



**THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
WASHINGTON**

September 24, 2021

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE UNDER SECRETARIES, ASSISTANT SECRETARIES,  
AND OTHER KEY OFFICIALS WITH AN EQUIVALENT LEVEL OF AUTHORITY**

**SUBJECT:** Delegation of Authority for Prize Competitions under the America Competes Reauthorization Act of 2010, 15 U.S.C. § 3719 (VIEWS 5802789)

**1. BACKGROUND.** The America Competes Reauthorization Act of 2010, 15 U.S.C. § 3719, provides Federal agencies with the authority to conduct prize competitions to spur innovation and to solve tough problems to advance core missions.

**2. DELEGATION.** This memorandum delegates the Secretary's authority to the Director of the Suicide Prevention Program within the Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention and to the Chief Officer, Healthcare Innovation and Learning, within VHA. The following authorities are hereby delegated:

- a. Determining the types of prizes appropriate to stimulate innovation that has the potential to advance the mission of VA (15 U.S.C. § 3719(c)(4));
- b. Selecting topics for prize competitions in consulting widely both within and outside the Federal Government, and with advisory committees (15 U.S.C. § 3719(d));
- c. Advertising each prize competition to encourage broad participation (15 U.S.C. § 3719(e));
- d. Publishing a notice on a publicly accessible Government website regarding the details of the prize competition (15 U.S.C. § 3719(f));
- e. Determining amounts of liability insurance required to be obtained by participants (15 U.S.C. § 3719(i)(2));
- f. Requiring a participant to waive claims against the administering entity arising out of the unauthorized use or disclosure by the agency of intellectual property, trade secrets, or confidential business information of the participant (15 U.S.C. § 3719(i)(4));
- g. Directly or through an agreement appoint one or more qualified judges to select the winner or winners of the prize competition. (15 U.S.C. § 3719(k) (1));

Subj: Delegation of Authority for Prize Competitions under the America Competes Reauthorization Act of 2010, 15 U.S.C. § 3719 (VIEWS 5802789)

h. Entering into an agreement with a private, nonprofit entity to administer a prize competition, subject to the provisions of this section. (15 U.S.C. § 3719(l));

i. Accepting funds from other Federal agencies to support competitions and not give any special consideration to any agency or entity. (15 U.S.C. § 3719(m)(1));

j. Increasing the amount of a prize after an initial announcement is made (15 U.S.C. § 3719(m)(3)(B));

k. Approving the award of more than \$1,000,000 in cash prizes for prize competitions (15 U.S.C. § 3719(m)(4)(B)).

**3. AUTHORITIES.** 38 U.S.C. §§ 303 and 512; 15 U.S.C. § 3719; VA Directive 0000.

**4. RESTRICTIONS.** None. This delegation of authority is concurrent with the Secretary's authority and does not preclude the Secretary from exercising, modifying or further delegating such authority.

**5. REDELEGATION.** The Director of Suicide Prevention may redelegate this authority to the Director of the Veterans Crisis Line and the Chief Officer for Healthcare Innovation and Learning may redelegate this authority to the Executive Director of the VHA Innovation Ecosystem. No further redelegation is allowed.

**6. EFFECTIVE DATE.** This delegation of authority is effective upon signature and will remain in effect for two years.



Denis McDonough