

Approval Authorizations

Changes to the FY 2001 procurement approval process as stipulated in the memo from the Assistant Secretary for Information & Technology (005) dated August 23, 2001 are outlined below.

All IT acquisitions, which are new, need to be reviewed and approved by both the VHA and the VA CIO prior to the expenditure of any IT funds. This includes:

- Implementation of new systems including prototypes, pilots, and conceptual designs;
- New software programs or databases;
- New services or enhancements to provide capability not currently in operation;
- New or expanded telecommunications services such as wide area networks (WANS) or local area networks (LANs), telephone service or cell phones;
- Non-PCHS PC acquisitions; and
- Expenditures to plan such activities.

Both the VHA and VA CIO must approve procurement of telecommunications equipment, regardless of dollar amount, prior to expenditure of any funds.

The Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology (005) has delegated authority to the VHA CIO to approve IT acquisitions for activities that have the Capital Investment Board's approval, or were fully operational prior to July 25, 2001. Therefore, the VHA CIO can approve the following types of acquisition requests, independent of dollar value. This includes:

- Contract renewals for existing services;
- Renewal of license agreements;
- Scheduled augmentation of equipment or services to meet planned capacity requirements for existing annual services (except telecommunications capacity improvements);
- Repair of equipment;
- Replacement of minor system components because of recurring failure or reliability; and
- Acquisitions from the PCHS contract if made to replace PC's, laptops, and servers more than three years old or otherwise formally scheduled and planned as technology refreshment.

For all other IT procurements, delegated thresholds and procedures for IT acquisition requests above \$250,000 and the dollar thresholds established for the

VA IT Capital Investment Process will remain in place. Specific procedures/guidelines for each procurement category are given below.

VHA PROCEDURES:

- **VHA Information Technology Acquisition Tracking System**

All VHA Information Technology Acquisitions must be reported in the new VHA Information Technology (IT) Acquisition Tracking System. This reporting system allows VHA to track, manage, and approve/disapprove VHA IT acquisitions. All procurement requests, including information on PCHS and PACs purchases, must be entered into the tracking system. Each VHA staff office, field office, and VISN will be given access to this system. Staff assigned to accomplish data-entry into the VHA IT Acquisition Tracking System must have web access to the VA Intranet, and use Internet Explorer 4.0 or greater.

The tracking system allows for the entering, certifying, and approval of requests. Once a request is entered into the tracking system, the submitting CIO is responsible for reviewing the procurement and certifying that the information presented is accurate. The submitting CIO may approve, disapprove, or place the procurement on hold. The Office of Information will only review procurement that the submitting CIO certify/ap proves. Certifying the request indicates that the IT acquisition meets all VA acquisition standards and guidelines.

The VHA IT Acquisition Tracking System can be assessed at <http://vhacoweb1.cio.med.va.gov/itaae/>. Detailed instructions for using the Information Technology Tracking System, and requesting usernames and passwords are provided on the web site.

- **Procurements Supporting New Initiatives:**

The VHA CIO and VA CIO must approve all IT acquisitions, which provide new capability regardless of dollar threshold. This includes: implementation of new systems (i.e. prototypes, pilots, and conceptual demonstrations); new software programs or databases; new services or enhancements to provide capability not currently in operation; new or expanded telecommunications service such as wide area networks (WANS) or local area networks (LANs); new telephone service or cell phones; non-PCHS PC acquisitions; and expenditures to plan such activities.

- **Procurements Supporting Ongoing Initiatives:**

The VHA CIO must approve all IT procurements independent of value, which have the Capital Investment Board's approval, or that support existing systems or support activities that were fully operational before July 25, 2001. These includes contract renewals for existing annual services; renewal of license agreements; scheduled augmentations of equipment and services to meet planned capacity requirements for existing services (except telecommunications capacity improvements); repair of equipment; replacement of minor system components because of requiring failure of reliability; and acquisitions from PCHS if made to replace PC's, laptops, and servers more that 3 years old, or otherwise formally scheduled and planned as a technology refreshment.

The VHA field, staff, and VISN offices will enter all IT acquisition requests for approval into the VHA IT Acquisition Tracking System. All procurement requests, including information on PCHS and PACs purchases, should be entered into this system. Once the submitting CIO has certified/approved the request, the Office of Information will begin processing. The VHA CIO's office will work directly with the Office of Information and Technology to expedite processing of those procurements (new equipment or services) that also require VA CIO approval.

Capital Investments

The VHA CIO is delegated the authority to approve activities that have already been approved by the Capital Investment Board independent of dollar value. Otherwise, the process will continue as in the past. Therefore, all VHA Information Technology initiatives over \$10 million dollars acquisition cost, over \$30 million dollars life-cycle cost, or represent high visibility or crosscutting efforts must be approved by the VA Capital Investment Board. In the near future, an additional step will be added to the VA IT Capital Investment process to incorporate a high level VA Chief Information Council/SMC conceptual review of major initiatives. Each proposed IT Capital Investment initiative will need to receive conceptual approval from the VA CIO Council/SMC before they can be entered into the VA Capital -Investment Process. Detailed documentation on the VA Capital Investment Process and on how to prepare an IT Capital Investment Proposal is outlined in the Information Technology Capital Investment Guide and on the website at <http://vhacoweb1.cio.med.va.gov/itaae/>.

Submitting Procurement Approval Request via the VHA IT Acquisition Tracking System

The following information, as stipulated in the Office of Information (005) "Information Technology Capital Investment Guide" must be kept on file at the local level for all procurements under \$250,000, and submitted to the Office of Information for those over \$250,000.

1. **Cost Benefit Analysis and Requirements Analysis** if purchasing equipment

OR

Statement of Work and Business Case Study if purchasing services

2. Project Description

3. Actual Costs

4. Project Type (Choose one of the following)

- Mission Critical
- Program Specific
- Infrastructure
- Research and Development
- Cross-Cutting
- Administrative

5. Project Phase

- Initial Concept
- New
- Ongoing (Project has been awarded but not completely implemented. This includes pilot and prototype development.)
- Operational/Maintenance (System- including legacy systems- is completely implemented. The requested assets or activities are needed to sustain the system and ensure it is operating at the optimal level of performance.

6. Location of the Proposed Actual Asset

* The Office of Information (005) "Information Technology Capital Investment Guide" can be found online at:

http://vaww.va.gov/oirm/ITplanning/IT-Capital_Investment-Guide.asp