The SQUIRES GROUP Inc.

THE CLIENT

Department of Veterans Affairs

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) established the VA Loan Guaranty service that provides home loan benefits to eligible veterans obtaining mortgage loans through private lenders by guarantying a portion of the loan against default while offering competitive rates with little or no down payment.

Currently, there are modernization efforts underway at the VA to enable better services and more efficient interactions for Veterans and employees. The vision of the Loan Guaranty Product Line is to develop a business and agency partnership to support ongoing Loan Guaranty modernization efforts and drive innovation.

THE SUPPORT

- DevSecOps
- Data Analytics
- Help Desk
- Training
- Continuous Implementation, Continuous Delivery and Deployment (CI/CD)
- AWS
- Docker and Swarm
- React
- JavaScript
- Data Structure Libraries
- Scripting languages like Bash, Python, and Groovy
- Linux Systems Administration
- Windows Systems Administration

THE CHALLENGE

The VA issued a multi-year contract to our prime integration partner to remove some of the obstacles it was currently facing. Those obstacles included: the lack of a unified system, shared services and platforms, one-off legacy systems, high operational costs, scant performance data, and limited shared vision or strategy.

The goal of the project was to provide shared services in the areas of DevSecOps, Data Analytics, Help Desk and Training. The new contract work aims to provide transparency and data insights to help veterans make informed, low-risk decisions regarding their home loans.

During the project ramp-up phase, our prime integration partner tasked us to staff the project team with mid-to-senior level DevOps Engineers and Application (React) Developers. Due to budgetary constraints of the project, this would be no easy task!

THE SOLUTION

To begin, we focused our sourcing and recruiting efforts on the mid-level positions. Our partner was looking to bring on DevSecOps Engineers and developers with 5-10 years of experience. This is an interesting point in an IT engineer/ developers' career. It is the time in their career when they are consolidating their experience. So, we had to look for an added incentive for candidates to consider, to further build on the charm of a "new project."

In addition, the budgetary constraints meant that it would be extremely difficult to find resources in the Mid-Atlantic region where the cost of living is higher and technical resources are in high demand. Since the project would accommodate remote work, our recruiting team expanded their talent search to pockets outside of the region with a lower cost of living.

The biggest incentive our team promoted was the opportunity to switch from a commercial project to a federal project. While some commercial projects pay more, they are generally much shorter in duration. Federal projects on the other hand, are almost always longer term, and in this case, we could present a four-year opportunity to qualified candidates—with remote work options!

THE SUCCESS

Through our creative talent sourcing efforts, we were able to identify, qualify and onboard three talented DevSecOps Engineers. By expanding our recruiting efforts outside the Mid-Atlantic region, we successfully hired candidates from Tennessee, North Carolina and Virginia. Finally, we were able to recruit a React Developer based out of Texas.

Today, our prime integration partner continues to rely on The Squires Group to expand their team of DevSecOps professionals to provide ongoing support to the Loan Guaranty product line modernization efforts.