

# Support to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has a unique and noble mission in providing high-quality programs and services to the nation's 26 million veterans and their families. Approximately one-quarter of the country's population is eligible to receive multifaceted VA services—from vocational rehabilitation, education, and loan guaranty, to compensation, pension, and comprehensive healthcare.

Given the scale and complexity of VA activities, challenges continually emerge for developing, implementing, and measuring the impact of programs and services. Over the past 8 years, ICF has worked with VA to evaluate programs, develop performance measures, assess awareness of benefits, investigate veteran satisfaction, and identify improvement strategies to ensure VA services and programs are delivered effectively.

## Our Approach

ICF has more than 20 years of experience conducting applied research and evaluation projects for federal departments. Our senior staff members hold Ph.D. or master's degrees in a variety of social and behavioral sciences, such as psychology, economics, sociology, and public policy. We have completed more than 20 projects for VA's three business lines— Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), National Cemetery Administration (NCA), and Veterans Health Administration—and for VA's Central Office. Today, VA and ICF continue to collaborate on additional projects that are helping VA to fulfill its mission.

## Featured Solutions

*VA Loan Guaranty Surveys.* To support VBA's ongoing assessment of the Loan Guaranty program, ICF conducted a satisfaction survey of lenders and veterans who participated in the program, as well as veterans who received grants as part of the Specially Adapted Housing program. The reports generated from these surveys summarized the data, displayed findings on key performance measures, and provided recommendations for program improvement.

*NCA Customer Satisfaction Survey.* Since 2001, ICF staff has conducted annual surveys of next of kin and funeral directors who recently had used national cemeteries. ICF provides key national, regional, and cemetery-specific findings in user-friendly reports.

*Analysis of Work Process Changes.* Using an Internet-based survey of VBA staff, ICF staff helped VBA identify changes in the agency's process of rating disability claims and differences in processes among VA regional offices. VBA is using the findings to determine ways to increase productivity and decrease inconsistencies in the rating process.

*VA Ambulatory Care User Focus Groups.* ICF staff conducted 30 focus groups with veterans who recently used outpatient services across 10 VA facilities. The study assessed veterans' experiences against 10 veterans' health service standards to develop recommendations to facilitate service improvement.



### Our core services include:

- Survey Research (Web, paper, and telephone surveys)
- Program Evaluation Services (process, outcome, and impact evaluations)
- Performance Measurement
- Applied Statistics and Psychometrics
- Job Analyses
- Return on Investment Analyses
- Benchmarking
- Researching and Developing Business Cases for Change
- Implementation of the Government Performance Results Act
- Organizational Assessment and Development
- Healthcare Studies
- Efficiency Analyses

## Featured Solutions (cont.)

### *Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Benefits Program.*

Since 1999, ICF staff has conducted annual surveys to identify specific areas of the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program that are most and least satisfying to veterans. Reports present veteran satisfaction with the program at both the national and VBA Service Delivery Network levels.

*VA Burial Benefits Program Evaluation.* ICF staff conducted an independent evaluation of the VA Burial Benefits Program. The goals of the evaluation were to determine whether the program was achieving expected outcomes and to assess program impacts on veterans and family members.

*VA Prosthetics User Focus Groups.* ICF staff conducted focus groups at five VA medical centers with wheelchair users, veterans with artificial limbs, and users of home oxygen units to gather information on their experiences with VA's Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Services Division. ICF prepared site visit reports and briefed the Director of Prosthetic Services on key findings of the study.

*VA Employee Survey.* A mixed methodology survey captured feedback from more than 83,000 VA employees on key personnel issues, such as rewards and recognition, customer service, teamwork, diversity, training and development, and supervision. The results informed VA facility and regional and national human resources activities.

## Additional Services

*Housing and Homelessness.* ICF works nationwide with public and private organizations that provide affordable housing and address homelessness. We offer a thorough and practical understanding of government programs and their intersection with private market lending and project development. Recently, ICF worked with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to create technical assistance materials for homelessness service providers to help them promote client employment and self-sufficiency.

*Workers' Compensation Claims Adjudication.* ICF helps workers' compensation programs enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of their claims adjudication processes. The U.S. Department of Labor has engaged ICF to benchmark performance and recommend process improvements for its Black Lung Program and Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program.

*Healthcare Communications.* ICF applies skills, expertise, and organizational capacity to helping clients develop and deliver successful social marketing campaigns designed to overcome attitudinal and information barriers to behavior change. We have deep experience combining the findings of behavioral research with social marketing initiatives to advance the health and well-being of individuals. We excel at translating complex health topics into communications products that focus on the right message, reach the right audience, and leverage the right strategy.

ICF's services can be accessed quickly through a number of contract vehicles. VA has established a Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) to meet its needs for empirically sound, timely survey research and program evaluation studies. The VA BPA contract number and other contract vehicles that can be used to access ICF services are:

- VA BPA: 101-049A3F-035
- GSA Mission-Oriented Business Integration Services: GS-23F-8062H
- HHS Program Support Center: 233-02-0094

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## About ICF International

ICF International (NASDAQ: ICFI) partners with government and commercial clients to deliver consulting services and technology solutions in the energy, climate change, environment, transportation, social programs, health, defense, and emergency management markets. The firm combines passion for its work with industry expertise and innovative analytics to produce compelling results throughout the entire program life cycle, from analysis and design through implementation and improvement. Since 1969, ICF has been serving government at all levels, major corporations, and multilateral institutions. More than 2,500 employees serve these clients worldwide. ICF's Web site is [www.icfi.com](http://www.icfi.com).

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