

# **Department of Veterans Affairs**

## **Veterans Re-Entry Search Service (VRSS)**

### **User Guide:**

#### **Correctional Facility (CF) and Court System (CS) Users**



**February 2015**

**Version 1.4**

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# How to Use This Guide

## Audience and Purpose

This User Guide provides information and instructions necessary for business users in the **Correctional Facility (CF)** and **Court System (CS)** community to effectively access the VRSS web-based application. From a business perspective, it describes how a CF or CS user operates the solution, including a description of the solution's functions and capabilities, and step-by-step procedures for basic access and use.

## Navigation

1. Determine the primary issue/question you'd like solved and/or answered
2. Consult the Table of Contents (pgs. iii-iv) in this Manual, which is broken down into 7 sections:
  - Introduction – The VRSS program mission
  - VRSS Overview – The program's primary function and set up
  - Getting Started – Navigation to website, terms/conditions, and login
  - New User Registration – Separate modules for CF and CS Users
  - Using the VRSS Solution – CF/CS Main Menu (User Options and Uploading data)
  - Frequently-Asked Questions (FAQs)
  - Acronyms

**Note:** If your issue, question, or topic does not fall within one of the sections listed above, please call **1-800-983-0935** (toll free) to speak with a Technical Support representative.

## 1 VRSS Introduction

At the request of former Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA), Eric Shinseki, the Homeless Program Office developed an automated system called Veteran Re-entry Search Service (VRSS) to locate Veterans who are currently incarcerated in federal, state, city and county correctional facilities, or who are represented as defendants on court dockets. There are approximately 1,295 federal and state, 3,000 city/county correctional facilities, and 3,000 to 4,000 courts in the United States (US), but no automated method to identify charged, convicted, or incarcerated Veterans. Through comparison of records from Correctional Facilities and Court Systems and the Veterans Affairs/Department of Defense Identity Repository (VADIR), VRSS will be used to identify Veterans incarcerated or under supervision in the courts.

Work surrounding this initiative falls under the VA's Major Initiative 1: Eliminate Veteran Homelessness (EVH). EVH is an initiative aiming to eradicate homelessness among Veterans. Information about charged, convicted, and/or incarcerated Veterans provided by VRSS will be used by VHA Veterans Justice Programs' (VJP) Specialists in either the Healthcare for Re-entry Veterans (HCRV) Program or the Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) Program as part of their outreach activities to prevent Veteran homelessness. The HCRV Program is designed to address community re-entry needs of charged, convicted, and/or incarcerated Veterans being released from prison, including addressing their housing needs. HCRV works to reduce the impact of medical, psychiatric, and substance abuse problems upon community readjustment and decrease the likelihood of re-incarceration for those leaving prison. The VJO Program provides outreach and linkage to VA services for Veterans at early stages of the justice system, including Veterans courts, drug courts, and mental health courts. VRSS will provide automated identification of charged, convicted, and incarcerated Veterans to greatly accelerate Veteran enrollment

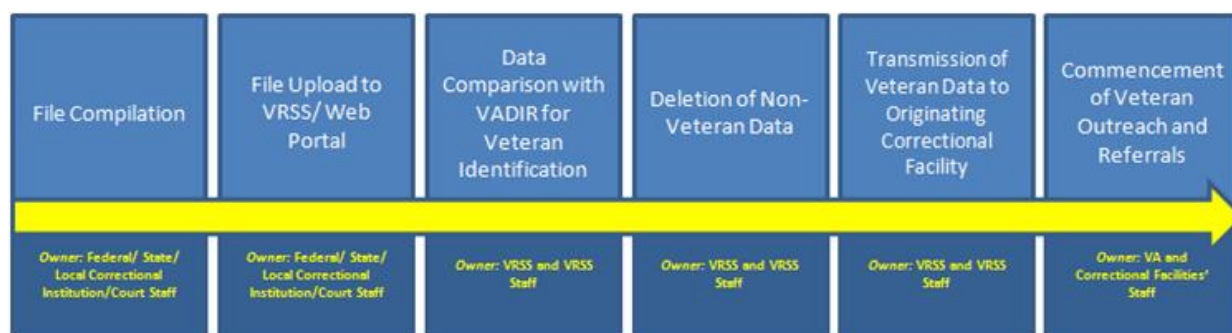
and reduce delays in accessing VA services once these individuals are released from custody. Veteran identification automation will improve data accuracy, reduce cycle times in the provision of VA services, and give VA a tool to help target the correct programs to the Veterans in need of services. Currently, Homeless Program Office Justice Programs Specialists use a variety of manual methods to identify incarcerated Veterans including:

- Self-reporting by inmates of prior US military service. Current estimates of Veteran self-identification in correctional facilities ranges from 2-4%; this self-reported information is significantly below the Department of Justice’s confidential survey estimate of 10%. Complicating matters, some individuals identify themselves as Veterans when they are not.
- Word-of-mouth referrals from other incarcerated Veterans
- Informational sessions conducted by VA Outreach Specialists during periodic visits (announced by posters in some prisons)
- Contact with correctional staff, re-entry and parole staff, chaplains, and mental health and physical health staff in correctional institutions, and with justice professionals in the courts

Correctional Facilities and Court Systems will use the VRSS website to upload their current population or census listings. VA automated algorithms/processing will then run the correctional facility or court system data through the VADIR database to search for inmates who have served in the U.S. military, using standard algorithms for error workarounds.

## 2 VRSS Overview

The VRSS system (*Figure 1*) will allow correctional and other justice systems, including courts, to upload data pertaining to their current incarcerated, detained, or court docket population. VRSS will then interface with the VA/DoD Identity Registry (VADIR) to identify any Veterans within the list in question. VADIR is the central database for all Veteran information relevant to the operation of VRSS. Data on non-Veterans will be deleted from VRSS following file upload processing, and an electronic listing of Veterans’ Defendant or Prisoner ID numbers—a “CF/CS Output File”—will be transmitted back to the originating Correctional Facility or Court System to facilitate outreach by staff for charged, convicted, or incarcerated Veterans.



*Figure 1 – Overall VRSS Process*

### 2.1 Features

The VRSS includes a secure web portal to be used by federal, state, and local Correctional Facility and Court System staff to upload their inmate and litigant registry, which will include corresponding Litigant or Prisoner ID numbers. Behind the VA firewall, an automated algorithm will draw information from VADIR to identify charged, convicted, and incarcerated individuals who have served in the U.S. military.

An electronic list of the Defendant and/or Prisoner identification numbers of those identified as Veterans will be transmitted back to the originating correctional/justice facility in order to facilitate outreach by correctional/court staff with the identified individuals. Some Correctional Facilities provide Veteran-specific services and/or are co-locating Veterans in special units; accurate identification of incarcerated Veterans will assist with these efforts. In conjunction with Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) and Healthcare for Re-entry Veterans (HCRV) programs, VRSS will provide an accurate means of identifying incarcerated Veterans to assist with providing Veterans services and outreach.

System Functionalities include:

- New User Registration
- User management components that permit VRSS staff to create new users, reset passwords, edit contact information, manage users' associations with particular correctional facilities, and deactivate users
- Secure login functionality that checks user-provided username and password for validity and either allows or denies access to the application. Functionality also includes User self-service re-setting of passwords by email at the point of login
- A process to import CSV data uploaded by Correctional Facility and Court System users, which, once compared against VADIR, will generate a CF/CS Output File noting any identified incarcerated individuals who have served in the U.S. military
- Data quality checks to assess whether the uploaded data meets pre-defined data quality thresholds
  - If data quality is outside expected parameters, VRSS provides specific error details and allows for data correction and resubmittal
- Notification to users that their data has been accepted or rejected, and (if rejected) the rationale for rejection
- Processes to notify users of the status of their data upload
- A process that sends an email notification to the uploader for each file uploaded indicating that a CF/CS Output File is ready to be retrieved (will create an output file even if no Veterans are found)
- Program management components that permit VRSS staff to compare data uploaded by a particular user (Correctional Facility or Court System) to the VADIR database to search for and locate incarcerated individuals who have served in the U.S. military
- A process that will send an email notification to the VJP representative(s) for each state in which a CF/CS Output File was generated indicating that the file is ready to be retrieved (as a VJP Output File)

(Continued on next page)

## 2.2 Business Benefits

Goal/Objective and Desired Outcome	Impact	Measurement
Provide VA with accurate information about incarcerated Veterans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HCRV and VJO Specialists are able to provide incarcerated Veterans outreach services</li> <li>Facilitate enrollment and access to VA services by incarcerated Veterans</li> </ul>	VA receives updated information from correctional facilities/court systems about incarcerated Veterans as often as files are uploaded (frequency of uploading will vary for courts, jails, and prisons)
Provide correctional facilities/court systems with accurate information about which inmates are Veterans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enable correctional facilities/court systems to plan services for Veterans in their populations</li> <li>Enable correctional facilities/court systems to support VA outreach activities</li> <li>Enable correctional facilities/court systems to support enrollment and access to services by incarcerated Veterans</li> </ul>	Correctional facilities/court systems will receive updated information from VA about incarcerated Veterans as often as files are uploaded (frequency of uploading will vary for courts, jails, and prisons)

*Figure 2 – VRSS Business Benefits*

## 2.3 VRSS Interfaces – CF/CS and VJP/Administrator

VRSS consists of two aesthetically-similar but slightly different User interfaces—one designed for Correctional Facility (CF) and Court System (CS) users, the other for VJP users, which includes VJP users authorized as Admin-level users (“Super VJP” or “Admins”).

**The Correctional Facility/Court System interface consists of the following modules and abilities:**

- The User Registration module allows the User to create a new Correctional Facility or Court System user account
- The VRSS Tools module allows the User to view and/or edit account information, upload a CSV file, view file upload history, download CF/CS Output Files, or view support information

**The VJP/Admin interface consists of the following modules and abilities:**

- The New User Account Registration module allows users to setup a new account based on their VA LAN User Id
- The VJP User Menu module (not covered in this User Guide) allows authorized users to view or change account information and/ or change password, manage user accounts (if the authorized User has been assigned Admin-level rights), download VJP Output Files based on upload history, and view support information
- The VJP Administrative Capabilities module (not covered in this User Guide) allows authorized Administrators to view or change account information and manage VJP or Administrator users by approving, editing, or suspending accounts

## 3 Getting Started

### 3.1 Access Information and Logging In (CF and CS Users)

**Correctional Facility (CF)** and **Court System (CS)** Users can use any web browser and the <https://vrss.va.gov> URL to access the VRSS system. The following information details how to login and register a new Correctional Facility or Court System User account.

#### 3.1.1 Correctional Facility/Court System User Welcome Page

After entering the URL in the web browser, Users arrive at the (default) **Correctional Facility/Court System User Welcome Page** (*Figure 3*), which displays Announcements and the VRSS Terms and Conditions of Use. This page gives Users the option to:

- View announcements, instructions, or any information relevant to the VRSS application and its processes
- Read and Accept the VRSS “Terms and Conditions of Use”
- Proceed to the **Correctional Facility/Court System User Login Page** (*Figure 4*) by accepting the Terms and Conditions of Use, and selecting the [Click here to login](#) hyperlink

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### Welcome to the Veterans Re-Entry Search Services

Welcome!

#### [Veterans Reentry Search Service \(VRSS\) - Terms and Conditions of Use](#)

This secure Web site enables correctional and other criminal justice system entities to identify inmates or defendants who have served in the United States (U.S.) military. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) makes this service available to facilitate its own direct outreach to these Veterans, and to inform the development of Veteran-specific programs in the criminal justice system. VA has authorized your access to this site because you represent a correctional or other criminal justice system entity that seeks to identify Veterans in its inmate or defendant population. To use the site, you will provide the following information on the individuals whose history of military service you wish to inquire about:

1. Name
2. Social Security Number
3. Date of Birth
4. Gender
5. Prisoner/Defendant ID number
6. Cell Location
7. Facility/Court Name
8. Facility/Court ZIP Code
9. Facility/Court State
10. Parole Date
11. Release or Hearing Date

☐ I have read and accept the Terms and Conditions of Use

[Click here to login](#)

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U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs - 810 Vermont Avenue, NW - Washington, DC 20420

Reviewed/Updated Date: September 1, 2010

*Figure 3 – Correctional Facility/Court System User Welcome Page*



- Users will not be permitted to proceed to the Login Page or register for a new user account until **VRSS Terms and Conditions** have been read and accepted, as follows:

“This secure Web site enables correctional and other criminal justice system entities to identify inmates or defendants who have served in the United States (U.S.) military. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) makes this service available to facilitate its own direct outreach to these Veterans, and to inform the development of Veteran-specific programs in the criminal justice system. VA has authorized your access to this site because you represent a correctional or other criminal justice system entity that seeks to identify Veterans in its inmate or defendant population. To use the site, you will provide the following information on the individuals about whose history of military service you wish to inquire:

1. Name
2. Social Security Number
3. Date of Birth
4. Gender
5. Prisoner/Defendant ID Number
6. Cell Location
7. Facility/Court Name
8. Facility/Court ZIP Code
9. Facility/Court State
10. Parole Date
11. Release or Hearing Date

VA will use the information you provide to identify individuals for whom it has a record of military service. Once this process of identification is complete (please allow at least 24 hours), you will be able to access on this secure Web site a list of defendant ID numbers or prisoner ID numbers with a record of military service. VA will also provide its outreach staff with sufficient information to locate and contact individuals identified through this process. VA makes the following assurances about its use and handling of such data:

1. **Data Protection and System Security:** VA will protect PII on the VRSS in accordance with all applicable federal laws and regulations, VA policies and procedures, and National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) requirements and guidelines, including, but not limited to, the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. § 552a), the Federal Information Security Management Act of 2002 (FISMA, 44 U.S.C. §§ 3541-49), 38 U.S.C. § 5701, and VA Directive and Handbook 6500
2. **Breach Notification.** VA complies with federal statutes and regulations in reporting data breach and loss of PII, in particular 38 U.S.C. §§ 5721-27
3. **Administrative Safeguards.** VA will restrict access to the data transmitted to it via this Web site to only those authorized employees and officials who need it to perform their official duties in connection with the uses of the information described above
4. **Limited Use.** VA will use data transmitted to it via this Web site to identify individuals for whom it has a record of military service, and for no other purpose. VA will not use the information in any determination of benefits nor will the PII be added to a Privacy Act system of records

5. Disposition of Data. VA may retain data pertaining to your use of the VRSS for lawful purposes, such as to perform tests and to conduct and facilitate audits of the use of the VRSS portal

VA will dispose of PII and data pertaining to your use of the VRSS portal in accordance with NARA approved records control schedules.”

Upon accepting the Terms and Conditions and selecting the [Click here to login](#) hyperlink, Users will be directed to the **Correctional Facility/Court System User Login Page** (Figure 4).

### 3.1.2 Correctional Facility/Court System User Login Page

The **Correctional Facility/Court System User Login Page** (Figure 4) gives Users the option to:

- Login using existing CF or CS User credentials
- Register a new CF or CS User Account
- Retrieve forgotten username or password
- View/download the VRSS User Guide
- Navigate to the **Veterans Re-entry Search Service Support Page**, or call the VA Help desk. This help/contact box will appear on many pages throughout the site

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Please enter your username and password to login

Username:

Password:

Login

[Register a new account](#) | [I forgot my username/password](#)

[User Guide: CF/CS Users](#)

Need Help?

[Click here for Support](#)

**VA Health Resource Center Help Desk**  
Phone: 1-800-983-0935  
Hours: 7 AM - 5 PM (CST), Monday - Friday

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Figure 4 – Correctional Facility/Court System User Login Page

In order to access VRSS, Users must register and complete the credentialing process, which will establish the new Correctional Facility/Court System record in the system and credentials for registration. To access the VRSS application follow the steps presented below:

- If the User has already registered:
  - Enter Username
  - Enter Password
  - Select **Login**
  - The User will be directed to the **CF/CS Main Menu** (Figure 13)

- If the User has not already registered:
  - Select the [Register a new account](#) hyperlink (process outlined in Section 4)
- If the User has forgotten his/her username and/or password:
  - Select the [I forgot my username/password](#) hyperlink

## 3.2 Password/Username Reset

### 3.2.1 Forgotten Password or Username

If a User selects the [I forgot my username/password](#) hyperlink on the **Correctional Facility/Court System Login Page**, the User is directed to the **Lookup Username or Password Page** (Figure 5). On this page, the User can select to have 1) a username reminder delivered via email, or 2) a temporary password delivered via email. After receiving a temporary password, the User must login to the system and reset the password. For security reasons, the username reminder and password reset cannot be performed and/or administered in the same transaction.

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### Lookup Username or Password

Please complete the information below to retrieve your lost/forgotten Veterans Re-Entry Search Service username or password. The system will send you an email containing your username or a temporary password.

☐ I forgot my username ☐ I forgot my password

First Name

Last Name

Email

Retrieve Login Cancel

Figure 5 – Lookup Username or Password Page

- If the User selects “☐ I forgot my username” or “☐ I forgot my password,” completes the form, and selects **Retrieve Login**, the following message will display and an email (not shown) will be generated and sent to the User’s email address with either username or password credentials

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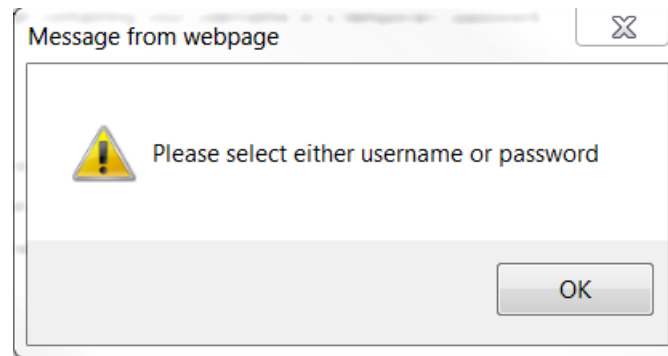
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### Check your email

Your information has been sent to dabernathy@phaseonecg.com

- If the User inputs information but does not select either “○ I forgot my username” or “○ I forgot my password,” the following error message will display:



- Select **OK** and make the appropriate selection
- If the user selects **Cancel**, no matter what information was entered, the transaction will not take effect, nor the information be retained, and the user will be redirected to the **Correctional Facility/Court System Welcome Page**

### 3.2.2 Expired Password

- Two scenarios will require a User to reset what the system considers an “expired” password,
  1. After a User has forgotten a password and performed a password reset, and
  2. After a password has been used for 90 days
- After a User applies for a password reset, the User will receive a temporary password via email. After logging in following receipt of that email, which will contain a temporary password, the User will see the following message “Your Password has expired!” and **Change Password** form. Users whose passwords have also become invalid will see the same message and be similarly required to select a new password by entering the old (either an expired or temporary) password and selecting a new one

## 4 New User Registration

### 4.1 New User Registration User Type Selection

If the User selects the [Register a new account](#) hyperlink from the **Correctional Facility/Court System User Login Page** (Figure 4), the user will first be directed to a page (Figure 6) that helps VRSS determine which of the two New User Registration processes to initiate, as each requires slightly different account information.

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Please select the type of VRSS account you wish to register for:

☐ Correctional Facility Account

☐ Court System Account

Submit Cancel

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**VA Health Resource Center Help Desk**  
Phone: 1-800-983-0935  
Hours: 7 AM - 5 PM (CST), Monday - Friday

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Figure 6 – New User Registration Type Selection Page

- If the User will be uploading from a correctional facility, select “☐ Correctional Facility Account” and **Submit**
- If the User will be uploading from a Court System facility, select “☐ Court System Account” and **Submit**
- Once the User Type is selected and submitted, the User will be directed to the appropriate User Account Registration Page
- If the User selects nothing, or one of the two selections, and then selects **Cancel**, the registration process will be abandoned (not recorded) and the User will be directed back to the **Correctional Facility/Court System User Login Page** (Figure 4)

### 4.2 Correctional Facility (CF) New User Account Registration

On the **Correctional Facility (CF) New User Account Registration Page** (Figure 7), the User registering for an account will be prompted to: enter basic account information (name, email, and phone), select a Correctional System Type and Facility, create a new username, and create a password.

Figure 7 – Correctional Facility New User Account Registration Page (Account Info section shown)

1. Under **Account Information**, the user will be asked to enter:

Field Name	Description
First Name	First name of user requesting new account
Last Name	Last name of user requesting new account
Email Address	Email address of user requesting new account which will be used for automated notifications
Phone Number	Phone number of user requesting new account
Extension (optional)	Phone extension, if applicable/desired

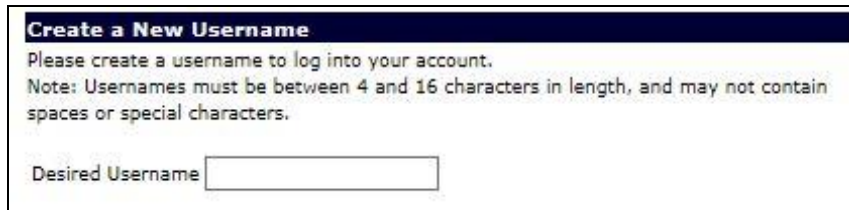
2. Under **Correctional System Selection**, select the **Correctional System Type** from those listed in the dropdown menu: Federal, State, County, Municipal, and Other.



3. Select the **Correctional System** from those listed in the dropdown menu.

4. If the User does not find their facility in the **Correctional System** dropdown menu, they can select **Other** from within the dropdown menu, allowing them to enter their facility name in a text box (below).

5. Under **Create a New Username**, the User will be asked to create a unique username that must be no less than **4** and no greater than **16** characters in length, and contain no spaces or special characters.

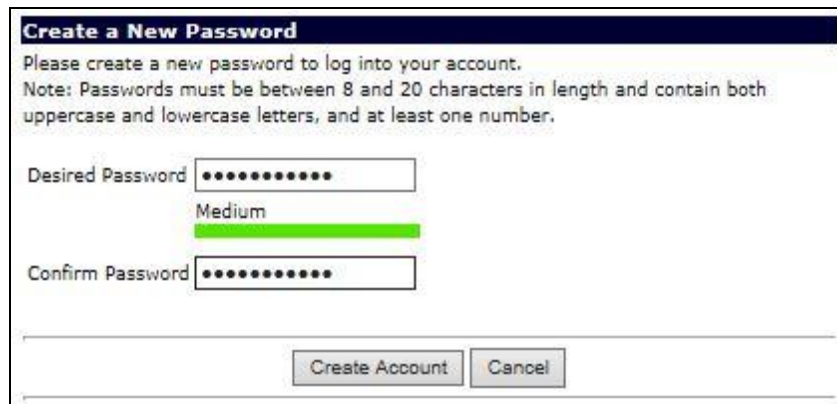


**Create a New Username**

Please create a username to log into your account.  
 Note: Usernames must be between 4 and 16 characters in length, and may not contain spaces or special characters.

Desired Username

6. Under **Create a New Password**, the User will be asked to create and confirm a password no less than **8** and no more than **20** characters in length. It must contain **both uppercase and lowercase letters** and **at least one number**. (e.g. "VeteranSupport1").



**Create a New Password**

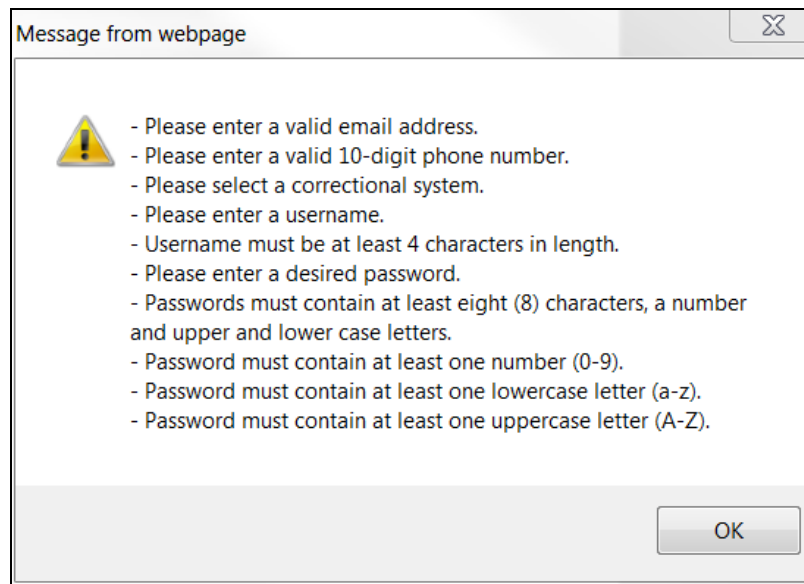
Please create a new password to log into your account.  
 Note: Passwords must be between 8 and 20 characters in length and contain both uppercase and lowercase letters, and at least one number.

Desired Password


Medium

Confirm Password

7. Once the User has entered all required information, select **Create Account** or **Cancel**.
8. Selecting **Cancel** will prompt an error message listing fields considered blank and/or invalid.



Message from webpage

 - Please enter a valid email address.  
 - Please enter a valid 10-digit phone number.  
 - Please select a correctional system.  
 - Please enter a username.  
 - Username must be at least 4 characters in length.  
 - Please enter a desired password.  
 - Passwords must contain at least eight (8) characters, a number and upper and lower case letters.  
 - Password must contain at least one number (0-9).  
 - Password must contain at least one lowercase letter (a-z).  
 - Password must contain at least one uppercase letter (A-Z).

9. Ignore this message and select **OK**, which will return the User to the **Correctional Facility/Court System User Login Page**.

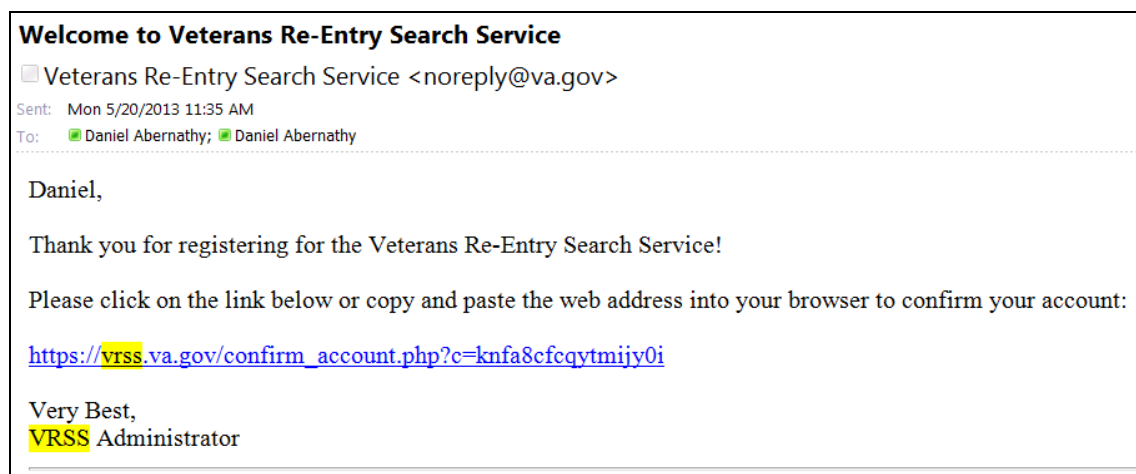


10. Selecting **Create Account** (assuming all required fields are addressed correctly) will complete the registration input process.
11. Once completed, the following page will display, stating that the new account registration has been *submitted* successfully (*Figure 8*).



*Figure 8 – Account Registration Confirmation Message Page*

12. Signaling a *tentatively-approved account registration*, the User will receive (via email address provided during registration) an email similar to the following (*Figure 9*):



*Figure 9 – CF User Account Registration Confirmation Email (typical text and link)*

13. The User **must** then select the system-generated <https://> hyperlink to validate/complete the registration approval process.

### 4.3 Court System (CS) New User Account Registration

On the **Court System New User Account Registration Page** (*Figure 10*), the User registering for an account will be prompted to: enter basic account information (name, email, and phone), select court information, create a new username, and create a password.

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### Court System User Account Registration

Please complete the following registration form to request an account for the Veterans Re-Entry Search System. After submitting this information, your request must be reviewed by a VA Administrator. You will receive an email confirmation when your account has been approved.

#### Account Information

Please complete the following fields to register for a VRSS Court System Account.  
Note: All fields are required.

First Name   
Last Name   
Email   
Phone  Ext.  (Optional)

**Need Help?**  
[Click here for Support](#)

**VA Health Resource Center Help Desk**  
Phone: 1-800-983-0935  
Hours: 7 AM - 5 PM (CST), Monday - Friday

Verizon Cybertrust Security SECURED SITE

Figure 10 – Court System New User Account Registration Page (Account Info section shown)

- Under **Account Information**, the User will be asked to enter:

Field Name	Description
<b>First Name</b>	First name of user requesting new account
<b>Last Name</b>	Last name of user requesting new account
<b>Email Address</b>	Email address of user requesting new account which will be used for automated notifications
<b>Phone Number</b>	Phone number of user requesting new account
<b>Extension (optional)</b>	Phone extension, if applicable

- Under **Court System Selection**, select the **Court System Type** from those listed in the dropdown menu: Federal, State, Statewide (ex. Administrative Office of the Courts), County, and City/Municipal.

**Court System Selection**

Court System Type

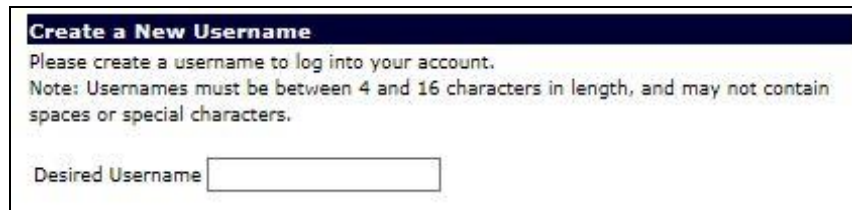
Court System State

Court System County

Court System Name

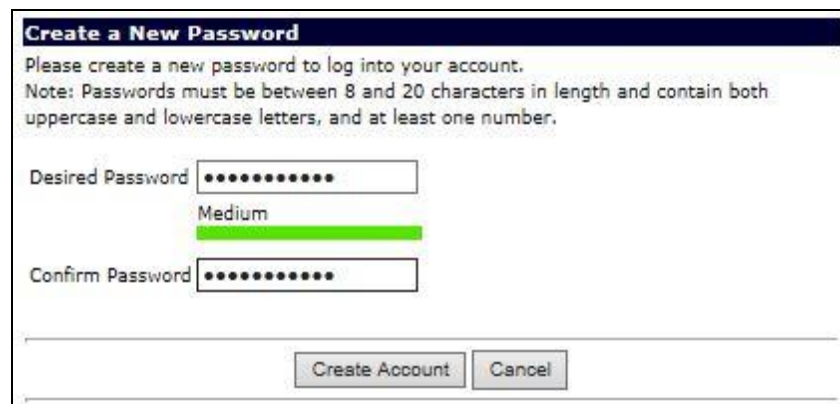
- Select the **Court System State** from those listed in the dropdown menu: all 50 U.S. states.
- Select the **Court System County** from those listed in the dropdown menu: populated by specific state counties.
- Enter the appropriate **Court System Name**. (**Important Note:** Please provide the institution's official name to minimize error and prevent multiple spellings or seemingly different institutions)

6. Under **Create a New Username**, the User will be asked to create a unique username that must be no less than **4** and no greater than **16** characters in length, and contain no spaces or special characters.



The screenshot shows a web form titled "Create a New Username" in a dark blue header. Below the header, the text reads: "Please create a username to log into your account." followed by a note: "Note: Usernames must be between 4 and 16 characters in length, and may not contain spaces or special characters." At the bottom, there is a label "Desired Username" next to a single-line text input field.

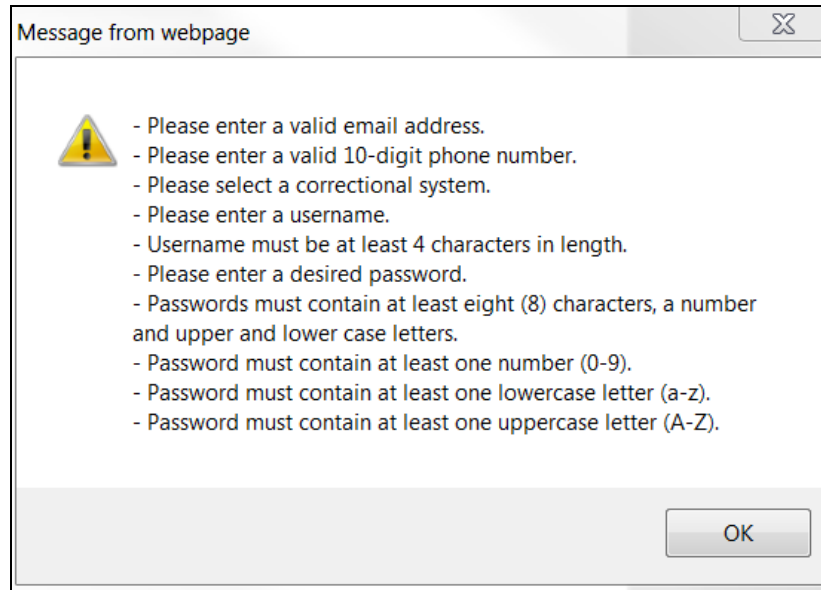
7. Under **Create a New Password**, the User will be asked to create and confirm a password no less than **8** and no more than **20** characters in length. It must contain **both uppercase and lowercase letters** and **at least one number**. (e.g. "VeteranSupport1").



The screenshot shows a web form titled "Create a New Password" in a dark blue header. Below the header, the text reads: "Please create a new password to log into your account." followed by a note: "Note: Passwords must be between 8 and 20 characters in length and contain both uppercase and lowercase letters, and at least one number." The form contains two text input fields: "Desired Password" and "Confirm Password", both masked with dots. Between these fields is a strength indicator showing the word "Medium" above a green progress bar. At the bottom right, there are two buttons: "Create Account" and "Cancel".

8. Once the user has entered all required information, select **Create Account** or **Cancel**.
9. Selecting **Cancel** will prompt an error message listing fields considered blank and/or invalid.

(Continued on next page)

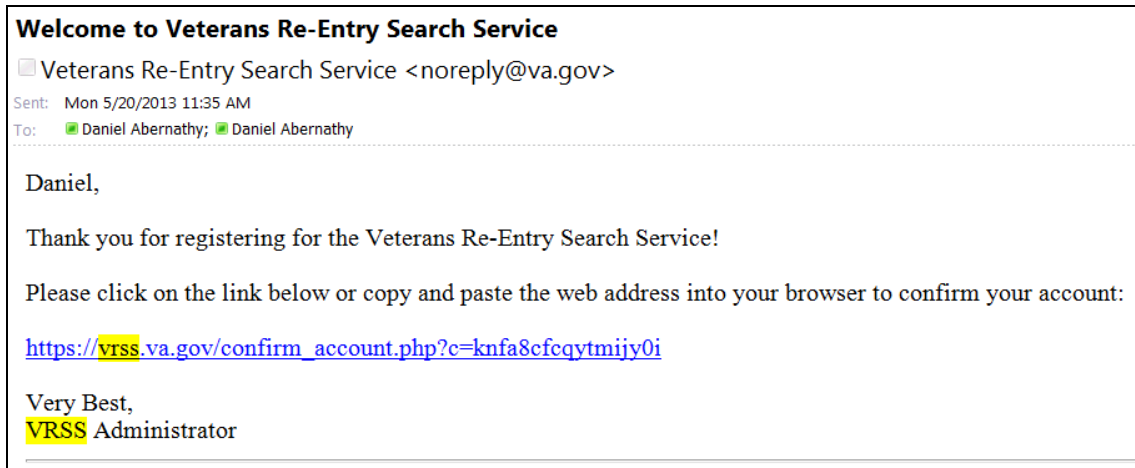


10. Ignore this message and select **OK**, which will return the User to the **Correctional Facility/Court System User Login Page**.
11. Selecting **Create Account** (and assuming all required fields are addressed correctly) will complete the web portal registration input process.
12. Once completed, the following page will display, stating that the new account registration has been *submitted* successfully (Figure 11).



*Figure 11 – Account Registration Confirmation Message Page*

13. Signaling a *tentatively-approved account registration*, the User will then receive (via email address provided during registration) an email similar to the following (Figure 12):



*Figure 12 – CF User Account Registration Confirmation Email (typical text and link)*

14. The User **must** then select the system-generated [https://](https://vrss.va.gov/confirm_account.php?c=knfa8cfcqymijy0i) hyperlink to validate/complete the registration approval process.

## 5 Using the VRSS Solution

### 5.1 CF/CS Main Menu: User Options

Users will see the following page (*Figure 13*) after logging into the application as either a CF or CS User:

The screenshot shows the CF/CS Main Menu page. At the top is the header for the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, including a search bar and navigation links like Home, Veteran Services, Business, About VA, Media Room, Locations, and Contact Us. The main content area is titled 'CF/CS Main Menu'. On the left, there is a 'User Options' box with links: My Account, Upload History, View/Download Reports, Support, and Logout. To the right, there is an 'Announcements' section with a welcome message and a note about upload errors. Below that is an 'Instructions' section titled 'Convert XLS documents to CSV' with a five-step guide. At the bottom, there is a 'CSV Data Upload Form' with a 'Choose a file' button, a 'Validate File' button, and a 'No file chosen' status. The footer contains various links like Privacy Policy, FOIA, and Web Policies, along with the address and a review date of September 1, 2010.

*Figure 13 – CF/CS Main Menu*

- Page-center is any information relevant to the VRSS application or process
- Page-left is a navigation box titled **User Options** (below) serving as the hub for access to all VRSS functionality. It includes 5 hyperlinks: [My Account](#), [Upload History](#), [View/Download Output Files](#), [Support](#), and [Logout](#)



- Page-bottom is the **CSV Data Upload Form**—the VRSS system’s upload utility (covered below in Section 5.2)

### 5.1.1 My Account

Selecting [My Account](#) from the **CF/CS Main Menu** (Figure 13) will direct the user to the **My Account Page** (Figure 14 and Figure 15):

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Search All VA Web Pages   [Open Advanced Search](#)

[Home](#) [Veteran Services](#) [Business](#) [About VA](#) [Media Room](#) [Locations](#) [Contact Us](#)

## My Account

[Return to the main menu](#)

### Account Information

Edit the fields below to update your account information.  
Note: All fields are required.

First Name	<input type="text" value="Nary"/>
Last Name	<input type="text" value="Tep"/>
Email	<input type="text" value="nary.tep@va.gov"/>
Phone	<input type="text" value="0"/>

Figure 14 – My Account Page (Account Information section)



**Change Password**

Use the fields below to update your account password. Please enter your current password first, and then enter your new password two times to make sure it is correct.

Current Password

New Password

Password not entered

Confirm Password

Note: Passwords must be between 8 and 20 characters in length and contain both uppercase and lowercase letters, and at least one number.

---

[VA Home](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [FOIA](#) | [Web Policies](#) | [No FEAR Act Data](#) | [Site Index](#) | [USA.gov](#) | [White House](#) | [National Resource Directory](#) | [Inspector General](#)

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs - 810 Vermont Avenue, NW - Washington, DC 20420

Reviewed/Updated Date: September 1, 2010

*Figure 15 – My Account Page (Change Password section)*

The **My Account Page** (Figure 14 and Figure 15) page allows the User to modify information as follows:

- Under **Account Information** (Figure 14), the User can modify his or her first name, last name, email, and phone information
- Under **Change Password** (Figure 15), the User will be prompted to enter the current password (to verify identity) and new password (with additional ‘confirmation’ entry) to be applied in the system
- If the User enters new/different Account Information and selects **Update Account**, the User’s new information will be saved in the system and the User will be directed back to the **CF/CS Main Menu**
- If the User enters new password credential and selects **Update Account**, the User’s password will be updated and the User will be redirected to a webpage with a confirmation message
- If the User selects **Cancel**, the User will be redirected back to the **CF/CS Main Menu** with no change to Account Information or password credentials

### 5.1.2 Upload History

Selecting [Upload History](#) from the **CF/CS Main Menu** (Figure 13) will direct the User to the **Upload History Page** (Figure 16) specific to the User:



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Search All VA Web Pages  
Search  
» Open Advanced Search

Home Veteran Services Business About VA Media Room Locations Contact Us

### Upload History

[Return to Main Menu](#)

File ID	Correctional Facility	Correctional System Type	File Name	Upload Date (EST)	File Status	Records Processed
---------	-----------------------	--------------------------	-----------	-------------------	-------------	-------------------

\*\*\* Note: The File ID is randomly generated in the system to help in identifying the file in the database. \*\*\*

Figure 16 – Upload History Page

This page displays the history of successful or in-process uploads for the user’s account. The information displayed will be as follows:

Field Name	Description
<b>File ID</b>	The File ID is randomly generated in the system to help identify the file within the database
<b>Correctional Facility/Court System</b>	The actual Correctional Facility or Court System reporting/uploading the data; Correctional Facility is mapped to a Correctional System type Court System is mapped to a Court System Type
<b>Correctional Facility Type/Court System Type</b>	Type of Correctional Facility or Court System to which the CF or CS is mapped; For CF, can be Federal, State, County, Municipal, or Other For CS, can be Federal, State, Statewide (ex. Administrative Office of the Courts), County, and City/Municipal
<b>File Name</b>	Name of uploaded file
<b>Upload Date (EST)</b>	Date of successful file upload in Eastern Standard Time
<b>File Status</b>	Most recent file upload status, e.g. “Uploaded”, “processing”, etc.
<b>Records Processed</b>	Number of records within the successfully-uploaded file

### 5.1.3 View/Download CF/CS Output Files

The primary expected output artifact is a CF/CS Output File automatically generated by VADIR and posted to VRSS that lists any incarcerated individual, or person currently detained within a court system, who has been positively identified as having a record of service in any branch of the U. S. military. This .csv file (example in *Figure 17*), which can be imported to Excel or read using standard text reader/writer programs such as TextEdit and Notepad, will consist solely of the Prisoner ID or Court System identifier, and be posted to the web portal User’s account and available for download. It will also be available to VHA Outreach Specialists to conduct Veteran outreach.

	A	B
1	3673475745	
2	1290787	
3	34590678-55	
4	2233439-12	
5	4467-765	
6	66576732	
7	1131296	
8	23785069	
9		

Figure 17 – Typical CF/CS Output File. (Correctional/Justice ID number formats will vary)

Selecting [View/Download Output Files](#) from the **CF/CS Main Menu** (Figure 13) will direct the User to the **File Download Page** (Figure 18) specific to the User:

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Search All VA Web Pages  
Search  
Open Advanced Search

Home Veteran Services Business About VA Media Room Locations Contact Us

**File Download**

[Return to Main Menu](#)

File ID	Correctional Facility	Facility Type	UserName	File Name	Upload Date (EST)	Download File
*** Note: The File ID is randomly generated in the system to help in identifying the file in the database. ***						

[Return to Main Menu](#)

Figure 18 – File Download Page

The **File Download Page** displays details related to available CF/CS Output Files, as well as a link to download the file. The information displayed will be as follows:

Field Name	Description
<b>File ID</b>	The File ID is randomly generated in the system to help identify the file within the database
<b>Correctional Facility/Court System</b>	The actual Correctional Facility or Court System reporting/uploading the data; Correctional Facility is mapped to a Correctional System type Court System is mapped to a Court System Type
<b>Correctional Facility Type/Court System Type</b>	Type of Correctional Facility or Court System to which the CF or CS is mapped; For CF, can be Federal, State, County, Municipal, or Other For CS, can be Federal, State, Statewide (ex.

	Administrative Office of the Courts), County, and City/Municipal
<b>UserName</b>	Name chosen by this user during registration, and who uploaded any/all files associated with this account
<b>Upload Date (EST)</b>	Date of successful file upload in Eastern Standard Time
<b>Download File</b>	Button that will initiate a download procedure (only for that specific file) pursuant to the respective facility's computer download process

### 5.1.4 Support

Selecting [Support](#) from the **CF/CS Main Menu** (Figure 13) will direct the user to the **Veterans Re-entry Search Service Support Page** (Figure 19) designed for all Users.

- Page-center will list contact information should Users need assistance beyond instructions located within the web portal or User Guide:

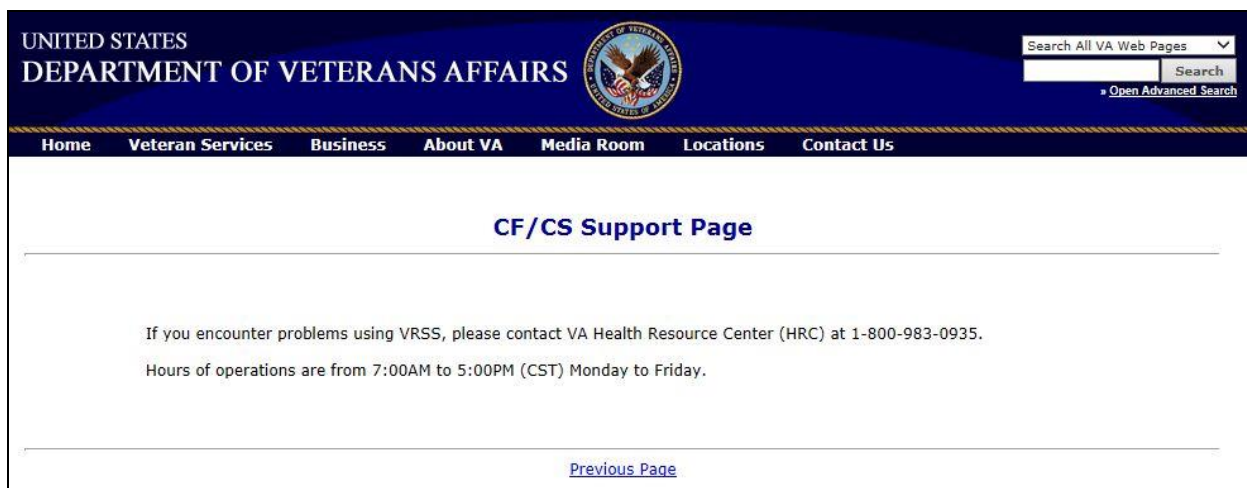


Figure 19 – Veterans Re-entry Search Service Support Page

### 5.1.5 Logout

Selecting [Logout](#) from the **CF/CS Main Menu** (Figure 13) will logout and direct the User back to the **Correctional Facility/Court System User Welcome Page** (Figure 3), where Users again have the option to view announcements, accept the VRSS Terms and Conditions of Use, and Proceed to the **Login Page**.

## 5.2 CF/CS Main Menu: Uploading CSV Data

Users (outside VA) working at participating Correctional Facilities or Court Systems will upload CSV files via an https web interface linked to the VRSS system network. CSV data will automatically be validated and processed by VRSS servers, transferred to a secure file transfer server, and compared to data housed within VA's single authoritative source, VADIR. As a process output, an auto-generated list of Veterans currently found within the Correctional Facility or Court System will be provided to the User who uploaded the file, as well as to VHA Veteran Justice Outreach (VJO) and HCRV (Healthcare for Re-entry Veterans) specialists.

**To successfully upload a file, a CF or CS User must:**

Step 1: Create a file

Step 2: Convert the file (if necessary) from Excel format (.xls) to CSV (.csv) format

Step 3: Choose the file

Step 4: Validate the file

Step 5: Upload the file

### 5.2.1 (Step 1) Create a File Using VRSS File Specification Guidelines

This information listed in this section outlines the file specifications required for any and all file uploads to VRSS, and mirrors that found in the File Form Specifications document; it is also repeated in under question 5 in this document's frequently asked questions (Section 6).

#### Website for Data Uploading

<https://vrss.va.gov>

#### File Fields

Files uploaded to VRSS must be in comma-separated value (CSV) format and contain fourteen (14) distinct fields, listed below in *Table 1*. Seven (7) of these fields contain individual-specific information, five (5) contain information about the correctional facility or court, and two (2) concern the individual's parole date and anticipated release or court hearing date (if applicable). Court users: Please note under "Description/Notes" where data modifications for court systems are appropriate.

*Table 1 – Field Names and Descriptions (\*Required)*

Field Name	Description/Notes
*FirstName	First Name of all incarcerated or charged individuals in your facility
MiddleName	Middle Name of all incarcerated or charged individuals in your facility
*LastName	Last Name of all incarcerated or charged individuals in your facility
SuffixName	Suffix Name of all incarcerated or charged individuals in your facility
*SSN	Social Security Number of all incarcerated or charged individuals in your facility
DateOfBirth	Date of Birth of all incarcerated or charged individuals in your facility
Gender	Gender of all incarcerated or charged individuals in your facility
*Prisoner/DefendantIDNumber	Unique Prisoner ID or Defendant ID numbers for all incarcerated or charged individuals in your facility
CellLocation	Cell Location identifier for your facility
*Facility/CourtName	Facility or Court Name for your location  Note: If this information is stored in acronym format, it is ok to use acronyms as VHA Specialists will be able to identify appropriate acronyms as required
Facility/CourtZIP	Zip Code within which your Facility or Court resides
*Facility/CourtState	State within which your Facility or Court resides
ParoleDate	Parole Date of all incarcerated or charged individuals in your facility
Release/HearingDate	Actual or projected release date for incarcerated individuals or hearing date for charged individuals

**Important Note:** Records for individuals in Halfway Homes and Work Release Centers should be included in the upload as they are considered part of the current incarcerated Veterans outreach initiative.

## Mandatory Data Fields

Missing or incomplete data will reduce the quality of results produced by VRSS; the more complete the data entries for each individual, the greater the likelihood of successful identification. The fields indicated below are required to enable accurate queries. If partial or no data is available for a particular individual, these fields still must not be left blank, as this will cause VRSS to reject the entire file:

- FirstName
- LastName
- SSN (Social Security Number)
- Prisoner/DefendantIDNumber
- Facility/CourtName
- Facility/CourtState

**Important Note:** The essential query logic requires one of the two following combinations for each prisoner/defendant submitted: **EITHER [SSN + LastName + FirstName], OR [SSN + DateOfBirth]**

Prisoner/DefendantIDNumber is particularly essential, as the CF/CS Output File sent back to the facility will contain only Prisoner/Defendant ID numbers.

## Missing Data

Algorithms are set to use information provided within certain tolerances and are more effective when more complete data is provided.

Additionally, the following standards should be adhered to in regard to missing data:

- Instead of using zeros (“0”s) for missing data, leave the field blank (note that this does not apply to required fields; see below guidance on missing data for required fields)
- Blanks should be right-padded (i.e., blanks should come after, not before, any data entered)
- For required fields indicated below by ‘Allow Null = N’, any fields left blank will cause VRSS to reject the entire file and generate an error message. To proceed with the upload, all required fields must contain data. If required-field data are not available for an inmate/defendant, he/she should be deleted from the file

## Field Specifications

Table 2 – Comma-Separated Value (CSV) Format

Field Name	Data Type	Length	Allow Null	Options / Description
*FirstName	Varchar(20)	20	N	
MiddleName	Varchar(20)	20	Y	
*LastName	Varchar(26)	26	N	
SuffixName	Varchar(4)	4	Y	
*SSN	Varchar(9)	9	N	XXXXXXXXXX
DateOfBirth	Date(8)	8	Y	YYYYMMDD
Gender	Char(1)	1	Y	M, F, U
*Prisoner/DefendantIDNumber	Varchar(30)	30	N	

<b>CellLocation</b>	Varchar(20)	20	Y	
<b>*Facility/CourtName</b>	Varchar(80)	80	N	
<b>Facility/CourtZIP</b>	Char(5)	5	Y	
<b>*Facility/CourtState</b>	Char(2)	2	N	<i>Two-letter state abbreviation</i>
<b>ParoleDate</b>	Date(8)	8	Y	YYYYMMDD
<b>Release/HearingDate</b>	Date(8)	8	Y	YYYYMMDD

## CSV Header Row

**A critical note on your CSV file's top (first) row:** VRSS treats the top (first) row in a CSV file as a header row (typically reserved for column titles, or "headers"), whether or not it is intentionally being used for this purpose. *Information included within this row will NOT be processed.* Therefore, **you must include a header row in your file**, reserving the top/first row for column titles (FirstName, MiddleName, etc.) across all 14 columns. This "pushes" the beginning of the list to row 2, ensuring that all records are addressed. If you do not include a header row, any inmate/defendant information in row 1 (the entire record) will be treated as a header and ignored. If for some reason row 1 does not or cannot include headers/column titles, leave it blank and begin your listing on row 2.

## ParoleDate

Use field/column 13 of 14, **ParoleDate** (tables 1 and 2), to note (if known) the parole date of incarcerated or charged individuals within your facility. Note that the ParoleDate field accepts date-only input (YYYYMMDD), and not text. If unknown or not applicable, leave this field blank.

## File Specifications

**File Name:** Space(s) in a file name is not permitted or the file will not upload. Files exceeding fifty (50) characters in the file name will not be accepted. Special characters should not be used in the file name.

**File Type:** Files must be in .csv format and contain 14 columns (described above).

**File Size:** File size is limited to 100MB. If a file exceeds this limit, VRSS will reject the file and generate an error message.

**Use of "" or ' for values:** If "" or ' are used within the file, the characters will be removed and the file will process. It is preferred, however, that files are sent without special characters.

### 5.2.2 (Step 2) Convert the File (if necessary)

The following instructions can be found just above the CSV Upload Form on the **CF/CS Main Page**.

#### Convert XLS documents to CSV

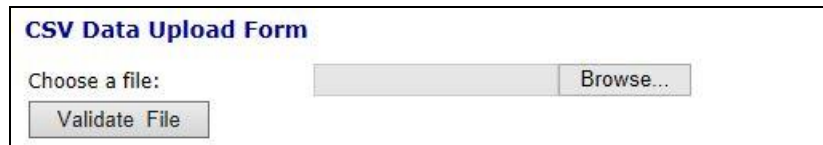
1. Open the XLS file in Microsoft Excel.
2. Click the "File" menu and choose "Save As." If using Microsoft Excel 2007, click the Microsoft Office "Button" and choose "Save As."
3. Choose one of the CSV formats listed in the "Save as type" drop-down box. If you are using Windows, choose "CSV (MS-DOS)." If you are using Mac OS, you should choose "CSV (Macintosh)."
4. Choose a filename and a location to save the file.



5. Click "Save."

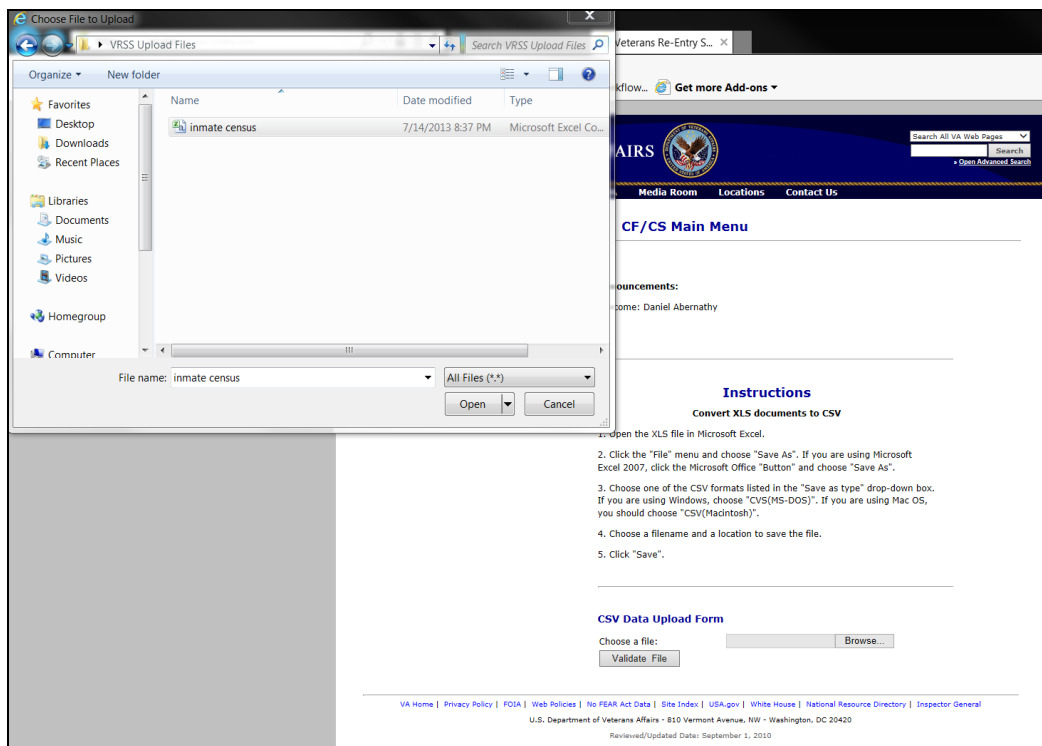
### 5.2.3 (Step 3) Choose the File Using the Upload Form

Page-bottom on the **CF/CS Main Menu** is the **CSV Data Upload Form**—the VRSS system's upload utility. This form allows the User to choose and upload his or her facility file containing records to be checked against the VADIR database.



To choose and upload Correctional Facility/Court System CSV files:

1. As displayed in *Figure 20*, select **Browse...** to locate (choose) the file that will be uploaded from the User's computer to the VRSS database.



*Figure 20 – Browsing for User's local CSV File*

2. Select the file, and select **Open** to place its path in the **CSV Data Upload Form** field.

### 5.2.4 (Step 4) Validate the File

3. Select **Validate File**. The file will be uploaded (for temporary validation purposes only), opened, and quality checked against the VRSS system's file upload requirements (file type, then format, then content). **Note:** this preliminary upload does NOT constitute a formal file upload.

- If any uploaded file data deviates from the prescribed file format specification, a negative file validation similar to the following (*Figure 21*) will display:

```

Step 3. Validate File
bad_test2.csv -> badtest2.csv[16 rows found in the file.]
File Error #1 : PrisonerIDNumber doesn't allow null (row #2)
File Error #2 : FacilityZip doesn't allow null (row #2)
File Error #3 : PrisonerIDNumber doesn't allow null (row #3)
File Error #4 : FacilityZip doesn't allow null (row #3)
File Error #5 : PrisonerIDNumber doesn't allow null (row #4)
File Error #6 : FacilityZip doesn't allow null (row #4)
File Error #7 : PrisonerIDNumber doesn't allow null (row #5)
File Error #8 : FacilityZip doesn't allow null (row #5)
File Error #9 : PrisonerIDNumber doesn't allow null (row #6)
File Error #10 : FacilityZip doesn't allow null (row #6)
File Error #11 : PrisonerIDNumber doesn't allow null (row #7)
File Error #12 : FacilityZip doesn't allow null (row #7)
File Error #13 : PrisonerIDNumber doesn't allow null (row #8)
File Error #14 : FacilityZip doesn't allow null (row #8)
File Error #15 : PrisonerIDNumber doesn't allow null (row #9)
File Error #16 : FacilityZip doesn't allow null (row #9)
File Error #17 : FacilityZip doesn't allow null (row #10)
Acknowledgement required #1 : There are(is) 13 missing data (FirstName) in badtest2.csv out of 15 records
which is more than 10% acknowledge threshold limit set for this data.
Acknowledgement required #2 : There are(is) 5 missing data (LastName) in badtest2.csv out of 15 records
which is more than 10% acknowledge threshold limit set for this data.

[ Validation Result Summary ]
17 file error(s) found. File upload is rejected and removed from the server.
2 acknowledgement error(s) found.
Go Back to Upload Page | Print Page

```

*Figure 21 – Negative File Validation Message*

- Users receiving a negative file validation message should correct all file discrepancies (individual record errors in the CSV file although they show as “File Errors”) and resubmit. To resubmit:
  - Select the [Go Back to Upload Page](#) hyperlink at the bottom or top of the negative validation message to return to the **CF/CS Main Menu**
  - Follow steps 1 through 3 above to choose the file and initiate the validation process
  - Those seeking further assistance should proceed to the **Veterans Re-entry Search Service Support Page** or contact the VRSS Technical Support center at **1-800-983-0935** (toll free) to speak with a Technical Support representative
  - **Optional:** To print a copy of the negative validation results (for your records), select the [Print Page](#) hyperlink at the bottom of the message and follow your computer print prompts



- If no negative validation messages are returned, or once all negative validation issues have been addressed and files successfully submitted, a positive file validation message similar to the following (*Figure 22*) will display:

The screenshot shows the Department of Veterans Affairs website interface. At the top is a blue header with the VA logo and a search bar. Below the header is a navigation menu with links: Home, Veteran Services, Business, About VA, Media Room, Locations, and Contact Us. The main content area has a purple link "Go Back to Upload Page" at the top. Below this is a dark blue box with the text "File Validation". Underneath, there are three steps: "Step 1. File Upload" showing file details (name: good\_test.csv, type: application/vnd.ms-excel, size: 1.6845703125 Kb), "Step 2. Open file" showing the file name, and "Step 3. Validate File" showing the validation result: "good\_test.csv -> goodtest.csv[16 rows found in the file.] No issue found." Below the steps is a section titled "[ Validation Result Summary ]" with the text "No issues found. Click the button below to process uploaded data files." and a button labeled "Upload Data". At the bottom of the page are two purple links: "Go Back to Upload Page" and "Print Page".

*Figure 22 – Positive File Validation Message*

- **Optional:** To print a copy of the positive validation results (for facility records), select the [Print Page](#) hyperlink at the bottom of the message and follow your computer print prompts

### 5.2.5 (Step 5) Upload the File

4. Select **Upload Data** to officially submit the CSV file to the VRSS system.

- A successful data upload message similar to the following (*Figure 23*) will display:

**File Validation**

**Step 1. File Upload**  
 File name: good\_test.csv  
 File type: application/vnd.ms-excel  
 File size: 1.6845703125 Kb

**Step 2. Open file**  
 File : good\_test.csv

**Step 3. Validate File**  
 good\_test.csv -> goodtest.csv[16 rows found in the file.]  
 No issue found.

**[ Validation Result Summary ]**  
 No issues found. Click the button below to process uploaded data files.

Processing Data Completed.

**Step 4. DB Insert**  
 " good\_test.csv with file id 43 has been inserted successfully to the database.  
 The upload was successful and the submitted file will be processed shortly.

[Go Back to Upload Page](#) | [Print Page](#)

*Figure 23 – Successful Data Upload Message*

- **Optional:** To print a copy of the successful file upload results (for facility records), select the [Print Page](#) hyperlink at the bottom of the message and follow your computer print prompts

## 5.2.6 Processing and CF/CS Output File Notification

Once a file has been successfully validated and uploaded, Users can check the file’s processing status by selecting “[Upload History](#)” from the **CF/CS Main Menu** (*Figure 13*), which will direct them to the **Upload History Page** (*Figure 16*) specific to the User and display the status of any file(s) processed or being processed.

- A file’s “processing time” is the time lapsed between the initial file upload (to VRSS, *post-validation*) and the moment a CF/CS Output File has been made available for download, which should be delivered in proximity to the notification email
- File processing times will vary, ranging from about 2 hours, to as many as 24 hours; 3 hours is the current average
- Not all files uploaded will yield results (a list of individuals who have served in the U.S. military), but all processed files will prompt a CF/CS Output File in the form of a .csv file that contains either PrisonerDefendantID numbers (results) or empty fields (no results)
- Whether or not a User’s uploaded file has produced any results, the User will receive an email similar to the following once processing is complete and the CF/CS Output File is available for download:

-----Original Message-----

From: [no-reply@va.gov](mailto:no-reply@va.gov) [<mailto:no-reply@va.gov>]

Sent: Monday, June 24, 2013 8:16 PM

To: Gandhi, Ujwal (Phase One); VRSS\_Support

Subject: VRSS File Upload Complete

VRSS User,

Your recent VRSS file upload has been processed. Please log in to <https://vrss.va.gov> to retrieve your Veteran Match Report.

Thank You,

VRSS Admin

## 6 FAQs

### 1. What is VRSS?

VRSS stands for Veterans Re-entry Search Service, and is designed:

- to identify and find inmates/offenders in criminal justice agencies who have served in the U.S. military, and, once identified
- to enable VA Justice Outreach Specialists and criminal justice agencies to assist Veterans in obtaining outreach services while incarcerated and, once released and in the community, assistance in obtaining access to VA services and benefits and community services as they reenter the community

### 2. How does it work?

VRSS is an online tool that enables participating correctional facilities (prisons, jails, etc.) and court systems (courthouses, judicial buildings with holding facilities, etc.) to upload a list of current inmates or defendants, which are then checked behind VA's computer firewall against records of U.S. military service in the VA-DoD Identity Repository (VADIR), a frequently updated copy of the military's *Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System*. For Veterans positively identified, a resulting Veterans' listing will be posted to the VRSS web portal, which authorized Correctional Facility/Court System staff and Veteran Outreach specialists can download and use to conduct appropriate outreach prior to, during, and after release from incarceration.

### 3. Who is my Veterans Justice Program (VJP) Outreach Specialist? (Note: also referred to as VA or VHA Outreach workers or staff)

Prisons: If you want to find who the VJP Specialist is for your prison, there is a listing on the following website: Healthcare for Re-entry Veterans (outreach - state and federal prisons):

<http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/Reentry.asp>

Jails/Courts: If you want to find who the VJP Specialist is for your jail or court, there is a listing on the following website: Veterans Justice Outreach (outreach - law enforcement, jails, courts):

<http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/VJO.asp>

If you cannot not locate your VJP, or discover that one has not been assigned to represent your institution, please contact Jim McGuire, PhD. at (310) 478-3711 ext. 41450.

4. *What are the VA's assurance for use, confidentiality, and security of data from justice agencies? (Also posted on the website):*

Veterans Re-entry Search Service (VRSS) - Terms and Conditions of Use:

"This secure Web site enables correctional and other criminal justice system entities to identify inmates or defendants who have served in the United States (U.S.) military. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) makes this service available to facilitate its own direct outreach to these Veterans, and to inform the development of Veteran-specific programs in the criminal justice system. VA has authorized your access to this site because you represent a correctional or other criminal justice system entity that seeks to identify Veterans in its inmate or defendant population. To use the site, you will provide the following information on the individuals whose history of military service you wish to inquire about:

1. Name
2. Social Security Number
3. Date of Birth
4. Gender
5. Prisoner/Defendant ID number
6. Cell Location
7. Facility/Court Name
8. Facility/Court ZIP Code
9. Facility/Court State
10. Parole Date
11. Release or Hearing Date

VA will use the information you provide to identify individuals for whom it has a record of military service. Once this process of identification is complete (please allow at least 24 hours), you will be able to access on this secure Web site a list of the booking numbers or prison ID numbers of individuals with a record of military service. VA will also provide its outreach staff with sufficient information to locate and contact individuals identified through this process.

VA makes the following assurances about its use and handling of such data:

1. **Data Protection and System Security:** VA will protect PII on the VRSS in accordance with all applicable federal laws and regulations, VA policies and procedures, and National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) requirements and guidelines, including, but not limited to, the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a), the Federal Information Security Management Act of 2002 (FISMA, 44 U.S.C. 3541-49), 38 U.S.C. 5701, and VA Directive and Handbook 6500.
2. **Breach Notification.** VA complies with federal statutes and regulations in reporting data breach and loss of PII, in particular 38 U.S.C. 5721-27.
3. **Administrative Safeguards.** VA will restrict access to the data transmitted to it via this Web site to only those authorized employees and officials who need it to perform their official duties in connection with the uses of the information described above.

4. Limited Use. VA will use data transmitted to it via this Web site to identify individuals for whom it has a record of military service, and for no other purpose. VA will not use the information in any determination of benefits nor will the PII be added to a Privacy Act system of records.
5. Disposition of Data. VA may retain data pertaining to your use of the VRSS for lawful purposes, such as to perform tests and to conduct and facilitate audits of the use of the VRSS portal.

VA will dispose of PII and data pertaining to your use of the VRSS portal in accordance with NARA approved records control schedules.”

If additional information is needed on data security, this can be obtained by contacting: Jim McGuire, PhD, (310) 478-3711 ext. 41450.

*5. What data is needed from a prison, court, or jail, when uploading a list of inmates or defendants, and in what format?*

## File Fields

Files uploaded to VRSS must be in comma-separated value (CSV) format and contain fourteen (14) distinct fields, listed below in *Table 3*. Seven (7) of these fields contain individual-specific information, five (5) contain information about the correctional facility or court, and two (2) concern the individual’s parole date and anticipated release or court hearing date (if applicable). Court users: Please note under “Description/Notes” where data modifications for court systems are appropriate.

*Table 3 – Field Names and Descriptions (\*Required)*

Field Name	Description/Notes
*FirstName	First Name of all incarcerated or charged individuals in your facility
MiddleName	Middle Name of all incarcerated or charged individuals in your facility
*LastName	Last Name of all incarcerated or charged individuals in your facility
SuffixName	Suffix Name of all incarcerated or charged individuals in your facility
*SSN	Social Security Number of all incarcerated or charged individuals in your facility
DateOfBirth	Date of Birth of all incarcerated or charged individuals in your facility
Gender	Gender of all incarcerated or charged individuals in your facility
*Prisoner/DefendantIDNumber	Unique Prisoner ID or Defendant ID numbers for all incarcerated or charged individuals in your facility
CellLocation	Cell Location identifier for your facility
*Facility/CourtName	Facility or Court Name for your location Note: If this information is stored in acronym format, it is ok to use acronyms as VHA Specialists will be able to identify appropriate acronyms as required
Facility/CourtZIP	Zip Code within which your Facility or Court resides
*Facility/CourtState	State within which your Facility or Court resides
ParoleDate	Parole Date of all incarcerated or charged individuals in your facility
Release/HearingDate	Actual or projected release date for incarcerated individuals or hearing date for charged individuals

**Important Note:** Records for individuals in Halfway Homes and Work Release Centers should be included in the upload as they are considered part of the current incarcerated Veterans outreach initiative.

## Mandatory Data Fields

Missing or incomplete data will reduce the quality of results produced by VRSS; the more complete the data entries for each individual, the greater the likelihood of successful identification. The fields indicated below are required to enable accurate queries. If partial or no data is available for a particular individual, these fields still must not be left blank, as this will cause VRSS to reject the entire file:

- FirstName
- LastName
- SSN (Social Security Number)
- Prisoner/DefendantIDNumber
- Facility/CourtName
- Facility/CourtState

**Important Note:** The essential query logic requires one of the two following combinations for each prisoner/defendant submitted: **EITHER [SSN + LastName + FirstName], OR [SSN + DateOfBirth]**

Prisoner/DefendantIDNumber is particularly essential, as the CF/CS Output File sent back to the facility will contain only Prisoner/Defendant ID numbers.

## Missing Data

Algorithms are set to use information provided within certain tolerances and are more effective when more complete data is provided.

Additionally, the following standards should be adhered to in regard to missing data:

- Instead of using zeros (“0”s) for missing data, leave the field blank (note that this does not apply to required fields; see below guidance on missing data for required fields)
- Blanks should be right-padded (i.e., blanks should come after, not before, any data entered)
- For required fields indicated below by ‘Allow Null = N’, any fields left blank will cause VRSS to reject the entire file and generate an error message. To proceed with the upload, all required fields must contain data. If required-field data are not available for an inmate/defendant, he/she should be deleted from the file

## Field Specifications

Table 4 – Comma-Separated Value (CSV) Format

Field Name	Data Type	Length	Allow Null	Options / Description
*FirstName	Varchar(20)	20	N	
MiddleName	Varchar(20)	20	Y	
*LastName	Varchar(26)	26	N	
SuffixName	Varchar(4)	4	Y	
*SSN	Varchar(9)	9	N	XXXXXXXXXX
DateOfBirth	Date(8)	8	Y	YYYYMMDD

<b>Gender</b>	Char(1)	1	Y	<b>M, F, U</b>
<b>*Prisoner/DefendantIDNumber</b>	Varchar(30)	30	N	
<b>CellLocation</b>	Varchar(20)	20	Y	
<b>*Facility/CourtName</b>	Varchar(80)	80	N	
<b>Facility/CourtZIP</b>	Char(5)	5	Y	
<b>*Facility/CourtState</b>	Char(2)	2	N	<i>Two-letter state abbreviation</i>
<b>ParoleDate</b>	Date(8)	8	Y	YYYYMMDD
<b>Release/HearingDate</b>	Date(8)	8	Y	YYYYMMDD

## CSV Header Row

**A critical note on your CSV file's top (first) row:** VRSS treats the top (first) row in a CSV file as a header row (typically reserved for column titles, or "headers"), whether or not it is intentionally being used for this purpose. *Information included within this row will NOT be processed.* Therefore, **you must include a header row in your file**, reserving the top/first row for column titles (FirstName, MiddleName, etc.) across all 14 columns. This "pushes" the beginning of the list to row 2, ensuring that all records are addressed. If you do not include a header row, any inmate/defendant information in row 1 (the entire record) will be treated as a header and ignored. If for some reason row 1 does not or cannot include headers/column titles, leave it blank and begin your listing on row 2.

## ParoleDate

Use field/column 13 of 14, **ParoleDate** (tables 3 and 4), to note (if known) the parole date of incarcerated or charged individuals within your facility. Note that the ParoleDate field accepts date-only input (YYYYMMDD), and not text. If unknown or not applicable, leave this field blank.

## File Specifications

**File Name:** Space(s) in a file name is not permitted or the file will not upload. Files exceeding fifty (50) characters in the file name will not be accepted. Special characters should not be used in the file name.

**File Type:** Files must be in .csv format and contain 14 columns (described above).

**File Size:** File size is limited to 100MB. If a file exceeds this limit, VRSS will reject the file and generate an error message.

**Use of "" or ' for values:** If "" or ' are used within the file, the characters will be removed and the file will process. It is preferred, however, that files are sent without special characters.

## 7 Acronyms

In addition to the acronyms listed and defined below, the OIT Master Glossary can be found at [http://vaww.oedwss.va.gov/process/Libray/master\\_glossary/masterglossary.htm](http://vaww.oedwss.va.gov/process/Libray/master_glossary/masterglossary.htm).

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
CSV	Comma-Separated Values
DOJ	Department of Justice
EVH	Eliminate Veteran Homelessness
GUI	Graphical User Interface

HCRV	Healthcare for Re-entry Veterans
IT	Information Technology
OIT	Office of Information and Technology
VA	Department of Veterans Affairs
VADIR	VA/DoD Identity Repository
XML	Extensible Markup Language
VHA	Veterans Health Administration
VJO	Veterans Justice Outreach
VJP	Veterans Justice Programs (VJO+HCRV)
VRSS	Veteran Re-entry Search Service

For questions regarding this User Guide, please contact Sean Clark, (859) 233-4511, x 3188.

**Thank You for using the VRSS system.**