



PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY
AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

Brigadier General Anthony J. Carrelli, The Adjutant General

Persian Gulf Conflict Veterans' Benefit
Program 2016 Annual Report

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

Persian Gulf Conflict Veterans' Benefit Program

Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
The Deputy Adjutant General for Veterans' Affairs
Fort Indiantown Gap
Anville, PA

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Persian Gulf Veterans' Benefit Program Summary Report

This section includes high level program statistics such as claim volume and dollars awarded. It also provides a summary of key program dates.

On April 24, 2006, the Governor signed House Bill 1820 into law as Act 29 of 2006. This Bill establishes the Persian Gulf Conflict Veterans' Benefit Program. This Bill was Amended by House Bill 175 and signed into law as Act 50 of 2015 to extend the Program to August 31, 2018. The Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs administers the benefit which provides a one-time lump sum "bonus" payment to eligible Pennsylvania Veterans of the Persian Gulf War. Eligible Pennsylvania Veterans include current and former members of the United States Armed Forces, a reserve component of the United States Armed Forces, or the Pennsylvania National Guard who served from August 2, 1990 to August 31, 1991 within the program-designated Persian Gulf Conflict Theater of Operations. Additionally, Service Members/Veterans must have been a legal resident of Pennsylvania, received the Southwest Asia Service Medal (SWAM) for active service during the period from August 2, 1990 to August 31, 1991, and been discharged from active duty under honorable conditions, if not currently on active duty. In some cases, surviving relatives of deceased Veterans may receive the "bonus" payment on behalf of eligible Veterans.

Additional details are available:

- 1) On-line at www.dmv.pa.gov
- 2) Via telephone at 1-866-458-9182, Mon thru Fri between 7AM and 3:15PM
- 3) Via mail at: Persian Gulf Conflict Veterans' Benefit Program, Building S-0-47, Ft Indiantown Gap, Annville, PA 17003-5002

Persian Gulf Conflict Veterans' Benefit Program – Summary Report

A. Summary of Applications Paid per year and total amounts paid.

Calendar Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total Applications Paid	4,653	1,813	762	407	296	236
Total Amount Paid	\$2,049,887	\$712,150	\$309,150	\$160,400	\$117,825	\$93,150

2014	2015	2016	TOTAL
389	681	191	9,413
\$158,150	\$283,400	\$80,025	\$3,952,963

B. A detailed report for 2016 showing the Name, Branch of Service, Payment Date and Payment Amount is attached to this summary document.

C. Key Dates.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
April 24, 2006	The Governor signed House Bill 1820 into law as Act 29 of 2006. This Bill establishes the Persian Gulf Conflict Veterans' Benefit Act.
November 7, 2006	On November 7, 2006, Pennsylvania voters gave overwhelming approval to a ballot question to fund the program. The bond issue created a fund for the payment of compensation to, or on behalf of, eligible current and former members of the United States Armed Forces, a reserve component of the United States Armed Forces, or the Pennsylvania National Guard.
April 4, 2008	Program first announced on DMVA website
April 24, 2008	First benefit checks awarded
January 2013	Program transferred to DMVA at FTIG

October 30, 2015	The Governor signed House Bill 175 into law as Act 50 of 2015 extending the Persian Gulf Conflict Veterans' Benefit until August 31, 2018.
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D. Summary of Administrative and Operating Costs incurred in the administration of the program, including costs related to vendor or consultant contracts for the period 2006 to December 31, 2016.

Authorized by voters in 2006	\$ 20,000,000
Held I Budgetary Reserve	\$ 13,000,000
Sold in Bolds	\$ 7,000,000
Claims	\$ 3,952,963
Administrative Costs	\$ 1,558,006
Available Balance	\$ 1,489,031
Premiums and Interest less fees	\$ 602,010
Current Balance	\$ 2,091,041

E. Vendors costs from 2007 to 2012

Smart Business Advisory		
	2007	\$ 372,172.09
	2008	\$ 607,286.91
	2009	\$ 128,390.00
	2010	\$ 224,113.50
Grant Thornton LLP		
	2011	\$ 120,530.00
	2012	\$ 102,664.56
Total Vendor Costs		\$ 1,555,157.06
Other Administrative Costs (travel, postage etc)		
	2012	\$ 1,337.10
	2013	\$ 259.82
	2014	\$ 202.24
	2015	\$ 921.89
	2016	\$ 127.94
Total Other Administrative Costs		\$ 2,848.99
Total Administrative Costs		\$ 1,558,006.05

F. Statement of Work Summary

1. Objectives. The objective of this procurement is to acquire an Awarded Offeror to administer the Pennsylvania Persian Gulf Conflict Veterans' Benefit Program in conformance with the applicable laws and regulations and in a manner, which is responsive to the overall policy and direction provided by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

The Awarded Offeror must maintain extraordinary customer service levels with respect to Pennsylvania Persian Gulf Conflict Veterans' Benefit Program. The Awarded Offeror will be expected to manage and enhance the Persian Gulf Conflict Veterans' Benefit Program in a manner that effectively educates veterans and their beneficiaries, and ensures they receive entitled benefits in a professional and timely manner. Special emphasis will be placed on program education efforts directed at potential applicants, particularly as it relates to the eligibility criteria and application process.

2. Nature and Scope of the Project.

Legislative Background. On April 24, 2006, the Governor signed Act 29 of 2006 into law. Funding for this program was approved by Pennsylvania voters at the November 2006 election and the administrative provisions of Act 29 of 2006 took effect on December 18, 2006. This established a Persian Gulf Conflict Veterans' Benefit Program for Commonwealth residents who served on active duty in the Persian Gulf theater of operations during the period from August 2, 1990 until August 31, 1991 and who received the Southwest Asia Service Medal. The Act directs the Adjutant General to promulgate rules and regulations, to implement, administer and enforce the provisions of the Act establishing the Persian Gulf Conflict Veterans' Benefit Program.

Act 29 of 2006 signed on April 24, 2006, established a Persian Gulf Conflict Veterans' Benefit Program and authorized the Department to enter into agreements with private Awarded Offeror(s) for the provision of assistance in administering the Program. Appendix C contains the current version of the Persian Gulf Conflict Veterans' Benefit Program authorizing legislation.

Proposals must be consistent with all provisions of the Act and the corresponding Program regulations contained in APPENDIX E. Offerors should carefully review the language of the Act and regulations. A summary of some significant provisions of the Act follows:

In order to qualify for payment of the bonus under the Program, an applicant must establish to the satisfaction of the Department, the person for whom or on behalf of whom the bonus payment is sought meets the definition of "veteran" set forth in Section 2 of the Act. The applicant must show that the person to whom or on behalf of whom the bonus payment is sought:

(a) Was a member of the Armed Forces of the United States, including the Army National Guard of the United States, the Air National Guard of the United States or a reserve component of the armed forces; and,

(b) Served on active duty in the Persian Gulf Theater of operations during any part of the period from August 2, 1990 to August 31, 1991; and,

(c) Received the Southwest Asia Service Medal established by executive order 127564, 12 March 1991; and,

(d) Was not, at any time during the Persian Gulf Conflict or thereafter separated from the armed forces under other than honorable conditions (including a bad conduct or dishonorable discharge or an administrative discharge under other than honorable conditions); and,

(e) Did not, at any time, renounce his United States citizenship.

The applicant must establish that the individual was a “legal resident of this Commonwealth” at the time of service qualifying for payment of the bonus during the period August 2, 1990 to August 31, 1991. A legal resident of this Commonwealth is an individual for whom Pennsylvania was the state of domicile and who did not claim legal residence in any other state for any purpose. A service member’s legal residence in Pennsylvania is not changed by virtue of military assignment to another state.

If an applicant is unable to show legal residence in Pennsylvania by means of official military records during the period of service, the Awarded Offeror may consider the following documentation when determining whether sufficient evidence exists to show that the veteran was a legal resident of Pennsylvania who did not claim legal residence in any other state at that time:

(a) Voter registration records for the period August 2, 1990 to August 31, 1991

(b) Proof of payment of state income tax as a resident for 1990 or 1991.

(c) Pennsylvania driver’s license or Pennsylvania Identification Card and similar documentation for 1990 or 1991.

(d) Other proof of Pennsylvania residence address in 1990 or 1991, including real estate records, utility receipts, and other records showing residence in Pennsylvania.

(e) An affidavit of residence submitted by the applicant under penalty of law in which the applicant swears or affirms that the veteran on whose behalf the bonus payment was sought remained a legal resident of Pennsylvania and did not claim legal residence in any other state for any purpose during the period August 2, 1990 to August 31, 1991. A service member’s legal residence in Pennsylvania is not changed by virtue of military assignment to another state.

An eligible veteran who served in the active armed forces during any part of the period August 2, 1990 to August 31, 1991 shall be eligible to receive a bonus payment, not to exceed \$525. This will be calculated on the basis of \$75 for the first month for which the member completed one day of active service and \$75 for each full month or major fraction of a month thereafter for which the eligible veteran completed active service.

An eligible veteran who served on active duty as a member of a reserve component of the armed forces (including Army National Guard of the United States and Air National Guard of the United States) during any part of the period August 2, 1990 to August 31, 1991 shall be eligible to receive a bonus payment, not to exceed \$525, to be calculated on the basis of \$75 for the first month for which the member completed one day of active service and \$75 for each full month or major fraction of a month thereafter for which the eligible veteran completed active service.

Completion of qualifying active service shall ordinarily be demonstrated by official military service records showing dates and places of services. Evidence contained in official military service records shall be deemed sufficient.

Eligible survivors of a veteran, who died as a result of their service in the Persian Gulf Conflict, shall be eligible for payment of \$5,000 in addition to bonus payments calculated based on months of active service. Official military records of the U.S. Armed Forces describing the circumstances of the death of an eligible veteran while performing active service or as result of service-connected wounds, diseases or injuries incurred in active service shall be sufficient documentation.

A veteran who was declared and recognized as a prisoner of war as a result of active service during any part of the period from August 2, 1990 until August 31, 1991, shall be eligible for a bonus payment of \$5,000 in addition to any compensation paid regardless of the duration of imprisonment. Official military records of the U.S. Armed Forces designating the eligible veteran as a prisoner of war during the Persian Gulf Conflict shall be sufficient documentation.

Applicants on behalf of deceased veterans who died in performance of active service or as a result of service-connected wounds, diseases or injuries and veterans who would, but for their death prior to submission of an application for benefits, been eligible for bonus payments based on active service. Applicants will be considered in the following order:

(a) The surviving spouse of the eligible veteran unless the surviving spouse was living separate and apart from the veteran at the time of the veteran commenced "active service" as defined in Section 2 of the Act. Proof of spousal status shall be the same as would be accepted by the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs. Surviving spouses will certify that they were not living separate and apart from the eligible veteran when the veteran commenced active service. If a surviving spouse applies or is qualified to apply, the entire payment shall be made to the surviving spouse.

(b) The surviving children of the eligible veteran in equal shares, share and share alike, provided there is no eligible surviving spouse. The surviving children shall certify that there is no eligible surviving spouse as part of the application for the benefit.

(c) The surviving parents of the eligible veteran in equal shares, share and share alike, provided there is no eligible surviving spouse and no eligible surviving children. The surviving parent(s) shall certify that there is no eligible surviving spouse or children as part of the application for the benefit.

Consistent with Section 5(a) of the Act, the following individuals shall be eligible for payment of compensation on behalf of eligible incompetent veterans. Payments shall be used for the benefit of the incapacitated veteran. Applicants will be considered in the following order:

(a) Court-appointed guardian of the eligible veteran.

(b) The spouse of the eligible veteran unless the spouse was living separate and apart from the veteran at the time of the veteran commenced "active service" as defined in Section 2 of the Act. Proof of spousal status shall be the same as would be accepted by the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs. Spouses will certify that they were not living separate and apart from the eligible veteran when the veteran commenced active service. The spouse shall certify that there is no court-appointed guardian of the eligible veteran.

(c) The children of the eligible veteran. The children shall certify that there is no court-appointed guardian or eligible spouse as part of the application for the benefit.

(d) The parents of the eligible veteran provided there is no court-appointed guardian, eligible spouse and no eligible children. The parent(s) shall certify that there is no eligible court-appointed guardian, spouse or children as part of the application for the benefit.

(e) The facility, as defined in Section 5(c) of the Act, providing care and services to the eligible veteran, if there are no court-appointed guardians, eligible spouse, children or parents and the facility so certifies. The bonus payment shall be used for clothing and incidental needs of the veteran and shall not be used to pay for the maintenance of the veteran in the facility.

In the event of a dispute of the eligibility of an applicant, the payment of the bonus will be deferred until the parties resolve the dispute or a court of competent jurisdiction issues an order making a determination on the issue.

Compensation of eligible veterans who die after submitting application but before payment:

(a) An applicant for compensation under the Program shall, in his or her application, set forth the name and address of one or more designated beneficiaries who would receive compensation in the event of the applicant dies before payment.

(b) If an applicant dies after the application is filed but before payment and has designated a beneficiary as part of the application for the benefit, the designated beneficiary will be paid the benefit upon proof of identity.

(c) If an applicant fails to designate a beneficiary or no person designated as a beneficiary survives the applicant, no payment shall be made and the right to compensation under the Program shall cease.

In the event the Department receives a complaint under Section 8 of the Act that a person has charged a fee for assisting a veteran in applying for the benefits provided by the Act, the Department shall refer the complaint to the appropriate district attorney or law enforcement agency.

Application Procedures. Application for benefits under the Program shall be made on forms developed by the Awarded Offeror. Forms must be provided to and may be obtained from the Department, County Directors of Veterans' Affairs, Veterans' services organizations and on-line at the Department's website (www.dmva.pa.gov).

Applications will be submitted to the address designated on the application form.

Applications must be accompanied by copies of supporting documentation from official military records of the U.S. Armed Force including DD Form 214s and other documentation showing periods of active service, military orders, certificate of award of Southwest Asia Service Medal, documentation of home of record, and other documentation specified in these regulations and the application form.

The Awarded Offeror will conduct a review of applications for completeness. If the application is deemed complete, the Awarded Offeror will review the application to determine eligibility for the benefits provided by the program and the amount of compensation.

The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs will review and approve all denials of benefits proposed by the Awarded Offeror before notice of the denial is sent to the applicant.

The Department will provide official notice of when applications will be available and when they may be submitted.

Reconsideration and Appeals. Any applicant who is dissatisfied with the disposition of his or her application may ask the Deputy Adjutant General for Veterans' Affairs to reconsider the disposition. The

Deputy Adjutant General will respond in writing to any requests for reconsideration within 60 days of receipt.

Any person aggrieved by decision of the Deputy Adjutant General for Veterans' Affairs after reconsideration of the disposition of the application for benefits under this chapter may, within 30 days of receipt of the disposition, appeal in writing to the Adjutant General, who shall, in accordance with the General Rules of Administrative Practice and Procedure (1 Pa. Code Part II), adjudicate the appeal.

An individual who received from any other state in the United States a bonus, gratuity or compensation similar in nature or purpose to the bonus payable under the Act is ineligible for a bonus payment under the Act. Applicants must certify as part of the application that the veteran did not receive such compensation or benefit payment from any other state. This exclusion does not apply to bonus, gratuity, and compensation or benefit payments from the United States Government.

For purposes of preparing the proposal, it is the responsibility of the offeror to project estimates for this program. The offeror may desire to use Census information, as adjusted, for purposes of projecting potential participation.

3. Requirements:

The Awarded Offeror will be required to meet the requirements set forth in Part IV-3 of the RFP and Appendix E. The error rate for processing all applications and related inquiries should not exceed one percent of the total number of applications on a monthly basis. The Department will perform random samples of files at its discretion to determine the Awarded Offeror's failure rate as well as rely on the management reports and audit findings. The Awarded Offeror will be required to pay as liquidated damages \$50.00 per application for simple neglect when the error rate exceeds a one percent failure rate, in addition to any other contractual remedies. In addition, the Awarded Offeror will pay \$100.00 per application for any wrongful processing of applications due to willful misconduct.

Performance Standards. The Awarded Offeror must meet the following processing standards:

- Log-in an application within 1 business day of receipt.
- Send the applicant a letter of receipt within 2 business days of receipt.
- Adjudicate a claim within 12 business days of receipt.
- Provide Department staff with an electronic file of applicants daily.
- Return an incomplete claim to applicant within 22 business days.
- Answer all inquiries within:
 - Phone messages: 1 business day
 - Emails: 3 business days
 - General Correspondence: 5 days
 - Special Correspondence: 6 days
 - Governor's Correspondence: 2 days prior to due date

Facilities. The Awarded Offeror must obtain a dedicated facility within a 50-mile radius of Fort Indiantown Gap where it will carry out the processing of applications under this contract. All operations at this facility are to be confined to the activities specified in the bid proposal. This facility must also contain offices and free parking accommodations, suitable for at least two Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Staff. This must include at least two network ports with a minimum of broadband access sufficient to support VPN access to the Commonwealth network. Three electrical and two telephone outlets must also be available in the offices for Department Military and Veterans Affairs staff. If the call center activities are not performed in this location, the call center must be within five (5) miles from this dedicated facility.

The Awarded Offeror shall provide direct access to the Awarded Offeror's Facility and all other Awarded Offeror sites utilized for this Program, as requested by the Department. Access is defined as the unrestricted ability of Department employees to work with personnel, operating systems, records, programs, procedures, software, facilities and equipment used in support of the Program.

Personnel. The Awarded Offeror is required to put forward a management team acceptable to the Department to oversee the Startup, Operation and Transition of the Program. The management team is expected to work closely with the Department during the startup and transition periods. The team will hire personnel and ensure that the necessary operation staff receives training so that operations may commence smoothly without interruption or delay.

Management and Operations Staffing. The Awarded Offeror shall employ a qualified management team to ensure the quality development, implementation and operation of the Program. Additionally, the "key management" personnel listed below shall be required to have, at a minimum, three years experience in their specialty area:

Project Manager (100% of their time shall be dedicated to this program);
Quality Assurance Manager;
Local Area Network/Wide Area Network (LAN/WAN) Manager;

Support staff shall be of sufficient number to ensure that a high quality program be operational and that the standards of performance are met.

The Department also shall receive a thirty-day advance notification of any involuntary separations, transfers, or furloughs of incumbents in "Key Management and Supervisory" positions. When vacated, key management and supervisory positions must be filled by qualified personnel within 21 days.

All personnel will be required to participate in a formal training program provided by the Awarded Offeror before beginning scheduled work hours. In addition, the Awarded Offeror will design and implement quarterly training activities for all staff. Where appropriate, cross training plans for employees should be considered.

Insurance. The Awarded Offeror must purchase and maintain at its expense the following types of insurance, which must be issued by companies acceptable to the Department:

Worker's Compensation Insurance in an amount to adequately cover all of the employees of the Awarded Offeror working to fulfill this contract.

Comprehensive General Liability Insurance, Automobile Liability Insurance, and Property Damage Insurance. The limits of such insurance shall be at least \$1,000,000 for injury to or death of one person in a single occurrence and \$3,000,000 for injury to or death of more than one person in a single occurrence and \$1,000,000 for a single occurrence of property damage. Such policies shall name the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as an additional insured.

Blanket Fidelity Bonds in sufficient amount to cover all of the employees of the Awarded Offeror working under the contract and to defend and hold harmless the Commonwealth from any claims of third parties that are the result of disclosure of the Awarded Offeror or its employees.

Contract Requirements—Disadvantaged Business Participation and Enterprise Zone Small Business Participation. All contracts containing Disadvantaged Business participation and/or Enterprise Zone Small Business participation must also include a provision requiring the selected Awarded Offeror to meet and

maintain those commitments made to Disadvantaged Businesses and/or Enterprise Zone Small Businesses at the time of proposal submittal or contract negotiation, unless a change in the commitment is approved by the BMWBO. All contracts containing Disadvantaged Business participation and/or Enterprise Zone Small Business participation must include a provision requiring Small Disadvantaged Business subcontractor, Enterprise Zone Small Business subcontractor and Small Disadvantaged Businesses or Enterprise Zone Small Businesses in a joint venture to perform at least **50%** of the subcontract or Small Disadvantaged Business/Enterprise Zone Small Business participation portion of the joint venture.

The selected Awarded Offeror's commitments to Disadvantaged Businesses and/or Enterprise Zone Small Businesses made at the time of proposal submittal or contract negotiation shall be maintained throughout the term of the contract. Any proposed change must be submitted to BMWBO, which will make a recommendation to the Contracting Officer regarding a course of action.

If a contract is assigned to another Awarded Offeror, the new Awarded Offeror must maintain the Disadvantaged Business participation and/or Enterprise Zone Small Business participation of the original contract.

The selected Awarded Offeror shall complete the Prime Awarded Offeror's Quarterly Utilization Report (or similar type document containing the same information) and submit it to the contracting officer of the Issuing Office and BMWBO within **10** workdays at the end of each quarter the contract is in force. This information will be used to determine the actual dollar amount paid to Small Disadvantaged Business and/or Enterprise Zone Small Business subcontractor and suppliers, and Small Disadvantaged Business and/or Enterprise Zone Small Business participants involved in joint ventures. Also, this information will serve as a record of fulfillment of the commitment the selected Awarded Offeror made and for which it received Disadvantaged Business and Enterprise Zone Small Business points. If there was no activity during the quarter then the form must be completed by stating "No activity in this quarter."

NOTE: EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND CONTRACT COMPLIANCE STATEMENTS REFERRING TO COMPANY EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY POLICIES OR PAST CONTRACT COMPLIANCE PRACTICES DO NOT CONSTITUTE PROOF OF DISADVANTAGED BUSINESSES STATUS OR ENTITLE AN OFFEROR TO RECEIVE CREDIT FOR DISADVANTAGED BUSINESSES UTILIZATION.

4. Tasks. The Awarded Offeror is required to perform three major tasks.

Program Start-up - To establish systems and procedures and to commence startup operations within 60 days of issuance of the fully executed contract.

Program Operation - To administer the program.

Program Transition - To establish a plan to transition the administration of the program to the Commonwealth. The offeror is required to estimate the amount of time and resources necessary for the complete and successful transition of the program.

Offerors shall provide a charted schedule of events in sufficient detail to enable effective monitoring of the Startup, Operation and Transition tasks (GANNT) with their proposals. Also, provide a critical path analysis of Startup activities to assure a fully operational program no later than sixty (60) days from the date the notice to proceed is issued. Include a summary of the person-days of effort for each Startup, Operation and Transition task.

Include informational flow diagrams for the application process, customer service operations, standard and ad hoc reporting systems, data management, input and retrieval, quality assurance, PC network and Mainframe networking diagram, internal on-line database access, and document imaging process and workflow.

Include sample internal management reports that will be used to administer this program.

Startup Plan. The Awarded Offeror shall develop a Startup plan, which contains information on all activities required to commence operations of the Program. The plan must include the following:

Detailed information on the tasks to be accomplished;
Identification of personnel necessary to complete the activities;
Identification of the systems and equipment needed for the program;

The plan must contain sufficient detail to enable the Department to have confidence in the Awarded Offeror's ability to start-up within sixty (60) days of the fully executed contract.

Policies and Procedures. The Awarded Offeror will be required to develop policies and procedures, when appropriate, during the Startup process. At a minimum, the following operations manuals, available in both written and electronic formats, must be developed and approved by the Department:

Procedural Manuals:

Application Process/Tracking System;
Payment ;
Reconsideration/Appeals;
Training;
Filing;
Customer Service/Inquiries;
Quality Assurance;
Systems;
Third Party Liability;
Telephone Manual;
Disaster Recovery; and
Transition Plan.

The Awarded Offeror must provide the Department with copies of all documentation relating to the program including, training manuals, disaster recovery plans, etc, in electronic and hard copy format.

Program Operation. The Awarded Offeror has the overall responsibility for determining eligibility of applications, to be determined consistent with the Act and Regulations. All denials must be processed through the Department personnel onsite.

At a minimum, the Awarded Offeror must provide the following services:

Develop, print, and distribute informational brochures/digests and applications with instructions, as directed by the Department. These are to be mailed, upon request, to applicants, county agencies, legislative district offices, or as otherwise directed by the Department. The application will also be available to be downloaded from the Persian Gulf Conflict Veterans' Benefit Program website.

The Applications must be designed to meet all the requirement of Act and accompanying rules and regulations. The Awarded Offeror is encouraged to recommend enhancements to the application design and process. The application must be provided in form fill able PDF format to the Department staff to be posted to the DMVA website.

All applications, complete or incomplete, must be responded to within two business days of receipt by the Awarded Offeror.

All inquiries, email, phone messages and correspondence, must be responded to as follows:

General Correspondence – 5 Business Days

Legislative Correspondence – 6 Business Days (All Legislative Inquires must be answered by the on-site Department Staff prior to issuance.)

Governor's Correspondence – 2 Days prior to the due date

Emails – 5 Business Days

Phone Messages: Within 1 Business Day of receipt

All applications and correspondence images must be maintained for the life of the contract and transferred to Department of Military and Veterans Affairs at the Transition Phase. All correspondence relating to the application must be attached to the application. The Awarded Offeror will ship all paper files to the State Archives in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania during the Transition Phase.

The Awarded Offeror shall be responsible for developing procedures to cover, at a minimum, the following categories:

Complete and incomplete applications;

Approved and Denied applications;

Reconsiderations and appeals;

Error resolutions for potential problems;

Cross-match and retrieval of information;

Filing (electronic and paper files);

Individual tracking of applications; and

Inquiry Handling: Correspondence, letters and emails

The Awarded Offeror shall scan all incoming documents within two business day from date of receipt.

The Awarded Offeror shall be responsible for maintaining a file of all applications (approvals, denials and incomplete). Removal shall be in accordance with applicable laws and regulations and with related policies and procedures approved by the Department.

If a Awarded Offeror error permits an ineligible person to receive benefits, the Awarded Offeror is liable to the Department for all payments made on behalf of that individual by the Program. The Awarded Offeror will be prohibited from collecting payments for such claims from the applicant.

The Awarded Offeror will be required to furnish representation, of at least a manager level, at all Department hearings pertaining to eligibility issues. Additionally, documentation on the application issue shall be provided by the Awarded Offeror. There shall be no additional charge to the Department for these services.

All applications, corresponding documentation and all other correspondence regarding applicants are to be maintained on a digitized image record, reproduced on a printer, and communicated between computers. Hard copies shall be retained on site for not less than the duration of the contract after being imaged. Hard Copies will be transferred to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (State Archives) and digital files will be transferred to Department of Military and Veterans Affairs at the conclusion of the contract. Daily and weekly backups should be maintained to support recoveries.

The Awarded Offeror shall maintain an application file which has on-line accessibility at the Awarded Offeror's location and available to Department of Military and Veterans Affairs personnel. On-line information shall be available at a minimum for the following:

- All information contained on the application form;
- Special identifiers for POW/KIA claims;
- Awarded Offeror approval checklist;
- Reconsideration and appeal processes;
- Audit trail for all contacts made via the telephone or by written correspondence;
- Cross - retrieval information;
- History files;
- Power of Attorney;
- Affidavit;
- Document image; and
- Deceased indicator/date of death;

Applicant correspondence shall be imaged, handled professionally and accurately, and responded to within five business days of receipt for general correspondence, six business days for special correspondence and two days prior to the due date for Governor's Correspondence.

Systems and subsystems necessary to maintain accurate tracking and support of all application processes must be maintained and periodically enhanced.

The Awarded Offeror will be responsible for conducting, on an annual basis, live instructor led training for the County Directors for Veterans Affairs, legislative personnel from the House and Senate, Veterans Service Organization Personnel, and Commonwealth staff associated with this program. The training sessions will be at designated locations throughout the Commonwealth. At a minimum, the training sessions should cover application processing, eligibility requirements for applicants, procedural changes and overall highlights of the Program. The Department will approve all training content prior to the issuance of the training. Annual training will consist of approximately 250 individuals throughout the state of PA. The Awarded Offeror will be responsible for all costs associated with the training; this includes, but is not limited to obtaining the locations, training rooms, equipment and manuals.

Offerors shall include a proposed Regional Training Plan with their proposal.

The Awarded Offeror will be responsible for maintaining an appeal system. All applicants have the right to appeal when their application has been denied.

This system should include, but is not limited to, the following fields:

- Name;
- Address;
- Telephone number;
- Social Security number;
- Application Control Number (ACN);
- Status;
- Beginning eligibility date;
- Ending eligibility date;
- Activity;
- Appeal type;
- Date appeal received;
- Date appeal verified;
- Date appeal resolved (approved or denied);
- Resolution
- Docket number;

The Awarded Offeror shall also print two copies of the appeal letters. One copy is sent to Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Chief Council and the other copy is imaged into the applicant's file.

Telephone System. The Awarded Offeror shall maintain a nationwide toll-free telephone system to assist persons in making application. This system must be equipped with a queuing function and be able to handle a minimum of 6,000 calls per five-day workweek. No applicants should receive voicemail during normal business hours. Normal business hours must be at least eight (8) hours per weekday, between the hours of 6:00 am and 6:00 pm EST. The toll free number should be the only published number for incoming calls. There shall be other dedicated lines for outgoing calls.

Voice mail messages received through the toll-free system will be returned within one business day of the date of receipt.

All telephone calls must be logged, and telephone operators shall receive training on Program operations, on telephone etiquette and customer service before responding to actual inquiries. At a minimum, this shall include how to operate the telephone system and what to say when answering the telephone. The Awarded Offeror shall develop and maintain a documented telephone manual. This manual shall be approved by the Department before being distributed to each operator.

The Awarded Offeror must maintain a monthly call abandonment rate of five percent or less on the toll-free telephone system and respond to all incoming calls within five seconds of the second ring ninety-five percent of the time.

The automatic call distribution system selected should be capable of electronically logging calls and providing an ongoing summation of information, which includes at a minimum the following:

Number and percent of calls (for the day, week-to-date and month-to-date) grouped according to:

- Type of call;
- Type of resolution;
- Geographic origin of call;

Telephone operator; and
Average duration of call.

In addition, the Awarded Offeror must include the following:

Operators who are available to accept calls;
Operators who are on the line and the amount of time they have been on the line; and
Number of calls waiting in queue and number of abandoned calls.

The system should also be designed to generate daily, weekly and monthly written summaries which highlight general trends and identify peak phone periods; and

Other features of the system should include the capability to conduct electronic quality control/monitoring activities and to receive and record incoming messages.

Claims Disbursements. Claim payments are made via paper check by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Awarded Offeror will be responsible for providing an electronic spreadsheet based file with the following fields:

Social Security Number
Last Name
First Name
Address
City
State
Zip Code

This file must be provided to the Department on-site staff daily for approval and processing. The Commonwealth will then process the data within ten (10) days and mail checks to the approved applicants.

Claims Payment System. Reports for the Department from the Awarded Offeror must include:
Claims processing timeliness reports;
Transactions;
Error reports;
Weekly, monthly and quarterly summaries;
Ad hoc reports and queries;
System evaluation reports, including outage reports; and
Electronic and paper claim submission data.

The system shall have the capability of creating logs and audit trails.

Routine information will be made available to the Department through the provision of electronic management reports and the submission of ad hoc reports as requested by the Department.

The offeror's proposal should describe the number and qualifications of all personnel who will be responsible for working with the Department in meeting these information needs. It is required that the Program Manager will be fully dedicated to the Program.

Except as specifically outlined in this RFP or subsequent contract, program information shall not be utilized, disseminated in any form by the Awarded Offeror to any Awarded Offeror subsidiary, other agency, organization, or person without the express written consent of the Department.

Computer Programs and Associated Software. The Awarded Offeror must obtain a domain and maintain an active e-mail account. Adequate modem connections are required in Awarded Offeror offices reserved for Department staff. The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs must also have VPN access to view the contractor's electronic files associated with this program.

The Awarded Offeror will be required to provide Commonwealth standard computer programs necessary for the operation of the entire system of application adjudication and reporting that meets all the functionality requirements of this RFP. The software purchased or developed for this Program, except as noted in the following paragraph, shall become the property of the Department upon termination of the contract.

In the event the Awarded Offeror proposes to use proprietary software as the core system for administering the program, it will be necessary that the software be available from the third-party licensor at competitive market rates upon termination of the contract. These rates will be agreed upon prior to signing of the contract.

During the term of the contract, it will be the Awarded Offeror's responsibility to upgrade and update the software and computer programs with the approval of the Department.

The Awarded Offeror will develop a system to track applications that can be queried based on name, SSN, county, branch of service, military component, Home of Record, Date of application, Date Paid, etc. A formula to determine the amount of the bonus an applicant is entitled, to include POW and Death Benefits must be maintained.

Equipment and Data Requirements. Offerors must identify any equipment, which will be required to implement the proposed plan. Only equipment, which has been demonstrated and operational in a user environment, shall be accepted. The Department encourages that the offeror propose to use modern computer and data entry systems, phone systems, duplicating and fax machines, scanning equipment, embossing machines and mail room processing equipment, including a dedicated fax machine and telephone line for the Department's use.

Before program operation is initiated, the Awarded Offeror shall perform all testing to ensure accuracy and completeness of processing utilizing the designed systems. Additionally, the Awarded Offeror will be subjected to a formal system acceptance test using data selected by the Department in order to ensure integrity of the test results.

Although the offeror is expected to recommend the format and extent of information to be provided, record files will include:

Application information:

General data on Applicant;

Name

Current address, including Street, City, State, Zip Code

Telephone number

County

SSN

Characterization of discharge

Branch of Service

Component

Dates of Service

Dates in Theater

KIA or POW indicator/date of death;
Application status;
Appeal status;
Amount of bonus;
Status of payment;
Supporting Documentation; and
 DD214
 Proof of Residency
 Power of Attorney (As required);
 Affidavit (As required);
 Death Certificate (As required)
General Description of contact made and subject.
Phone/email/correspondence/etc

Information pertaining to this program will not be stored on any portable devices.

Data Access Environments. The operating system currently in use at the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs is Windows XP Professional (Service Pack 2). Office XP is the office productivity suite and Microsoft Exchange/Microsoft Outlook is the e-mail etc. Software. Access to this network is controlled by the Department of Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, IT division. They operate in association with and subject to the Commonwealth Office of Information Technology (OIT). All network and computer-based Commonwealth related business is carried out using these workstations. Special software needs outside of the standard deployment described above must be cleared, tested and documented by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, IT division. This includes Awarded Offeror specific software. Installation of such software on actual workstations must also be coordinated and supervised by Department of Military and Veterans Affairs IT division. Access to this network is permitted but must first be approved by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. Data access environments at the Awarded Offeror's site will closely mirror the standards established by the Commonwealth of PA's ITBs.

Document Management. All Program applications and necessary accompanying documentation need to be scanned into electronic PDF or table document format files upon receipt and maintained for ready access. In addition, all correspondence must be scanned and archived for future reference. The Department will specify a naming convention for these files.

Network File Sharing. It is the Awarded Offeror's responsibility to facilitate secure sharing of data files, stored on the Awarded Offeror's network, with Department staff. Access must be as seamless and intuitive as is evident with software such as Windows Explorer. The file is selected, opened, modified, saved and archives easily, simply and quickly. The Awarded Offeror must preserve this ability and propose enhancements to it on an ongoing basis over the life of the contract.

Computer Devices. The following lists the number of machines to be made available by the Awarded Offeror and able to access without excessive interruption or malfunction. All functions in use in Department of Military and Veterans Affairs must be accessible through these devices.

Two PC systems each equipped with scanning and viewing system functions at the Awarded Offeror's facility. This software is used to access all applications and documents. A number of PC based software products are also required on some machines; otherwise, software achieving all functions is required for Department of Military and Veterans Affairs computer devices.

One dedicated network laser printer for Department of Military and Veterans Affairs staff will also be required at the Awarded Offeror's location in the immediate proximity of, or inside, Department of Military and Veterans Affairs staff offices in the Awarded Offeror's facility.

Two Adobe Acrobat Professional licenses in its most current version.

At the termination of the contract, all equipment purchased for the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs staff will become the possession of the Department.

Software and Hardware Upgrades. The Awarded Offeror must also ensure that upgrades to most current software and hardware technology as well as operating system upgrades are performed over the course of the contract. Upgrades must be coordinated with the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs IT Division to ensure compatibility with the Commonwealth Network.

Network Outages. The Awarded Offeror will be required to account for network outages when they occur on the Awarded Offeror's side of the network, and when they affect Awarded Offeror system access by Department of Military and Veterans Affairs staff and devices. This information must be reported to Department of Military and Veterans Affairs on a monthly basis.

PC Specifications. The Awarded Offeror will be responsible for all equipment necessary to allow all Department of Military and Veterans Affairs staff access to the network. This access to all the necessary program applications is required for Department of Military and Veterans Affairs staff to perform their daily duties at the Awarded Offeror's office. It is the responsibility of the Awarded Offeror to use the network connectivity device preferred by the Department in all desktop systems provided to Commonwealth employees and provide equipment that meets the Commonwealth Desktop Standards of ITB-PLT001.

Website. Information regarding the Program will be maintained on the Department's website. www.dmva.pa.gov. The Awarded Offeror will be required to develop content and provide the Department with information to be posted to the website. This includes, but is not limited to, the application in a fill able PDF format, frequently asked questions, pamphlets. The Department will update the website within three (3) business days of receipt of the information.

Administrative Support Functions. The Awarded Offeror is responsible for setting up any support functions. These functions shall include, but are not limited to, accounting, purchasing, security, legal and other administrative functions. These administrative support functions are solely the responsibility of the Awarded Offeror.

Forms and Documents. Offerors must demonstrate their ability to develop and supply new documents and to use documents to operate the Program. All documents must be approved by the Department prior to use. Documents the Awarded Offeror will provide include, but are not limited to, the following:

Application forms including instructional materials to assist applicants
Program informational and educational brochures/digests (at least 20,000 brochures must be created and the digest is not to exceed eight (8) pages)
Standardized Receipt Letter
Standardized Approval/Disapproval Letter
Qualification Checklist forms
Approval/Disapproval forms

An explicit reference must identify the location of a source document for the data contained on each table. Files may be protected from editing, but must then be shared with the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs staff to allow them to exploit the amassed information located in the source files used to report weekly status updates. It is anticipated that these reports will continue for the duration of the contract.

Transition Plan. At the termination of the contract, the Awarded Offeror will need to execute a Transition plan. **As part of their proposal, Offerors shall describe the strategy in which they would transition. This includes the time anticipated for the transition.**

To ensure that there is no interruption of operations, the Transition plan must contain detailed activities related to the following areas (**Offerors' proposals should address how these issues will be handled**):

Overall approach to Transition activities;
Responsibilities of the Awarded Offeror and the Department;
Identification of the Transition team;
Changes, which shall occur by the end of the contract;
Asset inventory record, which identifies all leased, owned, or rented equipment and facility records funded by this contract. Items provided by the Department for use by the Awarded Offeror, or by the Awarded Offeror for use by the Department should also be identified;
Identification of Transition processes. These include, at a minimum, staffing, equipment, systems, disposable supplies, consumption, projections of workloads and operational procedures;
A training plan for the subsequent operation and maintenance of the Programs' systems;
All program software developed for program operation shall be delivered to the Department or as directed to the subsequent Awarded Offeror. The Awarded Offeror shall relinquish any rights which it may have had to use the programming software developed for the program.
During the Transition, routine inventory management of disposable program documents (applications, brochures, etc.) will be required of the Awarded Offeror to avoid critical shortages in the immediate post contract period. Upon request, acquisition cost information shall be provided to the Department for all disposable items.

All paper files of approved applications will be transferred to the state archives. Awarded Offeror will make direct liaison with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania to execute this function.

The Awarded Offeror will be responsible for all costs associated with the transition.

5. Program Status Reports. Routine management reports are to be provided to the Department in accordance with the different time/types schedules listed below. All reporting must be available electronically. All reports must be printable in a format that is clearly readable and that duplicates the electronic format adequately so no data is lost in printing process.

Some routine management reports are described below. The Awarded Offeror shall be required to create new or revise current routine management reports at the direction of the Department. Further, the reporting system must allow for reports, deemed suitable, and developed by Pennsylvania Persian Gulf Conflict Veterans' Benefit Program staff to be incorporated into the system.

Weekly;
Monthly;
Quarterly; and
Pennsylvania Persian Gulf Conflict Veterans' Benefit Program Annual Report to the Pennsylvania General Assembly

Specific reports according to their time and type are as follows:

Weekly reports. Weekly status reports shall be required and will delineate significant events, dates, and progress on, at a minimum, the following:

Staff complement;
Training schedules;
Telephone activities;
Written correspondence;
Operational problems;
Application processing data;
 -Received
 -Pending
 -Approvals
 -Disapprovals
 -Returned due to insufficient documentation
 -Reconsiderations/Appeals
Payment verification;
System projects; and
Other significant events

Application processing activities, which occurred during the previous week:
Number of applications adjudicated;
Number and percent according to adjudication status;
Number and percent of applications sorted by category, i.e., approved, incomplete or denied applications;
Number of applications in-house to be adjudicated.
Actual number of hours expended;
Time table for completion; and
Progress report.

Weekly Appeal Report:

Appeals completed
Appeals Pending
Status of Pending Appeals
Date the initial notification was sent to the applicant
Electronically store all correspondence regarding appeal on the imaging system, log

Monthly reports. Summary of Pennsylvania Persian Gulf Conflict Veterans' Benefit Program enrollment in all of its phases:

Timeliness of processing for new approved applications (number and percent determined in less than twelve (12) days; number and percent determined over twelve (12) days).

Timeliness of processing denied applications.
Number and percent of the telephone inquiries.
Claims processing real time, including number of claims received, number and percent adjudicated according to status, number on hand to be adjudicated, and dollar amount approved for payment.

Total claims to date;
Monthly claims

Total claims approved, denied or returned as incomplete;
Monthly claims approved, denied or returned as incomplete;
Number of applications by county
Approved applications by county
Total Claims Paid by the Program;
Monthly Claims Paid by the Program
Total costs;
Monthly costs;
Average cost per claim;
Total number of request for reconsideration and appeal;
Monthly number of request for reconsideration and appeal;
Status of appeals;
Average time to process a claim
Average time to answer an inquiry
Total number of inquiries by category (email, phone and correspondence)
Monthly number of inquiries by category (email, phone and correspondence)
Average monthly number of application
Average monthly payment
Month-to-date summaries of numbers.

Yearly reports. Year-to-date summaries of numbers.

The Persian Gulf Benefit Annual Report to the Pennsylvania General Assembly. It is expected that the Awarded Offeror will provide "publication-ready" charts/figures/tables for inclusion in each Annual report prepared by the Department for submission to the Pennsylvania General Assembly. Inasmuch as the specific content and format of the reports may vary from time to time, the Awarded Offeror will be required to meet with Department representatives at least three months prior to the development of the report in order to finalize the format and content of the reports. Provisions will be made to accommodate the Department's legislative reporting needs. The Awarded Offeror will be responsible for printing a minimum of five hundred (500) copies of each Annual Report and create an electronic version for viewing on the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs web site.

Ad Hoc Reports. The Awarded Offeror will be required to provide ad hoc information as requested by the Department. To provide this information, it is expected that the Awarded Offeror will have a sufficient number of experienced and well-trained staff with demonstrated capability of developing and producing reports. A plan for providing information on an ad hoc basis should be included in the offeror's response to this RFP.

Pre-Operation Review. The Awarded Offeror is required to perform for Department personnel; a pre-operation review of the Startup task capabilities at the Awarded Offeror facilities, on, or before, 60 days after the contract is fully executed. This must include provisions for a walk-through of the facility and a mock demonstration of all systems. Upon successful review, the Department will grant its approval, in writing, for the Awarded Offeror to begin Program operation.

Secure Audits. The Awarded Offeror will be required to provide an independent audit of the Programs' administrative operation by a registered/certified public accountant, approved by the Commonwealth. The audit must be conducted in accordance with "Standards for Audit of Governmental Organizations, Programs, Activities and Functions," promulgated by the Comptroller General, which pertain to financial and compliance audits. Two (2) audits must be conducted, one at the end of the first year of the contract and one at the expiration of the contract. Four (4) copies of each audit report must be submitted to the Department within one hundred twenty days following the end of the first year and the end of the contract.

Disaster Recovery and Backup Plan. The Awarded Offeror shall provide backup equipment and facilities, subject to review and approval by the Department. The backup facilities must be operational within forty-eight hours of a disaster and must be able to provide service during the interim period such that the performance standards set forth in this RFP are met. Back up of all electronic data must also occur daily with one full back-up performed once a week with the remaining being differentials. Additionally, a full back-up of the system and its data will be shipped offsite to an approved vendor once a week.

Confidentiality. The Awarded Offeror shall maintain the confidentiality of the applicant's information through secure facilities and software and in full compliance with all applicable State and Federal Regulations. Security systems are subject to the inspection and approval of the Department. A fidelity bond will be required on all employees.

Rights In Data and Intellectual Property. Except as otherwise provided for computer software, all of the intellectual property developed for this program, including, but not limited to digests, applications, pamphlets, website information, will become the property of the Department.

The Awarded Offeror agrees that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Military and Veterans Affairs shall have a non-exclusive, royalty-free, and irrevocable license to reproduce or otherwise use and authorize others to use all software that has been acquired for the use with the Pennsylvania Persian Gulf Conflict Veterans' Benefit Program at any time during the period of the contract and thereafter.

The license shall include, but is not limited to:

- All supporting programs in their most current version that are currently being utilized;
- All development code and system instructions for operating the Persian Gulf Conflict Veterans' Benefit Program in its most current version;
- All data files in their most current version;
- All specialized or specially modified operation system software and specially developed programs, including utilities, software, and documentation, which are required for, or used in the operation of the Persian Gulf Conflict Veterans' Benefit Program.

All software specifically designed and developed by the Awarded Offeror for the Persian Gulf Benefit program becomes the property of the Department.

All data acquired by the Awarded Offeror from Department or from third parties in the performance of this Agreement during the Development and Implementation or Operations Tasks, whether or not it is personal data, shall be and will remain the property of the Commonwealth. The Department for itself and such other departments of the Commonwealth, will have unrestricted rights to all documentation acquired by the Awarded Offeror for delivery to the Department under this Agreement. Unrestricted ownership rights under this Agreement includes the right to use, disclose or duplicate all such documentation in whole or in part in any manner and for any purpose without compensation to or approval by the Awarded Offeror. This includes all finished or unfinished studies, analyses, flow charts, design documents, program specifications, programs, source codes and listings, test data, test results, schedules and planning documents, training materials and user manuals, forms, reports and similar documents, including modifications thereto. User and operational manuals, as well as other documentation in their most current version; training programs for Department staff and other designated Commonwealth employees for the operation and use of the system; any and all performance-enhancing operational plans and products; and training programs for State Legislators, County Agencies, Veterans Service Organizations.

The Awarded Offeror agrees to deliver such material to the Commonwealth within thirty (30) calendar days from receipt of a written request from the Department.

A fundamental obligation imposed on the Awarded Offeror is for the transfer by the Awarded Offeror to the Commonwealth of ownership rights for the Persian Gulf Conflict Veterans' Benefit Program, whether developed or obtained by the Awarded Offeror in the course of performance under the contract or before it.

The Awarded Offeror will convey, upon request and without limitation, copies of all system documentation, operating instructions, and procedures and all data processing program, or portions thereof, which are part of the Persian Gulf Conflict Veterans' Benefit Program, whether they are developed by the employees of the contactor or any subcontractor as part of this contract or transferred from another contract.

The Awarded Offeror will use Commonwealth owned data, software and related documentation, before and after the expiration or termination of this Agreement, only as required for the performance of this Agreement. It will not otherwise use, copy or reproduce the same in any form, except pursuant to the express written instructions of the Department.

The Awarded Offeror further agrees to deliver the same to the Department promptly upon request, or upon expiration or termination of this Agreement, in whatever form it is maintained by the Awarded Offeror, and to destroy all copies remaining in its possession. The Awarded Offeror will take all reasonable steps during the Startup, Operations and Transition Tasks to assure the physical security of the Department owned data, software and related documentation in its possession including, but not limited to, protection against damage from fire, smoke and water, and security violations.

The Department shall own and retain unlimited rights to use, disclose, or duplicate all information and data (copyrighted or otherwise) developed, derived, documented, stored, or furnished by the Awarded Offeror under this contract.

Quality Assurance Activities. The Awarded Offeror is responsible for monitoring all of the day-to-day activities of the Program.

At a minimum, the following plan will be adhered to:

Monitor development and/or production of special policies and any requests by the Department.

A mailbag sampling shall be done at the front end of the process, and the audit shall follow through the process to review all products produced in the sample area.

New applications shall be sampled weekly.

Adjudicated claims shall be sampled weekly.

Products, such as manuals and brochures, shall be sampled when they are developed and/or updated.

Special samplings shall be pulled on areas such as special claim processing, application suspend files, screen file accuracy, scanning, etc.

Monitoring shall be completed based upon employee performance standards with particular emphasis on the quality of work in the various operational areas.

The Awarded Offeror will also be responsible for identifying deficiencies and recommending corrective actions, and to assure that appropriate corrective actions are implemented. The findings of these audits shall be reported to the Department, monthly. Additionally, the Department shall have access to all of the Quality Assurance findings and actions.