or the placement of employees in a position at a lower pay band.
- (2) Management Officials: Assistant Administrators or equivalent, Office Directors, Regional Directors, Supervisory Air Marshals in Charge, or their designees.
- (3) Reorganization: The planned elimination, addition, or redistribution of functions, duties and/or positions in an organization.
- (4) Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA): Authorization from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), which allows agencies undergoing substantial reorganization to temporarily lower the retirement age and service requirements to increase the number of employees eligible for retirement. The authority encourages more voluntary separations and helps the agency complete the needed organizational change with fewer disruptions to the work force. By offering these short term opportunities, an agency can make it possible for employees to receive an immediate annuity, years before they would otherwise be eligible.

B. Purpose: VERA provides agencies the option to offer voluntary early retirement when restructuring or reducing the size of their organizations. The use of VERA is an option for increasing voluntary attrition in agencies undergoing substantial organizational change (e.g. IWR, reorganization, reshaping, or delayering). Besides providing an incentive for employees to voluntarily retire to avoid potential IWR actions, the agency may also offer VERA to employees in safe positions that could then provide placement opportunities for employees occupying surplus positions.

C. Eligibility Requirements:

- (1) Depending on TSA's request, the authority may be granted by OPM, for specific offices, geographic locations, positions, and/or employees.
- (2) An employee must have at least 25 years of service, regardless of age, or have 20 years of service and be at least 50 years of age to qualify for voluntary early retirement.
- (3) An employee must be serving on a permanent appointment. Employees on time-limited appointments are not eligible for voluntary early retirement.
- (4) An employee must have been continuously employed by TSA for at least 30 days prior to the date TSA initially requested OPM approval for use of VERA.
- (5) Employees in receipt of a decision of involuntary separation for misconduct or unsatisfactory performance are not eligible for voluntary early retirement.

- (6) If an employee is under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) or under CSRS Offset, she/he must have served in a position covered by the CSRS or CSRS Offset for at least one year out of the two years immediately before retirement. This rule does not apply to employees covered under Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS).
- (7) Employees may only retire under the VERA option during the agency's VERA window, as established by the Assistant Administrator for Human Capital (AA/OHC) within the authority granted by OPM.
- (8) There are additional eligibility provisions for employees on military duty. Employees may contact the OHCAccess Help Desk at 1(877) TSA-7990 (1(877)872-7990) for assistance.

D. Duration of Authority: OPM normally grants voluntary early retirement authority for a specific scope of employees for a specified period of time. During the VERA period, TSA may elect to limit use of the authority by scope and within specific timeframes during the period covered by the OPM authority. Scope and time limitations must be announced to employees at the time of initial offer. TSA may subsequently establish and publicize a revised closing date, or a revised number of applications, when a change in management's need to offer voluntary early retirement has occurred. The revised closing date, or number of applications, may be applicable to the entire authority or only to employees in specific organizations, occupational series, pay bands, or geographic area(s). The notice of the revised closing date or number of applications must be publicized in the same manner and to the same group(s) of employees as the original notice.

E. Coverage:

- (1) Assistant Administrators (AAs), or equivalent, may request the option to use VERA within their organization based on occupation; pay band; skills; knowledge; job series; organizational, geographical, and non-personal and objective factors; or any combination of these factors.
- (2) If an AA, or equivalent, seeks approval to use VERA, a written memorandum describing when and how it will be used, with justification, must be provided to the AA/OHC, before any announcements are issued to potentially eligible employees.
- (3) If an AA, or equivalent, wishes to make changes to any authorized VERA, a written memorandum describing the changes, with justification, must be provided to the AA/OHC before the changes are implemented.
- (4) An AA, or equivalent, may recommend the delay of an employee's desired retirement date due to the organization's need for the employee's services because there is a critical need or unusual circumstance (e.g., the need for an individual's specific knowledge to complete a project, or the need to fill behind a permanent employee who is on leave, military duty, or a long-term temporary assignment). Each such request, including a

strong written justification, must be submitted to the AA/OHC, or his/her designee, for approval, on a case-by-case basis.

- (5) The agency is responsible for ensuring that employees are not coerced into retiring under a VERA and that a decision to retire under a VERA was not based on erroneous or misleading information.

F. Application Procedures:

- (1) AAs, or equivalent, will notify their BMOs to designate a VERA point of contact to assist eligible employees with locating VERA information and to provide any information and/or documentation requested by OHC. AAs, or equivalent, may also use their VERA point of contacts to assist with providing information for strategic planning purposes in restructuring and/or reducing their workforce.
- (2) OHC will provide a written notification to employees that have been identified as being potentially eligible for voluntary early retirement consideration.
- (3) Employees interested in voluntary early retirement must complete [TSA Form 1148, *Voluntary Early Retirement Notice of Interest*](#) and submit it directly to the *OHCAccess Help Desk* via email to HelpDesk@mailserver-hraccess.tsa.dhs.gov, or fax to 1(877)872-7993, within the timeframe identified in the publication announcing the VERA open period.
- (4) OHC will provide written notification to each employee who submits TSA Form 1148, indicating whether the employee meets the eligibility requirements outlined in the VERA announcement, MD, and related Handbook.
- (5) Only employees who have been notified by OHC that they are potentially eligible to retire under VERA may request a VERA retirement annuity estimate through *OHCAccess Help Desk* via email to HelpDesk@mailserver-hraccess.tsa.dhs.gov, or fax number 1(877)872-7993.
- (6) If an eligible employee decides to request voluntary early retirement, he/she must complete and mail an original retirement application, within the timeframe identified in the publication announcing the VERA open period, to the address listed below:

TSA HRAccess Shared Service Center
Metroplace 1
2650 Park Tower Drive, Suite 201
Vienna, VA 22180-7300