



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

NOV 30 2007

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

Dear Ms. Kichak:

Enclosed please find the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Annual Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP) Plan Certification for FY 2008 and Accomplishment Report for FY 2007.

In FY 2007, VA continued to advance the DVAAP goals in the "Fulfilling the Commitment--Coming Home to Work" initiative, and by automating our DVAAP plans. VA continued the long-term trend of yearly increases in the proportion of disabled veterans employed. Disabled veterans now hold 7.72 percent of VA's positions, up from 7.6 percent in FY 2006.

Should you require additional information, please have your staff contact Mr. David Walton, National EEO Program Manager for People with Disabilities, Office of Diversity Management and Equal Employment Opportunity, at (202) 501-1970.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael W. Hager". The signature is stylized with loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Michael W. Hager

Enclosures

**ANNUAL DISABLED VETERANS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAM
(DVAAP) PLAN CERTIFICATION – FISCAL YEAR 2008**

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

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

A. Name and Address of Agency

Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

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

Ms. Susan C. McHugh
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Diversity Management and Equal Employment Opportunity
Telephone: (202) 501-1970
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) 501-1970
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



Michael W. Hager
Assistant Secretary for
Human Resources and Administration

DATE 11-30-07

**DISABLED VETERANS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAM (DVAAP)
FY 2007 Accomplishment Report**

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

The VA actively uses the Veterans Employment Opportunity Act and the Veterans Recruitment Appointment authority, under which we hired 1,633 disabled veterans into permanent and temporary positions in FY 2007.

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 and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/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 Federal and other public 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 and Vietnam Era veterans.

According to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) report, "Employment of Veterans in Federal Government for Fiscal Year 2006," VA continues to employ more veterans than other Federal agency, with the exception of the Department of Defense. The VA administrations provide job announcements to state and local government agencies and to VSOs. Each announcement contains a reasonable accommodation statement. Regular contact is maintained with VSOs, including the American Legion, AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans, Military Order of the Purple Heart, and Veterans of Foreign Wars. VA representatives visit military bases, medical centers, and transition centers, and attend job fairs to provide information to military personnel and veterans.

Veterans Health Administration (VHA): Recruiting resources such as Delegated Examining Units (DEUs) and Compensated Work Therapy Coordinators at VA medical centers are used to recruit disabled veterans for available positions. DEUs allow managers to recruit from all sources, which in turn create a larger applicant pool for the best qualified candidates.

VHA Human Resources staff attended recruitment fairs as well as disability awareness training, which provided the opportunity to recruit disabled veterans. VHA also utilizes OPM's Disabled Veteran Job Ready Connection electronic referral process as a nationwide recruitment source.

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 at that time.

The Waco VA Regional Office Human Resources Management (HRM) staff has established contacts with Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) representatives at the Waco and Temple offices of the Texas Workforce Commission. DVOP representatives are notified when external recruitment occurs. HRM staff provides vacancy announcements and application materials to these offices and explains where announcements can be found on OPM's Web site.

The HRM liaison works closely with the employment specialist in the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Division in referring and hiring veterans who have service-connected disabilities of 30 percent or more. HRM staff also work with service organizations to provide disabled veterans with employment information.

The HRM liaison, human resources specialist, and employment specialist participated in a job fair at the Army Career and Alumni Program Center at Fort Hood, Texas. Federal employment information was provided to active duty military, separating service members, and family members.

The HRM liaison and a veterans service representative participated in a National Multicultural Job Expo at Texas State University in San Marcos, Texas, with Texas State students in attendance. Additionally, minority students from colleges and universities throughout the nation received special invitations to attend this expo. Two alumni and one student from Texas State were recruited through the career intern appointment authority and the Student Career Experience Program. Of the three appointed, one is a veteran.

National Cemetery Administration (NCA): A memorandum of understanding between NCA and the VBA VR&E Service, established in FY 2003, continues to provide greater job recruitment opportunities to veterans who return to the workforce following medical rehabilitation. The Compensated Work Therapy program is also utilized as an additional recruitment source for disabled veterans.

NCA has identified veterans employment coordinators for VA 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 facility HRM 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, section 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): The Office of Marketing and Veterans Employment Outreach Service established a veteran/disabled veteran network in the National Capital Region to assist VACO hiring managers in filling vacancies using noncompetitive hiring authorities for veterans. This effort has had tremendous success by streamlining the hiring process for hiring officials and allowing qualified disabled veterans to access VA career opportunities via noncompetitive hiring appointments.

The VACO Human Resources Service (COHRS) staff will be proactive in assessing organizational staffing needs and informs management of recruitment options by utilizing veteran job fairs and military bases. Through this medium, staff can continue to provide sound information to veterans about employment opportunities and encourage them to seek Federal careers.

In May 2007, the VA Office of Human Resources and Administration issued a Human Resources Information Letter on employment of persons with disabilities. The letter summarized and provided guidance to all of VA's field facilities regarding the appropriate use of special hiring authorities for disabled veterans.

Veteran employment coordinators (VECs) were established and located within HR field offices throughout VA. Initiated by the Office of Marketing and Veterans Employment Outreach Service, VECs serve as leads for veteran employment

options and work solely toward attracting and recruiting new veterans. They also work with vocational rehabilitation counselors in acquiring employment for disabled and Vietnam Era veteran applicants.

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 in the Department.

VACO served as a host site for the "Coming Home to Work" initiative, part of VBA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) non-paid work experience program. Under this initiative, VACO hired two veterans into full-time permanent positions.

COHRS staff included statements in each VACO vacancy announcement addressing alternate staffing means for disabled and Vietnam Era veterans.

VACO emphasizes interviewing and providing pertinent employment information to all disabled and Vietnam Era veteran walk-in applicants and attends career fairs to provide counseling and employment information to military personnel and veterans in attendance.

Section B – 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 online 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 are 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: Individual disabled veterans who are leaving VA employment are interviewed to ensure that means of retaining them are not overlooked. Upward mobility and career ladder programs are emphasized in order to retain qualified disabled veterans.

NCA: All employees including disabled veterans are encouraged to seek additional training through the 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 C – 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. 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 plans to enhance their 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 employment of disabled veterans and other persons with targeted disabilities.

VHA: All facilities have internal monitoring systems that provide ongoing review and evaluation of the accomplishments of the DVAAP. The program is also discussed with medical center directors, executive staff, service chiefs, and selecting officials. Gains and losses are monitored on a regular basis to evaluate hiring trends. Monitoring also includes the identification of problem areas, goals, and objectives to eliminate or reduce problems. HR specialists, EEO managers and EEO committee members work collaboratively to help ensure this program functions in an effective manner. Facilities also used statistical data from the VHA Support Service Center (VSSC) Veteran Change Report to evaluate the effectiveness of this program.

VBA: All supervisors and selecting officials continue to be made aware of the President's and Secretary's special interest in disabled veterans, and of 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.

NCA: NCA's Workforce Planning Council meets quarterly to monitor and evaluate the progress of DVAAP and provide recommendations for improvement. Also, NCA has created a Diversity Advisory Board, with charter members from throughout the Administration, who will participate in monitoring and reviewing the DVAAP.

VACO: COHRS receives the Computer Output Identification Number and Personnel and Accounting Integrated Data (COIN PAID) 204 report on a quarterly basis. Information from this report is used to monitor the employment of disabled and Vietnam Era veterans in each administration and staff office.

COHRS uses the VSSC Web site to access veteran hiring trend information, and informs VACO organizations of their progress in veteran employment hiring trends.

Section D – An Explanation of the Agency's Progress in Implementing Its Affirmative Action Plan During the Fiscal Year

At the end of FY 2007, disabled veteran employees comprised 25 percent of VA's total veteran workforce. Further analysis reveals that 64 percent of disabled veterans are 30 percent or more disabled; this is a 3 percent increase over FY 2006.

During FY 2007, the proportion of disabled veterans in VA positions increased very slightly from 7.6 percent in FY 2006 to 7.72 percent in FY 2007, continuing a long-term trend, up from 6.63 percent in FY 1997.

Several VA occupations extensively employ disabled veterans, including chaplain (17.19 percent), police (18.84 percent), veterans claims examiner (24.23 percent), cemetery administration (25.27 percent), facility management

(9.09 percent), vocational rehabilitation (21.10 percent), general inspections (36.76 percent), maintenance mechanic (17.98 percent), and motor vehicle operator (20.15 percent). Disabled veterans make up 9.65 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 ability and not disability. During FY 2008, new automated EEO plans will be closely tracked, which should provide a more precise indication of how this is being accomplished.

VHA: At the end of FY 2007, VHA's total workforce consisted of 217,508 employees, of which 14,683 are disabled veterans. Disabled veterans made up 6.53 percent of the total workforce, representing a slight decrease of .06 percent from FY 2006. In FY 2007, of the 25,220 promotions awarded within VHA, 2,376 were awarded to disabled veterans.

VHA has an overall plan to increase the number of employees with targeted disabilities. Each VISN Director was asked to increase the employment of individuals with targeted disabilities to 1.7 percent in FY 2007, and incrementally progressing to 2 percent by FY 2011. It is anticipated that this effort will also increase the number of disabled veterans in the Administration's workforce.

VBA: At the end of FY 2007, VBA's workforce totaled of 13,874 employees, of which 3,335 are disabled veterans. Disabled veterans make up 24.04 percent of the total workforce, an increase of 1.63 percent from FY 2006.

There were 193 promotions in VBA during FY 2007, and 13.7 percent of those promotions went to disabled veterans.

NCA: At the end of FY 2007, NCA's workforce totaled of 1,618 employees, of which disabled veterans represented 17 percent (272). Of the 272 disabled veterans, 143 were 30 percent or more disabled. NCA is committed to increasing the representation of disabled veterans in its workforce and continues to place emphasis on their ability and not their disability.

VACO: At the end of FY 2007, the VACO workforce consisted of 9,400 employees, of which 1,224 are disabled veterans. Disabled veterans make up 13.03 percent of the total workforce, an increase of 4.80 percent from FY 2006.

During FY 2007, Staff Offices hired 135 disabled veterans, bringing the overall total to 1,269. Of the total 1,474 staff office promotions, disabled veterans accounted for 36 percent.
