

[Reforming End-User Operations is a VA IT Focus](#)

Provisioning and deployment of support are initiatives VA hopes to influence reform in other agencies.

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The Department of Veterans Affairs is focusing on broad-scale renovation of its deployment capacities, according to Executive Director of End-User Operations Dewaine Beard.

Following 23 years of service to the VA, Beard was officially appointed director of the 3,500-person team responsible for requisitions and deployment of end-user technology in April 2019. Beard outlined to GovernmentCIO Media & Research the agency's renewed focus on deployment-as-a service-capacities — especially as a foundation for supporting the agency's modernization initiatives.

As a companion to the upper-level technical advances occurring throughout the VA's Office of Information Technology, end-user operations are focused on ensuring VA employees are equipped with the best utilities for managing veterans care. The VA's ongoing attention to [fine-tuning its service lines](#) has necessitated corresponding reform to end-user deployment, an approach Beard summarized as being "focused on delivering a more consistent experience for our users."

This has centered largely on increasing the speed and efficacy of the end-user deployment process, with Beard noting that "automation is one of our key areas of focus."

As the VA has debuted more technically sophisticated means for improving veterans care, end-user ops has been tasked with ensuring the tablets and computers deployed to VA service centers are capable of fully supporting new applications and data integration. This has included a particular focus on the speed of setup and deployment, Beard explained.

The VA is currently working with major vendor partners on ensuring provisioning-as-a-service capacities are up to industry standard. These new process reforms have been ongoing since the start of 2019 and will be supported going forward by a newly finished VA request for information on provisioning that will be released in the first quarter of 2020.

In tandem with its broader role as a staging ground for IT innovation in the federal space, the VA is well positioned to test breaking methodologies in end-user deployment. While the Department of Labor has tested similar end-user deployment reforms, Beard pointed out that the VA has the institutional scale to explore how new deployment methods are managed within larger organizations.

The ultimate goal is to motivate end-user deployment reforms across the entire federal space.

“What we learn, we freely share with other agencies,” Beard said.

There are already signs that this new focus on rapid-deployment end-user ops is proving successful. Beard highlighted a promising case at a VA regional office in St. Petersburg, Florida, where, to accommodate 400 newly hired examiners, the agency provisioned and deployed laptops for incoming staff on the first day. This level of responsive efficiency is at the core of the agency’s end-user ops, Beard said, adding that “my mantra is ready day one.”

Ultimately, the VA’s reform of its end-user ops is a foundational component of its broader modernization push. Despite the technical complexities inherent in capacities like big data analytics, Beard endeavors to ensure the agency delivers the best experience possible for veterans who turn to the VA for benefits and care. No matter the intricacies of federal IT, the essential mission remains veteran-focused, Beard said.

“The end-user experience should be seamless and engaged — we shield our customers from the complexities behind the scenes,” he added.

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