



VETERANS EMPLOYMENT

VA Should Address Human Capital Needs and Other Issues in High-Tech Training

Report to Congressional Committees

September 2025

GAO-25-106876

United States Government Accountability Office

Accessible Version

GAO Highlights

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Highlights of [GAO-25-106876](#), a report to congressional committees

September 2025

Veterans Employment

VA Should Address Human Capital Needs and Other Issues in High-Tech Training

Why GAO Did This Study

The federal government helps veterans transition to the civilian workforce. The Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017 (the “Forever GI Bill”) instructed VA to carry out a 5-year pilot to train veterans for high-tech jobs. VA created VET TEC to support veterans who enrolled in high-tech courses through VA-approved training providers. In January 2025, legislation was enacted to establish a new program through September 2027.

The Forever GI Bill included a provision for GAO to assess VET TEC. GAO issued an initial report on VET TEC in [October 2022](#). This report builds on GAO’s prior work and examines (1) VET TEC’s alignment with leading practices for effective pilot design, (2) VA’s oversight of training providers, and (3) challenges reported by participants.

GAO compared VA’s efforts to leading practices for effective pilot design and analyzed VA program data from April 1, 2019–August 19, 2024, the most recent available. GAO also analyzed 124 VET TEC comments submitted through the GI Bill Feedback Tool from July 2, 2019–January 5, 2024. GAO reviewed relevant VA documents, federal laws, and regulations and interviewed officials.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making four recommendations, including that VA assess its human capital needs to effectively implement VET TEC, address certain provider overpayments, and collect and analyze participant feedback. VA agreed with all but one of the recommendations.

What GAO Found

The Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) program administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides financial support to veterans enrolled in high-tech programs through eligible training providers. VA data show more than 20,300 veteran enrollments during the 5-year VET TEC pilot, which began in April 2019. VA reported spending nearly \$262 million on the program as of December 2024.

GAO found that the VET TEC pilot did not fully align with leading practices for pilot design (see figure). VA officials said the agency did not have sufficient staff to fully address these practices. While VA initially determined it had sufficient staff to meet the pilot objectives, it did not continually assess staff resources. Given that a new VET TEC is authorized through 2027, assessing its human capital needs would help VA assure the program has appropriate resources.

Alignment of the VET TEC Pilot Program with Leading Practices for Effective Pilot Design

Leading practice	Description of VA actions	Alignment
Measurable objectives	VA established four objectives for the pilot but only two were measured.	 Partially aligned
Assessment methodology	VA identified some data sources and methodologies to gather information on the pilot. However, its data collection and analysis were limited.	 Partially aligned
Evaluation plan	VA did not develop an evaluation plan.	 Did not align
Stakeholder communication	VA took some steps to communicate with stakeholders and gather their input. However, VA did not sustain two-way communication with veterans, employers, and other stakeholders throughout the pilot.	 Partially aligned
Scalability assessment	VA did not formally assess the scalability of the pilot for broader implementation.	 Did not align

Source: GAO analysis of documentation of the Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) pilot of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and interviews with VA officials. | GAO-25-106876

Accessible Data for Alignment of the VET TEC Pilot Program with Leading Practices for Effective Pilot Design

Leading practice	Description of VA actions	Alignment
Measurable objectives	VA established four objectives for the pilot but only two were measured.	Partially aligned
Assessment methodology	VA identified some data sources and methodologies to gather information on the pilot. However, its data collection and analysis were limited.	Partially aligned
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Source: GAO analysis of documentation of the Veterans Education Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) pilot of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and interviews with officials. | GAO-25-106876

VA oversaw training providers by evaluating their applications. It denied 165 of 221 applications, suspended five provider facilities, conducted two on-site reviews, and referred one instance of potential provider fraud to its Office of Inspector General. GAO's analysis of VA data indicated about \$4 million in potential overpayments in tuition and fees to providers, or about 2 percent of payments. VA officials said that providers sometimes submitted information after an initial payment, such as when a veteran never began training, creating a potential overpayment. VA did not have written procedures applicable to the pilot to detect certain potential overpayments. Such procedures would enhance VA's internal controls for the VET TEC payment process.

Veterans reported multiple challenges with training providers, including recruiting, educational quality, and career placement services. However, VA did not explicitly collect or analyze ongoing feedback through the GI Bill School Feedback Tool, its primary feedback mechanism. Doing so would help VA obtain critical input and enable it to assess and inform its VET TEC implementation.

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Abbreviations

- Forever GI Bill Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 201
- VA Department of Veterans Affairs
- VET TEC Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses

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September 30, 2025

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chairman
The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
Ranking Member
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
United States Senate

The Honorable Mike Bost
Chairman
The Honorable Mark Takano
Ranking Member
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
House of Representatives

The federal government offers many educational and skill-building programs to veterans to support their transition from military to civilian employment. Among them is the Post-9/11 GI Bill program, the largest educational program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), which generally provides payments for eligible veterans to cover tuition, fees, and housing while they are pursuing a qualifying program of education.¹ VA also offers a more targeted educational initiative to provide high-technology training to eligible veterans. Specifically, the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017 (commonly referred to as the "Forever GI Bill") instructed VA to carry out a pilot program to provide tuition and other financial support to eligible veterans who enrolled in high-technology education programs through eligible training providers.²

Accordingly, VA implemented the Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) pilot program to help veterans quickly acquire skills in the fields of computer programming, computer software, media applications, data processing, or information sciences.³ Unlike Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits that veterans may use for college, graduate school, and vocational training programs, the VET TEC pilot was exclusively a vocational training program. Veterans were expected to find meaningful employment after completing training.⁴ The law authorized the VET TEC pilot for 5 years, starting from when VA entered into its first participation agreement with a training provider in April 2019.

¹These educational assistance benefits were created by the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008. Pub. L. No. 110-252, tit. V, 122 Stat. 2323, 2357-86 (codified as amended, primarily, at 38 U.S.C. ch. 33).

²Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017, Pub. L. No. 115-48, tit. I, § 116, 131 Stat. 973, 986-89.

³In January 2025, enacted legislation authorized a modified VET TEC program through September 30, 2027. Pub. L. No. 118-210, tit. II, § 212, 138 Stat. 2706, 2767 (2025) (codified at 38 U.S.C. § 3699C).

⁴VA defined "meaningful employment" as traditional employment in a career supported by the completed program of study, promotion in the veteran's current career if the veteran is currently employed in a career supported by the completed program of study, or self-employment if the veteran owns or operates a business and is utilizing the skills obtained through the completion of the program of study.

The Forever GI Bill includes a provision for GAO to assess VET TEC. In October 2022, we issued a report that examined the demographics and employment outcomes of veterans who enrolled in VET TEC, the benefits and challenges that training providers reported in implementing VET TEC, and the steps VA had taken to improve its design and implementation of VET TEC.⁵ This report builds on our previous work and examines (1) the extent to which the VET TEC pilot aligned with leading practices for effective pilot design, (2) the extent to which VA oversaw training providers, and (3) the challenges that participants in the VET TEC pilot program have reported.

To examine how the VET TEC pilot aligned with leading practices, we reviewed documentation related to the pilot's implementation and interviewed VA officials about its efforts. We assessed VA's efforts against leading practices for effective pilot program design that we identified in prior GAO work.⁶

To examine how VA oversaw VET TEC training providers, we reviewed relevant federal laws and regulations; obtained and analyzed VA data on training provider applications, approvals and reapprovals, suspensions, and withdrawals, as well as data on participant enrollments and payments to providers, for the 5-year duration of the pilot. We interviewed VA officials about their collection and use of these data. We obtained and analyzed data on payments to training providers from April 1, 2019 to August 19, 2024 to fully reflect payments to providers during the pilot and shared our analysis with VA for review and comment. We also reviewed the applications of all four training providers that VA reapproved in fiscal year 2023. Of these training providers, three agreed to be interviewed about their observations on veterans' experiences, VA's oversight, and suggestions for improving the pilot; the remaining provider declined to be interviewed. We assessed VA's efforts against federal internal control standards for the effective design of internal controls.⁷

To describe the challenges that participants in the VET TEC pilot program have reported, we asked VA for all comments submitted through the GI Bill School Feedback Tool.⁸ VA provided comments it received through the feedback tool between January 2019 and mid-January 2024. We used data analysis of text fields to identify any comments that mentioned the VET TEC program and identified VET TEC comments received between July 2, 2019 and January 5, 2024. We then conducted a detailed qualitative analysis of those comments to (1) determine whether the comment related to a participant's experience with the VET TEC pilot and (2) identify common themes that participants reported as challenges.⁹ To characterize the feedback of the veterans in this report, we defined two modifiers to quantify the volume of veterans' views: we used "many" to represent 15 or more veterans and "some" to represent three to 14 veterans. We also interviewed VA officials about the collection and use of these veterans' comments. In addition, we assessed VA's efforts against selected federal

⁵GAO, *Veterans Employment: Promising VA Technology Education Pilot Would Benefit from Better Outcome Measures and Plans for Improvement*, GAO 23-105343 (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 27, 2022).

⁶GAO, *Data Act: Section 5 Pilot Design Issues Need to Be Addressed to Meet Goal of Reducing Recipient Reporting Burden*, [GAO-16-438](#) (Washington, D.C.: Apr. 19, 2016).

⁷GAO, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, [GAO-14-704G](#) (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 2014).

⁸VET TEC participants may have been service members or veterans at the time they submitted their comments. We refer to participant commenters as "veterans" for the purposes of this report.

⁹Our data analysis of text fields initially identified 132 complaints. During our review we excluded eight that we determined were not related to VET TEC, reducing the total to 124 comments. Since an individual can submit multiple comments, we also combined comments under a new identifier when they were recognized as being from the same individual. As a result, the final number of veterans providing feedback was 115.

internal control standards related to externally communicating quality information, leading practices GAO has identified for evidence-based decision-making, and VA's Strategic Plan for fiscal years 2022 through 2028.¹⁰

In addition, we obtained and analyzed data on participant applications, eligibility, enrollments, completions, transfers, salary, and employment outcomes from April 1, 2019, through August 19, 2024, to fully reflect outcomes for veterans participating in the pilot. See appendix I for our analyses.

To assess the reliability of VA's data, we interviewed VA officials knowledgeable about the data, reviewed the codes that VA used to extract the data, and conducted electronic testing of the data to identify missing data, outliers, or obvious errors. We determined that VA's data on VET TEC participants and training providers were sufficiently reliable to identify what is known about the employment outcomes of veterans who have enrolled in VET TEC and VA's oversight processes of and payments to training providers.

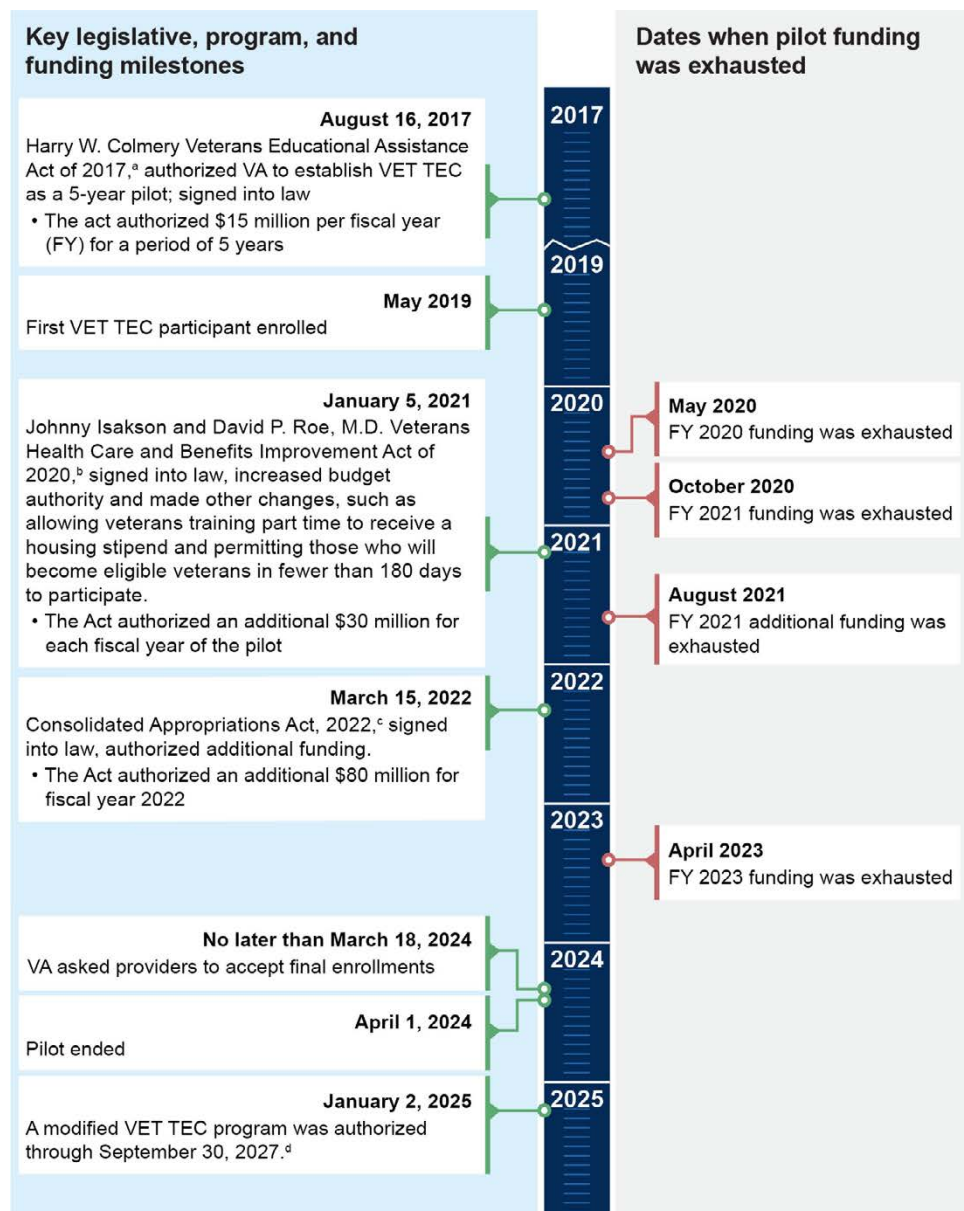
We conducted this performance audit from June 2023 to September 2025 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Background

Funding History of the VET TEC Pilot

The Forever GI Bill initially authorized \$15 million per fiscal year for the pilot program, and VA began paying benefits in October 2019 (see fig.1). According to VA, the agency has exhausted VET TEC annual funding on four occasions since the pilot began. On these occasions, when VET TEC ran out of funding, new veterans were unable to enroll in the program, although they could continue to find out if they were eligible for the program.

¹⁰[GAO-14-704G](#); GAO, *Evidence-Based Policymaking: Practices to Help Manage and Assess the Results of Federal Efforts*, [GAO-23-105460](#) (Washington, D.C.: July 12, 2023); U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, *Department of Veterans Affairs Fiscal Years 2022–28 Strategic Plan* (Washington, D.C.: 2022).

Figure 1. Key Milestones for the VA's Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) Pilot Program

Source: GAO review of relevant laws and interviews with Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) officials. | GAO-25-106876

^aPub. L. No. 115-48, tit. I, § 116(g) and (h), 131 Stat. 988-89.

^bPub. L. No. 116-315, tit. IV, § 4302, 134 Stat. 4932, 5017 (2021).

^cPub. L. No. 117-103, div. DD, § 101, 136 Stat. 49, 1111.

^dPub. L. No. 118-210, tit. II, § 212, 138 Stat. 2706, 2767 (2025) (codified at 38 U.S.C. § 3699C).

As shown in figure 1, legislation enacted in January 2021 increased VET TEC's annual authorization to \$45 million per fiscal year. In March 2022, Congress authorized an additional \$80 million for VET TEC, making a total of \$125 million available for the program for fiscal year 2022. As of December 2024, VA reported expending a total of \$261.6 million on the program since it began.

Participating in VET TEC

Under the VET TEC pilot, any veteran who met program eligibility requirements could be approved to participate. To be eligible for VET TEC, an individual must (1) be a veteran or have the VA determine they will be a veteran within 180 days of the determination and (2) have had at least 1 day of unexpired GI Bill entitlement.¹¹

Veterans applied to participate in VET TEC by submitting an online application to VA. If their applications were approved, VA issued them a certificate of eligibility, at which point they could apply to a specific program offered by a participating training provider. Training providers used their own admissions criteria in determining whether to accept a veteran into their programs.¹² Once veterans completed training, they were supposed to submit an employment certification form to VA that provides information on the nature of their employment.¹³

To become a VET TEC training provider in the pilot, interested organizations were required to apply and to meet certain eligibility requirements. For example, training providers could not be institutions of higher learning, and the training programs they offered could not lead to a degree. In addition, instructors affiliated with training providers had to be approved by VA. Training providers whose applications were approved by VA were required to submit a participation agreement that included the requirements for training providers' participation in the pilot, such as reporting certain data and attesting to compliance with relevant laws.

VA generally covered tuition and fees associated with VET TEC by reimbursing training providers using a milestone-based payment system.¹⁴ Figure 2 shows the typical process for veterans and training providers to participate in VET TEC.

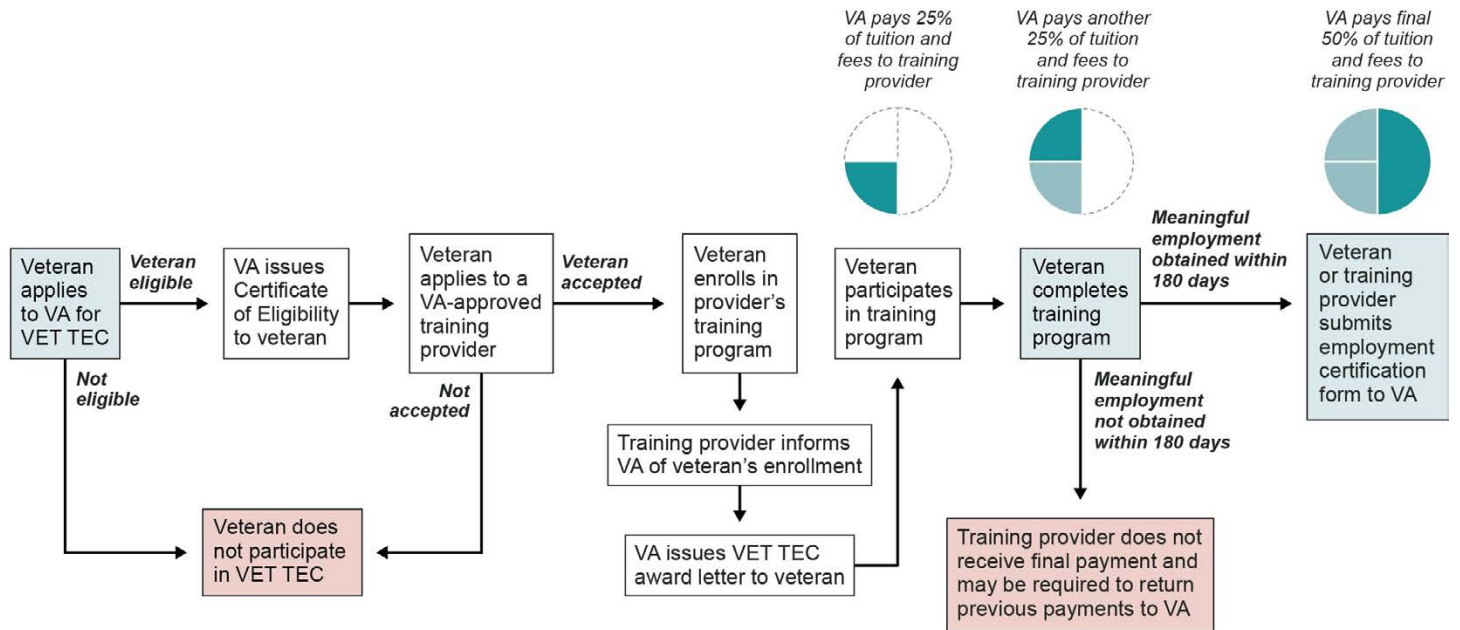
¹¹An eligible veteran is one who is entitled to educational assistance under 38 U.S.C. Chapters 30, 32, 33, 34, or 35 or 10 U.S.C. Chapters 1606 or 1607.

¹²VA data show 20,326 enrollments in training providers' programs during the pilot. See app. I.

¹³The form required signatures from the veteran and the training provider. The veteran could submit the form to VA directly, or the training provider could submit the form on the veteran's behalf, which was more often the case, according to VA officials.

¹⁴VA also provided a monthly housing allowance associated with VET TEC, which was paid directly to the veteran.

Figure 2. Veteran and Training Provider Participation in the VA's Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) Pilot Program



Source: GAO review of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) documents. | GAO-25-106876

Under the pilot, training providers received an initial payment of 25 percent of tuition and fees when the veteran enrolled in VET TEC and attended at least 1 day of class. VA reimbursed training providers another 25 percent when a veteran completed their VET TEC training program. VA provided the remaining 50 percent in tuition and fees once VA received the veteran's employment certification form attesting that they found meaningful employment within 180 days of completing the VET TEC training program. Conversely, training providers could not receive the final payment if a VET TEC participant did not find meaningful employment within 180 days of completing training.¹⁵

Participating training providers could choose to be designated "preferred providers" for VET TEC by requesting this designation on their application. A preferred provider agrees to refund payments of tuition and fees for any veteran who graduates but does not obtain meaningful employment within 180 days of program completion. In return, preferred providers receive special designation on the VET TEC website and are exempt from certain program rules. Specifically, preferred providers are not subject to a cap on the amount of tuition and fees that VA will reimburse on behalf of their students, which could result in preferred providers charging more than non-

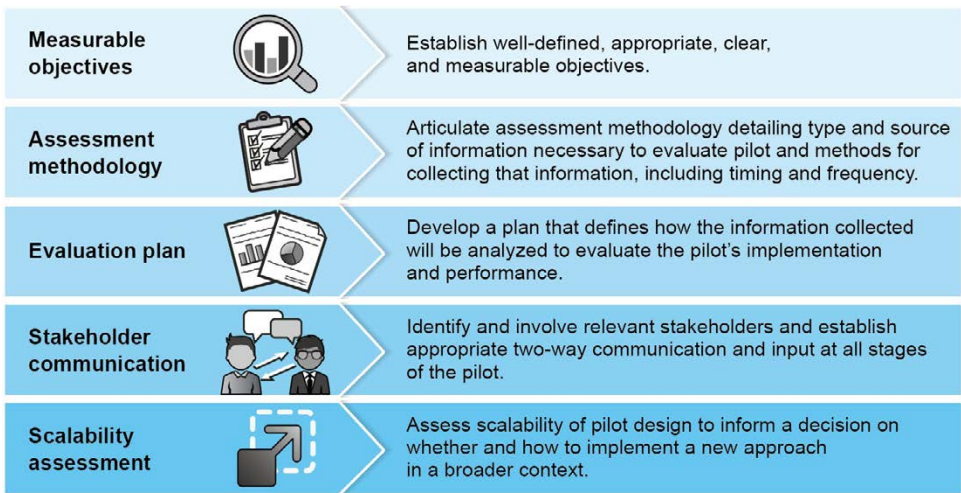
¹⁵VA officials said they used the 180-day mark to analyze employment outcomes for VET TEC because the Forever GI Bill, which authorized the pilot program, contains a related provision. Specifically, the act states that preference shall be given to training providers who agree to refund all payments of tuition and fees for any veteran who graduates but does not obtain full-time employment within 180 days of program completion. VA requested that VET TEC graduates complete a 180-day employment certification form to establish their employment status.

preferred providers.¹⁶ In addition, preferred providers did not have limits on the percentage of students who could receive financial assistance and as a result could enroll more students.¹⁷

Leading Practices for Effective Pilot Design

According to leading practices for effective pilot design, a well-developed and documented pilot program can help ensure that agency assessments produce the necessary information to make effective program and policy decisions. In 2016, we identified five leading practices for designing a well-developed and documented pilot program that covered the following areas: (1) measurable objectives, (2) assessment methodology, (3) evaluation plan, (4) stakeholder communication, and (5) scalability assessment.¹⁸ These practices enhance the quality, credibility, and usefulness of pilot program evaluations, and help ensure that time and resources are used effectively. Each of the five practices serves a purpose on its own, and taken together, they form a framework for effective pilot design (see fig. 3.)

Figure 3. Leading Practices for Effective Pilot Design



Source: GAO. | GAO-25-106876

¹⁶The Post-9/11 GI Bill established a cap on the amount of tuition and fees that entities offering educational programs can be reimbursed by VA for each enrolled veteran. For example, for non-college degree granting institutions the maximum reimbursement for the academic year from August 1, 2023, to July 31, 2024, is \$27,120.05 for in-state tuition and fees. For the academic year from August 1, 2024, to July 31, 2025, the maximum reimbursement amount is \$28,937.09.

¹⁷VA does not apply the 85-15 rule to preferred providers. This rule stipulates that no more than 85 percent of students in a course can have all or part of their tuition, fees, or other charges paid for them by the educational institution or by VA under Titles 10 or 38 of the U.S. Code.

¹⁸[GAO-16-438](#).

Accessible Data for Figure 3. Leading Practices for Effective Pilot Design

Subject	Description
Measurable objectives	Establish well-defined, appropriate, clear, and measurable objectives.
Assessment methodology	Articulate assessment methodology detailing type and source of information necessary to evaluate pilot and methods for collecting that information, including timing and frequency.
Evaluation plan	Develop a plan that defines how the information collected will be analyzed to evaluate the pilot's implementation and performance.
Stakeholder communication	Identify and involve relevant stakeholders and establish appropriate two-way communication and input at all stages of the pilot.
Scalability assessment	Assess scalability of pilot design to inform a decision on whether and how to implement a new approach in a broader context.

Source: GAO. | GAO-25-106876

VET TEC Did Not Fully Align with Leading Practices for Pilot Design, and VA Has Not Assessed Current and Future Staffing Needs for the Program

VA's Design for the Pilot Did Not Fully Align with Leading Practices

Our review of pilot documentation and interviews with VA officials found that VA's design of the VET TEC pilot did not fully align with the five leading practices for effective pilot design (see fig. 4).¹⁹ Specifically, VA did not (1) establish measures for two of the pilot's four objectives, (2) collect comprehensive data on pilot outcomes, (3) develop an evaluation plan for the pilot, (4) ensure two-way stakeholder communication throughout the pilot, or (5) formally assess how best to scale up the program.

¹⁹We used three categories to assess VA's VET TEC pilot against the leading practices: "fully aligns," "partially aligns," and "does not align." We determined that VA's pilot fully aligned with a leading practice when we saw evidence that VA followed all aspects of the leading practice. We determined that the pilot partially aligned with a leading practice when VA followed some, but not all, aspects of the leading practice. We determined that the pilot did not align with a leading practice when we did not see any evidence of VA following the leading practice.

Figure 4. Alignment of the VA’s Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) Pilot Program with Leading Practices for Effective Pilot Design

Leading practice	Description of VA actions	Alignment
Measurable objectives	VA established four objectives for the pilot but only two were measured.	 Partially aligned
Assessment methodology	VA identified some data sources and methodologies to gather information on the pilot. However, its data collection and analysis were limited.	 Partially aligned
Evaluation plan	VA did not develop an evaluation plan.	 Did not align
Stakeholder communication	VA took some steps to communicate with stakeholders and gather their input. However, VA did not sustain two-way communication with veterans, employers, and other stakeholders throughout the pilot.	 Partially aligned
Scalability assessment	VA did not formally assess the scalability of the pilot for broader implementation.	 Did not align

Source: GAO analysis of documentation from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and interviews with officials. | GAO-25-106876

Accessible Data for Figure 4. Alignment of the VA’s Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) Pilot Program with Leading Practices for Effective Pilot Design

Leading practice	Description of VA actions	Alignment
Measurable objectives	VA established four objectives for the pilot but only two were measured.	Partially aligned
Assessment methodology	VA identified some data sources and methodologies to gather information on the pilot. However, its data collection and analysis were limited.	Partially aligned
Evaluation plan	VA did not develop an evaluation plan.	Did not align
Stakeholder communication	VA took some steps to communicate with stakeholders and gather their input. However, VA did not sustain two-way communication with veterans, employers, and other stakeholders throughout the pilot.	Partially aligned
Scalability assessment	VA did not formally assess the scalability of the pilot for broader implementation.	Did not align

Source: GAO analysis of documentation from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and interviews with officials. | GAO-25-106876

Note: We used three categories to assess VA’s VET TEC pilot against the leading practices: “fully aligns,” “partially aligns,” and “does not align.” We determined that VA’s pilot fully aligned with a leading practice when we saw evidence that VA followed all aspects of the leading practice. We determined that the pilot partially aligned with a leading practice when VA followed some, but not all, aspects of the leading practice. We determined that the pilot did not align with a leading practice when we did not see any evidence of VA following the leading practice.

Measurable objectives. We found that VA’s pilot partially aligned with this leading practice. VA developed the following four objectives for the VET TEC pilot, but as of May 2025 has measured only the first two objectives:

1. Learn whether permitting veteran participation in high-technology programs provided by non-traditional providers helps veterans find meaningful employment;
2. Examine student outcomes to evaluate the effectiveness of these nontraditional providers;

3. Assess quality-assurance processes that are appropriate for nontraditional providers and the programs they offer; and
4. Identify ways to protect students and taxpayers from risks in an innovative and emerging area of postsecondary education.²⁰

The first and second objectives are clear and measurable. VA officials took steps to measure these two objectives by collecting and analyzing data on the percentage of VET TEC participants who find employment within 180 days after completing their training programs.²¹ However, VA did not operationalize or develop measures for the third and fourth objectives for the pilot, citing staff and resource constraints. As a result, VA is not able to assess its quality-assurance processes for VET TEC providers or identify and mitigate potential risks in its approach to providing high-tech training.

Assessment methodology. We found that the VET TEC pilot partially aligned with this leading practice. VA identified some data sources and methodologies to gather information on the pilot; however, VA's data collection was limited, and its assessment methodology was incomplete.

VA collected data to track the number of veterans who applied and the rate at which they were deemed eligible for the pilot program. Other types of data VA collected included the demographic characteristics of VET TEC participants, such as gender, age, race, and ethnicity. However, VA's data collection efforts related to training provider quality were limited. In 2020, VA proposed a scorecard tool that it could use to assess training provider quality, but did not finalize and implement it, citing a lack of staff resources and insufficient time remaining in the pilot. According to VA documentation, VA planned to develop the scorecard tool in accordance with industry best practices, which would mean including a variety of training provider performance metrics with established benchmarks related to veteran graduation outcomes, provider cost and return on investment, and veteran satisfaction with the pilot program.²² Furthermore, VA proposed that it would review and evaluate the metrics biannually to ensure they were applicable to the pilot program and make necessary adjustments. However, in December 2023, VA officials told us the agency had decided to discontinue developing and implementing the training provider scorecard because VA did not have sufficient staff to continue it. They also said the scorecard would have required providers to collect and report baseline

²⁰VA established these four objectives in a 2020 white paper and affirmed them following a meeting with GAO in December 2023. As we noted in our October 2022 report, VA provided three different versions of the pilot's objectives. In that report, we recommended that VA develop a consistent set of objectives for the pilot. VA agreed with our recommendation and had partially addressed it as of February 2025. Specifically, VA indicated it plans to evaluate the third and fourth objectives, but it has not provided a time frame for doing so. See [GAO-23-105343](#).

²¹In 2022, we found that VA did not use an employment rate calculation in accordance with other government and industry approaches, which prevented VA from comparing VET TEC employment outcomes with other programs and assessing VET TEC's effectiveness at getting veterans into jobs. As a result, we recommended that VA develop an employment rate calculation consistent with standard approaches. For more information, see [GAO-23-105343](#). As of February 2025, the recommendation remained open. VA reported to GAO that it had reviewed employment calculation best practices and identified the need for a full-time data analyst to help collect additional data needed to calculate the employment rate. Once the permanent VET TEC program is implemented, VA officials said that they would assign a data analyst to collect employment data that would facilitate an employment calculation consistent with government or industry practices. See also this report, app. I, for an updated comparison of VET TEC employment outcomes with other programs.

²²VA documentation states it would work with the National Skills Coalition and the Lumina Foundation in developing the training provider scorecard.

information, but there was not enough time remaining in the pilot to do this. Officials stated they may consider reviving the scorecard in the future.²³

Evaluation plan. We found that VA's pilot did not align with this leading practice because VA did not develop an evaluation plan. VA officials told us they took steps to monitor pilot performance and made adjustments to the pilot on a rolling basis. Specifically, they cited their update to the handbook for veteran service organizations as VA switched from paper to electronic applications for VET TEC. VA also revised the definition of its meaningful employment measure to clarify that the measure is based on VET TEC's 180-day program milestone. These steps are helpful updates to reflect changes in the program, but VA did not develop a plan to evaluate the pilot's implementation and performance, as called for in this leading practice.

Stakeholder communication. We found that VA's pilot partially aligned with this leading practice. VA took some key steps during the pilot to identify and involve stakeholders, ensure two-way communication with them, and gather their input. For example, VA officials said the agency conducted briefings and discussions with several veteran service organizations—such as the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars, among others—during the design phase of the pilot. VA officials said the agency also hosted a working group involving training providers and held monthly meetings throughout the pilot to discuss primarily operational aspects of administering VET TEC programs.²⁴ In addition, VA launched an employer consortium to connect training providers with prospective employers who might hire VET TEC graduates.²⁵ According to VA officials, about 25 employers were involved in the consortium during the pilot, and the consortium served as a forum to discuss how VET TEC could address the technology industry's needs for skilled workers. However, VA officials told us that beginning in 2023, the agency stopped hosting quarterly meetings of the employer consortium due to the lack of agency resources and competing priorities.

Throughout the pilot, VA kept VET TEC participants informed about the program through a monthly newsletter and took some steps to collect participant feedback on their experience with VET TEC programs. For example, VA surveyed participants in 2021 about their satisfaction with VET TEC and solicited suggestions to improve it. VA also obtained participant feedback by interviewing nine VET TEC participants and produced a report on its findings from these interviews to inform VA leadership about the pilot's effectiveness. These interviews represented a non-generalizable sample of participants who, according to the report, graduated and found employment in the technology sector.

VA took some key steps to communicate with stakeholders, but we found that most of its efforts did not constitute sustained two-way communication throughout all stages of the pilot, in accordance with the leading practice of pilot design for communicating with stakeholders. VA officials noted that its working group with training providers continued to the end of the pilot, but it did not provide documentation we requested of ongoing two-way communication with other VET TEC stakeholders. For example, VA collected some input from veterans who participated in VET TEC, such as through the survey and interviews discussed above. However, the agency did not provide documentation that it engaged in ongoing two-way communication with veterans, such as in forums or listening groups, throughout the pilot. Also, as we previously noted, VA discontinued the employer consortium more than a year before the pilot concluded. According to GAO's

²³On Jan. 2, 2025, legislation was enacted to establish a VA high technology program. Pub. L. No. 118-210, tit. II, § 212 (2025).

²⁴Two of the three training providers we interviewed told us they were not familiar with the VET TEC Working Group.

²⁵For more information on VA's Employer Consortium, see <https://benefits.va.gov/gibill/fgib/vettecemployerconsortium.asp>.

leading practices for pilots, it is important to ensure two-way communication with a range of stakeholders at all stages of the pilot to address their concerns and ensure that their input is considered, as appropriate.

Scalability assessment. We found that VA's design of the VET TEC pilot did not align with this leading practice. VA did not take steps to formally assess the scalability of the pilot for broader implementation. We reported in 2022 that VA did not track information that could be helpful to determine veteran demand for the program or the appropriate number of training providers. In particular, VA officials said they know how many veterans were eligible for the program, but they did not track the number of veterans who were turned away when funding was unavailable, which may have been an indicator of additional demand for the program. VA officials said they did not ask training providers to report to VA whether they were unable to enroll a veteran due to lack of funding. Further, in 2024 VA officials reiterated they had not gauged either veteran or training provider demand for VET TEC during the pilot or potential demand if the program were to be continued. Officials also told us they did not develop plans to assess scalability after the pilot's completion.

VA Reported That Insufficient Staff Capacity Hampered VET TEC Design and Implementation

Overall, we found that the VET TEC pilot did not fully align with the five leading practices of effective pilot design. Agency officials told us VA did not have sufficient staff capacity to fully implement the pilot. Specifically, officials said that additional program staff and contracting resources were needed to fully implement all components of the pilot. VA assigned a specialized team to design and initially implement the pilot. However, the team was disbanded in 2022, and VA relied on the existing program staff to continue VET TEC's implementation. However, officials said VA staff faced competing program priorities, including education claims processing and other VA program initiatives. According to officials, the number of VA staff assigned to administer the pilot was not sufficient to implement several major pilot components, including finalizing and implementing a provider scorecard for measuring and tracking outcomes, measuring and evaluating VET TEC's third and fourth program objectives, and assessing the scalability of the pilot. Officials told us they would have needed additional personnel to fully implement these components. However, they said they did not inform senior management of the need for additional personnel.

During the pilot's initial stages, officials told us the agency assessed and determined that it had sufficient staff and contracting support to meet the pilot's objectives.²⁶ However, those officials said VA did not have a plan and related procedures to continually assess resource needs throughout the pilot. Without such a plan and procedures to continually assess resource needs, VET TEC officials did not have assurance that staff with the appropriate skills and knowledge were assigned to the pilot and that the program's objectives were being met.

GAO's model of strategic human capital management calls for human capital planning in which an agency should first identify current and future needs, including the appropriate number of employees, the key competencies and skills for mission accomplishment, and the appropriate deployment of staff across the agency.²⁷ After completing these activities, the agency should then create strategies for identifying and filling staffing gaps. To this end, human capital planning could help VA ensure it has the necessary staff and

²⁶VA officials were not able to provide documentation of their initial staffing assessment or the results.

²⁷For more information, see GAO, *A Model of Strategic Human Capital Management*, [GAO-02-373SP](#) (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 15, 2002).

contracting resources to position the agency to accomplish its objectives of helping veterans gain skills and employment, particularly as the program has been authorized to continue through fiscal year 2027.

VA Oversaw Training Providers Through an Application Process and VA Data Reflect Potential Overpayments to Training Providers

VA Required VET TEC Training Providers to Apply and Removed Providers That Did Not Comply with Their Participation Agreement

To become a VET TEC training provider in the pilot, interested organizations were required to apply. Once approved, VA required these providers to sign a participation agreement and comply with their agreements or face suspension and removal. In addition, VA conducted formal on-site reviews of two training providers.

Training Provider Application Process

As part of the application process, VA required prospective training providers to submit information about their admissions requirements, completion rates, and financial soundness, among other things; initially, they also needed proof of being in operation for at least 2 years. Additionally, VA required prospective providers to submit extensive information about

- the training facility;
- admission requirements;
- refund policies;
- policies regarding grading, graduation, and attendance; and
- advertising materials.

Also, prospective training providers were required to submit documentation of the following:

- assurance that they would comply with the laws, regulations, and policies governing the VET TEC pilot;
- proof of financial soundness and capacity to fulfill training commitments;
- copies of their training catalogs;
- documents related to enrollees' efforts to seek and obtain employment; and
- student completion rates for their programs.

The VET TEC application also included questions asking prospective training providers about

- any previous cessation of operations or change of ownership;
- whether it provided payments to its staff for enrolling, recruiting, or admitting students, or for making decisions about and awarding student financial aid;
- whether it faced any federal or state regulatory action; and
- whether it was involved in litigation.

VA evaluated these applications when determining which training providers to approve for VET TEC, according to officials. For example, VA officials said they reviewed prospective training providers' catalogs, advertising materials, financial status, and completion rates for program participants. In fiscal year 2023, the last full fiscal year of the pilot, VA approved 35 VET TEC training providers. According to VA officials, these providers collectively offered 93 training programs. Table 1 shows the number of approved VET TEC training providers with enrollments for each fiscal year of the pilot.

Table 1. Number of Approved Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) Training Providers and Facilities with Enrolled Veterans, by Fiscal Year

Number of Approved VET TEC Training Providers and Facilities with Enrolled Veterans

Fiscal Year	Providers	Facilities
2019	8	15
2020	18	34
2021	20	36
2022	21	31
2023	26	35
2024	25	32

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Veterans Affairs data. | GAO-25-106876

Notes: Data include training providers with multiple facilities. Fiscal years 2019 and 2024 do not reflect 12 months of operation because the pilot began in April 2019 and ended in April 2024.

VA denied some training provider applications.²⁸ Table 2 shows new training provider applications, approvals, and denials for each year of the pilot.

Table 2. Number of New Training Provider Applications, Approvals, and Denials for the Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) Pilot Program, by Fiscal Year

Fiscal Year	Number of New VET TEC Training Provider Applications	Number Approved	Number Denied
2019	67	31	36
2020	43	8	35
2021	33	6	27
2022	27	2	25
2023	41	8	33
2024	10	1	9

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) data. | GAO-25-106876

Notes: Data include training providers with multiple facilities. Fiscal years 2019 and 2024 do not reflect 12 months of operation because the pilot began in April 2019 and ended in April 2024. Some providers applied multiple times, and each application was counted separately.

VA denied 165 of 221 applications that it received during the pilot. According to VA data, the reasons that VA denied training providers' applications varied. Based on VA's summary of reasons for denials, the most common was the prospective providers' failure to demonstrate financial soundness (see text box).

²⁸According to VA data, 14 provider facilities voluntarily withdrew their applications during the first 2 fiscal years of the pilot. It was not within the scope of our review to independently assess the basis for VA's application determinations.

Most Common Reasons for VA Denials of Training Provider Applications for Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC)

- Prospective provider did not demonstrate financial soundness.
- Prospective provider was disqualified based on its response to the application question about payments related to enrollment, recruitment, admissions, and financial aid decisions and awards.
- Prospective provider did not meet the requirement to have provided its program for at least 1 year.
- Prospective provider did not meet the requirement to have been in operation for at least 2 years.
- Prospective provider was disqualified based on its response to an application question about the definition of full-time participation.
- Prospective provider did not offer high-tech programs.

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) summary of reasons for denials of provider applications from February 2021 through September 2023. | GAO-25-106876

Note: GAO did not independently review the basis for VA's determinations. Originally, the VET TEC training provider application required proof that the entity had been in operation for at least 2 years. The Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 eliminated this requirement effective January 5, 2021. However, during the pilot, training providers were required to have provided their high-tech programs of study for at least 1 year under the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017.

Additionally, after a VET TEC training provider was initially approved, it was required to submit information annually about its participants' completion rates and meaningful employment rates to maintain this approval status.

In fiscal years 2022 and 2023, VA modified the training provider application process. In fiscal year 2022, VA began requiring training providers to submit information about their instructors' qualifications and the courses they taught.²⁹ VA required this information pursuant to the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020. In fiscal year 2023, VA ended its existing practice of requiring all training providers to apply annually, streamlining the approval process and requiring training providers to reapply only if they (1) offered a new program, (2) changed their tuition and fees, or (3) changed their facility. Training providers with no changes to report could continue to operate under their existing approval status as long as they provided certain documentation.³⁰

Approved Training Providers' Participation Agreements

The training providers that VA approved were required to sign a participation agreement. The participation agreement incorporated the provider's original application and required assurance of compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and policies, as well as other VA requirements, such as those related to recordkeeping and reporting, program cost, instructor qualifications, program length, and advertising, among other requirements.

²⁹We previously reported on VA's instructions to training providers for demonstrating instructor expertise. See [GAO-23-105343](#)

³⁰Specifically, these providers were required to provide a current course catalog, expert checklist showing all currently approved instructors, and data on enrollees' completion and employment rates. VA officials said they reviewed this documentation. These providers also had to attest that no changes had been made to their program.

When VA found that a training provider had violated the terms of its participation agreement, the provider was subject to suspension and subsequent removal from the pilot.³¹ VA data showed that it removed five training provider facilities from the pilot for various reasons (see table 3).³²

Table 3. Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) Training Providers Removed by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), as of July 2024

Number of Providers Removed from VET TEC Following Suspension	Reason VA Cited for Removal
1	Multiple reasons: failure to obtain required federal, state, and local licenses; noncompliance with VA recordkeeping requirements; and noncompliance with applicable federal, state, local, and tribal fire, building, and sanitation codes.
1	Failure to comply with participation agreement provision that self-paced and open enrollment training were ineligible for the pilot.
2	Failure to achieve meaningful employment by claiming self-employment outcomes that VA could not corroborate using the provider's home state's searchable business listings.
1	Discrepancy in tuition and fee policies for veterans compared to non-veterans.

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) information. | GAO-25-106876

On-Site Reviews and Referrals

In addition to reviewing providers' compliance with their annual participation agreements, in two instances VA oversaw VET TEC training providers by conducting formal on-site reviews that it generally conducts for GI Bill programs.³³

As a pilot, VET TEC would not have been a specific focus of these formal on-site reviews because VA conducts them only for training providers approved for GI Bill programs, according to VA officials. Officials said that having training providers approved for both VET TEC and GI Bill programs has facilitated on-site reviews to the extent both programs share similar characteristics, such as instructor qualifications and facilities. VA officials told us they conducted one formal on-site review in July 2023 of a training provider approved for VET TEC and GI Bill programs and conducted another such review in October 2024 in response to a complaint. VA officials said they referred these cases to state agencies for resolution of issues identified during the reviews.

³¹The VET TEC participation agreement stated that VA could withdraw approval for violation of any of its general terms and approval conditions. According to VA officials, suspended training provider facilities were generally given 60 days to demonstrate compliance or face removal.

³²Additionally, 21 other providers left the pilot for various reasons, such as withdrawing from it voluntarily, not applying for reapproval, or ceasing operations.

³³For all education programs it oversees, VA conducts formal on-site reviews by visiting selected training providers, examining their records, and interviewing training provider officials and students to check, for instance, if a training provider is enrolling veterans in approved courses and making payments properly. VA also reviews whether a training provider's advertising, sales, or enrollment practices are erroneous, deceptive, or misleading under existing law. Additionally, reviews may be unannounced and conducted in response to complaints or notifications about potential risks, or in response to an allegation of fraud, deceptive advertising, or other misleading practices, according to VA officials. We previously reported on VA's formal on-site reviews. See GAO, *VA Education Benefits: VA Should Strengthen Its Efforts to Help Veterans Make Informed Choices*, GAO 14-324 (Washington, D.C.: May 13, 2014) and *VA Education Benefits: VA Needs to Ensure That It Can Continue to Provide Effective School Oversight*, [GAO-19-3](#) (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 14, 2018).

Officials also said that they made a referral to the VA Office of Inspector General in one instance of potential fraud committed by a VET TEC training provider staff member. According to a July 2025 Department of Justice press release related to the referral, an individual pleaded guilty to one count of wire fraud and awaits sentencing. According to the press release, this individual allegedly created fraudulent employment offer letters, falsified certifications, and forged veterans' signatures to make it appear as if veterans had attained meaningful employment so that the provider could receive tuition payments from VA.

VA Data Indicate Potential Overpayments of Tuition and Fees to Training Providers

Our analysis of VA's payment data from April 1, 2019 to August 18, 2024 indicated about \$4 million in potential overpayments in tuition and fees to training providers during the pilot (representing about 2 percent of payments to training providers).³⁴ These potential overpayments reflect cases where VA paid training providers without evidence that the veteran ever began training, completed the course, or obtained meaningful employment.³⁵

In addition, our analysis identified about \$28.4 million in payments to preferred providers that may be subject to recovery because, according to VA's data, the participants graduated but did not obtain meaningful employment. As we noted previously, preferred providers agreed to refund payments of tuition and fees for any veteran who graduated but did not obtain meaningful employment within 180 days of program completion.

VA officials told us that, under VET TEC's milestone payment process (i.e., providers received 25 percent of tuition and fees upon enrollment, 25 percent upon training completion, and 50 percent upon attainment of meaningful employment), a payment may be accurate on the day it is issued, but an overpayment may be created should circumstances change. For example, VA officials explained that as part of their initial milestone payment request training providers sometimes submitted documentation and later reported revisions that amend or adjust this information, such as information indicating the veteran never started, resulting in overpayment. Training providers are responsible for reporting such instances to VA, under their participation agreements. VA officials attributed some overpayments to provider error, but acknowledged that others were attributable to VA, such as those involving administrative errors. VA officials informed us that they have begun to take corrective action on overpayments they have identified.³⁶

³⁴Our analysis of VA's data identified 685 out of 20,326 enrollments with potential overpayments of tuition and fees to training providers, representing about 3 percent of all VET TEC enrollments. Our analysis does not include housing allowance payments, which were made directly to participants.

³⁵During the course of our analysis, VA reviewed and agreed with the written logic our model used to identify cases of potential overpayments. After we shared our results from the model, VA conducted an additional analysis of the cases we identified and concluded that about \$466,000 were overpayments that were attributed to issues such as VA error, provider error, and other reasons. VA officials told us they manually reviewed each of the 685 records that we identified comprising the \$4 million in potential overpayments and concluded that 501 were paid correctly. However, VA did not provide details of its review of the records that would have allowed us to validate VA's analysis. We did not conduct a review of the underlying documentation for each transaction, and our analysis should not be used to make determinations about VA's legal compliance.

³⁶According to VA officials, they have recovered approximately \$10.3 million in VET TEC overpayments as of September 30, 2024. The amount recovered included tuition and fees and housing payments, and would reflect provider certification errors, certain VA errors, and recovered payments made to preferred providers. Based on discussions with VA officials, there is no deadline for collecting overpayments, including for pilots that have concluded, such as VET TEC. VA regulations provide that "VA will take aggressive collection action on a timely basis, with effective follow-up, to collect all claims for money or property arising from its activities." 38 C.F.R. § 1.910(a).

VA has manual processes to help ensure payment accuracy before a payment is made and review payments after they have been made. Before a payment is made, two separate claims processors are required to review each claim submitted by training providers. In addition, two separate claims processors are required to issue each VET TEC payment. If an error is detected prior to authorizing the payment, the claim is returned for correction. If an error is discovered after a payment is issued, VA must determine the cause and take appropriate action, according to VA officials. After a payment has been made, VA conducts various manual reviews. VA officials said they conducted one such review in 2023 focused on the VET TEC pilot. Furthermore, in October 2024, they said they planned to conduct two additional quality reviews of VET TEC claims—one based on a random sample of claims that include VET TEC as well as other programs, and another that would constitute a comprehensive historical review of the VET TEC pilot. VA informed us that these additional reviews had not been conducted as of February 2025.

Although VA had various processes to oversee providers during the pilot, and has taken corrective action to recover overpayments, it was unable to provide a written, systematic process specific to the VET TEC pilot's milestone payment process for preventing and detecting overpayments. For example, VA could not provide documented procedures to consistently identify which date to use when determining whether a veteran had obtained meaningful employment. Relatedly, VA had no documented process to detect preferred provider payments that must be recovered because the graduate did not obtain meaningful employment within the time frame required by the VA. VA officials agreed that using a documented process, such as an algorithm, on a regular basis, such as weekly or monthly, may help VA consistently validate milestone payment criteria before paying providers and detect payments that later became potential overpayments as a result of amended or adjusted information. Finally, using these processes on a regular basis could assist VA in identifying preferred provider payments that must be recovered.³⁷

Federal internal control standards state that management should design the entity's information system and related control activities to achieve objectives and respond to risks—in VA's case, the risk of over paying training providers.³⁸ By establishing a process to proactively and systematically identify overpayments that reflect administrative errors or amendments or adjustments that occur after an initial payment was made, VA would create additional assurance that its resources are being spent appropriately.

³⁷An algorithm is a set of rules describing systematic procedural steps, such as those documented in a written standard operating procedure or in a computer program that automatically and routinely checks payment logic against data in a database.

³⁸[GAO-14-704G](#), app. I.

Veterans Reported Multiple Challenges with the VET TEC Program, but VA Did Not Use its Feedback Tool to Inform Program Implementation

Veterans Reported Challenges with Marketing Practices, Educational Quality, Instructor Behavior, Career Placement, and Payment Structure

We identified 124 comments from 115 individuals related to the VET TEC program that were reported through VA's GI Bill School Feedback Tool.³⁹ VA created the feedback tool to establish, "a centralized complaint system for students receiving federal military and Veteran educational benefits." VA designed the feedback tool primarily to capture complaints, rather than to serve as a repository for both positive and negative feedback. The purpose of the complaint system is to provide a standardized method to submit a complaint against an educational institution alleging fraudulent and unduly aggressive recruiting techniques, misrepresentation, payment of incentive compensation, and failure to meet state authorization requirements, among other things.

The comments veterans submitted in the feedback tool are not a generalizable snapshot of challenges with the VET TEC program (see sidebar). However, the comments provide insight into the experiences of a subset of VET TEC veterans who reported their challenges with the program to VA, including frustration or dissatisfaction about their training provider. Later in the report, we discuss how VA did not explicitly collect feedback on the VET TEC program through the feedback tool or use the comments received through the tool to inform implementation of the program.

Veterans' comments in the feedback tool encompassed a broad range of issues, including reports of feeling misled by providers' recruiting marketing practices, as well as concerns about the overall quality of education, behavior by program instructors and administrators, adequacy of career placement assistance during the job search process, and challenges related to VET TEC's payment structure.

A Small Percentage of Comments Submitted Through the GI Bill School Feedback Tool Pertained to VET TEC

Comments about the VET TEC program constituted a small proportion of all comments veterans submitted through the GI Bill School Feedback Tool from April 1, 2019 to January 9, 2024: 124 of 6,358 comments. This represents about 2 percent of the total.

Similarly, the overall proportion of veterans enrolled in VET TEC who submitted comments on the program was low. 115 individuals commented on the program through the feedback tool during the time period used for this analysis, April 1, 2019 to January 9, 2024, when there were 20,036 enrolled veterans. Expressed as a percent of enrolled veterans, the 115 commenters reflect less than 1 percent of enrollment veterans.

Of the 115 veterans who submitted comments, they provided feedback on 19 of the 30 VET TEC training providers that were in operation during the pilot.

Source: GAO analysis of GI Bill School Feedback Tool data, VET TEC provider data, and VET TEC enrollment data. | GAO-25-106876

³⁹GAO analyzed the comments to identify common themes about challenges veterans faced, as they described them. GAO did not independently validate the substance of the comments or ask VA for specifics of how the comments were resolved. In addition, an individual can submit multiple comments.

Recruiting Marketing Practices

In 61 of the 124 comments submitted through the feedback tool, veterans selected “recruiting marketing practices” as an issue. We also identified marketing practices as a key issue raised by veterans in our qualitative analysis of veterans’ comments. Many of these veterans alleged that training providers communicated inaccurate or misleading information about both academic and practical aspects of their programs, such as inaccurate information about course time frames and schedules.⁴⁰ Some veterans said they received misleading information from providers about their prospective academic experience. For example, some veterans alleged that one particular training provider inaccurately marketed the classes as being taught in person, but veterans reported the classes were conducted virtually or consisted of a series of pre-recorded videos. Veterans reported they would arrive to an in-person classroom, but instead of being taught by a live instructor they would log into virtual-only classes. One veteran described how they had moved to a new state because they were promised an in-person learning environment, but never had an in-person lecture or saw an instructor in person during their time in the program.

Similar comments about other training providers included veterans expecting an instructor-led environment only to find that the program was largely self-taught. These veterans reported that they would have to rely on outside resources, such as third-party online trainings, to complete the program successfully. Some veterans also noted that training providers advertised their program as requiring no prior subject matter knowledge or that it was a beginner’s level course. However, these veterans said they felt “lost” or that prior knowledge and experience were needed to succeed in the program. In one instance, a veteran said they enrolled in what was marketed as a beginner’s level course but later found they had to pay for additional outside training to pass the certification exam and get a job. In another instance, a different veteran said the instructor advised them to pay out of pocket for an additional 20 hours of video training from an outside company.

Some veterans commented that providers substantially changed their programs after veterans signed up, jeopardizing their ability to remain in the program and, in two cases, their ability to obtain needed certifications (see fig. 5). For example, one veteran said they rearranged their work schedule to participate in daytime classes but learned a few days before the program started that they had been reassigned to evening classes. This created a hardship for this individual. In addition, the veteran said they were informed that if they withdrew from the program, they would need to wait 18 months to sign up for another program, which they described as “more of a punishment instead of a solution to help a veteran.”

Figure 5. Excerpt of a Veteran Comment Related to Marketing Practices

“

The course material also changed without notice. All students were given a brochure at the beginning of class with what topics would be taught and the duration of each subject, without them telling us, they completely changed it. Then when it was brought up, the heads of the program gaslit us and faulted us for not knowing. My class has dropped by almost 50% and no one has been prepared enough for the certification exams which are needed to [excel] in the field.

Source: GI Bill School Feedback Tool. | GAO-25-106876

⁴⁰We defined two modifiers to quantify the volume of veterans’ views: we used “many” to represent 15 or more veterans, and “some” to represent three to 14 veterans.

Note: This comment reflects the views of participant and not conclusions drawn by GAO.

Quality of Education

In 70 of the 124 comments submitted through the GI Bill School Feedback tool, veterans selected “quality of education” as an issue. We also identified this as a key issue in our qualitative analysis of veterans’ comments, which included concerns about poorly designed course curriculum, instructors lacking adequate or relevant credentials, instructors not being available to meet in person or online, and training providers’ enforcement of academic policies.

- **Course curriculum.** Many of the veterans who commented described a variety of situations in which the training provider relied primarily on pre-recorded videos or read slide deck presentations verbatim in place of providing more interactive classroom instruction. Some veterans also said that their course content was out of date (see fig. 6). For example, one veteran noted that course materials can become obsolete fairly quickly in technology fields, but reported his 2023 program was still relying on instructional videos recorded in 2014. In addition, some veterans described how there was no syllabus or “road map” for their training program, which left them with no clear benchmarks to measure their understanding and performance during the program.

Figure 6. Excerpt of a Veteran Comment About Course Curriculum

“

...many students find themselves having to seek outside resources such as ChatGPT, YouTube tutorials, and other documentation to gain a baseline understanding of how to code. This significant gap between the bootcamp’s teachings and the latest, most relevant applications in the marketplace severely hinders students’ ability to compete in the job market and keep up with industry demands.

Source: GI Bill School Feedback Tool. | GAO-25-106876

Note: This comment reflects the views of the participant and not conclusions drawn by GAO.

- **Instructor credentials and availability.** Many of the veterans who commented expressed concerns about instructor credentials, such as instructors not possessing adequate knowledge of or lacking the ability to teach the program’s subject matter. Veterans described instructors who were unprepared to lead class lectures or organize “hands-on” labs allowing students to apply their classroom learning (see fig. 7). Some veterans reported that their instructors only occasionally provided individual assistance. Veterans enrolled in one coding bootcamp described having to wait in a virtual queue for hours before getting a response to their questions or interacting only briefly with the instructor.

Figure 7. Excerpt of a Veteran Comment About Instructor Credentials

“

...instructors...only have a superficial understanding of what they’re teaching....
Instructors could only give cookie cutter responses to the problems students faced, and often did not fully understand the problem themselves.

Source: GI Bill School Feedback Tool. | GAO-25-106876

Note: This comment reflects the views of the participant and not conclusions drawn by GAO.

- **Academic integrity.** Veterans’ comments reflected a variety of concerns about the academic integrity of some training providers, including different treatment of VET TEC students compared to non-VET TEC

students enrolled in the same course, inappropriate instructor behavior, or unclear or inconsistent policies. Some veterans described training providers lacking a clear and consistent grading policy. In the case of one training provider, two veterans reported that VET TEC students who failed the final exam were dismissed from the program, but that GI Bill and civilian students enrolled in the same program were allowed to continue. The veteran said this resulted in fewer VET TEC students completing the program.

Some veterans said that training providers did not consistently enforce their own policies about fulfilling attendance, assignment, or testing requirements. One veteran, for example, said their training provider had policies in place to encourage regular attendance and active participation in class, but alleged neither was enforced.

Instructor and Administrator Behavior

Some veterans alleged inappropriate behavior towards students, including threatening retaliation if veterans filed a complaint, being disrespectful towards veterans, or discriminating against veterans. Comments about one “bootcamp” included detailed descriptions of how the instructors and leadership disrespected students by talking down to them or yelling. Some veterans enrolled in this bootcamp also described the training provider retaliating or instilling fears of retaliation for making a complaint.

Veterans enrolled in various training programs submitted comments that described how some training providers engaged in insensitive or what they alleged was discriminatory behavior toward the veteran on the basis of their disability, gender, or age.⁴¹

- **Disability.** Seven veterans described situations in which they felt poorly treated on the basis of their disability at programs delivered by two training providers. For example, at one training provider, four veterans that submitted comments believed their disability was dismissed by the training provider and three of the four veterans alleged they were denied reasonable accommodations. One veteran felt this was of particular concern because their training provider reportedly enrolled many student veterans who had a brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, or other learning disorders from fighting in Iraq or Afghanistan. Regarding another training provider, one veteran reported being questioned during the admissions process about their mental and physical health. The veteran reported this to VA out of concern that the questions could be considered inappropriate or illegal.
- **Gender.** Two female veterans reported feeling they had been discriminated against by the training provider because of their gender. One of these veterans also alleged the lack of a reasonable accommodation for her gender-related medical condition. According to the comment, the instructor told the class that assignments were due “even if we were in the hospital.”
- **Age.** Two veterans each reported a training provider for what they believed to be age discrimination. These veterans stated they were not selected for the program once the provider learned their age during their admissions interviews.

In describing their experiences with behavior they viewed as insensitive or potentially discriminatory, veterans sometimes noted that exiting the military and transitioning to civilian life is already a challenging experience, or

⁴¹As noted, these comments reflect the views of participants and not conclusions drawn by GAO.

that their ongoing disabilities, anxiety, or other health conditions were aggravated by the stress and maltreatment they experienced from the VET TEC training provider.⁴²

Career Placement Services

Many veterans who commented through the feedback tool were dissatisfied with the career placement services offered by training providers. Some expressed frustration that the training provider did not appear to maintain substantial networking connections with companies to help veterans get a job. For example, one veteran noted that they were promised interviews with specific employers, but that the provider did not follow through.

In addition, one veteran said their training provider relied on external staffing agencies to secure contract work for the veteran after they completed the program, which the veteran did not consider to be meaningful employment (see fig. 8).

Figure 8. Excerpt of a Veteran Comment About Career Placement

“

...contract work...falls short of the promised career opportunities for “meaningful employment”. Independent self-employment via contracting through a staffing/temp agency is not the same as meaningful employment because that would imply a lack of stability and benefits.

Source: GI Bill School Feedback Tool. | GAO-25-106876

Note: This comment reflects the views of the participant and not conclusions drawn by GAO.

Some veterans reported feeling they had been misled by providers about the potential for job opportunities after completing their programs. Veterans questioned the accuracy of statements that some providers made about their employment outcomes, relationships the provider maintained within the technology sector, as well as the level of career placement assistance veterans would receive. For example, one veteran said their training provider advertised a job placement rate above 90 percent but that over half of the individuals in their class had been unemployed after they graduated or needed to return to their previous jobs to make ends meet.

Payment Structure

Many of the veterans who commented through the feedback tool alleged questionable provider practices related to the VET TEC payment structure. For example, some of these veterans reported providers withholding certifications until the veteran submitted an employment certification form and VA paid the provider. In other cases, veterans alleged that the provider held them personally responsible for paying back the full tuition amount if the veteran did not find meaningful employment within 180 days of completing the program (see fig. 9).⁴³ Other veterans described what they viewed as potentially deceptive practices to force veterans to utilize their GI Bill benefits to cover tuition for the VET TEC program. For example, some veterans

⁴²We previously testified on our body of work on mental health support for service members transitioning to civilian life. See GAO, *DOD and VA Transition Programs: Recommendations for Improving Mental Health Support*, [GAO-24-107752](#) (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 10, 2024).

⁴³As of fiscal year 2022, the VET TEC participation agreement with training providers states that training providers cannot charge students directly for tuition and fees.

said one provider intentionally failed VET TEC participants so they would be forced to re-enroll using their GI Bill benefits or a personal loan.

Figure 9. Excerpts of Two Veteran Comments About Challenges Related to Payment Structure

“

I need those certifications to get a job. How is it going to help me to tell an employer that I took classes through a school nobody knows and have no certifications to show? They said that if I want to get the certifications before getting a job, I have to use my G.I. Bill entitlement. I don't have much of the G.I. Bill left. I'll have to pay for the exams out of pocket, so I can get a job. I think it's a disservice for them to say "we will give you vouchers after you have a job and we get the VA payment"...

“

...I participated in the VET TEC - Veterans in Technology VA program and successfully completed the coding bootcamp at [the training provider]. I have been actively seeking meaningful employment since. I recently received a notice from my school...effectively stating if the VA does not pay them, the school will bill me for the tuition. This seems to be a violation of their agreement with the VA in becoming a part of VET TEC, especially as a preferred school. Further, if I had known the school could bill me instead of the VA, I would not have selected this school or program.

Source: GI Bill School Feedback Tool. | GAO-25-106876

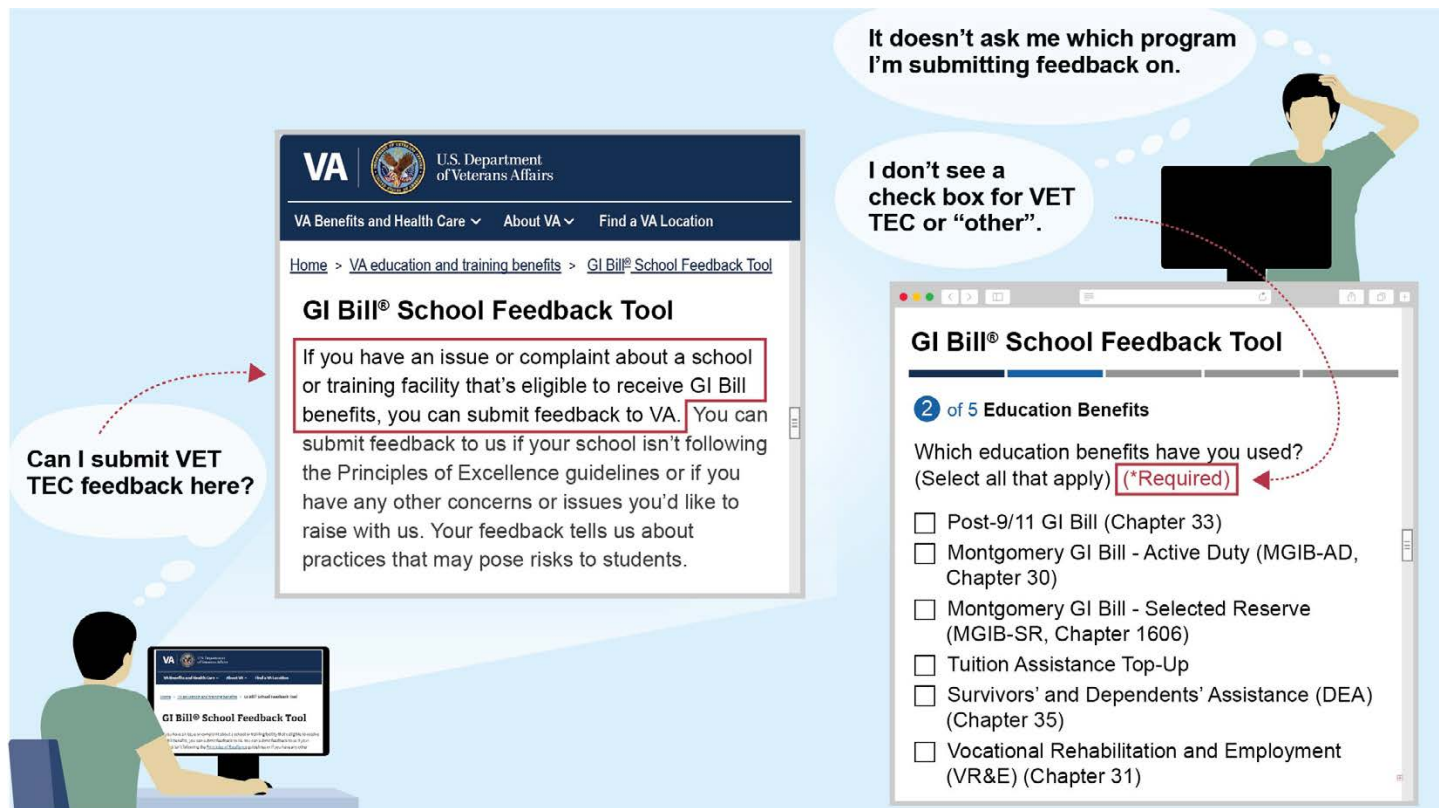
Note: These comments reflect the views of participants and not conclusions drawn by GAO.

In addition to describing key challenges, at least 48 of the 124 VET TEC comments in the GI Bill School Feedback Tool requested that VA investigate specific providers, cut their funding, or remove them from the VET TEC program. In these instances, veterans were often reporting not just their own individual experiences with providers, but also what they observed or alleged to be systemic problems, including allegations of broader deceptive practices. Veterans also sometimes offered feedback on how VA could oversee training providers. Some veterans expressed a desire to warn other veterans about a particular training provider and cautioned VA to make more effective use of taxpayer dollars.

VA Did Not Explicitly Collect VET TEC Feedback Through Its Primary Feedback Tool

VA did not explicitly collect ongoing feedback from veterans in the VET TEC pilot program and provide them with a clear way of communicating with VA when they experienced an issue. The GI Bill School Feedback Tool is currently not designed to collect feedback on programs such as VET TEC that are outside the GI Bill (see fig. 10). In particular, the introductory language for the feedback tool is exclusive to GI Bill-funded schools and training facilities. It states, “If you have an issue or complaint about a school or training facility that’s eligible to receive GI Bill benefits, you can submit feedback to VA.” In addition, the GI Bill School Feedback Tool does not include a check box option or question for veterans to indicate that they are commenting specifically about VET TEC. It also does not include an “other” or “unknown” programs checkbox option to name and capture programs not on the list of education benefits they have used, such as VET TEC. VA officials acknowledged that veterans must infer they can use the tool to provide feedback and specify in their written comments that feedback is for VET TEC.

Figure 10. Examples of Limitations to Providing Feedback Specific to the Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) Pilot Program



Source: GAO analysis of GI Bill Feedback Tool website, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); GAO (icons); VA (logo). | GAO-25-106876

Many veterans who submitted comments through the feedback tool noted that they did not see VET TEC as an option or appeared to question whether the feedback tool was appropriate to use for VET TEC comments. These veterans often went to additional lengths to explain their use of the feedback tool. For example, one veteran wrote, “IMPORTANT: This is regarding the VET TEC program, as instructed by VBA, [veteran] students are submitting complaints through the GI Bill School Feedback Tool.” Some veterans noted selecting the wrong program checkbox to submit a VET TEC comment, since there was no option for VET TEC. One veteran wrote “Disclaimer: I used VETTEC, but it was not an option to choose from in the application, therefore I choose chapter 31.” Others expressed uncertainty about using the feedback tool for VET TEC comments. For example, one veteran wrote, “I am not sure if this is the right place to reach out to, but if not, I hope you can direct my email to the appropriate individuals.”

In March 2022, VA identified that creating a check box for VET TEC on its feedback tool website would be a potential improvement but did not implement it. In addition, VA officials informed us that they did not issue formal communications advising veterans to use the GI Bill School Feedback Tool to provide feedback about VET TEC or its training providers. Federal internal control standards call for agencies to externally communicate the necessary quality information to achieve its objectives.⁴⁴ However, VA was not collecting “quality information” via “open two-way” communication with external parties. In addition, VA’s Fiscal Year

⁴⁴GAO-14-704G.

2022–2028 Strategic Plan sets forth strategic objectives regarding collection and use of veterans' feedback, including obtaining their insights by using proactive and consistent communications.

The feedback tool's limitations and the absence of VA communications about its use may have prevented and deterred veterans from using it to submit comments about VET TEC. Consequently, VA may not have had a full picture of veterans' experiences in the pilot. As VA implements the recently enacted program, by clearly communicating to VET TEC participants that VA collects feedback about the VET TEC program through the feedback tool, VA could better meet its strategic goal of obtaining veterans' insights by using proactive and consistent communications. Additionally, VET TEC participants would have greater confidence that they could provide feedback on their program experience if needed and help inform its implementation.

VA Did Not Use Veterans' Feedback to Inform Program Implementation

VA did not use evidence gathered through the GI Bill School Feedback Tool to inform its decisions about VET TEC implementation, according to officials. VA officials said the tool was expressly designed to collect feedback on educational institutions with GI Bill-approved programs and developed to meet the specific requirements of Executive Order 13607, which established Principles of Excellence that VA applies to education and training providers (see sidebar).⁴⁵

Executive Order 13607

Executive Order 13607 directed the Department of Veterans Affairs and other agencies to establish Principles of Excellence to apply to educational institutions receiving funding from federal military and veterans educational benefits programs. VA has implemented the Principles of Excellence to include issues related to recruiting/marketing practices, accreditation, financial issues related to tuition/fee charges, student loans, post-graduation job opportunities, change in degree plan/requirements, quality of education, grade policy, release of transcripts, transfer of credits, and refund issues.

Source: Exec. Order No. 13,607, 77 Fed. Reg. 25,861 (Apr. 27, 2012), reprinted as amended in 38 U.S.C. § 3301 note. | GAO-25-106876

VA officials said that comments about VET TEC that fell within the Principles of Excellence were referred to the training providers named in the comment, for resolution. Comments that fell outside the Principles of Excellence, such as those pertaining to VA's administration of the VET TEC program, were closed without further action and the complainant was notified.

Further, VA's complaints database is not designed to track the comments it receives through the feedback tool because the purpose of the tool is to address problems with individual providers, and not the broader program. As a result, the feedback tool functions primarily as a case management tool intended to capture issues with individual training providers on a case-by-case basis, but not to review broader program implementation issues.

However, the feedback tool states in part, "You can submit feedback to us...if you have any other concerns or issues you'd like to raise with us." The tool then provides an option for "other" issues, which 89 of the 124 VET TEC respondents chose when submitting their comments. Many veterans commented directly on VA's implementation of the program, including feedback on VA handling of benefits, training provider oversight and the effective use of taxpayer dollars. However, VA does not conduct further review of this category of

⁴⁵According to VA, the feedback tool is also used to gather feedback required in 38 U.S.C § 3698.

comments and does not have a plan for analyzing the feedback it receives from veterans to inform program implementation.

In earlier GAO work, we identified key practices that can help federal agencies develop and use evidence to effectively manage and assess the results of federal efforts.⁴⁶ The use of evidence is one of four core topic areas and encompasses three key practices: (1) using evidence to learn, (2) applying learning to inform decision-making, and (3) communicating learning and results. Information captured through the feedback tool serves as a potentially valuable evidence source for implementing these practices. In addition, VA's Fiscal Year 2022–2028 Strategic Plan sets forth strategic objectives related to the collection and use of veteran feedback. The plan states that data are a strategic asset to be used to improve VA's understanding of customers and partners, drive evidence-based decision-making, and deliver more effective and efficient solutions. Developing a written plan to use veterans' feedback about the VET TEC program, including feedback obtained through the GI Bill Feedback Tool, will help VA assess implementation of the recently enacted program and inform its future program implementation efforts.

Conclusions

Over the 5 years of the VET TEC pilot, VA has made substantial effort to support the training of veterans for jobs in high-tech fields, leading to over 20,000 enrollments by veterans. Nevertheless, human capital planning could help VA ensure it has the necessary staff to accomplish its program objectives, including measuring how well the program may be accomplishing them. Moreover, by implementing a process to consistently check payment criteria before payments are disbursed and identify potential overpayments after payments are disbursed, the agency would have reasonable assurance that its resources are used in accordance with program goals and objectives. Establishing and implementing such a process would strengthen VA's ability to minimize the number of potential overpayments and the need to recoup those dollars. Veterans' feedback provides crucial evidence to inform decisions about program implementation. Clearly communicating to VET TEC participants that VA collects feedback on the program through the GI Bill School Feedback Tool could help VA obtain a fuller picture of veterans' experiences. In addition, having a plan to analyze veterans' feedback to inform the program's implementation may facilitate VA's ability to drive evidence-based decision-making and develop potentially more effective solutions for training veterans. With the enactment of the new program in January 2025, VA has an opportunity to take several actions to improve its implementation.

Recommendations for Executive Action

We are making the following four recommendations to VA:

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs should develop and implement a plan and related procedures for assessing the agency's current and future human capital needs to effectively implement the VET TEC program. This plan and related procedures could also assist the agency in administering future pilots, as applicable.

(Recommendation 1)

⁴⁶[GAO-23-105460](#).

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs should develop and implement a written, systematic process to help prevent, identify, and recoup overpayments from VET TEC training providers, as appropriate. This could include documenting criteria aligned with the VET TEC milestone payment process to be applied before payments are made. In cases in which a payment has already been issued, such procedures could flag payments (1) for which the training provider subsequently submitted updated information and (2) that must be recovered from preferred providers because the veteran did not obtain meaningful employment. (Recommendation 2)

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs should clearly communicate that participants can use the GI Bill School Feedback Tool to provide ongoing feedback about the VET TEC program. For example, VA could modify the tool by (1) revising the introductory language to ensure veterans are aware the tool is not exclusive to schools or training providers eligible to receive GI Bill benefits, (2) adding language to clarify which program(s) a veteran is submitting feedback about, or (3) adding a check box for any non-GI Bill program and pilot programs, as well as check boxes for “other” or “unknown” programs. (Recommendation 3)

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs should develop and implement a plan to analyze ongoing feedback it receives from VET TEC participants, including feedback VA receives through the GI Bill School Feedback Tool, to inform program implementation. This analysis could be incorporated into any future evaluation of the program. (Recommendation 4)

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

We provided a draft of this report to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for review and comment. We received written comments from VA, as well as technical comments, which we incorporated, as appropriate. In its written comments, reproduced in appendix II, VA concurred with three of our recommendations and did not concur with one.

In response to our first recommendation on assessing current and future human capital needs to effectively implement the VET TEC program, VA concurred in principle. VA stated that it cannot develop and implement a plan for assessing human capital needs for a future VET TEC program because the program is not permanent. VA noted that because the current authority for the program is set to expire in 2027, VA is not able to submit a budget request for the program in the regular budget cycle, which is developed 2 years in advance of the year of execution. VA said that new program features in each iteration of VET TEC make it difficult to forecast future staffing needs but that it would provide human capital requirements to Congress upon request or should Congress establish a permanent VET TEC program. VA requested that we close the recommendation as addressed.

We acknowledge that VET TEC is a time-limited program, with the newly enacted program authorized through September 2027. However, a time-limited program authorization should not preclude VA from determining the level of human capital needed to effectively implement the VET TEC program until the current program expires. For example, as we have noted in this report, human capital planning could help VA ensure it has the necessary staff and contracting resources to accomplish not only the VET TEC objectives of helping veterans gain skills and employment but VA’s overall mission objectives. Moreover, while the program may or may not be extended, understanding human capital needs for the current program would help inform a future program, should it be continued.

In response to our second recommendation on a systematic process to help identify, prevent, and recoup overpayments from VET TEC training providers, VA disagreed. In its comments, VA stated that the VET TEC pilot did not fall under statutorily required processes for detecting potential overpayments and said that the new VET TEC program enacted in January 2025 requires the use of existing oversight methods. VA said that with the enactment of the new program, VA has a robust systematic process in place to minimize errors and prevent overpayments and that the same systematic process to prevent overpayments for all other educational assistance programs prevents overpayments for VET TEC. In addition, VA said in its comments that it mandates training for certain training provider officials and relies upon them to report accurate enrollment and graduation information, and that erroneous information provided by these officials is the only scenario that would result in an overpayment.

While the processes and activities VA uses are important for its educational assistance programs generally, the processes described in VA's letter do not meet the intent of our recommendation, which is to develop a systematic oversight process that addresses risks specific to the milestone payments made under VET TEC. As discussed in our report, the process VA used during the pilot did not prevent payment errors as shown by VA's own validation of our analysis of potential overpayments during the pilot. During the validation, VA identified some that were due to its own administrative errors, and others that reflected corrected information submitted by providers after an initial payment. These instances suggest that a systematic process, for preventing, identifying, and addressing potential overpayments, is important for VET TEC. A systematic process could include, for example, an algorithm or other written procedures that would check all information available to VA at each milestone. While officials previously told us in December 2024 that a systematic process, such as an algorithm, would help detect potential overpayments, in agency comments VA said it did not believe an algorithm could improve upon existing practices. In addition, VA noted, and we agree, that VET TEC claims processing is inherently data-driven.

We continue to believe that having a systematic process for detecting and recouping potential overpayments specific to the VET TEC program remains important, given the past implementation of the milestone payment process. However, we have added some changes to the finding to clarify the intent of our recommendation—for example, that the systematic process is to be specific to the VET TEC program and could include an algorithm or written procedures that would help prevent, identify, and recoup overpayments.

In response to our third recommendation on clearly communicating that the GI Bill School Feedback Tool can be used to provide ongoing program feedback, VA concurred. Given that the newly enacted VET TEC program is open to institutions of higher learning becoming training providers, VA said that it will update the GI Bill Feedback Tool to include VET TEC and publish participant feedback on the GI Bill Comparison Tool. Further, VA said it will develop and implement an outreach plan to inform VET TEC participants about how to provide feedback. VA noted that its target completion date for these efforts is April 1, 2027.

In response to our fourth recommendation on analyzing ongoing feedback from VET TEC participants, VA concurred in principle. VA said it intends to analyze feedback once the GI Bill Feedback Tool has been updated to include VET TEC, and to incorporate this feedback into existing oversight procedures, as are currently followed for other education benefit programs. Additionally, VA said it will continue to send out participant experience surveys to VET TEC participants to obtain their feedback on providers and overall program satisfaction. Although VA noted that these changes will not be in place to allow feedback to inform initial implementation of the newly enacted VET TEC program, VA noted that participant feedback and findings from oversight activities will inform updates to policies, procedures, training, guidance, and stakeholder engagement, among other activities. VA noted that its target completion date for these efforts is April 1, 2027.

We are sending copies of this report to the appropriate congressional committees and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. In addition, the report is available at no charge on the GAO website at <https://www.gao.gov>.

If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact me at sawyerj@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff who made key contributions to this report are listed in appendix III.

//SIGNED//

John D. Sawyer
Director
Education, Workforce, and Income Security

Appendix I: Data on Veteran Education Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) Participants and Their Outcomes

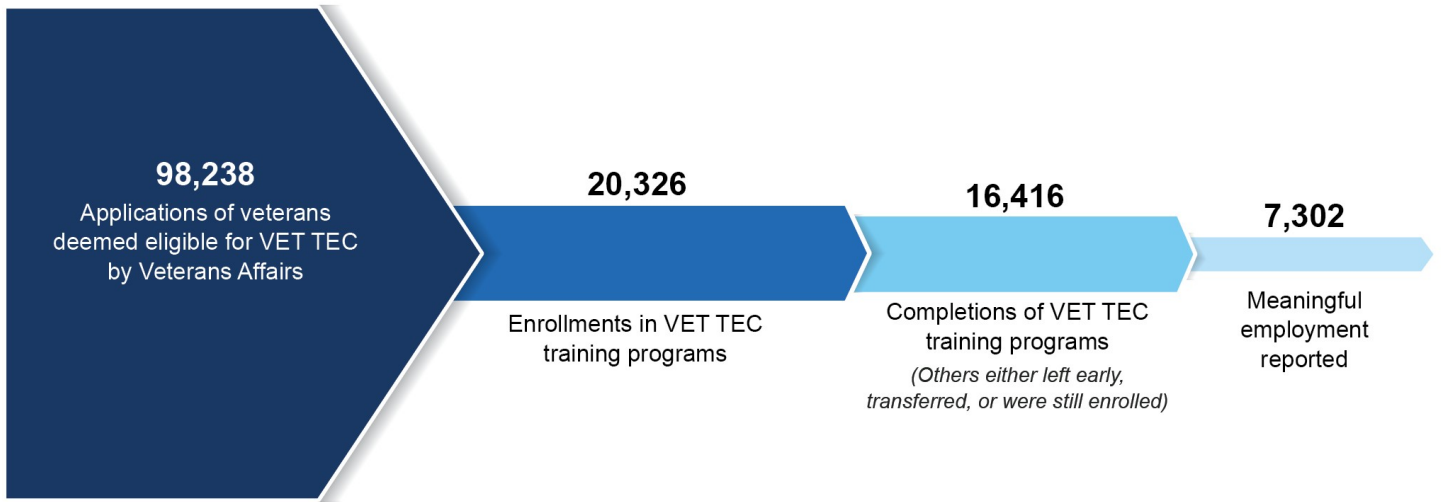
We obtained and analyzed data on VET TEC participant applications, eligibility, enrollments, completions, transfers, and employment outcomes from April 1, 2019, through August 19, 2024. We also obtained and analyzed other data for the same time period, such as participant demographics and salary data for those who reported obtaining meaningful employment to fully reflect outcomes for veterans participating in the pilot.¹

Veterans’ Participation in VET TEC

From April 1, 2019, through August 19, 2024:

- VA received 139,853 VET TEC applications and
- VA deemed 98,238 applications (70 percent) eligible for participation (see fig. 11).

Figure 11. Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) Pilot Program: Number of Program Enrollments and Completions, April 2019 Through August 2024



Source: GAO analysis of Department of Veterans Affairs data. | GAO-25-106876

¹VA provided GAO with final enrollment data in October 2024. GAO discovered that final enrollment data did not include 191 of 20,515 records that were previously included. Given that the missing records represented less than one percent of enrollments, GAO concluded the final enrollment data were sufficiently reliable to proceed with its analyses of these data.

Accessible Data for Figure 11. Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) Pilot Program: Number of Program Enrollments and Completions, April 2019 Through August 2024

Technology Education Course	Number of Enrollments
Applications of veterans deemed eligible for VET TEC by Veterans Affairs	98,238
Enrollments in VET TEC training programs	20,326
Completions of VET TEC training programs (Others either left early, transferred, or were still enrolled)	16,416
Meaningful employment reported	7,302

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Veterans Affairs data. | GAO-25-106876

Note: The data used to create this figure include 541 veterans who enrolled in more than one VET TEC course. The data do not include less than one percent of enrollments that were present in prior data deliveries but missing from the final files provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to GAO. VA defined meaningful employment as traditional employment in a career supported by the completed program of study, promotion in the veteran’s current career if the veteran is currently employed in a career supported by the completed program of study, or self-employment if the veteran owns or operates a business and is utilizing the skills obtained through the completion of the program of study.

Specifically, during this period, veteran participation in VET TEC training programs indicated the following:

- 20,326 enrollments (21 percent of those deemed eligible);
- 16,416 completions (81 percent of enrollments); and
- 7,302 reports of meaningful employment (44 percent of completions).
- The difference between the total number of applications and the number deemed eligible could be because some applicants, particularly older applicants, were unaware that their benefits had expired, according to a VA infographic.² Also, the difference between the number deemed eligible and the number of enrollments may reflect the selection processes training providers use to admit veterans into their programs. Furthermore, in 2021, VA officials noted that some applications were denied because applicants were active-duty service members, not veterans.³
- The number of reports of meaningful employment may be understated. According to a training provider that GAO interviewed, not all those who found meaningful employment submitted the employment certification form to the training provider. We previously reported that three training providers described situations involving VET TEC participants who obtained employment but did not report it to VA.⁴

²To qualify for VET TEC, applicants must have had at least 1 day of GI Bill entitlement, among other things. Prior to January 1, 2013, Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits generally expired after 15 years. In addition, VA’s document noted that for some applicants “[b]enefits may also have been exhausted, transferred to a dependent, or the veteran became ineligible.”

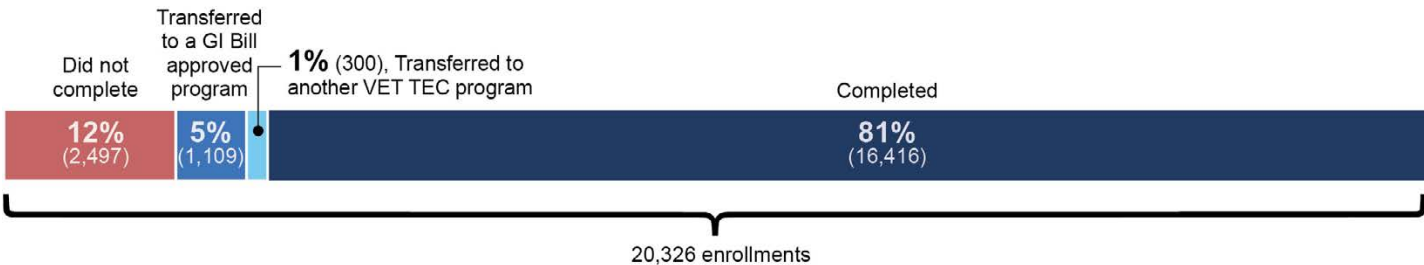
³In 2021, the law was amended to permit individuals within 180 days of becoming a veteran to participate in VET TEC. See Pub. L. No. 116-315 tit. IV, § 4302, 134 Stat. 4932(1), 5017 (2021).

⁴When this occurred, training providers did not get fully reimbursed and preferred providers had to return all prior payments to VA, even though a veteran achieved a positive outcome. See GAO, *Veterans Employment: Promising VA Technology Education Pilot Would Benefit from Better Outcome Measures and Plans for Improvement*, GAO 23-105343 (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 27, 2022).

Completion Status for VET TEC Participants

- Of 20,326 veteran enrollments in training programs, 16,416 (81 percent) were completed (see fig. 2).
- On average, veterans who completed their VET TEC training program took about 3 months to do so.
- VA paid training providers a median of \$9,194 in tuition and fees per course for those veterans who completed their VET TEC training program.

Figure 12. Program Completion Status for Enrollments in Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) Pilot Program, April 2019 Through August 2024



Source: GAO analysis of Department of Veterans Affairs data. | GAO-25-106876

Accessible Data for Figure 12. Program Completion Status for Enrollments in Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) Pilot Program, April 2019 Through August 2024

Type	Percentage	Enrollments
Did not complete	12%	(2,497)
Transferred to a GI Bill approved program:	5%	(1,109)
Transferred to another VET TEC program	1%	(300)
Completed:	81%	(16,416)
Total	na	(20,326)

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Veterans Affairs data. | GAO-25-106876

Note: The data used to create this figure include 541 veterans who enrolled in more than one VET TEC course. The data do not include less than one percent of enrollments that were (1) not yet completed or (2) present in prior data deliveries but missing from the final files provided by Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to GAO. VA defines meaningful employment as traditional employment in a career supported by the completed program of study, promotion in the veteran's current career if the veteran is currently employed in a career supported by the completed program of study, or self-employment if the veteran owns or operates a business and is utilizing the skills obtained through the completion of the program of study. In addition, VA defined transfer rate as those veterans who continue to a GI Bill program instead of becoming employed. As such, the percentage of veterans who transferred represents those who did not complete the VET TEC program but continued to a GI Bill program.

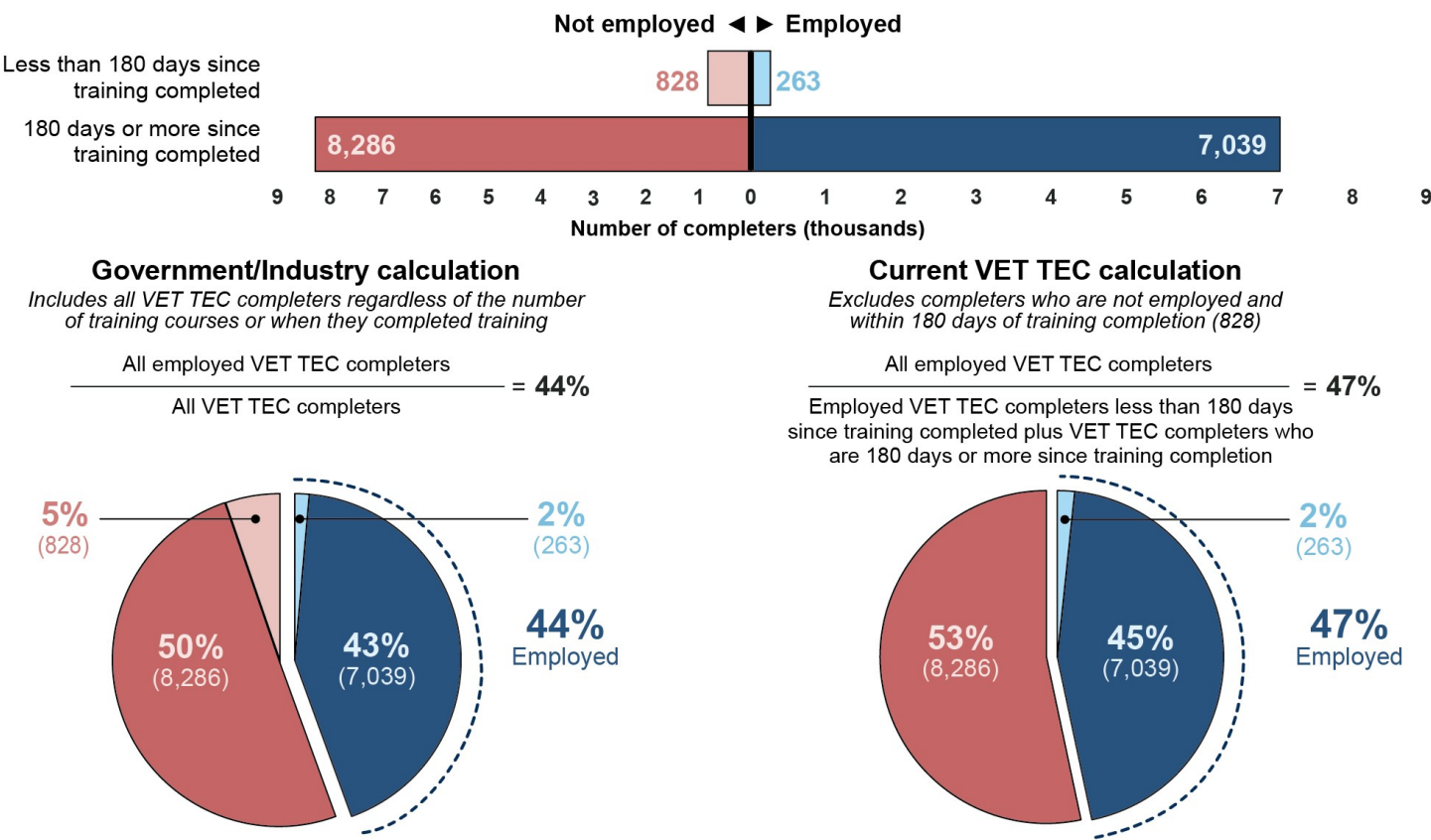
Employment Rate Calculations for VET TEC Participants

We previously reported that VA's employment rate calculation was inconsistent with standard approaches used in government and industry (see fig. 13).⁵ VA officials said their approach was aligned with the milestone payment process for training providers. VA divided the number of all employed VET TEC participants by the number of VET TEC participants who had completed their training at least 180 days earlier. As such, the calculation excluded participants who were not employed and were within 180 days of completing training. Accordingly, we recommended that VA develop an employment rate calculation consistent with standard

⁵GAO-22-105343.

approaches used by government or industry. As of February 2025, VA reported to GAO that it had reviewed internal and external agency employment calculation best practices and had identified the need for a full-time data analyst to help collect additional data needed to calculate the employment rate. Once the permanent VET TEC program is implemented, VA officials said that they would assign a data analyst to collect employment data that would facilitate an employment calculation consistent with government or industry practices.

Figure 13. Comparison of Employment Rate Calculations for Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) Pilot Program, April 2019 Through August 2024



Source: GAO analysis of Department of Veterans Affairs data. | GAO-25-106876

Accessible Data for Figure 13. Comparison of Employment Rate Calculations for Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) Pilot Program, April 2019 Through August 2024

Number of completers (thousands)

Number of Days	Not employed	Employed
Less than 180 days since training completed	828	263
180 days or more since training completed	8286	7,039

Government/Industry calculation^a: Includes all VET TEC participants regardless of when they completed

training

All employed VET TEC participants (divided by) VET TEC participants who completed training (equals) 44%

Employment Status and Number of Days	Number	Percentage
Not employed and less than 180 days since training completed	828	5%
Not employed and 180 days or more since training completed	8,286	50
Employed and less than 180 days since training completed	263	2%
Employed and 180 days or more since training completed	7,039	43
Total employed	7,302	44

Current VET TEC calculation: Excludes completers who are not employed and within 180 days of training completion (828)

All employed VET TEC participants (divided by) VET TEC participants who are 180 days or more since training completion (equals) 47%

Employment Status and Number of Days	Number	Percentage
Not employed and 180 days or more since training completed	8,286	53
Employed and less than 180 days since training completed	263	2
Employed and 180 days or more since training completed	7,039	45
Total employed	7,302	47

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Veterans Affairs data. | GAO-25-106876

Note: We counted veterans who did not submit an Employment Certification Form as not having obtained meaningful employment, consistent with VA's reported approach. VA defined meaningful employment as traditional employment in a career supported by the completed program of study, promotion in the veteran's current career if the veteran is currently employed in a career supported by the completed program of study, or self-employment if the veteran owns or operates a business and is utilizing the skills obtained through the completion of the program of study. For the 217 veterans who enrolled and completed more than one VET TEC course, this figure includes outcome data for each completed course. These data do not include less than one percent of enrollments that were present in prior data deliveries but were missing from the final files provided by VA to GAO. Percentages do not always add to 100 due to rounding.

Employment Status of Veterans Who Completed VET TEC

- Of VET TEC training programs completed, 44 percent (7,302 of the 16,416) resulted in meaningful employment, as reported by veterans. (See fig. 14).
- On average, veterans who reported finding meaningful employment did so within 2 months of completing their VET TEC training programs.

Figure 14. Employment Status of Veteran Completions in Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) Pilot Program, April 2019 Through August 2024



Source: GAO analysis of Department of Veterans Affairs data. | GAO-25-106876

Accessible Data for Figure 14. Employment Status of Veteran Completions in Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) Pilot Program, April 2019 Through August 2024

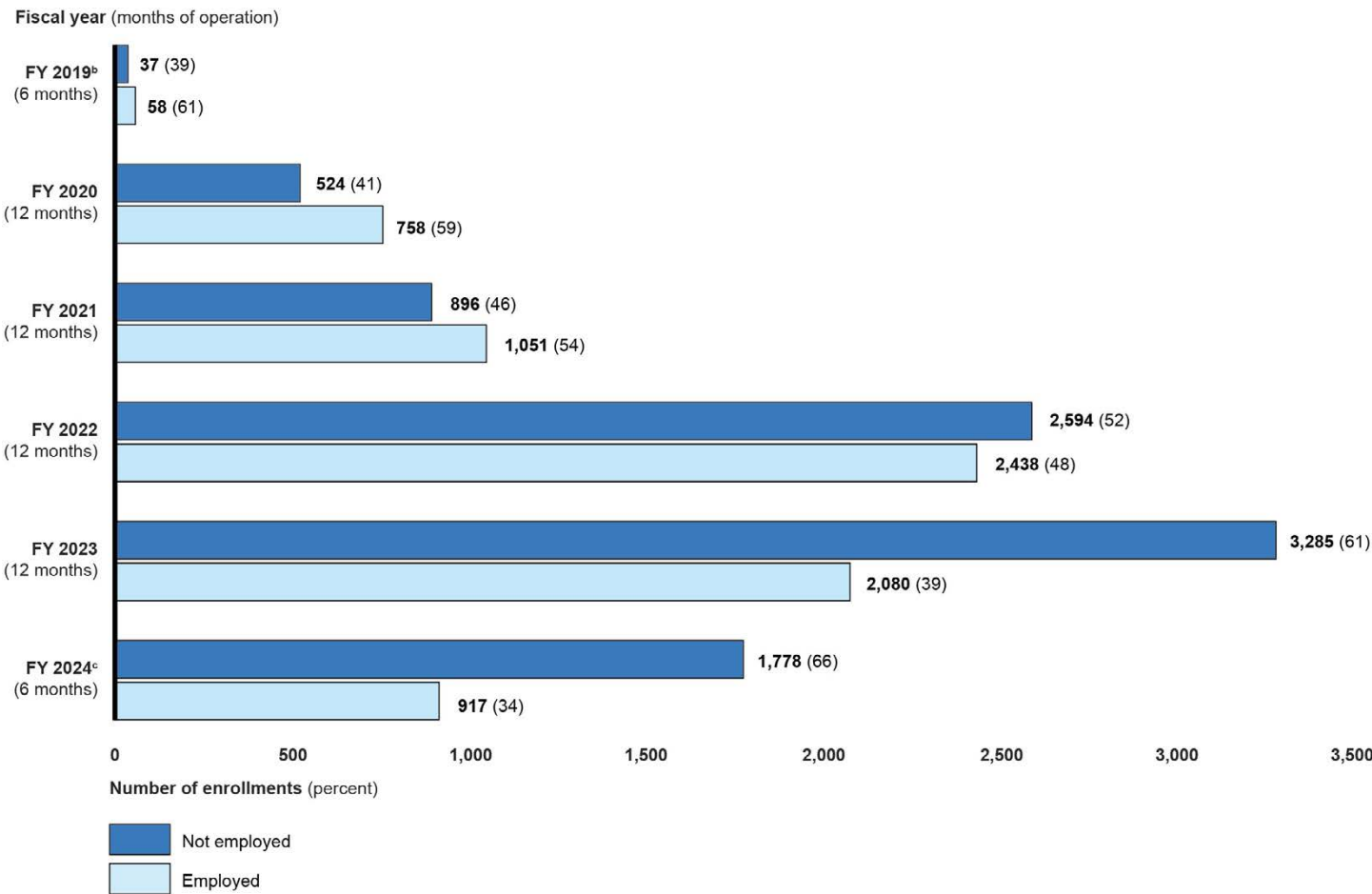
Type	Percentage	Number of Veterans
Meaningfully employed:	44%	(7,302)
Unemployed/Not meaningfully employed:	56%	(9,114)

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Veterans Affairs data. | GAO-25-106876

Note: Generally, VA made payments when veterans reported to the VA that they found meaningful employment within VA's required time frame of 180 days, or, in some cases, within extended time frames authorized by VA, such as those related to the COVID-19 pandemic. We counted veterans who did not submit an Employment Certification Form as not having obtained meaningful employment, consistent with VA's reported approach. VA defined meaningful employment as traditional employment in a career supported by the completed program of study, promotion in the veteran's current career if the veteran is currently employed in a career supported by the completed program of study, or self-employment if the veteran owns or operates a business and is utilizing the skills obtained through the completion of the program of study. For the 217 veterans who enrolled and completed more than one VET TEC course, this figure includes outcome data for each completed course. These data do not include less than one percent of enrollments that were present in prior data deliveries but were missing from the final files provided by VA to GAO.

Figure 15 shows the trend in employment outcomes from fiscal years 2019 through 2024. When asked about declining rates of meaningful employment over time, VA officials said that they had not analyzed the reasons, but suggested possible reasons: (1) veterans may have enrolled in VET TEC with varying levels of preparedness and skills, including some with less technology experience who may not have previously considered enrolling, (2) the type of training programs pursued by veterans may have shifted, with more veterans enrolling in programs that have historically had lower graduation rates, and (3) layoffs in the technology sector after the COVID-19 pandemic may have contributed to lower graduation and employment rates.

Figure 15. Meaningful Employment Outcomes for Veteran Employment Through Technical Education Courses (VET TEC) Pilot Program, by Fiscal Year^a



Source: GAO analysis of Department of Veterans Affairs data. | GAO-25-106876

Accessible Data for Figure 15. Meaningful Employment Outcomes for Veteran Employment Through Technical Education Courses (VET TEC) Pilot Program, by Fiscal Year^a

Fiscal year (months in operation)	Not employed	Employed
FY 2019 ^b (6 months)	37 (39)	58 (61)
FY 2020 (12 months)	524 (41)	758 (59)
FY 2021 (12 months)	896 (46)	1,051 (54)
FY 2022 (12 months)	2,594 (52)	2,438 (48)
FY 2023 (12 months)	3,285 (61)	2,080 (39)
FY 2024 ^c (6 months)	1,778 (66)	917 (34)

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Veterans Affairs data. | GAO-25-106876

Generally, VA made payments when veterans reported to the VA that they found meaningful employment within VA's required time frame of 180 days, or, in some cases, within extended time frames authorized by VA, such as those related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The data do not include less than one percent of enrollments that (1) were not yet completed or (2) were present in prior data deliveries but were missing from the final files provided by VA to GAO. Veterans with multiple enrollments may be counted multiple times. VA asked veterans who completed a course to report their employment status via an "Employment Certification Form" 180 days after completing their course. Enrollments with hire dates prior to term begin dates are counted

as not obtaining meaningful employment. VA defined meaningful employment as traditional employment in a career supported by the completed program of study, promotion in the veteran's current career if the veteran is currently employed in a career supported by the completed program of study, or self-employment if the veteran owns or operates a business and is utilizing the skills obtained through the completion of the program of study. For the pilot overall, across all training providers, 44 percent of veterans' course completions resulted in a meaningful employment outcome (7,302 of 16,406 completions). Among preferred providers, 52 percent of course completions resulted in a meaningful employment outcome (2,529 of 4,896 completions), and among non-preferred providers, the percentage was 41 percent (4,773 of 11,520 completions). However, the completion rate was higher for non-preferred providers compared to preferred providers (76 percent compared to 65 percent).

^aThis figure includes only enrollees who have completed a VET TEC course.

^bThe pilot began in April 2019.

^cThe pilot ended in April 2024. The data reflect meaningful employment outcomes for enrollments with term begin dates in March 2024, reflecting the date that VA asked training providers to cease enrollment.

Demographic Characteristics of Veteran Participants and Salary Information for Veterans Who Reported Meaningful Employment

See Tables 4–5 below for demographic information on VET TEC participants and Table 6 for salary information for veterans who completed a VET TEC program. Overall, most participants were male (84.1 percent) and either White or Black (68.9 percent). Additionally, most had a service-connected disability (75.6 percent).

Table 4. Demographic Characteristics of Participants in the Veteran Education Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) Pilot Program, April 2019 Through August 2024

Category	Demographic characteristic ^a	Number of VET TEC participants	Percent of VET TEC participants
Gender	Male	16,636	84.1
Gender	Female	3,135	15.9
Ethnicity	White, non-Hispanic	6,961	35.2
Ethnicity	Black, non-Hispanic	6,660	33.7
Ethnicity	Asian, non-Hispanic	1,568	7.9
Ethnicity	Other, non-Hispanic ^b	1,169	5.9
Ethnicity	Hispanic	3,413	17.3
Disability	Veteran with a service-connected disability	14,955	75.6

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Veterans Affairs data. | GAO 25-106876

^aVeterans with multiple enrollments are counted only once in this table.

^bThe category “Other, non-Hispanic” includes those who identified as American Indian, Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, or unknown race.

Table 5. Age Range of Participants in the Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) Pilot Program, April 2019 Through August 2024

Age range ^a	Number of VET TEC participants	Percent of VET TEC participants
18 – 24 years old	1,806	9.1
25 – 34 years old	10,962	55.4
35 – 44 years old	5,294	26.8
45+ years old	1,709	8.6
Age (mean)	na	33.6 years old

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Veterans Affairs data. | GAO 25-106876

**Appendix I: Data on Veteran Education Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC)
Participants and Their Outcomes**

^aAge is the number of days between date of birth and term begin date divided by 365.25. Veterans with multiple enrollments are counted only once in this table.

Table 6. Salaries for Participants in the Veteran Education Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) Pilot Program Who Reported Obtaining Employment, by Demographic Group

VET TEC participant demographic group ^a	Mean salary of VET TEC participants	Difference from mean salary of all participants	Median salary of VET TEC participants	Difference from median salary of all participants
All meaningfully employed participants	\$64,576	—	\$58,240	—
Gender: Male	\$65,015	\$439	\$58,822	\$582
Gender: Female	\$62,020	-\$2,555	\$55,000	-\$3,240
Ethnicity: White, non-Hispanic	\$66,075	\$1,500	\$60,000	\$1,760
Ethnicity: Black, non-Hispanic	\$61,866	-\$2,710	\$55,000	-\$3,240
Ethnicity: Asian, non-Hispanic	\$69,566	\$4,990	\$67,000	\$8,760
Ethnicity: Other, non-Hispanic ^b	\$67,766	\$3,191	\$62,000	\$3,760
Ethnicity: Hispanic	\$62,378	-\$2,197	\$54,080	-\$4,160
Disability: Veterans with a service-connected disability	\$64,846	\$270	\$58,240	\$0

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Veterans Affairs data. | GAO 25-106876

Generally, VA made payments when veterans reported to VA that they found meaningful employment within VA's required time frame of 180 days, or, in some cases, within extended time frames authorized by VA, such as those related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

^aVeterans with multiple enrollments are counted multiple times. There are 10 enrollments that resulted in meaningful employment but are missing a value for salary. These records have been excluded from this analysis.

^bThe category "Other, non-Hispanic" includes those who identified as American Indian, Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, or unknown race.

Appendix II: Comments from the Department of Veterans Affairs



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON

August 1, 2025

Mr. John D. Sawyer
Director
Education, Workforce, and Income Security Issues
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Sawyer:

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has reviewed the Government Accountability Office (GAO) draft report: ***VETERANS EMPLOYMENT: VA Should Address Human Capital Needs and Other Issues in High-Tech Training*** (GAO-25-106876).

The enclosure contains technical comments and the action plan to implement the draft report recommendations. VA appreciates the opportunity to comment on your draft report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Syrek".

Christopher D. Syrek
Chief of Staff

Enclosure

Enclosure

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Comments to
Government Accountability Office (GAO) Draft Report
***VETERANS EMPLOYMENT: VA Should Address Human Capital Needs and Other
Issues in High-Tech Training***
(GAO-25-106876)

Recommendation 1: The Secretary of Veterans Affairs should develop and implement a plan and related procedures for assessing the agency's current and future human capital needs to effectively implement the VET TEC program. This plan and related procedures could also assist the agency in administering future pilots, as applicable.

VA Response: Concur in principle. The Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017 instructed VA to carry out a 5-year pilot program to train Veterans for high-technology jobs. The provision did not, however, provide funding for additional staff to develop and implement the program. VA had to develop and implement the program utilizing existing human capital resources, as the Congressional budget process for requesting additional staff to support new initiatives is 2 outyears.

The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) is unable to develop and implement a plan and related procedures for assessing human capital needs for a future Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) Program because there is no permanent VET TEC Program, and VBA cannot predict new statutory authority for a future VET TEC program. The most recent refresh of the VET TEC Program was established by section 212 of the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act (P.L. 118-210). This authority expires in 2027, negating VBA's efforts to submit a budget request through the regular budget cycle, which is developed 2 years in advance of the year of execution.

New program features for each new VET TEC Program authorization generate new requirements for information technology systems and claims processors to process and pay benefits. This volatility predictably and directly impacts the level of effort for a claims processor, which is the primary driver for a sustainable forecasting model that can predict human capital needs. VBA can commit to providing human capital requirements to Congress upon request, as part of the legislative costing process for each new authorization of VET TEC. Should Congress establish a permanent VET TEC Program or framework for a reoccurring VET TEC Program, VBA will likewise establish a predictive model that will inform future budget requests.

VBA submitted the attached cost estimate for the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act; however, no appropriation was provided by Congress.

VA requests this recommendation be closed.

Enclosure

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Recommendation 2: The Secretary of Veterans Affairs should develop and implement a systematic process to help identify, prevent, and recoup overpayments from VET TEC training providers, as appropriate. This could include developing an algorithm to be applied before payments are made to verify whether the veteran began training, completed the course, or obtained meaningful employment. In cases where a payment has already been issued, such a process could detect potential overpayment situations such as payments: (1) for which the training provider subsequently submitted updated information and (2) that must be recovered from preferred providers because the veteran did not obtain meaningful employment.

VA Response: Non-concur. VA acknowledges that the original VET TEC pilot program did not fall under statutorily required processes for detecting potential overpayments. The new VET TEC Program under the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act, however, does fall under chapter 36. Therefore, VBA requires the use of existing oversight methods for this program. VA does not concur that an algorithm could be applied before payments are made to verify whether the Veteran began training, completed the course, or obtained meaningful employment.

VBA already has a very robust systematic process in place to minimize erroneous information and maximize reliable information. VET TEC, like all other VBA educational assistance programs, relies on the School Certifying Official (SCO) to provide accurate information about school enrollments and the Veteran Claims Examiner (VCE) or automated adjudication systems to accurately process the information provided by the SCO. VBA's systemic process to prevent overpayments for VBA educational assistance is as follows:

- 1) train SCOs and conduct quality reviews and oversight activities (compliance surveys, supervisory visits, and risk-based reviews) to hold SCOs accountable, and
- 2) train VCEs and conduct quality reviews and performance evaluations to hold VCEs accountable.

The same systematic process to prevent overpayments used for all other VBA educational assistance programs prevents overpayments for VET TEC.

Training SCOs is of paramount importance because claims processing is an inherently data-driven process. VBA mandates new and reoccurring SCO training. Once the SCO certifies an enrollment, VBA is required by 38 U.S.C. § 3699C(c)(2)(a) to make the initial 25% payment to the training provider "upon the enrollment of a covered individual in the

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program.” The primary source for enrollment status is the certification from the SCO attesting to the student’s enrollment. VBA is statutorily required to assume that the SCO certified this enrollment truly and correctly. However, in the event a SCO certifies an enrollment for a GI Bill beneficiary who is not enrolled, VBA’s safeguard is the individual Veteran. VBA sends an award letter to the student, and the student would contact VBA to inform that they are not enrolled in school.

Additionally, VBA ensures accountability for SCOs and training providers through quality reviews and periodic compliance surveys in accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 3693, and in conjunction with the State Approving Agency (SAA) risk-based reviews required by 38 U.S.C. § 3673A. If VBA determines the training provider and the SCO are unreliable, VBA will remove the training provider from VET TEC by disapproving the program.

Similarly, for graduation, 38 U.S.C. § 3699C(c)(2)(b) requires VBA to make the second 25% payment to the training provider “upon graduation of the individual from the program.” VBA’s notification of student graduation is through an attestation from the SCO. Because this is a matter of the SCO needing to provide accurate information to VA, VBA’s current systemic process of training followed by quality and compliance reviews is appropriate. VBA does not believe it has the authority to withhold the 25% payment based on its predictive analysis generated by an algorithm if it is in direct opposition to the school’s explicit statement that the student graduated. As stated above, VBA believes the most appropriate safeguard against overpayments based on graduation is VBA’s statutorily mandated, periodic compliance surveys and risk-based reviews.

VBA’s current system is designed to detect overpayments based on updated information. There are no scenarios, other than erroneous certification by the SCO, where a training provider subsequently providing updated information would result in an overpayment. Congress designed the program to trigger payments at enrollment, graduation, and employment. There is no other process or algorithm that can remove and replace the SCO certification as the data point upon which VBA must rely for payment. Therefore, the only systemic process is the current process: train the SCO, check their work through quality review and oversight activities, provide retraining as necessary, or remove the school from the program if they are unreliable.

For the future iteration of the VET TEC Program, VBA will continue to utilize internal controls it established under the original VET TEC pilot program, which require certification from both the training provider and the student to verify meaningful employment prior to payment. VBA requires accompanying evidence, such as pay stubs and employment contracts, to further reduce overpayment risk and does not believe any algorithm could improve on this practice.

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Recommendation 3: The Secretary of Veterans Affairs should clearly communicate that participants can use the GI Bill School Feedback Tool to provide ongoing feedback about the VET TEC program. For example, VA could modify the tool by: (1) revising the introductory language to ensure veterans are aware the tool is not exclusive to schools or training providers eligible to receive GI Bill benefits, (2) adding language to clarify which program(s) a veteran is submitting feedback about, or (3) adding a check box for any non-GI Bill program and pilot programs, as well as check boxes for “other” or “unknown” programs.

VA Response: Concur. The new VET TEC Program, enacted with section 212 of public law 118-210, codifies VET TEC in 38 U.S.C. § 3699C, and opens the program to institutions of higher learning. Consequently, to comply with the requirements of 38 U.S.C. § 3698, VBA will update the GI Bill Feedback Tool to include VET TEC as a benefit type from which to collect program participant feedback and, subsequently, publish feedback on the GI Bill Comparison Tool. VBA will also develop and implement an outreach plan to inform VET TEC participants about how to provide feedback.

Target Completion Date: April 1, 2027

Recommendation 4: The Secretary of Veterans Affairs should develop and implement a plan to analyze ongoing feedback it receives from VET TEC participants, including feedback VA receives through the GI Bill School Feedback Tool, to inform program implementation. This analysis could be incorporated into VA’s evaluation of the program.

VA Response: Concur in principle. Once the GI Bill Feedback Tool is updated to add the new VET TEC Program as a benefit type, VBA will be able to analyze that feedback and incorporate it into existing procedures for statutorily required bi-annual compliance surveys and ad hoc targeted risk-based reviews as is currently done for the other education benefit programs. Additionally, VBA will continue to send out participant experience surveys every 6 months to VET TEC students to obtain their feedback on providers and overall program satisfaction with obtaining meaningful employment. While the changes will not be in place to allow feedback to inform initial implementation, participant feedback and the findings of oversight activities will be important drivers for updates to policies, procedures, training, guidance, stakeholder engagement, and compliance activities within the statutory requirements during ongoing administration of the program.

Target Completion Date: April 1, 2027

Accessible Text for: Appendix II: Comments from the Department of Veterans Affairs

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Target Completion Date: April 1, 2027

Appendix III: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact

John D. Sawyer at sawyerj@gao.gov

Staff Acknowledgments

In addition to the contact named above, Meeta Engle (Assistant Director), Christopher Morehouse (Analyst in Charge), Justine Augeri, Edward Bodine, Sarah Hay, and Haley Wall made key contributions to this report. Also contributing to this report were Peter Del Toro, Kirsten Lauber, Jessica Mausner, Jeffrey Miller, Aaron Olszewski, Meg Sommerfeld, Alexandra Squitieri, Curtia Taylor, and Matthew Valenta.

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