

**PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANT
INSTRUCTION MANUAL**

FOR

VETERAN DIRECTED SERVICES

WESTERN MONTANA AREA VI AGENCY ON AGING

110 MAIN STREET SUITE 5

POLSON, MT 59860

TELEPHONE: 406-883-7284

FAX: 406-883-7363

IDAHO VETERAN DIRECTED SERVICES

WESTERN MONTANA AREA VI AGENCY ON AGING

CHRISTY HULING

PO BOX 3577

OLDTOWN, ID 83822

TELEPHONE: 208-610-2000

FAX: 208-437-1737

The purpose of this manual is to give an overview of the position of Personal Care Attendant (PCA) for the Veteran Directed Care program. The Veteran or his/her Designated Representative (DR) is the PCA's employer with regard to scheduling and work responsibilities; therefore, the position is specific to each individual Veteran's needs.

Once hired, the PCA will be instructed and trained by the Veteran Employer or his/her Designated Representative. The PCA's schedule will be determined by the needs of the Veteran, while taking into consideration the PCA's availability. **All work-related and scheduling issues are to be discussed and negotiated with the Veteran Employer or his/her Designated Representative.**

It is the intention of the Western Montana Area VI Agency on Aging to facilitate good matches between Veterans and their PCAs. However, the Service Coordinator is available to help resolve issues or concerns that may arise between the parties.

Your primary contact at Western Montana Area VI Agency on Aging is your Veteran Employer's Service Coordinator.

MONTANA CONTACTS: 406-883-7284

Vicki Holmberg vdcvicki@a6wm.onmicrosoft.com

Emilianne Lansdown vdcemilianne@a6wm.onmicrosoft.com

IDAHO CONTACT: 208-610-8000

Christy Huling vdcidaho@a6wm.onmicrosoft.com

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INTRODUCTION

The policies and information in this manual specifically apply to the position of Personal Care Attendant (PCA) in the Veteran Directed Care (VDC) program. Any specific accommodations necessary to implement these policies should be discussed with the VDC Service Coordinator.

The policies and information in this manual also apply to the Veterans enrolled in the VDC program. A copy of this manual will be given to each newly enrolled Veteran as the PCA employer and supervisor.

Any questions regarding these policies and procedures should be discussed with the VDC Service Coordinator.

This document is for informational purposes only and is not an offer, promise or guarantee of employment by a veteran and/or any specific terms or conditions of employment.

As a provider agency for the VDC program, Western Montana Area VI Agency on Aging must follow the rules and procedures set forth by the VA. Veterans and PCAs, as participants in this VA program, are also subject to these rules and procedures.

VDC PROGRAM OVERVIEW

VDC is a VA program that allows Veterans, who meet the criteria to self-direct their in-home care assistance by recruiting, hiring, training and managing personal care attendants (PCAs) of their choice. Veterans are responsible to train the PCAs to meet their specific care needs and maintain a schedule convenient and flexible for both the Veteran and the PCA(s). The Veteran will have the skills and abilities to direct their in-home personal assistance services. In certain situations a Veteran may arrange to have a Designated Representative (DR) direct service on his/her behalf. The DR has the same duties and responsibilities as the Veteran. In this manual all references to Veteran also apply to Designated Representative.

Shared Employment Responsibility: In the VDC program Veterans and provider agency, Western Montana Area VI Agency on Aging; share the responsibility for employment of the PCAs who work in the Veteran's home. **The Veteran is considered the Employer of Record and the Western Montana Area VI Agency on Aging, as the provider agency, is responsible for Service Coordination on behalf of the Veterans and will contract with 406 Financial Services LLC as the fiscal agent.** The Veterans have the responsibility for the day-to-day supervision of their PCAs. Both these rolls are defined in more detail below.

Western Montana Area VI Agency on Aging Role: Western Montana Area VI Agency on Aging, as the VDC provider agency, contracts with 406 Financial Services LLC to process the PCA employment applications and timesheets, and to perform other payroll, human resources, record keeping and billing procedures, including verification of eligibility for employment and assisting the Veteran Employer with Worker's Compensation and Unemployment accounts and Claims.

NOTE: The Veteran, NOT Western Montana Area VI Agency on Aging, is the employer of the PCA.

Western Montana Area VI Agency on Aging is also responsible to provide service coordination assistance to the Veterans. The Service Coordinator duties include, but are not limited to:

- Conduct initial home visit to assess Veteran ability to self-direct.
- Assess Veteran care needs to determine Service and Support Plan budget.
- Provide guidance and support to Veteran participants and PCAs in the policies and procedures of the VDC program.
- Conduct regular quarterly visits and maintain regular contact with the Veteran Participant.

Veteran/Designated Representative Role:

The Veteran or Designated Representative is the Employer of Record for each of his/her PCAs. The Veteran ensures that all state and federal labor laws are followed. As the employer, the Veteran is responsible to ensure that all services provided by the PCA are done in accordance with the approved Service Plan and that timesheets accurately reflect the dates and times of service provided.

EMPLOYMENT CONSIDERATIONS

The first step toward employment through the VDC program is selection by the Veteran. The selection process can be customized by each Veteran.

The Veteran is responsible for determining the duties and responsibilities for the PCA. However, Western Montana Area VI Agency on Aging reserves the right to terminate employment if the PCA falsifies any information on the employee application.

CONVICTED FELONS: The employee may not begin employment with the Veteran until the employee background check is completed and the outcome confirms the Employee is free from prohibitive offenses. **Prohibitive offenses include: assault, homicide, kidnapping, sexual crimes, offenses against the family, weapons crimes, offenses involving dangerous drugs and pre-release workers.** An individual is also not eligible for employment if convicted of **Public Assistance fraud.**

The Service Coordinator will inform the Veteran of any potential employee with findings other than prohibitive offenses on their criminal background checks. The Veteran has the option to continue or discontinue the employment process. If the Veteran chooses to continue the employment process, he/she will sign an authorized form provided by the Service Coordinator indicating the Veteran is aware of the individual's criminal record and chooses to proceed with hire.

Employment Status: Given the intimate nature of personal assistance care, it is vital that Veterans have flexibility and control over their in-home services and the ability to select the PCAs that best meet their needs. A Veteran may dismiss a PCA from service in his/her household for any reason, such as incompatible schedules, personality conflicts, inability to perform required job duties, etc. Unless the dismissal was "for cause": as defined in Dismissal/Termination of Employment (see page 13), employees remain eligible for referral to other Veterans in the VDC program. Such employees are considered laid off versus terminated.

Training: The Veteran is responsible for on-the-job training of his/her PCAs. The Veteran may document in notes each PCA's ability to function competently and

safely, although this is not required by Western Montana Area VI Agency on Aging or the VA.

TIMESHEETS AND PAYROLL PROCESS

Work week and pay periods:

The work week for the VDC program begins on Sunday and the last day of the work week is Saturday. A PCA may not work more than 40 hours during a work week.

The first pay period of the month is from the **1st of the month through the 15th** of the month. Timesheets for this pay period are **due on the 16th** of the month **BY NOON**. (If the 16th falls on a holiday or weekend, the timesheets are due on the next business day.) See calendar with timesheet due dates delineated.

The second pay period is from the **16th day of the month to the last day of the month**. Timesheets for this pay period are **due on the 1st day of the following month BY NOON**. (If the 1st falls on a holiday or weekend, the timesheets are due on the next business day.) See calendar with timesheet due dates delineated.

Pay checks will be direct deposited or mailed 3 to 4 working days after the timesheet due date.

TIMESHEETS:

Time sheets should remain at the home of the Veteran during each pay period. **It is the responsibility of the Veteran to review and sign each timesheet for each PCA at the end of the pay period.** If a PCA works for more than one Veteran, a separate timesheet will be used for each Veteran.

Timesheets are legal documents and should be completed in blue or black ink. Do not use whiteout on the timesheet. If you make a mistake-draw a single line through the mistake and initial the correction. First and last name of the PCA should be written on the timesheet, using the same name listed on the completed W-4 employment form. Do not use a nickname.

**Time sheets can be hand-delivered to the office at 110 Main Street, Suite 5
Polson, MT 59860**

OR

Fax timesheets to: 406-728-7686

OR

Email timesheets to: payroll@406llc.org

TIME SHEETS ARE DUE BY NOON ON THE DUE DATE!! Late timesheets will be processed the following pay period. Timesheets will be considered late if they are not filled out completely with all required information or if the information conflicts with the Veteran's Services authorized on the SSP.

VDC staff will make a reasonable effort to contact the employee to obtain an acceptable timesheet or clarify timesheet information, but it is the employee's responsibility to provide a completed, accurate timesheet by the payroll deadline. Please total your timesheet to assure you are within the allotted hours.

Misrepresentation of hours worked is considered **FRAUD** and is grounds for termination of employment and termination of Veteran eligibility for VDC services.

Working over 40 hours per work week (Sunday through Saturday) is not allowed without prior authorization. PCAs who work for more than one Veteran receiving VDC services must not have more than 40 hours per week combined. Any PCA working for the Veteran Directed Care Program cannot work more than 40 hours per week.

Payroll: 406 Financial Services LLC in Missoula will process payroll and provide a paycheck to PCAs per the payroll schedule. This includes withholding Social Security, Medicare, and Federal and State income taxes from the employees' gross wages. They will also pay the employers taxes including; Social Security, Medicare, Unemployment and Workers' Compensation coverage.

Employee Benefits Include:

Social Security/Medicare: The Veteran employer pays Social Security and Medicare tax on all employee wages. These taxes are paid into each employee's

Social Security account and provide Medicare Coverage and retirement, disability and survivor's benefits to eligible persons.

Unemployment Insurance: The Veteran employer pays Payroll taxes to the State Unemployment program, which provides temporary, partial reimbursement for lost wages due to layoff, reduction in work hours and other situations. This is contingent on hours worked according to the Unemployment Insurance Division.

Workers' Compensation: The Veteran employer pays premiums for this insurance program which provides coverage for medical treatment and lost wages due to a job-related injury. Report any work related injury to your Veteran employer **and to Western Montana Area VI Agency on Aging VDC staff immediately, by the following business day at the latest.**

PAYCHECKS AND PAYMENT OF WAGES:

- VDC payroll is processed by 406 Financial Services LLC in Missoula. Paychecks are direct deposited or mailed by 406 Financial will not be issued outside of regularly scheduled pay periods.
- Checks mailed and not received by employees will not be replaced until the following pay period. Employees are responsible for notifying Western Montana Area VI Agency on Aging of their correct addresses. Employees are encouraged to use Direct Deposit to avoid delayed delivery or mistakes made by US Postal Services.
- In the event the employee is laid off or terminated, final wages will be paid during the next regularly scheduled pay period after receipt of a properly completed timesheet.

EMPLOYMENT VERIFICATION:

Western Montana Area VI Agency on Aging through 406 Financial Services LLC will only provide information on wages paid and will not speculate on an employee's future wages and/or schedule. A Release of information will need to be signed before Western Montana Area VI Agency on Aging can provide employment information. Exceptions include: Social Security, Office of Public Assistance, Workers' Compensation, and State Unemployment. Employees who receive

public assistance should keep copies of their pay stubs. Western Montana Area VI Agency on Aging does not process payroll, therefore does not have copies of the pay stubs. **It is the responsibility of the PCA to keep all paystubs provided to them by the fiscal agent that processes payroll (406 Financial Services).**

VETERAN SERVICE AND SUPPORT PLAN

Following the service and support plan (SSP): It is the Veteran's responsibility for follow the SSP authorized by the VAMC. This includes staying within the authorized hours and authorized tasks, and to communicate this information to the PCAs. Unless prior authorized, **VDC will not pay for any time above and beyond the authorized hours.**

VDC staff relies on the PCA to report if services are being used inappropriately. If you have questions on tasks that you are doing or think you should be doing, please contact the VDC Service Coordinator.

HOSPITALIZATIONS/NURSING HOME STAYS: The VDC program **does NOT pay for PCA services provided in a hospital, nursing home, or other institution.** VDC services can be resumed once the Veteran returns home.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mandatory Reporter: VDC staff members are mandatory reporters. They are required to notify the proper authorities if they have knowledge that a Veteran is being abused, neglected, or exploited. Both the VDC staff and PCAs have this obligation and must report the suspected abuse or neglect.

Examples of reportable occurrences may be one of the following, but is anything that puts the Veteran's health, safety or welfare in jeopardy:

- Physical and/or verbal abuse;
- Neglect, including self-neglect;
- Sexual harassment or sexual abuse;
- Exploitation; theft or exploiting financially;
- Injuries requiring medical attention

Accidents/injury at Work: All Veterans and PCAs are responsible to report all work-related incidents that result in or may result in injury **immediately, no later than the next business day**. An incident report must be completed within 3 days of the accident. Accidents must be reported to the VDC Service Coordinator, who will follow up with both the PCA and the Veteran and will report any incidents to the Workers' Compensation Insurance Company, The Montana State Fund.

Sexual Harassment:

Employees of the VDC program have a right to work in an environment free of discriminatory intimidation, ridicule and insult. Veteran and employee conduct, intentional or unintentional, that results in the harassment of an employee or the Veteran because of gender will not be tolerated. Veterans who violate this policy will be subject to potential dismissal from the VDC program and an employee violating this policy may be disciplined up to termination.

Personal Safety:

Be aware of behaviors that may jeopardize our personal safety. Examples include: verbal abuse or threats of physical harm. If violent behavior occurs or you believe you are in danger do the following:

- Trust your instincts regarding impending danger.
- Speak in a low tone of voice.
- Present yourself as being calm, relaxed and confident helper to keep the situation from getting out of control.
- If you feel frightened or unsafe during a home visit, listen to your feelings, remain calm and leave as quickly as possible
- If you are in immediate danger, leave, call 911 and ask for a welfare check on the person.

Confidentiality:

Given the nature of personal assistance services, PCAs may come into contact with personal information and records regarding the Veteran, and be party to personal conversations and/or professional discussions between the Veteran and others. All such information is strictly confidential. Confidential information is not to be shared with anyone in the community. PCAs are required to observe confidentiality with respect to Veteran information and not share such information without the Veteran's written authorization. Violation of this policy can result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Drug Free Work Place:

PCAs are required to report to work in appropriate mental and physical condition to perform his/her job in a safe and satisfactory manner. While at work and while conducting business related activities in any location, no employee may use, possess, distribute, sell or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. The legal use of prescribed drugs is permitted on the job only if it does not impair the employees' ability to perform the essential functions of the job effectively and in a safe manner that does not endanger anyone. Violations of this policy may lead to termination and may have legal consequences.

DRIVING POLICY

PCAs are expected to follow safe driving practices to ensure their personal safety, public safety and the safety of their Veteran Employers.

PCAs who are required to drive as part of their responsibilities must possess a valid driver's license and vehicle liability/property damage insurance as required by MT/ID state law.

PCAs must comply with all local, state and federal laws regarding vehicle operation. Drivers are expected to follow defensive driving principles, laws, and regulations. PCAs shall not operate a vehicle while impaired by illness, fatigue, or injury; when under the influence of any intoxicant, controlled substance, or drug(except as prescribed by a licensed physician), or when under the influence of a legally prescribed substance that may impair the ability to safely and /or efficiently drive and /or perform position duties. If a PCA is prescribed a substance that may impair the ability to safely and /or efficiently drive and/or perform responsibilities, it is the PCA's responsibility to immediately inform the VDC Service Coordinator and VDC Veteran Employee.

PCAs that transport Veteran Employers as part of their duties are required to evaluate the condition of their vehicle as fit for service. Vehicles must be of the private passenger types. Vehicles should have safety restraints, properly inflated tires, fully functional head and tail lights and directional signals, clean windows and have no visual obstructions that would block driver or passenger view. Drivers and passengers are required to use seat belts.

PCAs that are required to drive in order to perform their job duties must have an acceptable driving record. They will notify the VDC Service Coordinator of moving violations on or off the job resulting in conviction, suspension or revocation of license. Moving violations may be cause for removal from employment.

DISMISSAL/TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

The following definitions are utilized in Western Montana Area VI Agency on Aging Veteran Directed Program:

Dismissal: Employee is dismissed from service in a Veteran's household by the Veteran Employer or Designated Representative as described in section 3 Employment status. The Veteran must notify the VDC Service Coordinator if he/she plans to dismiss a PCA from employment and needs to communicate the reason for dismissal.

Resignation: Employee voluntarily resigns from service in a Veteran's household. The Veteran must notify VDC Service Coordinator that the employee has resigned and inform SC of the last date the employee worked.

Mutual Agreement: The Veteran and PCA mutually agree that continued service in the Veteran's household will not continue. The Veteran must notify the VDC Service Coordinator and report the last day worked by the PCA.

Termination for Cause: The PCA employee's service with the Veteran Employer is terminated for a reasons including, but not limited to, the following:

- Verbal or physical abuse of Veteran or VDC staff
- Sexual harassment of Veteran or VDC staff
- Theft, misuse, or destruction of Veteran property
- Violation of VDC program policies and procedures
- Breach of confidentiality
- Use of drugs or alcohol while on duty
- Repeated absences/tardiness
- Job abandonment
- Unsatisfactory job performance
- Failure to follow orders or defiance of orders
- Failing to accurately and promptly report on-the-job injuries

- Falsifying timesheets

Veterans will immediately contact VDC Service Coordinator if they experience any of the situations listed above under, “termination for cause” to ensure their safety and well-being and to make arrangements to initiate appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of the PCA’s employment. Only the Veteran can legally terminate an employee, as he or she is the official employer of record.

COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Conflict resolution between Veterans and PCAs is the responsibility of the individuals involved. If a PCA is dismissed from service by a Veteran, and it is determined that the dismissal was, “for cause” continued employment with the Western Montana Area VI Agency on Aging VDC program will be terminated.

In regard to a PCA’s relationship with Western Montana Area VI Agency on Aging and the VDC program, employees have the right to express concerns, suggestions and complaints and to contest disciplinary actions or other employment conditions that they believe are unjust or inequitable. PCAs are encouraged to bring problems/solutions to the VDC Service Coordinator.

GLOSSARY

ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING (ADLS): Routine activities that people tend to do every day without needing assistance. (eating, bathing, dressing, toileting, transferring and walking)

INSTRUMENTAL ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING (IADLS): Not necessary for fundamental functioning, but let an individual live independently in a community.(housework, preparing meals, shopping, running errands, managing money, attending appointments, taking medication)

EMPLOYER OF RECORD: The Veteran or Designated Representative (DR) is the employer of the individuals hired to provide personal care assistance (PCA). As the employer of record, the Veteran (or DR) is responsible to recruit, hire, train, supervise, verify timesheets, and if necessary, terminate employment with the PCA.

FISCAL AGENT (FA): Is responsible for processing PCA employment applications, handles timesheets, provides paychecks and performs other payroll, human resources, record keeping and billing procedures. Including, verification of eligibility of employment, handling of workers' compensation and unemployment claims and other duties as required. Currently 406 Financial Services LLC is the Fiscal Agent.

WESTERN MONTANA AREA VI AGENCY ON AGING: The provider agency for the program. Western Montana Area VI Agency on Aging is not the employer of persons hired to provide services to participating Veterans. The Veteran is the employer. Western Montana Area VI Agency on Aging provides service coordination, manages the contract with both the Veteran Administration and the Fiscal Agent. Provides oversight of necessary documentation and reports, and ensures VDC policy and procedure is followed.

PERSONAL CARE AID (PCA): Employee hired by participating Veteran or DR. PCAs assist with assigned tasks which may include; bathing, dressing, transfers, toileting, walking, transportation, accompanying to medical appointments, assistance with community outings, housekeeping, meal preparation, etc. (see job description and task list.)

SERVICE AND SUPPORT PLAN (SSP): the Service and Support Plan is the document developed with the Veteran using the budget authorized by Fort Harrison Veteran Affairs Medical Center. The Service Plan identifies and summarizes services authorized for the 6 month authorization period. This includes the number of PCA hours authorized per pay period.

SERVICE COORDINATOR (SC): The SC is the primary contact for the PCAs, assisting in completing the application process and signing and submitting paperwork. The Service coordinator works with PCAs in relation to timesheets, payroll and/or ongoing employment with other Veterans on the VDC program.

VETERAN AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER (VAMC): The VAMC is commonly referred to as Fort Harrison in Helena, MT. or Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center in Spokane, WA.