



THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON
October 11, 2012

**MEMORANDUM FOR UNDER SECRETARIES, ASSISTANT SECRETARIES, OTHER
KEY OFFICIALS, AND FIELD FACILITY DIRECTORS**

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2013 Employment Goals for Individuals with Targeted
Disabilities (VAHQ #1283589)

I would like to congratulate all of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) organizations that met or exceeded the Department's two percent hiring goal for individuals with targeted disabilities (blindness, deafness, partial paralysis, total paralysis, missing extremities, dwarfism, psychiatric disorders, severe intellectual disabilities, and epilepsy). Your efforts collectively contributed to VA exceeding its hiring goal for fiscal year (FY) 2012. For FY 2013, I am requesting your continued commitment to making VA a model employer with a diverse workforce that includes people with disabilities.

As of July 2012, the departmental hire rate for this group was 2.54 percent of total hires. At the current hire rate, VA is projected to meet the on board goal of two percent by January 2014. To meet the two percent on board goal more quickly, I am increasing the hiring goal for individuals with targeted disabilities to three percent of total hires for FY 2013. This increase will help counter the adverse effect of the high rate of separations for this group. The on board goal will remain at two percent for FY 2013.

I especially want to recognize the Veterans Benefits Administration, which achieved the highest hiring ratio of individuals with targeted disabilities: 2.73 percent of total hires in the first three quarters of FY 2012. I congratulate the Veterans Health Administration's Central Office and Veterans Integrated Service Networks 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, and 23 for meeting or exceeding the two percent goal. The National Cemetery Administration's Atlanta Memorial Service Network exceeded the goal and had the highest hire ratio at 8.33 percent. I am very proud to report that all three Administrations met or exceeded the hiring goal.

While we have made progress toward these employment goals, we have more work to do. The separation rate for VA employees with targeted disabilities increased to 2.43 percent in the first three quarters of FY 2012, and over half of these individuals were Veterans.

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Attention to creating a positive work environment by providing disability accommodations and advancement opportunities for these employees is the key to retention. In keeping with the guidance in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, we must address the glass ceiling for this group and, whenever possible, hire individuals with targeted disabilities for positions that offer promotion potential.

To ensure accountability, the goal of hiring individuals with targeted disabilities is included in the Diversity and Inclusion performance element for Senior Executives. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) will continue to closely monitor and keep me advised of VA's progress in the hiring, advancement, and retention of persons with targeted disabilities on a quarterly basis. Additional guidance is posted on ODI's Web site at <http://www.diversity.va.gov/programs/pwd.aspx>.

If you have questions on this initiative, please contact Ms. Georgia Coffey, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Diversity and Inclusion, or Ms. Christy Compton, Disability Employment Manager, at (202) 461-4131.

Thank you again for your continuing commitment to make VA the model Federal employer for individuals with disabilities.



Eric K. Shinseki