

# U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

## Sustainability Report and Implementation Plan

2019



Submitted: September 12, 2019

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
2019 Sustainability Report and Implementation Plan

[Table of Contents](#)

---

Executive Summary .....	1
Implementation Summary: Facility Management.....	2
1. FACILITY ENERGY EFFICIENCY.....	2
2. EFFICIENCY MEASURES, INVESTMENT, AND PERFORMANCE CONTRACTING .....	3
3. RENEWABLE ENERGY .....	4
4. WATER EFFICIENCY .....	5
5. HIGH PERFORMANCE SUSTAINABLE BUILDINGS .....	6
6. WASTE MANAGEMENT AND DIVERSION .....	6
Implementation Summary: Fleet Management.....	7
1. TRANSPORTATION / FLEET MANAGEMENT .....	7
Implementation Summary: Cross-Cutting Operations .....	9
1. SUSTAINABLE ACQUISITION / PROCUREMENT .....	9
2. ELECTRONICS STEWARDSHIP .....	10
3. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS.....	11
Agency Priorities and Highlights .....	11
Agency Identified Priorities .....	11
Notable Projects and Highlights .....	11

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
2019 Sustainability Report and Implementation Plan

## Executive Summary

---

The mission of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is to fulfill President Lincoln’s promise “To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan.” VA provides numerous benefits and services to honor the men and women who are America’s Veterans, including medical care, financial benefits, and memorial services. Sustainability is fundamental to achieving this mission. VA strives to provide healthy, productive, and cost-effective environments for Veterans, staff, and visitors while minimizing any negative impacts of our operations on the communities and environments in which we operate. Cost savings achieved in energy and sustainability efforts are reinvested to better serve Veterans.

VA’s commitment to sustainability is well represented by the agency’s success in winning recognition through the non-profit sustainable healthcare organization, Practice Greenhealth. This year, VA medical centers received seven of the organization’s most prestigious “Top 25” category awards, along with numerous awards in other categories. VA hospitals overall use 44 percent less energy per square foot than the national average for all hospitals<sup>1</sup>.

VA continues to experience unprecedented growth in services being provided to our Nation’s Veterans and beneficiaries. The number of VA employees has grown by 44% since 2008 to 363,362 employees as of FY 2018. VA facilities are located throughout the country to reach Veterans in their communities, with 8,071 buildings in 794 cities, totaling over 177 million square feet. This portfolio encompasses vastly different needs for building operations, from low energy intensity cemetery facilities to acute care hospitals with high energy demand. At the same time, the VA vehicle fleet has grown over 70 percent to 21,500 vehicles performing mission-specific functions such as transporting Veterans to and from appointments.

VA strives to meet sustainability-related targets while providing the highest standard of care. As VA works towards sustainability related goals and mandates, mission requirements continue to evolve. For example, to better serve Veterans, VA is providing healthcare and other services to Veterans in their homes and neighborhoods as well as at VA facilities. Such developments, in addition to the Department’s strict requirements related to infection control in its healthcare facilities, present unique and significant challenges to ongoing efforts to meet sustainability goals. Despite these challenges, VA has made substantial achievements in many sustainability areas.

Through investments in energy improvements and renewable energy, energy use and water use per square foot have each been reduced by about one third (33%) since 2003 and 2007, respectively. In recent years, this progress has been fueled particularly by energy performance contracting, with \$241 million in contracts awarded in FY 2018 alone. VA has certified almost 44% of building square footage as sustainable. This has been made possible by certification of new buildings upon their completion, but also through a sustained effort to certify existing VA buildings. Renewable energy use is over 16 percent, with VA’s renewable energy infrastructure continuing to grow as VA pursues renewable energy within energy performance contracting.

---

<sup>1</sup> National average for General Medical and Surgical Hospitals in EnergyStar Portfolio Manager Technical Reference, “Energy Use Intensity by Property Type,” August 2018.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
2019 Sustainability Report and Implementation Plan

Each year, VA evaluates capital investments through a tool called the Strategic Capital Investment Planning (SCIP) process, which ranks projects based on whether they address various mission needs. When a project addresses a need, it earns points, with higher priority needs conferring more points. Needs in SCIP are expressed as “gaps” that represent a target or goal that must be met. SCIP currently features four sustainability-related gaps: energy efficiency, water efficiency, renewable energy, and sustainable buildings. These gaps are based on mandates for federal agencies in these areas, e.g., 30% reduction in energy intensity compared to a 2003 baseline.

Going forward, VA will continue to pursue efficiency and cost-savings strategies. Key strategies for FYs 2020 and 2021 focus on energy performance contracting, data quality, and assessing energy project opportunities.

- VA continues to identify beneficial energy projects that serve the mission and are responsible with taxpayer dollars while reducing VA’s environmental impact. Improving energy resiliency and reliability, upgrading critical infrastructure, and lowering operating costs increase VA’s ability to serve Veterans. Where possible, VA seeks to employ non-traditional funding for these projects, to include energy sales agreements and energy performance contracting.
- Energy performance contracting has been an innovative way for VA to channel private sector investment into improvements for VA’s energy and water infrastructure. With VA’s awarded portfolio of over \$649 million of energy performance contracts, VA is already addressing infrastructure and building system needs at 60 VA medical centers across the country. This strategy will continue to be a priority with eight planned projects totaling approximately \$160 million in value for FYs 2019 and 2020.
- VA has undertaken comprehensive efforts to improve data quality. In vehicle fleet data, VA has developed training and resources in combination with using a review and tracking process for monitoring and improving data. Between July and September 2018, approximately 30,000 pieces of additional data were entered into VA’s fleet databases. VA has also undertaken extensive efforts for managing energy data, tracking performance contracts in eProject Builder, managing the Department of Energy (DOE) Comprehensive Tracking System (CTS) database, and populating the annual energy report to DOE with rigorously reviewed data. In addition, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is developing and transitioning to a new waste tracking system, which is being customized to meet VA’s needs and is expected to improve waste contract management, tracking, and data entry. VA plans to focus on optimizing these efforts in the coming years to ensure the best quality data for managing facilities and vehicles.

## Implementation Summary: Facility Management

---

### FACILITY ENERGY EFFICIENCY

#### FY18 Energy Intensity Progress (Btu/GSF):

33.3% reduction from FY03

0.9% reduction from FY17

#### FY19-FY20 Plan:

0.5% reduction in FY19 from FY18

0.5% reduction in FY20 from FY19

#### Implementation Status:

VA’s agency-level energy management program supports the site-specific needs of over 170 medical centers, 133 cemeteries, and various regional offices. In VA’s SCIP process, each facility must identify how they plan to meet the energy efficiency target of reducing energy intensity by 30 percent

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
2019 Sustainability Report and Implementation Plan

compared a 2003 baseline. While VA is exceeding the target at the agency level, there remain facilities that have not met it. This process helps ensure continuing improvement overall.

- Performed energy audits and retro-commissioning for 25% of VA covered facilities to inform future energy efficiency measures.
- Implemented new technologies when retrofitting or constructing new facilities to reduce building energy consumption per square foot.
- VA mission has grown as evidenced by continually increasing patient load numbers – since 2007, average patient visits per day have increased more than 40%, from 164,398 to 232,841 in 2018 – and Veteran population continues to shift, requiring reallocation and expansion of services. Despite that, VA has already exceeded the goal of 30% reduction in energy intensity, and continues to improve.
- VA hospitals overall use 40 percent less energy per square foot than the national average for all hospitals. In FY 2018, VA estimates that utility expenses would have been 67 percent higher without VA's efficiency efforts.

#### Priority Strategies & Planned Actions

- VA will perform energy audits and retro-commissioning for 25% of its covered facilities this year.
- Based upon the results of energy audits, VA facilities will submit promising projects into the SCIP process, including plans to pursue energy performance contracts. Facilities will continue development and implementation of projects previously submitted through SCIP.
- VA will continue to ensure that future infrastructure investments are as energy efficient as is economically possible.

### EFFICIENCY MEASURES, INVESTMENT, AND PERFORMANCE CONTRACTING

**FY18 Performance Contracting – Investment value and number of new projects awarded:**

\$241.1 M / 7 projects in FY18

**FY19-FY20 Plan:**

\$60 M / 3 projects in FY19

\$100 M / 5 projects in FY20

#### Implementation Status

VA's centralized energy performance contracting program provides support across VA by upgrading energy and water equipment, modernizing buildings, and making critical infrastructure improvements. Energy performance contracts are incorporated into VA's SCIP process as a component of plans for evaluating facility energy needs and the potential for energy efficiency improvements. In addition, data from VA's facility energy audits are used to identify energy and water conservation measures for inclusion in future energy performance contracts.

- In FY 2018, VA awarded \$241 million in energy performance contracts through 25 contract actions that are expected to generate \$13.5 million of avoided energy and water costs. Additionally, VA is on track to meet its FY 2019 goal of awarding \$60 million.
- With VA's total awarded portfolio of over \$649 million of energy performance contracts, VA is addressing infrastructure and building system needs at 60 VA medical centers across the country. The installed systems and upgrades across 53 million square feet of medical center space are expected to translate into \$1.1 billion of energy and water savings over the life of the contracts, and approximately \$41 million of annual avoided energy and water costs to VA facilities.
- Long paybacks for renewable energy projects remain a challenge within the maximum 25-year contract limit.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
2019 Sustainability Report and Implementation Plan

- VA facility and regional energy managers face the challenge of balancing the priorities of developing energy performance contracts with competing mission requirements. Developing energy performance contracts is a complex process that requires multiple levels of technical, legal, contracting and programmatic review, which in turn creates a lengthy and time-intensive path to award.
- Budgetary, hiring and design standard issues contribute to planning uncertainties and longer development timelines.

#### Priority Strategies & Planned Actions

- VA will continue to pursue efficiency and savings through energy performance contracting at its facilities. VA's planned investment for FY 2019 is \$60 million across three projects, and \$100 million across five projects for FY 2020.
- VA will continue to use energy performance contracting as a tool to aid facilities in addressing facility condition assessment deficiencies, deferred maintenance issues, and infrastructure upgrades to mission critical building and energy systems.

## RENEWABLE ENERGY

### FY18 Renewable Electricity Use:

16.2% of total electricity in FY18

### FY19-FY20 Plan:

16.5% of total electricity in FY19

17% of total electricity in FY20

### Implementation Status

VA's agency-level renewable energy program supports the site-specific needs of over 170 medical centers, 133 cemeteries, and various regional offices. In VA's SCIP process, each region must identify how it plans to meet the renewable energy target of 7.5% renewable energy consumption with on-site renewable energy projects. While VA is exceeding this target at the agency level, there remain regions that have not met it. This process helps ensure continuing improvement overall.

- VA integrates renewable energy generation and consumption, including purchase of renewable energy certificates (RECs), into its overall sustainability strategy. In FY 2018, 59% of VA renewable energy was generated from on-site renewable energy systems and 41% was from renewable energy credits.
- In FY 2018, VA completed installation of 4 MW of on-site solar PV panels. In total, VA has installed over 100 MW of on-site solar PV systems.
- Regulations surrounding renewable energy projects, such as standby tariffs and reserve charges, challenge VA's ability to implement lifecycle cost effective on-site renewable energy projects.

#### Priority Strategies & Planned Actions

- Integrate on-site renewable energy generation into new construction where economically feasible.
- Pursue potential renewable energy power purchase agreements (PPAs) in markets where shorter term agreements (five years or fewer) are economically viable, pending legislative authority that is needed for VA and most other federal agencies to enter into longer-term agreements. PPAs allow federal customers to purchase energy at stable, below market rates from third party developer projects that may or may not be located on federal property. In

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
2019 Sustainability Report and Implementation Plan

addition to budgeting advantages, PPAs would help VA mitigate energy project risk arising from the frequent need to modify structures on VA campuses to meet mission needs. Additionally, as VA's on-site renewable generation assets age and become less efficient, PPAs would allow VA to replace lost generation without upfront investment.

- Pursue energy sales agreements for renewable energy within energy performance contracts where technically and economically viable. These are similar to PPAs, but the generating asset must be on agency property. Currently, several potential ESAs are being evaluated as part of energy performance projects in development.
- Investigate renewable energy and energy storage systems as part of facility energy audits and current and future energy performance contracts.
- Perform a comprehensive review of VA's renewable assets to assess performance and address deficiencies.
- Participate in a performance assessment with DOE's Federal Energy Management Program (FEMP) and the national labs to identify areas for performance improvement of renewable generating assets.

## WATER EFFICIENCY

### FY18 Water Intensity Progress (Gal/GSF):

34.3% reduction from FY07

0.1% reduction from FY17

### FY19-FY20 Plan:

0.1% reduction in FY19 from FY18

0.1% reduction in FY20 from FY 19

### Implementation Status

VA's agency-level water efficiency program supports the site-specific needs of over 170 medical centers, 133 cemeteries, and various regional offices. In VA's SCIP process, each facility must identify how it plans to meet the water efficiency target of 20% reduction in water use intensity compared to a 2007 baseline. While VA is exceeding this target at the agency level, there remain facilities that have not met it. The SCIP process helps ensure continuing improvement overall.

- VA evaluates water efficiency as part of its facility energy audits and has installed water efficient technologies at sites and facilities across the Department.
- Eleven percent of projected cost avoidance from VA's awarded energy performance contracting portfolio is attributable to water efficiency improvements.
- VA national cemeteries engage in efforts to minimize the use of irrigation water, including web-based irrigation controllers and advanced sensors to control the amount of water used.
- Installing water reclamation technology while simultaneously meeting healthcare sanitation standards remains a challenge in healthcare facilities, as patient health and safety takes precedence. In addition, VA conducts regular flushing of hot- and cold-water pipes and fixtures to prevent the growth of dangerous bacteria such as Legionella.

### Priority Strategies & Planned Actions

- Continue to evaluate water efficiency improvements as part of facility energy audits and performance contracts, including water balancing analyses to help identify savings opportunities.
- Install water efficient technologies at sites and facilities, particularly within energy performance contracts. Virtually all of VA's performance contracts in development explore potential water efficiency measures. Measures commonly considered include fixture upgrades, cooling tower

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
2019 Sustainability Report and Implementation Plan

upgrades and other chiller plant improvements, and repairing leaks in chilled water, hot water and steam distribution systems.

## HIGH PERFORMANCE SUSTAINABLE BUILDINGS

### FY18 Sustainable Buildings Progress:

677 sustainable Federal buildings  
35.3% of buildings / 43.8% of gross square footage (GSF)

### FY19-FY20 Plan:

35.4% of GSF or buildings in FY19  
35.5% of GSF or buildings in FY20

### Implementation Status

VA's agency-level sustainable buildings program supports the pursuit of sustainability in new construction, renovation, and among VA's existing building inventory. In VA's SCIP process, each medical campus/organization must identify how it plans to meet the target of achieving sustainability for 15% of their buildings. Buildings may be internally self-certified via a centrally controlled process or certified via a third party. While VA is exceeding this target at the agency level, there remain medical campuses that have not met it. The SCIP process helps ensure continuing improvement overall.

- VA requires all new construction to meet the Guiding Principles for Sustainable Federal Buildings and has made extensive efforts to certify existing buildings, with outstanding results.
- Due to the extensive certification of buildings VA has already completed, limited opportunities remain.
- Building on past success, VA has made online and other resources available, so VA staff can pursue internal certification rather than third-party certification.
- The VA Acquisition Academy's Facilities Management School administers a Sustainability Facility Professional (SFP®) Certificate program focusing on three areas: strategy and alignment for sustainable facility management; managing sustainable facilities; and operating sustainable facilities. The school earned a 2018 internal award for "Fostering Sustainable Facilities through Training," including the SFP® and other courses on energy and water management.

### Priority Strategies & Planned Actions

- VA will continue to require the Guiding Principles for all new construction, encourage certification for existing buildings, and seek out new candidates for certification.
- VA anticipates certifying several existing buildings over the next year. VA plans to pursue EnergyStar certification for all eligible buildings.

## WASTE MANAGEMENT AND DIVERSION

### FY18 Non-hazardous Waste Management and Diversion:

139,740.9 metric tons of non-hazardous solid waste generated\*  
65.2% sent to treatment and disposal facilities

\*not including construction and demolition waste

### Implementation Status

VA's agency-level waste management program supports the efforts of VA organizations to reduce, reuse, and recycle materials and waste and to maintain lifecycle cost-effective waste prevention and recycling programs.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
2019 Sustainability Report and Implementation Plan

- In FY 2018, VA generated an estimated 139,740.9 metric tons of non-hazardous solid waste, diverted 34.8% of non-hazardous solid waste, and diverted 65.5% of construction and demolition materials and debris. VA did not collect aggregated agency-level data specifically regarding percentage and amount of non-hazardous solid waste sent to treatment and disposal facilities.<sup>2</sup>
- In calendar year (CY) 2018, VA medical centers ended their use of the Practice Greenhealth Tracker, a waste tracking tool. CY 2019 is a year of transition, as VHA is developing and transitioning to a new waste tracking system, which is being customized to meet VA's needs.
- VHA issued a recycling program guide to assist VA medical facilities in establishing and maintaining cost effective recycling programs that comply with applicable laws, regulations, and internal policies and procedures. This document also provides guidance on source reduction measures and sustainable acquisition.
- VA medical centers around the country earned numerous prestigious public and private sector awards for outstanding and innovative achievements in pollution prevention and waste reduction. Programs that recognized VA medical centers include EPA's Federal Green Challenge Awards and Practice Greenhealth's Environmental Excellence Awards, along with a robust VA internal sustainability awards program. VA's internal publication, *Green Purchasing News*, featured several award-winning projects.

#### Priority Strategies & Planned Actions

- VHA's new waste tracking system was piloted in one region, and the lessons learned were used to make incremental improvements to the tracker system and as well to the training program. The new VHA Waste Tracker and training have been rolled out region by region. The new system is expected to improve waste contract management, tracking, and data entry beginning in FY 2020. Additional training will be delivered throughout the year. All VHA facilities will be required to enter their waste data in the system.
- VA plans to conduct training on options for sustainable management of food waste and operating room waste.

## Implementation Summary: Fleet Management

---

### TRANSPORTATION / FLEET MANAGEMENT

#### FY18 Petroleum Reduction Progress (Gal):

- 1.8% increase in petroleum fuel since 2005
- 12.9% increase in petroleum fuel since FY17

#### FY19-FY20 Plan:

- 0% increase in FY19 from FY18
- 0% increase in FY20 from FY19

#### Implementation Status

VA's agency-level fleet management program supports fleet managers throughout VA in acquiring, using and disposing of their fleet vehicles efficiently and effectively. VA is addressing the challenges posed by a growing mission with additional vehicle needs through acquisition of alternative fuel vehicles (AFVs) and fleet manager training.

---

<sup>2</sup> The 65.2% for treatment and disposal is a rough estimate based on the following assumptions: 1) metric tons (MT) of non-hazardous solid waste generated – MT of waste diverted = MT of waste sent to treatment and disposal facilities; and 2) % of waste sent to treatment and disposal facilities = 100% -- % of waste diverted.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
2019 Sustainability Report and Implementation Plan

- VA's FY 2018 increase in petroleum use is attributable to improved fuel data reporting.
- VA's use of alternative fuels has been increasing since 2005 and stands at 10.7% of fleet fuel use.
- VA fleets continue to acquire electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles when appropriate and pursue installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
- Fleet managers are provided with centralized training and support.
- VA has integrated the acquisition of AFVs into its overall sustainability strategy. In FY 2018, VA met the Energy Policy Act standard of 75% for procurement of alternative fuel and low greenhouse gas (GHG) vehicles. This included acquiring 855 E-85 flexfuel vehicles, 695 hybrids, 39 plug-in hybrids, and 3 all-electric vehicles.
- The VA fleet has grown over 70% since 2008 to help fulfill VA's expanding mission to provide world-class care and services to our Nation's Veterans. These vehicles help VA deliver healthcare and other services to Veterans at home and in their communities, as well as transporting them to and from appointments, and facilitating other services. VA's fleet priority is to execute these tasks for the mission despite the increase in miles driven. Sustainability efforts are centered around acquiring low GHG and alternative fuel vehicles. Proposed acquisitions of light-duty and medium-duty passenger vehicles that are not low GHG require documentation demonstrating the mission need.
- To continue "right-sizing" vehicles, VA implemented a new and improved vehicle allocation methodology (VAM) tool to assist with acquisition choices. This tool calculates the most efficient vehicle type to meet the mission based on the planned usage of the vehicle.
- Virtually every medical center fleet includes a number of donated vehicles. These donations represent up to ten percent of the owned fleet nationwide. Donated vehicles are almost never AFVs or low GHG emitting vehicles. Under Title 38 United States Code (U.S.C.) sections 8301 to 8305, VA has the authority to accept gifts, which includes gifts of vehicles. While VA policy encourages donations of more efficient vehicles, VA accepts vehicle donations, regardless of condition or type, and does so on an ongoing basis.

#### Priority Strategies & Planned Actions

- A comprehensive online training program for VA fleet managers is being rolled out, including webinar and video components.
- VA will continue to ensure that the most efficient type of vehicle is acquired for a given function by using the VAM tool. The use of this tool is mandatory for every new vehicle acquisition.
- Between July and September 2018, more than 30,000 pieces of data were updated to the VA fleet management information system. In FY 2019, tracking of fleet data compliance will expand to focus more on vehicle utilization and expenses, with reviews of progress at the regional level. This will improve VA tracking of vehicle inventory, use, and cost, to improve decision-making and oversight.
- Purchase alternative fuel and acquire electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles as appropriate, and install electric vehicle charging infrastructure

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
2019 Sustainability Report and Implementation Plan

## Implementation Summary: Cross-Cutting Operations

---

### SUSTAINABLE ACQUISITION / PROCUREMENT

#### FY18 Sustainable Acquisition Progress:

0.17% of contract actions and 4.42% of obligations (in dollars), for a total of \$1190.3M in contract actions with statutory environmental requirements<sup>3</sup>

#### Implementation Status

VA's agency-level green purchasing program supports VA organizations' efforts to procure environmentally preferable goods and services. Training and outreach are key VA strategies to promote performance in this area.

- VA continued to issue *Green Purchasing News*, a quarterly electronic newsletter for the VA acquisition community and others involved in the VA procurement process. The newsletter has featured green purchasing success stories, new mandates (e.g., EO 13834), reporting reminders (e.g., biobased reporting by federal contractors through the System for Award Management), and articles encouraging increased procurement of green products and services.
- VA issued an Acquisition Policy Flash on EO 13834 in August 2018. The Flash features the EO's acquisition and other statutorily-based policy goals.
- Provided green purchasing trainings to VHA procurement analysts and environmental managers.
- Recognized successes in green purchasing and other sustainability efforts through an internal awards program and encouraged participation in external awards programs recognizing achievements in procuring products such as those containing recycled content, biobased content, energy- and water-efficient products, and sustainable electronics.
- Issued an award-winning market research guide for acquisition teams that includes a comprehensive section on sustainable acquisition resources.

#### Priority Strategies & Planned Actions

- Conduct training and outreach, e.g., via comprehensive green purchasing program website.
- Use insights and analyses from the interagency Sustainable Acquisition and Materials Management (SAMM) working group to help inform internal policies and improve data quality.
- VA's biobased purchasing targets for FY 2020 are 698 contract actions and \$113,468,713.38 (i.e., estimated total dollar value of the 698 contract actions). (Targets are based on data obtained from FPDS-NG Sustainability Reports).
- Recognize success in green purchasing and other sustainability efforts through an internal awards program.

---

<sup>3</sup> Per data from the FY2018 FPDS-NG Sustainability Report, 0.17% is "% Total Actual Actions" (i.e., number of sustainable actions/number of virtually all actions), 4.42% is "% Total Actual Dollars" (i.e., \$value of sustainable actions/\$value of virtually all actions), and \$1190.3M is "Total Actual Dollars" (i.e., total dollar value of actions with sustainable acquisition clauses). This data includes contract actions with statutory environmental and/or environmentally preferable requirements.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
2019 Sustainability Report and Implementation Plan

## ELECTRONICS STEWARDSHIP

### FY18 Electronics Stewardship Progress:<sup>4</sup>

- 100% of newly purchased or leased equipment met energy efficiency requirements
- 91% of equipment with power management enabled\*
- 100% of electronic equipment disposed using environmentally sound methods

\*excluding exempted equipment

### Implementation Status

In managing the Department's electronic assets, VA's policy is to buy Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT) registered electronic products, enable the Energy Star features on agency computers and monitors, and use environmentally sound practices with respect to the disposition of electronic equipment that has reached the end of its useful life. Buying EPEAT helps ensure that VA is meeting current statutory and regulatory requirements for purchasing energy-efficient and EPEAT products, e.g., Section 104 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, and Subpart 23.704 of the Federal Acquisition Regulation.

- Among other options, VA utilizes a memorandum of understanding with UNICOR to recycle used electronics.
- The Fall 2018 issue of *Green Purchasing News* recognized VA's achievement in procuring and using EPEAT-registered electronic products. This was VA's fourth consecutive win of an agency-level EPEAT Purchaser Award for excellence in green procurement of electronics. Other articles announced the launch of the new "Server" and "Mobile Phones" product categories in the EPEAT registry; learning about these products is a key step in helping VA meet current energy efficiency and EPEAT product procurement requirements.
- Three VA organizations won 2019 EPEAT Purchaser Awards for excellence in procurement of sustainable electronics.
- VA's Technology Acquisition Center received an internal Department-level Sustainability Award for its efforts in ensuring that the electronics purchased across the enterprise meet federal sustainability mandates.

### Priority Strategies & Planned Actions

- Utilize UNICOR to recycle VA end-of-life electronics.
- Use insights and analyses from the interagency Federal Electronics Stewardship Working Group (FESWG) to help inform internal policies and improve data quality.
- Conduct internal outreach efforts on electronics stewardship.

---

<sup>4</sup> Data is as reported February 2019 in MAX Integrated Data Collection, i.e., 100% "of Equipment Purchased Meeting EPEAT-Registry Standard," and 91% "of Eligible/Non-Exempt Laptops, Desktops, and Monitors with Power Management Enabled." Per EPA website, all Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT)-registered products are required to meet the ENERGY STAR technical specifications for that product. 100% of end-of-life electronic assets managed in an environmentally sound manner.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
2019 Sustainability Report and Implementation Plan

## GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

### FY18 Scope 1&2 Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions:

17.2% reduction from FY 2008

8.1% reduction from FY 2017

### Implementation Status

Since conducting its initial inventory of GHG emissions, VA has focused primarily on investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy to reduce GHG emissions, along with acquisition of alternative fuel vehicles and related fueling infrastructure.

- Since FY 2008, VA has seen a significant increase in patient visits (41 percent) and demand for benefit services. To meet these expanding mission needs, VA hired additional employees (44 percent growth), expanded its building footprint by 30 percent, and grew its vehicle fleet by 72 percent, improving the quality of service that VA provides to Veterans and their families. Thanks to VA's proactive energy, water and fleet management efforts, however, VA has reduced its emissions over the same period.
- Through VA's focused sustainability programs, VA continues building efficiency upgrades, energy investments, and employee awareness and education campaigns to achieve both energy intensity and GHG emissions reductions despite the challenges of a growing agency and mission.

### Priority Strategies & Planned Actions

- VA will continue building efficiency upgrades and energy investments, particularly with energy performance contracts, as well as employee awareness campaigns.
- VA will continue to acquire AFVs and low GHG-emitting vehicles that meet mission needs.
- Fleet managers will continue to use DOE's FleetDash tool to improve their fleet's performance in fueling dual-fuel vehicles with alternative fuels.

## Agency Priorities and Highlights

---

### AGENCY IDENTIFIED PRIORITIES

VA is always focused on the mission of serving Veterans. VA's efforts in energy performance contracting are a path to improve facility energy and water infrastructure to better serve Veterans, as well as reduce energy use and provide guaranteed annual savings. VA's Energy Management Program is also actively working to improve energy and fleet data quality through rigorous review processes and training. Finally, VA continues to assess energy project opportunities, seeking those that are beneficial to the VA mission, are cost-effective, and incorporate innovative financing strategies such as energy performance contracting.

### NOTABLE PROJECTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

- Every year, the VA Energy Management Program recognizes projects with contributions to sustainability. This year's winners include individuals in a wide variety of positions, from food services to engineering, with projects reducing water use, saving energy, reducing waste, and more.
- In 2019, for the fifth year in a row, one or more VA organizations won EPEAT Purchaser Awards for sustainable electronics purchasing. The Green Electronics Council recognized two VA organizations for their purchases in four of the five EPEAT product categories: computers and displays, imaging equipment, televisions, servers, and/or mobile phones. The Council also recognized a third VA organization for its purchases in one of the five product categories.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
2019 Sustainability Report and Implementation Plan

- VA has successfully incorporated renewable energy and combined heat and power (CHP) systems into several of its energy performance contracts. For example, a solar hot water system became operational in October 2018 as part of an energy savings performance contract and is now supplementing the facility's existing steam to hot water converter with over 1,000 gallons of storage.
- VA continues construction work on CHP projects at the VA medical centers in Albany, NY, Fayetteville, NC, and Asheville, NC. In addition, VA completed a CHP system at the Cheyenne VA Medical Center that is expected to generate over 8,000,000 kWh annually and provide greater efficiency and resiliency for the facility.
- 125 VAMCs/VHA regions won 165 of a total of 549 Practice Greenhealth 2019 Environmental Excellence Awards, including seven of the Top 25 Awards (exemplifying the highest standards for environmental sustainability practices in health care), 23 Circles of Excellence Awards, and 20 Emerald Awards. Winning these awards demonstrates VHA's strong commitment to sustainability.
- 95 VA medical centers qualified for an Energy Star label under the EnergyStar Portfolio Manager program.