

Intended Audience: All Forest Service Employees

March 7, 2025

Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA) Application Window will be Open March 10 – 25 and HRM Will Host Four VERA Webinars Next Week

USDA has approved the Forest Service to use [VERA](#) which is designed to allow agencies undergoing significant changes such as restructuring, reshaping, downsizing, transfer of function, or reorganization to temporarily reduce the age and service requirements, thereby making more employees eligible for retirement.

Applications for VERA can be submitted through the VERA Application system available through [ConnectHR](#) as early as **Monday, March 10, 2025 but no later than Tuesday, March 25, 2025, at 11:59 PM (EDT)**. Individuals approved for VERA during this offering must separate with a retirement effective date **no later than May 31, 2025**. Visit [HRM's VERA website](#) for detailed information about VERA and instructions about how to submit a VERA application.

NOTE: This [VERA](#) announcement is **separate** from the one offered to employees who accepted the [Deferred Resignation Program \(DRP\)](#).

General Eligibility

Employees participating in the [Civil Service Retirement System \(CSRS\)](#) and the [Federal Retirement System \(FERS\)](#) are able to apply for [VERA](#).

VERA is not an employee entitlement, it is a management tool for agencies that are undergoing organizational change, such as: workforce downsizing and restructuring. Employees who meet the following eligibility requirements may be eligible to retire early using VERA:

1. Meet the minimum age and service requirements
 1. At least age 50 with at least 20 years of creditable service, OR
 2. Any age with at least 25 years of creditable Federal Service;
2. Be serving in a position covered by the USDA VERA plan (and not in a position excluded from coverage which will be posted on the upcoming VERA website).

Webinar Information

Next week, Human Resources Management (HRM) will host four webinars to provide an overview of [VERA](#) and will display the electronic system employees will use to submit a VERA application. The webinars will not address questions about DRP or be able to provide individual retirement calculations.

Webinar Details

American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreters and Closed Captioning will be provided during the webinars. All times are in Mountain Daylight Time (MDT).

[VERA Webinar Session 1 - Tuesday, March 11, 2025 - 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. MDT](#)

[VERA Webinar Session 2 – Tuesday, March 11, 2025 - 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. MDT](#)

[VERA Webinar Session 3 – Wednesday, March 12, 2025 - 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. MDT](#)

[VERA Webinar Session 4 – Wednesday, March 12, 2025 - 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. MDT](#)

Additional Resources

- [OPM's Voluntary Early Retirement Authority](#)
- [OPM's Top 10 VERA & VSIP Frequently Asked Questions](#) (this is a VERA opportunity only)
- Retirement Calculator – accessed through [ConnectHR](#)

Help Is Available

- Call: 1-877-372-7248, option 2
- Email: hrm_contact_center@usda.gov
- Self-Service: [ConnectHR](#), then select HR Help. For detailed instructions, review the [self-service portal user guide](#).