



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR HUMAN RESOURCES AND ADMINISTRATION  
WASHINGTON DC 20420

DEC - 5 2008

Ms. Nancy H. Kichak  
Associate Director  
Strategic Human Resources Policy  
Office of Personnel Management  
1900 E Street, N.W., Room 6551  
Washington, DC 20415-9700


Dear Ms. Kichak:

I am pleased to submit the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Annual Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP) Plan Certification for fiscal year (FY) 2009 and Accomplishment Report for FY 2008.

In FY 2008, VA continued to advance the DVAAP goals in the "Fulfilling the Commitment—Coming Home to Work" initiative by automating its DVAAP plans. VA continued the long-term trend of yearly increases in the proportion of disabled veterans employed. Disabled veterans now hold 7.92 percent of positions within the Department which is up from 7.72 percent in FY 2007.

Should you require additional information, please have a member of your staff contact Mr. David Walton, National EEO Manager, People with Disabilities, Office of Diversity Management and Equal Employment Opportunity, at (202) 461-4002.

Sincerely yours,

  
Willie L. Hensley  
Acting

Enclosures

**ANNUAL DISABLED VETERANS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAM (DVAAP)  
PLAN CERTIFICATION – FISCAL YEAR 2007**

Please type or print clearly and return this sheet with an original signature to:

Ms. Nancy H. Kichak  
Associate Director for Strategic Human Recourses Policy  
Office of Personnel Management  
1900 E Street N.W., Room 6551  
Washington, DC 20415-9700

**A. Name and Address of Agency**

Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20420

**B. Name and Title of Designated DVAAP Official (include address, if different from above, and telephone and fax numbers)**

Ms. Georgia Coffey  
Deputy Assistant Secretary for  
Diversity Management and Equal Employment Opportunity  
Telephone: (202) 461-4131  
Fax: (202) 501-2145

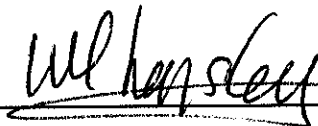
**C. Name and Title of Contact Person (include address, if different from above, and telephone and fax numbers)**

Mr. David Walton  
Office of Diversity Management and Equal Employment Opportunity  
Telephone: (202) 461-4002  
Fax: (202) 501-2145

**CERTIFICATION:**

I certify that the above named agency: (1) has a current DVAAP plan and the program is being implemented as required by 38 USC 4214, as amended, and appropriate guidance issued by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management; (2) that all field offices or installations having less than 500 employees are covered by a DVAAP plan; (3) that all field offices or installations having 500 or more employees are covered either by this plan or by a local plan; and (4) that such plans are available upon request from field offices or installations.

SIGNATURE



DATE 12/4/08

**DISABLED VETERANS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAM (DVAAP)  
FY 2008 Accomplishment Report**

**Section 1 – Methods Used to Recruit and Employ Disabled Veterans,  
Especially Those Who Are 30 Percent or More Disabled**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) actively uses the Veterans Employment Opportunity Act and the Veterans Recruitment Appointment authority, under which we hired 2,520 disabled veterans into permanent and temporary positions in Fiscal Year (FY) 2008.

VA continues to implement the “Fulfilling the Commitment—Coming Home to Work” initiative. This initiative focuses on ensuring that transitioning service members, particularly service-connected disabled veterans from Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) / Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), have access to a full-range of resources to obtain and retain suitable employment. This program acts as an early intervention outreach to address the specific period of transition for service members in assisting them with their resumes, work experience, tutoring, tuition reimbursement, career development, and other vital components to prepare them to become marketable and competitive for job opportunities. This program focuses on linking seriously injured and wounded OEF/OIF service members to existing resources through local and regional job markets, regardless of where they separate from, where they return to, or the career/education they choose to pursue. Outreach initiatives include targeted efforts to locate job opportunities in both the visible and hidden markets through development of relationships with public/Federal agencies, national trade associations, state governors, and an integrated network of interested partners. VA continues to actively engage veterans service organizations (VSOs) in the Washington Metropolitan area, state and district employment services, the regional office One Stop Career Center and other veterans employment representatives from national employment services for referrals of Disabled Veterans (DVs) and Vietnam Era Veterans (VEVs). VA also has a strong commitment with regard to employing graduates of the Department’s Chapter 31 veterans who have received vocational rehabilitation and educational training.

FY 2008, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment service (VR&E) helped place 715 veterans with disabilities into suitable employment with VA. Of the 715 veterans, 322 work for the Veterans Benefits Administration, 389 work for the Veterans Health Administration and four veterans work for the National Cemetery Administration.

The number of veterans with disabilities hired by VA in FY 2008 was 228, which represents 46.8 percent increase from FY 2007.

The VA Administrations (listed below) provide job announcements to state and local government agencies and VSOs. Each announcement contains a

reasonable accommodation statement. Regular contact is maintained with VSOs including American Legion, AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans, Military Order of the Purple Heart, and Veterans of Foreign Wars. Representatives visit military bases, medical centers, transition centers, and attend job fairs to provide information to military personnel and veterans.

**Veterans Health Administration (VHA):** Field facilities used other recruitment methods for disabled veterans to include resources such as Delegated Examining Units (DEUs) and Compensatory Coordinators, used to recruit disabled veterans for available positions. DEUs allow managers to recruit from all sources, which in turn creates a larger applicant pool in order to select the best-qualified candidate. Compensable veterans with a 30 percent or more service-connected disability are given hiring preference with the use of DEU referrals. VHA worked on a continual basis with State Directors of Veterans Employment and Training Service, Department of Labor's Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP), State Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Projects with Industry, and the Transition Assistance Program (TAP). VA's Job Ready Disabled Veterans Connection (JRDC) electronic referral process was used as a nationwide resource for job-ready disabled veterans, which is accessible through OPM's Automatic Applicant Referral System. Veterans Vocational Specialists assisted disabled veterans with the development of resumes, applications for employment, writing more effective KSAs, preparing for performance-based interviews, and employment retention. Selective Placement Coordinators were identified by Human Resources to address employment and career advancement barriers to improve the recruitment, advancement, and retention of disabled veterans. The establishment of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) Coordinators worked to provide employment assistance to returning veterans. VHA Field Facilities attended Military Job Fairs to share employment opportunities and application procedures to outgoing military personnel. Employment information was shared and communicated with local area colleges and universities for veterans.

**Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA):** All appointment-eligible veterans are interviewed by a personnel specialist when they inquire about possible employment. Eligibility for the various special appointment authorities is discussed. Vacancy announcements are posted to the OPM Website, which contains detailed information on hiring authorities for veterans, including disabled veterans. Recruitment methods at the various Regional Offices (ROs) include requesting a list of certified eligibles from DEUs. These lists include the top three qualified veteran applicants. Emphasis is placed on recruitment and outreach of disabled veterans when vacancies occur and qualified candidates are available.

During FY 2008, the Houston RO made a concerted effort to post several vacancy announcements on military bases and discharge sites. Through outreach staffers in San Antonio, the RO was able to communicate vacancies

directly to the processing personnel, who in turn could make them available to people separating, both through retirement and honorable discharge. Through these efforts and the use of DEU postings, the RO was able to hire eight disabled veterans. The RO continues to actively seek disabled veterans in external recruiting efforts by posting copies of vacancy announcements to state service officers (e.g., Military Order of the Purple Heart, Disabled American Veterans, Texas Veterans Commission, etc.) and by ensuring that the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Specialists in Houston and the out-based locations are aware of job opportunities.

**National Cemetery Administration (NCA):** NCA's EEO office is working collaboratively with NCA's field HRC office to utilize the Minority Veterans Program Coordinators (MVPC) located at each cemetery nationwide to incorporate targeted recruitment during their outreach activities. This will further provide NCA with an additional tool to conduct targeted recruitment while reaching a large number of veterans.

NCA has identified Veterans Employment Coordinators for central office and the field they are responsible for providing assistance with employment information, as well as contacting local military facilities to identify veterans separating from service.

Veterans Readjustment Appointment (VRA), a special hiring authority, allows NCA to hire eligible veterans using direct appointments if they meet the basic veterans' readjustment eligibility requirements provided by law.

NCA ensures the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act (VEOA) of 1998 is followed, allowing eligible veterans to apply for positions announced under merit promotion procedures when the agency is recruiting from outside its own workforce.

The servicing station Human Resources (HR) Management Office publishes vacancy announcements for field positions, distributes them to the cemetery, posts them on bulletin boards at the medical center, and supplies them to state/local government agencies. Maximum consideration is given to VRA, VEOA, and special authority for non-competitive employment of 30 percent disabled veterans.

NCA's HR department uses the hiring authority of Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, 315.604, which allows direct appointments without examination. This type of opportunity may lead to career appointments for veterans who have a service connected disability of 30 percent or more.

NCA continues to show their commitment and support of the "Fulfilling the Commitment – Coming Home to Work" initiative.

**VA Central Office (VACO):** In FY 2008, Veterans Employment Coordination Service (VECS) established nine regional Veterans Employment Coordinators (VECs) in Seattle; San Diego; Denver; San Antonio; Augusta, GA; Louisville, KY; Fayetteville, NC; New York City; and Washington, DC. VECS worked closely with over 160 previously-established collateral duty VECs at local Human Resource offices nationwide to identify potential employment opportunities.

VECS serves as subject matter experts for veteran employment options and work solely towards attract, recruit, and hire new veterans, particularly severely injured veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan. VECS assist in acquiring employment for DV and VEV applicants.

- VECS established partnerships and collaborated with Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Services, Marine Corps' Wounded Warrior Regiment, Army's Warrior Transition programs, Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs), and other veteran stakeholders.
- VECS has developed an informational video for use within the Department highlighting the service and benefits of hiring veterans. VECS has also developed and distributed brochures and posters highlighting the service and benefits of hiring veterans. During FY 2008, VECS maintained a constant presence at Military career fairs, transition assistance centers, and outreach events. VECS participated in 15 career fairs and conferences associated with VSOs nationwide.
- The Office of Marketing & Veterans Outreach continually monitors the veteran/disabled veteran network in the National Capitol Region, to assist VACO hiring managers in utilizing competitive hiring authorities to fill vacancies, streamlining the hiring process for qualified disabled veterans.
- The Office of Inspector General (OIG) hired several veterans during FY 2008, utilizing the USAJOB postings. OIG participated in recruiting events at schools located in California, Florida, and New Hampshire that focused on veteran employment.
- Volunteer Disabled Veterans and disabled employees from VACO make periodic visits to Walter Reed Army Hospital, to visit the disabled soldiers who recently returned home from fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. Sharing their past work experience, training; and career opportunities that are available to them in the Department.
- The One VA Career Fair was held on September 30, 2008. Of the 291 participants, the Central Office Human Resources Service collected 204 resumes from 80 participants. To date, no selections have been identified; however, many of the announcements are still being processed. The One VA-Career Fair was advertised through the Employer Assisted Recruiting Network through the Department of Labor which networks with many military and veteran organizations. The Fair was specifically advertised for veterans.

## **Section 2 – Methods Used to Provide or Improve Internal Advancement Opportunities for Disabled Veterans, Including Developmental Opportunities**

Individual development plans are used throughout VA to identify training needs and to determine resources to meet those needs. VA is the government's largest user of the Department of Defense Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program (CAP) to provide technology accommodations. Supervisors and directors are strongly encouraged to attend CAP training sessions as they become available. VA provides extensive online training through VA's Learning University, VA's broadcast system, the Memorial Service Network (MSN) resource library, and the VA Knowledge Network. These sources provide a myriad of courses that offer continuing education units and self-improvement classes. All employees, including veterans, are encouraged to participate in available on-line training. Disabled veterans are included on local committees and task forces to provide input and support to these career-enhancing programs.

**VHA:** EEO managers discuss the results of the DVAAP report with managers and supervisors at medical center Directors' staff meetings and individual service care lines throughout the year to encourage and promote strong internal advancement opportunities. Managers are also informed when disabled veterans are listed on the selection certificates and reminded of their responsibility to support the affirmative action plan for disabled veterans.

Additional methods providing internal advancement opportunities include:

- Career ladder promotions, allowing recruitment at an entry level and requiring less specialized knowledge which may be developed on the job.
- Veterans Readjustment Act Authority, which supports training agreement programs to allow for advancement to higher levels upon completion of training provided.
- Tuition support and tuition reimbursement.
- Upward Mobility and Worker Trainee positions for internal advancement opportunities.

Many EEO Special Emphasis Program Managers networked with local community organizations and encouraged disabled veterans to apply for posted vacancies. In an effort to enhance opportunities for disabled veterans, educational and career counseling opportunities were offered at many medical centers and disabled veterans were included on local committees and task forces to solicit their cooperation and support of this Program.

**VBA:** Forty-five percent of the workforce at the Waco RO are veterans, and sixty-four percent of veteran employees are disabled. Management focuses on

the advancement of this targeted group, which contributes to a diverse workforce.

The Houston RO continues to make positions available through internal Merit Promotion procedures. VBA directives, which deal with additional points for Vietnam Era disabled veterans, are applied to all positions within the GS-996 series (Veterans Service Representative). For example, using this procedure, four disabled veterans were recently promoted from within to the position of Rating Veterans Service Representative. Work areas have been evaluated and modified to accommodate disabled veterans, and to provide them with an opportunity to be more competitive for internal advancement opportunities.

**NCA:** All employees; including disabled veterans; are encouraged to seek additional training through VA Learning University. The MSN resource library provides additional continuing education and self-improvement classes. Individual Development Plans are used for NCA employees to identify training requirements needed to prepare employees for career advancement.

**VACO:** Supervisory training sessions and meetings with HR liaisons are used to educate managers about the special laws and authorities enacted by Congress that provide for veterans preference in Federal employment.

### **Section 3 – A Description of How the Activities of Major Operating Components and Field Installations Were Monitored, Reviewed, and Evaluated.**

VA is a government leader in online workforce data reports, available to all managers, Human Resource specialists, and EEO managers throughout the Department. Our system has automated reports for tracking the employment of veterans and disabled veterans, and during FY 2007, VA continued to implement this system throughout the field facilities. Currently, VA is able to track not only the employment of disabled veterans, but the accomplishment of the plans to enhance that employment. VA has produced an hour-long training video on how to use these online systems.

A statistical summary of workforce issues is presented and discussed with the Deputy Secretary and senior management at VA's Monthly Performance Review, which includes tracking the employment of disabled veterans and other persons with targeted disabilities.

**VHA:** Field facilities used statistical data from the VHA Support Service Center (VSSC) intranet Web site, which is provided on a monthly basis via the Veterans Change Report. The Disabled Veteran and Vietnam Era Veteran Employment Report (COIN PAI 204), which is available quarterly, tracks the hiring, promotions, and separations of veterans. This report was used to monitor, review, and evaluate the effectiveness of DVAAP programs. This information



was reviewed by facility Human Resources Management Staff, EEO Managers, Minority Veteran Program Coordinators, locally-established EEO Committees, Special Emphasis Program subcommittees, and the Unions in an effort to ensure the DVAAP program functioned in an effective manner and to identify placement opportunities for disabled veterans. Problem areas were identified, and goals and objectives were established to eliminate or reduce challenges related to hiring disabled veterans. DVAAP accomplishments were discussed with Medical Center Directors, Executive Staff, Service Chiefs, and selecting officials. The gains and losses were monitored within the employee population to evaluate hiring trends.

**VBA:** All supervisors and selecting officials continue to be made aware of the President's and Secretary's special interest in disabled veterans, and their responsibility to give serious consideration to all qualified disabled veterans referred for vacancies. Regional office Directors periodically review hiring practices with the Assistant Directors and Human Resources staff.

HRM reviews quarterly statistical printouts to determine any inadequacies or significant changes that may have occurred in the employment of disabled veterans. During FY 2008, all external hires were made through the Veterans Readjustment Appointing (VRA) authority, the Veterans Employment Opportunity Act (VEOA), 30 percent or more Disabled Veteran provision, Chapter 31 authority, Delegated Examining Unit (DEU), Career Intern Program, or by transfer or reinstatement.

**NCA:** NCA works closely with VA's Office of Diversity Management and EEO in monitoring and reviewing methods used to improve the representation of disabled veterans. Additionally, NCA receives the COIN-PAI 204 (Disabled Veteran and Vietnam Era Veterans Employment Report) on a quarterly basis which is used to monitor the employment of disabled veterans and Vietnam Era veterans.

**VACO:** COHRS the COIN-PAI 204 (Disabled Veteran and Vietnam Era Veteran Employment Report) VISN Support Service Center (VSSC) version is utilized by COHRS to monitor the employment of DVs and VEVs of Staff Office organizations. This data is used to assess whether participation rates are at par with the Relevant Civilian Labor Workforce trends.

#### **Section 4 – An Explanation of the Agency's Progress in Implementing Its Affirmative Action Plan during the Fiscal Year**

Based on VA's, dated September 2007, disabled veteran employees comprise 25 percent of total workforce. Further analysis reveals that 64 percent of disabled veterans are 30 percent or more disabled; this is a three percent increase over FY 2005.

During FY 2008, the proportion of disabled veterans in VA positions increased very slightly from 7.70 percent in FY 2006 to 7.92 percent of the total employee population in FY 2008, continuing a long-term trend, up from 6.63 percent in FY 1997.

Several VA occupations extensively employ disabled veterans, including Chaplain (15.54 percent), Police (19.63 percent), Veterans Claims Examiner (24.23 percent), Cemetery Caretaking (80.1 percent), Cemetery Administration (32.61), Vocational Rehabilitation (11.97 percent), General Inspections (71.19 percent), Maintenance Mechanic (18.63 percent), and Motor Vehicle Operator (22.6 percent). Disabled veterans make up (9.96 percent) of VA Senior Executive Service positions within VA.

These figures illustrate VA's commitment to employing disabled veterans and that VA continues to place emphasis on the ability and not the disability. During FY 2006, new automated EEO Plans will be closely tracked, which should provide a more precise indication of how this is being accomplished.

**VHA:** In FY 2008 VHA's total workforce was comprised of 228,508 employees of which 14,714 were disabled veterans. Disabled veterans made up 6.58 percent of the total workforce, representing a slight increase of 16 percent from FY 2007. In FY 2008, there were 33,328 promotions awarded within VHA, 4,417 of the total promotions were awarded to disabled veterans.

**VBA:** In FY 2008, VBA's total workforce was comprised of 16,097 employees of which 3,930 are disabled veterans. Disabled veterans made up 24.42 percent of the total workforce requesting an increase of 0.38 percent from FY 2007. There were 4,864 promotions awarded within VBA, 1,319 of the total promotions were awarded to disabled veterans.

**NCA:** In FY 2008, NCA's total workforce was comprised of 1,603 employees; of which 277 were disabled veterans. Disabled veterans made up 17.74 percent of the total workforce, an increase of 1.02 percent from FY 2007. There were 268 promotions awarded within NCA, 48 of which were awarded to disabled veterans.

**VACO:** In FY 2008, VACO's total workforce was comprised of 9,818, of which 1,266 were disabled veterans. Disabled veterans made up 13.89 percent of the total workforce an increase of .98 percent from FY 2007. There were 441 promotions awarded within NCA, 277 of which were awarded to disabled veterans.