



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

DEC 11 2006

COPY

Ms. Nancy H. Kichak
Associate Director
Strategic Human Resources Policy
U.S. 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 2006 Report on Hispanic Employment in the Federal Government. In accordance with the requirements of Executive Order 13171, this report provides data on Hispanic representation in VA and outlines human capital strategies and practices in the following areas: community outreach; strategic recruitment; career development; and accountability for workforce diversity.

The Department continues to make progress in recruiting a high performing, diverse workforce. This year our three administrations showed gains in the representation of Hispanics in their workforces. The total number of Hispanics in the permanent VA workforce during Fiscal Year 2006 stood at 6.86 percent, or 16,072, a slight increase from 2005. We anticipate the representation of Hispanics in the Department's workforce to continue in this upward trend.

VA is committed to advancing the goals stated in your Management Agenda by building a Federal workforce that draws from the strength of America's diversity. The Department will continue to reach out to more communities so that all Americans interested in public service have access to opportunities for Federal employment.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Allen Pittman", is located below the closing.

R. Allen Pittman

Enclosure

Executive Summary – In 2006, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), in collaboration with the League of the United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) and the American GI Forum (AGIF) of the United States, established a new initiative to enhance outreach services for the Hispanic American community. This new approach redefined the service delivery functions of the special emphasis programs, moving to a diversity enterprise that is local-community driven and is a high-profile public-service model orientated on VA's enabling and mission goals.

The new program, called the Community Prosperity Partnership (CPP), delivers on the President's primary vision of citizen-centered, not bureaucracy-centered, programs meeting the special requirements outlined in Executive Order 13171, Hispanic Employment in the Federal Government. Shifting from a top-down approach to a results-oriented local community approach, CPP is promoting community involvement in a manner similar to the development of two legacy programs, the AGIF and LULAC innovative employment initiative SER and ASPIRA's Upward Bound Veterans Program.

In June 2006, LULAC, AGIF, VA, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico officials defined the Operational Plans and Implementation Strategy supporting the first phase of the prototype CPP program. The prototype would allow for collaboration between the LULAC, VA, and AGIF as well as other Hispanic affinity associations, institutions of higher education, private sector, and Federal, state, and local governments. The CPP commenced with an event held October 31 – November 2, 2006, in San Juan, Puerto Rico, to demonstrate sponsorship among National and local community support groups from the Federal, Commonwealth, and local governments, military, private sector, affinity organizations, veterans service groups, and faith-based organizations. This CPP event was called the "2006 First Hispanic American Veterans Summit."

Community Outreach – The purpose of the CPP is to establish the framework and infrastructure to develop and institutionalize collective support for Hispanic veterans of the United States Armed Forces, their dependents, and the youth and young adults in their communities. CPP strives to develop a seamless service-delivery process supported by a high-profile local-level network comprising Federal and Commonwealth government agencies, veterans service organizations, community affinity associations, institutions of higher education, and the private sector in order to accomplish the following:

- Focus on the recruitment of Hispanic American veterans into the Federal workforce. VA strives to become the employer of choice in the Hispanic American community.
- Develop a range of employment opportunities for veterans, including consultative service, career development, and educational improvement.

- Sustain a highly visible Veterans' Business Enterprise structure supporting self-employment.
- Encourage upward-bound youth programs utilizing interactive personal practices (e.g., tutoring, mentoring) via a network of community classrooms, job-readiness activities, Federal internships, proficiency development or other work experience programs, and job placement initiatives.

2006 First Hispanic American Veterans Summit: Job, Health, and Veterans Enterprise Development Fairs in San Juan, Puerto Rico

1. Event: Organizers of the Community Prosperity Partnership (CPP) initiative are the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), U.S. American GI Forum, and Department of Veterans Affairs. The First Hispanic American Veterans Summit in Puerto Rico was sponsored by LULAC. This Summit was the first CPP pilot event and it was held at the Condado Plaza Hotel in San Juan, from October 31 to November 2, 2006.
2. Registrants: More than 1,500 persons registered for the Summit, including about 150 representatives of sponsors and exhibitors. Attendance was estimated to be higher than 1,500 because access to the Job Fair and exhibition area was unrestricted.
3. Promotional Activities: The Mayor of San Juan started promotional activities a month prior to the event. LULAC promoted the event in television, radio, and print media prior to and during the event. The Municipality of San Juan's Department of Economic Development, the Puerto Rico Chamber of Commerce, United Retailers Association of Puerto Rico, and U.S. Small Business Administration promoted the event through their business sector networks. Veterans service organizations promoted the event to their membership.
4. Supporters: The 29 sponsors and 36 exhibitors included Federal, public, private, academic, military, and nonprofit organizations. Federal supporters included:
 - Department of Agriculture, National Agriculture Statistics Services
 - Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census
 - Department of Commerce, Minority Business Development Administration
 - Department of Defense, Air Force ROTC
 - Department of Health and Human Services, Social Security Administration
 - Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Coast Guard
 - Department of Justice, Bureau of Prisons

- Department of Labor, Veterans Employment and Training Service
- Department of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration
- Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of the Secretary, Center for Veterans Enterprise
- Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Human Resources and Administration
- Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Diversity Management and EEO
- Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Human Resources Management and Labor Relations
- Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration, Office of Facilities Management
- Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration, Healthcare Recruitment and Retention Office and the VA Caribbean Healthcare System
- Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration, San Juan Vet Center
- Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefits Administration, San Juan Regional Office
- Department of Veterans Affairs, National Cemetery Administration, Puerto Rico National Cemetery
- Office of Personnel Management, Center for General Government
- Small Business Administration

5. Health Fairs. The San Juan VA Medical Center sponsored a veterans health fair at the Summit and the medical center. The Municipality of San Juan sponsored a health fair at the Summit and Job Fair site.

6. VA Employment Service and Outreach:

- Applicants applied on-line for VA jobs using four computers set up at one of four VA booths. All VA human resources officers were instructed in advance of the job fair to post their vacancies on the *USA Jobs* and *VA Careers* Web sites. Hardcopies of vacancy announcements were also available.
- Representatives of VA Central Office and the San Juan Medical Center, Regional Office, and National Cemetery were on site each day to provide information on veterans benefits, readjustment counseling, veterans business development, and VA employment.

7. Federal Employment Outreach: More than 400 registrants visited the Office of Personnel Management booth. Veterans preference information was provided.

8. Municipality Employment Service: The Municipality of San Juan provided security services as well as free parking at a sports arena and free shuttle service to and from the event site. With the assistance of San Juan's Department of Economic Development, Employment and Training Program, veterans and others applied for jobs located in Puerto Rico. A bank of computers and trained personnel were on site to assist applicants with building their resumes. More than 1,700 community job opportunities had been identified in advance of the job fair. The matching of resumes with job opportunities is underway.

Outreach – Additionally during 2006, the Philadelphia Regional Office and Insurance Center (RO&IC) participated in another community program called Operation Stand Down, which provides homeless veterans, including Hispanic veterans, food, medical checkups, and information on benefits and employment opportunities in the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA). The RO&IC also participated in the Philadelphia Unity Day Event that provided the Hispanic community employment opportunities within the local community.

Establishing effective relationships with the Hispanic community can provide agencies with a source of qualified candidates for Federal jobs. The Hispanic community benefits through educational opportunities and grant programs. Administrations continued to make special efforts to develop long-term relationships with Hispanic communities and expanded recruitment outreach with Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) as well as with professional organizations and Hispanic advocacy groups. These activities included participating in conferences of Hispanic professional organizations, attending job fairs, and sponsoring Hispanic community-based programs and student events. Other outreach techniques included advertising in professional and minority publications, broadcasting on Hispanic-serving radio and television stations, and on Internet Web sites.

Conference Support:

- Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, National Conference, October 15 –18, 2005, Phoenix, Arizona
- National Association of Hispanic Nurses, National Conference, July 19-21, 2006, Phoenix, Arizona
- National Image, Inc., May 15-16, 2006, National Conference, Phoenix Arizona
- LULAC National Convention, June 27-29, 2006, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

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). 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 while supplementing their academic study with practical work

experience. The Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) internship commitment to HACU during 2006 was a total of 65 interns, or more than \$600,000. The National Cemetery Administration participated in the HACU NIP, supporting 2 interns costing \$18,800 during Fiscal Year 2006. VBA invested a total of \$89,300 supporting HACU's NIP program in 2006. During the reporting period, VBA hired three Presidential Management Fellows, one of whom was an Hispanic American.

The Student Education and Employment Program provides minority students the opportunity to work at VA before making career choices. The annual budget is \$1.5 million. VHA's Office of Academic Affiliation Report for Fiscal Year 2006 is not available until mid-December. However, FY 2005 data was provided and showed support for students at HSI's, totaling \$45,843,442 or approximately 5 percent of their entire Education and Training Budget.

Career Development – VA administers the following centralized educational assistance programs that provide career development opportunities for Hispanic Americans:

The Leadership VA Program is designed to identify 70 leaders in VA to provide an enrichment of their career development through an intense leadership training experience. In 2006, the LVA program included one Hispanic employee.

The Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program offers individuals a structured approach to prepare for an SES position. Successful candidates are certified by the Office of Personnel Management as eligible for placement into the SES.

In addition, VA provides career development opportunities through the following educational growth programs: Employee Scholarship Program, National Nursing Education Initiative, Education Reduction Program, VA Learning Opportunity Residency, Executive Career Field Candidate Program, and Technical Career Program.

VBA offers two employee training programs – the Leadership Enhancement and Development (LEAD) Program and the Assistant Director Development Program (ADDP). Of the 30 employees selected for the LEAD program, three were Hispanic Americans. In the ADDP class of 2006, 3 of 17 candidates were Hispanic Americans.

Accountability – VA recognizes the need to invest in programs that support academic excellence and provide needed knowledge skills for success in the workplace that align with the Annual Performance Plan under the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) to accomplish goals through measurable efforts that include participation and support of senior executives and managers and partnerships with other organizations. Additionally, VA's best practices in

support of Hispanic Employment Initiatives are incorporated into the annual EEO Program Report required by Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Directive MD-715.