



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Washington DC 20420

OCT 17 2007

Ms. Nancy H. Kichak
Associate Director
Strategic Human Resources Policy
Office of Personnel Management
ATTN: Hispanic Report
1900 E Street NW, Room 6500
Washington, DC 20415-1900

Dear Ms. Kichak:

I am pleased to submit the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Fiscal Year 2007 Report on Hispanic Employment in the Federal Government. This report addresses VA's best practices and innovative human capital practices used to recruit, outreach, and retain talented and skilled citizens, including Hispanic Americans.

VA's total number of Hispanic Americans in its permanent workforce during Fiscal Year 2007 is 15,594 or 6.77 percent. Of these, 5,774 Hispanic Americans are veterans, representing 7.66 percent of the VA veteran population.

As the Executive in Charge of the Office of Human Resources and Administration, I am committed to advancing the goals of the Office of Personnel Management's Management Agenda by building a Federal workforce that draws from the strength of America's diversity. I will continue to promote and encourage the Department to reach out to more communities so that all Americans interested in public service may have access to opportunities for Federal employment.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul J. Hutter".

Paul J. Hutter
Executive in Charge of the
Office of Human Resources and Administration

Enclosure

**Department of Veterans Affairs
Hispanic Employment in the
Federal Government
Fiscal Year 2007 Report**

Community Outreach – VA senior management focused on outreach and recruitment processes during Fiscal Year 2007. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), and American GI Forum (AGIF) continued their introduction of veteran business enterprise and outreach phase of the Community Prosperity Partnership (CPP). The prototype achieved exceptional success with the support of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

VA, LULAC and AGIF implemented the first ever local community service delivery prototype between affinity Hispanic associations, institutions of higher education, private sector, Federal, state and local governments. LULAC labeled a new marketing platform as the “LULAC Hispanic Veterans Summit.” LULAC will introduce the successful Puerto Rico model in Central Florida and San Antonio, Texas for Fiscal Year 2008, and AGIF expanded the initiative to include all veterans groups and local communities.

CPP will host the 2007 LULAC Veterans Summit in Orlando, Florida, on November 8-11, 2007, at Disney’s Coronado County Springs Resort in Lake Buena Vista, Florida. The Summit will kick off the CPP in the state of Florida, serving our Nation’s veterans and the local community via LULAC’s brand new community-based centers. Seminars and workshops will feature expert panelists addressing the issues that are impacting veterans the most, including access to benefits, education and employment opportunities, entrepreneurship, and healthcare. LULAC expects tangible deliverables to veterans and local communities ranging from small business development through veterans business enterprise to ultimately improve the socio-economic base of local communities by creating jobs where they are most needed. Promoting volunteer services is another key component at the local levels through the establishment of six new LULAC local community centers in Florida centers. With the support of National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Kennedy Space Center is providing surplus computers and furniture.

VA, with the support of the LULAC and the AGIF, is redefining the delivery of diversity management services in the VA for the Hispanic American community. This new approach defines the service delivery functions of the special emphasis programs as a diversity business enterprise supporting local communities. This high profile public service model is oriented on VA’s enabling and mission goals.

VA's Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) Healthcare Retention and Recruitment Office (HRRO) participated in recruitment exhibits at the following conferences: LULAC CPP Hispanic VA Summit (October 2006), Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) Annual National Conference, National Association of Hispanic Nurses' Annual National Conference, and the National Society for Hispanic Professionals Annual Conference.

VHA's Office of Research and Development (ORD) actively participated in a number of outreach activities with various Hispanic Veteran Service Organizations and Hispanic-Serving Institutions, which included but are not limited to the AGIF (Hispanic Veterans Service Organization (VSO) conference) and the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities. The ORD attended the AGIF summer conference and presented at the summer workshop training for the Minority Veterans Program Coordinators, sponsored by the Center for Minority Veterans. The ORD presents throughout the year informational briefings to VSOs that include Hispanic audiences and other VSO organizations. For example, Disabled American Veterans State Chapter of Nebraska, in which the State Commander is Hispanic.

VA's Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) held numerous outreach activities including briefings to provide employment information to service members who are separating from active duty at Fort Bliss and Fort Hood, Texas. In addition, to these briefings, employees of the Waco Regional Office also conducted outreach seminars for veterans and their families located in El Paso. The majority of individuals attending the briefings were Hispanic. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 81.2 percent of El Paso County is Hispanic or Latino.

Recruitment – In an effort to reach a large number of professionally trained Hispanic students, VA has partnered with the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities. HACU's internationally recognized award winning National Internship Program (NIP) provides opportunities for students to gain professional work experience at VA that will enable them to make more educated career choices and supplement their academic study with practical work experience. VA's Veterans Health Administration internship commitment during 2007 totaled \$619,000.

VHA supported nontraditional internship during the 2007 National Summer Internship. The HACU Internship Program provides students an opportunity to earn academic credit and gain an enhanced appreciation of VA as an employer of choice. VA's Veterans Benefit Administration hiring increased by 23 permanent Hispanic employees to a total of 765 compared to 742 in FY 2006. VA's National Cemetery Administration (NCA) hired 9 Hispanic Americans during fiscal year 2007 matching their 2006 hires. NCA has a total workforce of 1,634 which includes 155 Hispanic Americans.

Sixty-one HACU interns participated in this year's Summer Internship Program; 17 were in Washington, DC, and 44 were in field facilities. This year the program focused on securing interns for mission critical occupations in budget, finance, human resources, pharmacy, nursing, healthcare administration, and engineering. While this was the focus, interns also participated in other occupations including public affairs, broadcast media, and general administration. VHA hired two of the above referenced interns into full-time employment positions.

The Student Employment Educational Program (SEEP) provides minority students opportunities to work at VA before making career choices. The annual budget for this program is \$3,000,000. This year, VHA's Healthcare Recruitment and Retention Office (HRRO) reported 171 students who participated in SEEP, and 7 were Hispanic Americans.

The Office of Academic Affiliations reported in FY 2006, 100,893 (25,344 paid and 75,549 without compensation (WOC)) students, interns, and residents who received all or part of their clinical training in VA health care facilities in affiliation with over 1,000 institutions of higher education. Forty-four of these colleges and universities affiliated with VHA facilities have been designated as Hispanic Serving Institutions by the Department of Education. These affiliations resulted in 5,077 (1,280 paid and 3,797 WOC) students receiving part of their required clinical education in VA facilities in Fiscal Year 2006. The Health Professions Education and Training Programs do not provide awards to colleges or universities. These programs provide direct support to students receiving VA training. Direct support includes salary and fringe benefits paid directly to medical residents and associated health trainees.

Indirect support is the cost of VA Medical Center staff who are instructors for trainees and other administrative costs associated with the program. The majority of the students who participated in the WOC basis incurred indirect support associated with the training program. The Education and Training Budget for FY 2006 totaled \$1,046,255,000 (\$509,333,000 stipends or direct cost and \$536,922,000 indirect cost). The average stipend cost (direct) for paid trainees is estimated at \$20,184. (There is no stipend (direct cost) associated with WOC trainees.) The average indirect cost for paid and WOC trainees is estimated at \$4,289. The total dollars support for students at Hispanic Serving Institutions for FY 2006 was \$47,610,773 or approximately 5 percent of the entire Education and Training Budget.

VBA senior executives and managers continue to have direct involvement in the recruitment and retention of a high quality and diverse workforce. For example, Regional Office (RO) Directors continue to support recruitment initiatives by appropriating funds to recruit minority applicants, including Hispanics. During this reporting period, the RO used approximately \$8,000 on recruitment services so that VBA Human Resources and Management officials could design effective

programs to seek out desirable candidates and market the VA as an "Employer of Choice." These services included:

- Recruitment brochures
- Recruitment tri-fold handouts
- Instructions on establishing recruitment teams
- Training for members of recruitment teams
- A reference guide for human resource and management officials
- A Web site for VBA recruitment
- VBA representatives attending Job Fairs and other related programs designed to provide current employment opportunities for Hispanics in the Federal sector

Career Development – VA administers centralized educational assistance programs that provide career development opportunities for Hispanic Americans. Leadership VA (LVA) identifies 70 leaders in VA and provides an enrichment of their career development through an intense leadership training experience. The program's general goals are to (a) identify unusually fine leadership talent in VA, (b) expand the participants' leadership skills and provide them with the opportunity to become acquainted with VA's top leaders and to develop keener insight into the internal and external forces which affect VA, and (c) provide for an exchange of information and viewpoints which will broaden personal and professional perspectives and lay a foundation for a network of VA leaders who share a deep commitment to the Department of Veterans Affairs and to public service in its broadest sense. Although VA has had Hispanic representation in the LVA career development program in the few years past, the LVA 2007 class had zero Hispanic participants.

VA's Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program (SESCDP) offers individuals a structured approach to prepare for SES. The Office of Personnel Management certifies successful candidates as eligible for placement into the SES in 2007. The SESCO had one Hispanic male employee.

Employee Incentive Scholarship Program (EISP) enables VHA to award scholarships to VA employees pursuing degrees or training in Title 38 and hybrid Title 38 health care disciplines in which recruitment or retention is difficult. Scholarship awards may not exceed the equivalent of 3 years of full-time education, and award amounts are prorated for part-time students. The National Nursing Education Initiative (NNEI), a component of the EISP, provides education scholarships to registered nurses. The initiative helps to ensure that the Department's nurses are prepared to provide the highest quality of health care to veterans across a full range of clinical practice roles. The Education Debt Reduction Program (EDRP) helps recently appointed employees in shortage category Title 38 and hybrid Title 38 health care disciplines to reduce the interest and principal on government and commercial loans obtained to fund their health care education. EDRP limits payments to a maximum of \$6,000 for

with efforts to promote greater awareness, VBA held a Diversity and EEO Training conference on July 30 – August 3, 2007. Fifty-seven Regional Office participants attended an intense 3-day training seminar on Alternative Dispute Resolution techniques, overviews of the Equal Employment Opportunity complaint process, limited English proficiency guidelines, and diversity awareness.

VA reports its best practices in support of Hispanic Employment Initiatives in the annual Management Directive 715 report.

The Community Prosperity Partnership initiative established the framework to develop and institutionalize a new service delivery system supporting veterans employment, youth internships, and outreach/awareness to the local communities.

In keeping with the VA's enabling goals, the Department is currently working towards the development of a National Recruitment Approach. The National Academy of Public Administration contract will provide the Department an effective national recruitment strategy and an operations tactical guide for attracting and retaining high performing and diverse individuals for approximately 20 mission-critical occupations.

The Office of Diversity Management and EEO led the above initiatives to help establish the recruitment and career pathway development services. These initiatives also support VA's branding as the employer of choice and a gold standard to improve service delivery.