



House Strategies Group
FEDERAL COMPENSATION & WORKFORCE ANALYTICS

USER & OPERATIONS MANUAL · V1.0 · JUNE 2026

VHA Enterprise Compensation Platform

The working Task-4 solution for the VHA Salary Survey program — survey distribution and collection, publisher participation, benchmarking and locality analytics, pay determination, and audit-ready governance. This manual covers every role that touches the platform.

vha-salary-survey.housestrategiesgroup.com

Program

VHA Salary Survey
Solicitation 36C77626Q0191

Team

Riley McGuire Partners (SDVOSB)
+ House Strategies Group (8(a))

Audience

HSG · RMP · VA OCHCO ·
Facility Coordinators · PCAC

What's in this manual

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- 04 Program Manager (RMP)** — participation operations + the optional §7451 campaign
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CHAPTER 01

Orientation

Two front doors. The **portal** (vha-salary-survey.housestrategiesgroup.com) is the public, evaluator-facing site — the proposal content, methodology, team, and deliverables. The **platform** (vha-salary-survey.housestrategiesgroup.com/platform) is the working product this manual covers: the tools the program team and the VA would operate during performance. The portal links into the platform with one button — “Operate the platform.”

The six roles

**Platform Administrator — HSG**

Owns and operates the platform: the distribution campaign, user provisioning, the cloud data store, security posture, and the audit trail.

**Program Manager — RMP**

Runs the program: publisher participation (the contracted submission), the optional conduct-§7451 campaign, IMPS and deliverables, survey sourcing, jobs and reporting. Does not set pay.

**VA HR Specialist — OCHCO**

The compensation analyst: benchmarking, geographic differentials, pay equity, job architecture, and defensible pay determinations in the Pay Workbench.

**Facility Survey Coordinator — VAMC**

One facility's coordinator of record: receives a tokenized invitation, completes the five-section §7451 instrument, and certifies it (~33 minutes).

**VA Observer — PCAC / COR**

Read-only oversight of the whole program: status boards, analytics, audit, and exports. Sees everything; changes nothing.



Guest — public demonstration

No sign-in required. Explores every module with interactive changes sandboxed to the browser. The portal's evaluators land here.

Signing in

Visit vha-salary-survey.housestrategiesgroup.com/platform/login. Guests can explore everything without signing in (changes stay in the browser sandbox). Signing in switches the platform to **server mode**: your view narrows to exactly your role's modules, and every write persists to the cloud store and the audit trail. Demonstration credentials (also shown on the login page):

Platform Administrator (HSG)

admin@hsg.gov

AdminDemo2026

Full console incl. Cloud & data

Program Manager (RMP)

pm@rmp.com

PmDemo2026

Campaign + program operations

VA HR Specialist (OCHCO)

hr@va.gov

HrDemo2026

Analytics + Pay Workbench

Facility Coordinator

coord@va.gov

CoordDemo2026

James A. Haley VH (673) only

VA Observer (read-only)

observer@va.gov

ObserveDemo2026

Everything, read-only

Role-tailored navigation

The sidebar shows each role *only* its modules — a coordinator sees two, the HR specialist twelve. If a URL outside your role is opened directly, the platform shows “Outside the <role> view” and offers your home screen. The full map is in Chapter 08.

CHAPTER 02

The ten-minute demo

The golden path — it opens with the optional conduct-\$7451 campaign (the live theater no narrative can match), then analytics, pay setting, the contracted participation flow (the PWS-baseline submission), and governance. Run it exactly as written for any audience.

- 1 Sign in as the Administrator** (admin@hsg.gov) → Admin Console. The **Campaign** tab (the optional conduct-\$7451 model — the PWS-baseline submission is step 7) shows the live FY2026 board: 16 facilities, response rate, overdue flags. Point out the “Live — cloud store” badge: this is server state, not a mock.
- 2 Add yourself as a coordinator** — “Add coordinator,” your real email, any facility name. Click **Invite** on your row: a real tokenized invitation arrives in your inbox. (Seeded @va.gov rows simulate the send — deliberately,

to protect deliverability.)

- 3 **Open the email and click the button.** You arrive at the §7451 instrument *already signed in as that facility's coordinator*, facility fields prefilled, with the green "Invitation verified" banner. Walk one section, then jump to section 5 and **Certify & submit**.
- 4 **Return to the Admin board** — your row has flipped to **Certified**, and the Audit Log tab shows the chain: invited → opened → submitted → certified, each timestamped.
- 5 **Switch to the HR Specialist** (`hr@va.gov`) → **Pay Workbench**. Pick Registered Nurse at San Francisco VAMC: the localized range computes live from real BLS data (compa-ratio ~0.5 — the locality gap §7451 exists to fix). **Save determination** → it lands in the audit trail.
- 6 **Show Benchmarking, Shortage × Pay, and Pay Equity** — real OEWS percentiles, the OIG shortage cross, the AI disparity flags with the threshold slider.
- 7 **The contracted flow: VA Data Intake** → load the sample VA extract (Subtask 2.1, Government-furnished) and watch it summarize; **run the classification QA screen** — rules flag the records that look wrong and route them to the named desks (CJE · physician-comp SME · data ops); open a flag, run the **AI proposal**, exclude the record — then generate the publisher submissions and watch the excluded record disappear from the file. The AI never decides; it sorts and drafts. This is the submission the contract pays for (Subtasks 2.2/2.3) — participant pricing is earned here.
- 8 **Close on Audit & Lineage** — publish a catalog version; every action of the last ten minutes is in the immutable log. "Every number traces to its source — that's the product."

If you only have two minutes

Steps 2–4 alone — invite yourself, certify, watch the board flip — demonstrate what no narrative response can: the distribution engine is real.

CHAPTER 03

Platform Administrator — HSG

The administrator owns the platform: the campaign, access, the cloud store, and governance.

Home: `/platform/admin` (five tabs).

Campaign tab — the conduct-§7451 runbook (optional capability)

- 1 **Build the roster.** The board lists every facility's coordinator of record, station-bound. **Add coordinator** for new facilities (name, email, facility, station, metro, due date). Rows persist to the cloud store and seed the cycle.
- 2 **Invite.** Per-row **Invite** sends a tokenized, single-use, 14-day link that signs the recipient in as that facility's coordinator — no password. **Copy link** generates the same token for manual delivery (or to try the coordinator flow yourself).
- 3 **Monitor.** Statuses move automatically: *invited* → *in progress* (link opened) → *certified* (instrument certified). *Overdue* computes from the due date. Filter by status, VISN, or search.
- 4 **Chase.** Select rows → **Invite / remind** runs the cadence (invite for not-started/overdue; reminder otherwise — the board tracks "reminded ×n"). Escalations and every send are audit-logged.
- 5 **Close the cycle.** Certified rows carry their submission ID. The Live Submissions panel streams §7451 filings; QA returns flow through the revisions status.

Deliverability guard — read before demos

Seeded rows use illustrative `@va.gov` addresses; the engine **simulates** their sends (full lifecycle, no email transmitted) so the program domain never bounces. Real addresses get real email through **SendGrid** (HSG's email platform), sent as "VHA Salary Survey Program" from the verified HSG sender. To change the from-address, update the `SENDGRID_FROM_EMAIL` environment variable — the address must be verified in SendGrid.

The other four tabs

Tab	What you do there
Roles & Access	The five production roles with scopes and permissions — the provisioning reference (least privilege, deny by default).
Security	The NIST-aligned control map for the collection flow: PIV/CAC SSO (at award), tokenized invitations, CUI minimization, TLS/AES-256, single-tenant enclave, immutable audit.
Audit Log	The tamper-evident event feed — every view, send, submission, certification, and export with actor, role, timestamp.
Cloud & data	Admin-only: the live S3 survey store (read-only browse) and the password-gated file ingest (presigned PUT → object appears in the store).

Admin extras: **Jobs** (trigger/watch pipeline runs), **System Status** (live health + store reachability), **API Reference** (try-it console), and the campaign **reset** action (restores the seeded demo roster; admin only).

CHAPTER 04

Program Manager — RMP

RMP runs the operation: publisher participation (the contracted submission), the survey-purchase calendar, the schedule and reporting — plus the optional conduct-\$7451 campaign if the VA elects it. The PM sees twelve modules — operations, not pay-setting.

Your week in the platform

- 1 Participation first** (`/platform/participation`): the FY submission calendar and each publisher's outbound file — generate, QA, and transmit on window. This is the work the contract pays for (Subtask 2.3), and what earns participant pricing.
- 2 VA Data Intake** (`/platform/data-intake`): confirm the annual VA-furnished extract is complete (Subtask 2.1), run the **classification QA screen** (flags route to the CJE, physician-comp, and data-ops desks; AI drafts proposals; humans disposition), and watch the repaired file become each publisher's de-identified submission.
- 3 Program / IMPS** (`/platform/program`): the Gantt, WBS, deliverable tracker, and monthly-report queue — Tasks 1, 6, 7 live here.
- 4 Survey Library** (`/platform/survey-sources`): the ~50-product library with license terms and vintages, served live from the cloud store — your sourcing and renewal calendar.
- 5 Campaign — if conducting** (`/platform/admin` → Campaign): the optional conduct-\$7451 cadence (invite/remind/escalate) exactly as the runbook above — the cockpit if the VA elects locally administered facility surveys.

- 6 **Jobs & Status:** watch ingest/processing runs; confirm the store is healthy before reporting. **Audit** backs the monthly report's activity narrative.

What the PM cannot do — by design

No pay determinations, no catalog publishing, no platform configuration. The separation is deliberate (and visible to the VA): operations and pay-setting are different hands.

CHAPTER 05

VA HR Specialist — OCHCO

The analyst's twelve modules cover the full determination cycle: market data in, defensible pay out.

- 1 **Benchmarking:** occupation percentiles (P10–P90, real BLS OEWS) against current pay — compa-ratio and market position per occupation.
- 2 **Geographic + Facility Locality:** the locality model and the per-VAMC §7451 view — why San Francisco and Nashville cannot share a schedule.
- 3 **Shortage × Pay:** OIG severe-shortage occupations crossed with pay position — separates pay-driven shortages (fix with §7451/§7431) from supply-driven ones (a raise won't help).
- 4 **Pay Workbench** — the centerpiece: occupation + facility → localized P25/P50/P75, compa-ratio, verdict. **Save determination** writes it to the audit trail with full source lineage.
- 5 **Pay Equity:** the 4G AI flags with gap-to-median dollars and an adjustable threshold. **Job Architecture:** the versioned catalog your determinations hang on.
- 6 **Audit:** publish catalog versions; every determination you save is reviewable with its source survey and vintage — the §7431 panel standard.

CHAPTER 06

Facility Survey Coordinator

You are one facility's coordinator of record for the annual §7451 local labor-market survey. Total time: about 33 minutes. Drafts save; you can return on the same link.

- 1 **The email.** You'll receive "Action required: §7451 Local Labor-Market Survey — [your facility]" from the program office, with your due date and one button. The link is single-use-scoped to your station and expires in 14 days.
- 2 **Click it.** No password: the link signs you in as your facility's coordinator. A green "Invitation verified" banner confirms your facility, and section 1 arrives prefilled (VISN, facility, station, market, your name and email). Correct anything that's wrong.
- 3 **Five sections.** ① Facility identification (3 min) · ② Covered-occupation roster — authorized vs. filled FTE, vacancies, average rates; *counts and rates only, never names or SSNs* (12 min) · ③ Local market comparators — the employers you benchmarked and the method (10 min) · ④ Recruitment & retention indicators (6 min) · ⑤ Certification (2 min).
- 4 **Certify & submit.** Your attestation locks the record, timestamps it in the audit trail, and updates the program board automatically — no email to send, nothing to print.

- 5 **Afterward.** Automated range checks run; an analyst reviews; if anything needs another look you'll get a revision request on the same link. Otherwise: done for the year.

Three questions coordinators ask

- **Where do comparator numbers come from?** Your local sources — published surveys, association data, direct employer contacts, or BLS metro data. Record the method per row; the program office can pre-fill purchased data where licensed.
- **Can someone else finish it?** Forward your link only to a person authorized for your facility — it carries your station's access. Better: ask the program office to re-issue to the right person.
- **The link says expired or invalid?** Ask the program office to resend — a fresh token takes seconds.

CHAPTER 07

VA Observer — PCAC / COR

Sign in as `observer@va.gov`: program-wide read access with every write control hidden. Watch the campaign board's response rate, open any analytics module, read the audit trail end-to-end, and export program reports — without the ability to touch a record. Use it to verify, not to operate: the audit log is the contract-oversight view (who did what, when, from which role), and the status dashboards are the QASP evidence.

CHAPTER 08

Module index

Module	Route	What it does	Who sees it
Command Center	<code>/platform/command-center</code>	Live program dashboard — activity, KPIs, quick launch	All signed-in roles
AI Assistant	<code>/platform/ai</code>	Compensation Copilot + classification assistant (activates when the API key is configured)	Admin, PM, HR, Observer
Program / IMPS	<code>/platform/program</code>	Integrated Master Project Schedule, WBS, deliverable tracker, monthly reports	Admin, PM, Observer
VA Data Intake	<code>/platform/data-intake</code>	Subtask 2.1–2.3 — extract in → classification QA screen (rules flag, AI drafts, named desks decide; exclusions flow into the files) → de-identified publisher submissions out	Admin, PM
Survey Participation	<code>/platform/participation</code>	Subtask 2.3 — the contracted submission: outbound files in each publisher's own format + the FY submission calendar	Admin, PM, Observer
Facility Survey (\$7451 · optional)	<code>/platform/survey/respond</code>	The conduct-model instrument — beyond the PWS baseline (RFI Q3); tokenized invites + certify-and-lock	Admin, PM, Coordinator

Admin Console	/platform/admin	Conduct-\$7451 campaign board · roles & access · security · audit log · cloud & data	Admin, PM
Survey Library	/platform/survey-sources	The ~50-survey commercial library, licenses and vintages (live from the cloud store)	Admin, PM, HR, Observer
Benchmarking	/platform/benchmarking	Occupation benchmarks vs. market percentiles (real BLS OEWS data)	Admin, HR, Observer
Pay Equity	/platform/pay-equity	Task 4G AI flags — gap-to-median, threshold slider	Admin, HR, Observer
Shortage × Pay	/platform/shortage-pay	OIG severe-shortage occupations crossed with pay position	Admin, HR, Observer
Geographic	/platform/geographic-differentials	Locality model — metro cost-of-labor indices (real BLS)	Admin, HR, Observer
Facility Locality	/platform/facilities	Per-VAMC \$7451 locality view (15 real medical centers)	Admin, HR, Coordinator, Observer
Job Architecture	/platform/job-architecture	Functions → families → tracks → levels; the versioned catalog + live committed classifications + 18→5 VISN resilience	Admin, HR, Observer
Classification AI	/platform/classification	Subtask 5.1/5.2 desk audit — duty log (voice or templates) → AI proposal → analyst commit	Admin, HR, Observer
Pay Workbench	/platform/workbench	Pick occupation + facility → localized range, compa-ratio, save determination	Admin, HR
Audit & Lineage	/platform/audit	Immutable event log + catalog version publishing (Task 4I)	Admin, PM, HR, Observer
Jobs	/platform/jobs	Async pipeline board — trigger and watch processing jobs	Admin, PM
System Status	/platform/status	Live health, store reachability, service cards	Admin, PM
API Reference	/platform/api	REST reference + roles × permissions matrix with live try-it	Admin

REST surface for integrators: </api/v1/> — auth (login/logout/session), submissions, determinations, versions, audit, jobs, exports/[kind] (CSV), campaign (the distribution engine), invite (token redemption), ai (status/copilot/classify), health. Role-gated server-side; the API Reference module includes a live try-it console.

CHAPTER 09

Security model & the demo boundary

How access works

- **Sessions:** HMAC-signed, stateless, 8-hour; HTTP-only secure cookies. No passwords stored client-side. Login attempts are rate-limited (5/minute) against brute force.

- **Invitations:** signed single-purpose tokens bound to one station, 14-day expiry — and **single-use:** the first redemption consumes the token; replaying the link without the original session is refused and audit-logged. Redemptions are rate-limited.
- **RBAC:** deny-by-default; five production roles + guest sandbox; facility coordinators are hard-scoped to their station (server-enforced, not just hidden UI). Coordinator emails are **masked for unauthenticated viewers**.
- **Step-up verification:** destructive administrative actions (e.g., roster reset) re-confirm the administrator's password; certification carries the coordinator's typed e-signature attestation. Production adds PIV/CAC.
- **Data:** survey store on AWS S3 (scoped IAM user, Get/Put/List only) fronted by CloudFront with the bucket private; roster data is counts and rates — no SSNs, no names of employees.
- **Audit:** every consequential action lands in a **tamper-evident, SHA-256 hash-chained** event log — altering or deleting any event breaks every hash after it; the chain is verified on every read and the Admin Console shows the verification badge live.
- **Browser & transport:** HSTS, Content-Security-Policy, X-Frame-Options DENY, nosniff, strict referrer policy; TLS everywhere. All endpoints are per-account rate-limited.
- **Email integrity:** invitations send via SendGrid from the DKIM-signed, domain-authenticated housestrategiesgroup.com; link tracking is disabled so tokenized access links are never rewritten through a third-party redirector.

Live today vs. activates at award

Capability	Status
Distribution campaign — roster, tokenized invitations, real email sends, reminders, status transitions, certification lock	Live now
§7451 instrument, scoped coordinator sessions, board + audit integration	Live now
Benchmarking / locality / shortage / equity analytics on real BLS & OIG data; Pay Workbench determinations	Live now
Publisher-format participation exports; cloud store + password-gated ingest	Live now
AI Copilot & classification assistant	Live when the API key is configured
VA PIV/CAC single sign-on; live HR Smart / payroll feeds; VA A&A/ATO of the production system of record	At award — requires VA sponsorship

The honesty rule this platform follows

Everything in this manual that says “live” can be operated right now at vha-salary-survey.housestrategiesgroup.com — by an evaluator, with no login. Where a capability needs the VA (identity, system feeds, authorization), the platform says so on the page rather than pretending. That distinction is itself part of the product.