


Approved By: Tommy Baker Commissioner	Policy Number: VS301
Signature: 	Supersedes: All other department policy on this issue
Application: Department Employees; Any Other TDVS Accredited Individuals	Effective Date: March 28, 2024
Authority: TCA § 58-3-109; § 58-3-111; 38 U.S.C. 5901-5905; 38 C.F.R. 14.626 - 14.637	

Department Policy: Accreditation

I. Purpose

This document establishes policy for the accreditation of individuals with the Tennessee Department of Veterans Services (TDVS) and those who would seek to become accredited with TDVS.

II. TDVS Accreditation Policy – General

Tennessee Code Annotated, 58-3-111, requires that all Veterans Service Officers successfully complete training and be issued TDVS accreditation by VA’s Office of General Counsel within one year from the date of their appointment. This document establishes policy for the accreditation of individuals with TDVS.

Accreditation is the authority granted by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to representatives that is necessary to assist claimants in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims for VA benefits.

III. TDVS Accreditation Policy - Requirements

For an individual to be recommended for accreditation with the Tennessee Department of Veterans Services they must meet the following criteria:

1. Be a paid employee of the state of Tennessee working in a position designated by the Commissioner that requires accreditation or be a paid employee of a county working in a county or municipal service office for no less than 1,000 hours annually.
2. Complete the TDVS Veterans Services Accreditation Course, which is an initial course of training and examination that has been approved by the VA District Chief Counsel with jurisdiction for the state.
3. Receive both regular supervision and monitoring as well as mandatory training to assure continued qualification as a representative in the claims process.
 - a. Regular supervision and monitoring will include the filing of claims through TDVS’s Appeals Division or other method of filing approved by the Commissioner

- to ensure quality review prior to filing. This applies to claimants represented by TDVS and other VA recognized Veterans Service Organizations supported by TDVS through a Memorandum of Understanding.
4. Not be employed in any civil, military department or agency of the United States.
 5. Be of good character and reputation and have a demonstrated ability to represent claimants before the VA.

Notwithstanding these requirements for accreditation, the Commissioner may recommend individuals not employed by the state of Tennessee or a county to be accredited with TDVS if the individual is already an accredited representative of another VA recognized Veterans Service Organization if such recommendation would further the representation of claimants within Tennessee.

IV. Obtaining and Maintaining TDVS Accreditation

As required by 38 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) 14.629, TDVS shall certify that representatives continue to meet the accreditation criteria of 38.C.F.R. 14.629(a)(1), (2), and (3) and TDVS's accreditation policy every five years. In furtherance of the recertification requirement of 38 C.F.R. 14.629, TDVS shall audit the accreditation of all representatives annually to ensure representatives continue to meet the accreditation standards necessary to provide high quality representation and customer service to Veterans and claimants.

V. Revocation of Accreditation

All accredited representatives are subject to the standards of conduct for persons providing representation before VA outlined in 38 C.F.R. 14.632.

Accreditation of a TDVS representative may be cancelled at any time on volition by the General Counsel of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Accreditation of a TDVS representative may be cancelled upon a recommendation to the General Counsel of the Department of Veterans Affairs for such action by the Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Veterans Services, or designee, for the reasons outlined in 38 C.F.R. 14.633. In addition, accreditation of a TDVS representative may be cancelled upon a recommendation to the General Counsel of the Department of Veterans Affairs for failure to comply with TDVS's accreditation policy and procedures to include accreditation training standards.