



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



## Diversity & Inclusion Annual Report FY 2011

Office of Diversity & Inclusion  
Human Resources & Administration





U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

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# **Diversity and Inclusion**

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

### **Fiscal Year 2011**



Human Resources and Administration | Office of Diversity and Inclusion

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<http://www.diversity.va.gov>



# *Message from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs*

Three years ago, President Obama charged us with the goal of transforming the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) into a 21<sup>st</sup> century organization that delivers the high quality services our Veterans deserve. Today, we are on our way to realizing that vision as we continue our journey of building a VA that is *people-centric, results-driven, and forward-looking*. Doing so will require the full engagement and participation of our diverse workforce. President Obama has said, “Our Nation derives strength from the diversity of its population and from its commitment to equal opportunity for all. We are at our best when we draw on the talents of all parts of our society, and our greatest accomplishments are achieved when diverse perspectives are brought to bear to overcome our greatest challenges.”

In pursuit of this aim, VA published its first Departmental Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan in 2009. The Plan articulated three overarching goals that laid the foundation for creating a diverse, inclusive, and high performing organization. Each year since the inception of that Plan, VA has issued a Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report to transparently report on the progress made toward achievement of our strategic goals. The VA Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report for 2011 reflects the state of VA as of September 30, 2011, and presents the accomplishments and initiatives to promote diversity and inclusion throughout our Department.

Transformation requires the collective efforts of all of our employees, leaders, and stakeholders. I want to thank the Office of Diversity and Inclusion for their leadership in guiding the Department’s efforts toward diversity and inclusion, and the VA Diversity Council for its role in the development of this Report. I ask for your continued commitment to cultivating a diverse workforce and inclusive workplace so that we can provide the best possible services to our Nation’s Veterans.



ERIC K. SHINSEKI,  
*Secretary of Veterans Affairs*



# *Message from the Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration*

The past fiscal year marks a momentous milestone for the work of diversity and inclusion in the Federal Government. On August 8, 2011, President Obama signed the long-awaited Executive Order 13583, entitled “Establishing a Coordinated Government-wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in the Federal Workforce,” and assigned roles and responsibilities to Federal agencies.

In the Executive order, President Obama instructed the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to produce a Federal Government Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan, the first of its kind. VA is proud to have played a leadership role in the development of this Plan. Further, OPM directed each Federal agency to develop its own complementary strategic plan.

VA’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) has the primary responsibility for providing leadership and guidance for the Department’s diversity and inclusion initiatives. The VA Diversity Council (VADC) serves as an advisory body to the Secretary of VA and a forum to share best practices, consider new initiatives, monitor progress, and ensure accountability in the areas of diversity and inclusion. Because of the important roles that they play, ODI and the VADC led the process of updating VA’s current Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan to comport with the new Government-wide Plan, in response to the President’s call for a more comprehensive, integrated, and strategic focus on diversity and inclusion.

In order to ensure a high level of care and service to Veterans, VA must recruit, retain, develop, and engage the best people possible. To do so, VA must cultivate a diverse workforce and an inclusive work environment—an environment in which all employees can contribute to the maximum extent possible, without fear or prejudice, to VA’s success. We thank our partners for making diversity and inclusion a cornerstone of our human capital management strategy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century VA.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John U. Sepúlveda". The signature is written in a cursive style.

JOHN U. SEPÚLVEDA,  
*Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration*





# Acronyms

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Board of Veterans' Appeals	<i>BVA</i>
Center for Minority Veterans	<i>CMV</i>
Center for Women Veterans	<i>CWV</i>
National Cemetery Administration	<i>NCA</i>
Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construction	<i>OALC</i>
Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs	<i>OCLA</i>
Office of Diversity and Inclusion	<i>ODI</i>
Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication	<i>OEDCA</i>
Office of General Counsel	<i>OGC</i>
Office of Human Resources and Administration	<i>HRA</i>
Office of Inspector General	<i>OIG</i>
Office of Management	<i>OM</i>
Office of Operations, Security, and Preparedness	<i>OSP</i>
Office of Policy and Planning	<i>OPP</i>
Office of Public Information and Affairs	<i>OPIA</i>
Office of Resolution Management	<i>ORM</i>
Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization	<i>OSDBU</i>
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs	<i>VA</i>
U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission	<i>EEOC</i>
U.S. Office of Personnel Management	<i>OPM</i>
VA Learning University	<i>VALU</i>
Veterans Benefits Administration	<i>VBA</i>
Veterans Health Administration	<i>VHA</i>



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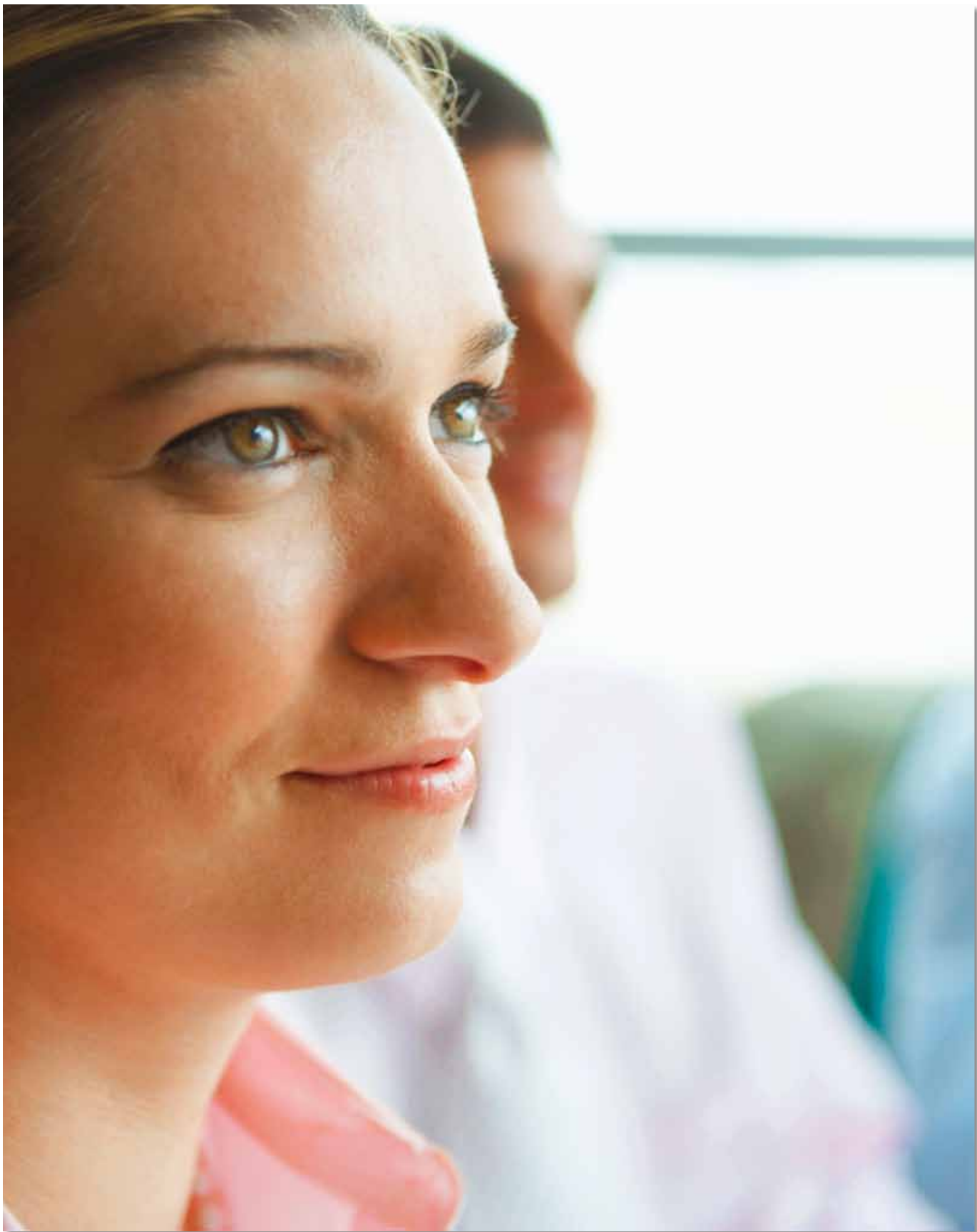
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# Executive Summary

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The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) *Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report for Fiscal Year (FY) 2011* presents the accomplishments, recognitions, and outcomes as of September 30, 2011 associated with the VA *Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan for FY 2009–2013*. We begin with the public recognitions VA has received this past year.

## Looking at Our Accomplishments...

### Awards and Recognition

VA's groundbreaking work in the area of diversity and inclusion resulted in the Department being cited as a government-wide leader by various public and private organizations. Below are some of the awards and recognitions VA received in FY 2011.

- DiversityInc named VA as one of top five Federal Agencies for diversity.
- HBCUConnect ranked VA seventh in hiring student interns from Historically Black Colleges and Universities.
- Hispanic Association for Colleges and Universities (HACU) named VA “Federal Partner of the Year.”
- Latinos for Hire Magazine named VA Best Federal Agency.
- Partnership for Public Service named VA Best Federal Agency for Employees starting their careers under 30.
- VA ranked seventh on the Careers and the Disabled Magazine 21<sup>st</sup> Annual “Top 20 Government Agencies.”
- VA received “Chairman’s Award” at the National Image Annual Conference.
- VA Learning University received the Brandon Hall Excellence in Learning Award for its custom learning content in VA Learning University’s Military Cultural Awareness e-Learning program.
- VA Learning University was awarded Best New Corporate University by the Corporate University Best in Class.
- INSIGHTS bestowed the VA Learning University with the Best Deployment to an Organization award.
- Chief Learning Officer Magazine awarded VA Learning University’s Dean, Alice Muellerweiss, the Practitioner Leadership Award.

- VA Learning University received the Federal Government Distance Learning Association Eagle Award for Advocacy, Innovation, and Leadership.
- VA was ranked first in a September 2011 report released by the Partnership for Public Service entitled, “Best Places to Launch a Career in the Federal Government.”
- VA was recognized by the Center for American Progress in for its Monthly Performance Review process.
- VA featured in Disaboom article on “VA has Jobs for People with Disabilities.”
- VA featured in Diversity/Careers Magazine in IT on “VA Vision for Diversity.”
- VA featured in OPM-sponsored published study by Human Capital Shared Interest Group on “How Diversity & Inclusion Can Transform Your Organization.”
- VA mentioned in Federal News Radio article on “Diversity Hiring Keeps Agencies Alive.”

VA made considerable progress in meeting its milestones and targets in its third year under the Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan for FY 2009-2013.

## Goal 1

*“Create a diverse, results-oriented, high-performing workforce that reflects the communities we serve by identifying and eliminating barriers to equal opportunity.”*

Some of VA’s noteworthy accomplishments under this goal in FY 2011 include the following:

- Increased the representation of people with targeted disabilities from 1.51 percent in FY 2010 to 1.65 percent in FY 2011.
- Increased hires of people with targeted disabilities to 1.89 percent.
- Increased employment of disabled Veterans from 9.02 percent in FY 2010 to 9.61 percent in FY 2011.
- Increased diversity of Senior Executive Service (SES), specifically the representation of Black men and women.
- Implemented new VA-wide Mandatory EEO, Diversity and Inclusion Performance Element for all SES and managers and supervisors.
- Conducted virtual Management Directive 715 trainings to field facilities.
- Developed and implemented an innovative new Diversity Index to measure VA’s workforce diversity.
- Designed and implemented a system to capture component-based applicant flow data for SES vacancies.
- Distributed and posted “Recruitment & Selection Best Practices Guide” on-line VA-wide.
- Re-designed the ODI Web site and refreshed online content.

## Goal 2

*“Cultivate a flexible and inclusive work environment that enables full participation through strategic outreach and retention.”*

The following highlights some of the agency’s achievements and initiatives in this area:

- Increased the number of Reasonable Accommodations (RA) funded by the VA Centralized RA Fund to 233 accommodations (considered a best practice Government-wide.)
- Disseminated new standardized VA-wide RA Procedures to ensure timely compliance with EEOC regulations.
- Implemented VA’s first Centralized Workforce Recruitment Program to centrally fund interns with disabilities.
- Implemented new centralized Diversity Internship Fund supporting a record-breaking number of 164 diverse internships including 20 from the Puerto Rico, and hired 40 percent of interns who were employment ready.
- Administered six Technical Assistance Reviews at field facilities to evaluate EEO program strengths and deficiencies.
- Implemented the VA “Plan for Increasing Employment of Individuals with Disabilities for FY 2011-2015” in support of Executive Order 13548.
- Procured a customized contract to obtain registers of candidates with targeted disabilities qualified for VA jobs and eligible for immediate hire under Schedule A.
- Worked with the Compensated Work Therapy staff to facilitate the hiring via the Schedule A excepted appointment authority of 366 disabled Veterans who were homeless or at risk of homelessness into temporary positions funded by the Secretary.
- Established new lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) employee resource group as a committee under the VA Diversity Council.
- Distributed “Guidance Regarding the Employment of Transgender Individuals in the Federal Workplace” VA-wide.

## Goal 3

*“Facilitate outstanding customer service and stakeholder relations by promoting cultural competency, accountability, education, and communication.”*

In FY 2011, significant accomplishments under this goal included the following:

- Reinforced employee protections (for sexual orientation and, parental status, marital status and political affiliation) and added a new employee protection for genetic information and gender identity to the Secretary’s EEO, Diversity, and No FEAR Policy Statement for FY 2012.
- Trained 36 Community Based Outpatient Clinic senior medical professional representatives from 26 states on “Cultural Competency Considerations in Healthcare”

with 5 face to face training sessions at the Rural Health Professions Institute in partnership with East Tennessee State University in two locations at Johnson City, TN and Portland, OR.

- Achieved 98 percent completion rate for VA's Mandatory EEO, Diversity, and Conflict Management Training for Executive, Managers, and Supervisors; trained 417 SES and Title 38 executives and over 26,000 managers and supervisors VA-wide.
- Reviewed diversity and inclusion content in VA's "Supervisory Essentials" e-learning module and developed face-to-face training on "Championing Diversity."
- Implemented the 2<sup>nd</sup> Secretary's Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Awards Program.
- Implemented new diversity and inclusion onboard briefing at new employee orientation.
- Launched the Change Academy – a series of customized programs based on VA strategic goals and objectives as well as the desired outcomes of individual facilities or organizations.
- Organized the first Social Learning Summit, which brought together social learning thought leaders (in VA and industry) to engage in dialogue with VA employees about social learning concepts, strategies and technologies.
- Issued six bimonthly newsletters (Diversity@Work); distributed 52 weekly diversity-focused news summaries (NewsLink); produced 12 monthly video broadcasts (Diversity News).

## **The Road Ahead...**

In FY 2012 and beyond, VA will focus on building upon current initiatives and adding new strategies in furtherance of its goal of "fostering a diverse workforce and an inclusive work environment." The following includes a sampling of these forward-thinking initiatives:

- Develop and implement a new VA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan for FY 2012-2016.
- Implement VA's new Inclusion Index and apply the algorithm as a standardized metric to assess progress on organizational inclusion.
- Implement an applicant flow system in USAStaffing to identify barriers to EEO in all recruitment and selection processes.
- Increase the awareness and participation of the Workforce Recruitment Program Fund to support hiring of interns with disabilities.
- Expand marketing and use of the centralized VA reasonable accommodation fund.
- Expand marketing and use of the centralized VA diversity internship program fund.
- Expand the diversity and inclusion training portfolio and deploy customized training on multi-generational, disability employment (Schedule A), reasonable accommodation, and LGBT issues.

- Implement a training evaluation instrument and program metrics to assess the short- and long-term impacts of training and reasonable accommodation initiatives on VA culture.
- Designate local reasonable accommodation coordinators and selective placement coordinators in all field facilities.
- Expand marketing and participation in MyCareer@VA, new pathways program to support upward mobility of entry level employees and bridge career gaps.

# Eighty-eighth Congress of the United States of America

AT THE SECOND SESSION

*Began and held at the City of Washington on Tuesday, the seventh day of January,  
one thousand nine hundred and sixty-four*

## An Act

To enforce the constitutional right to vote, to confer jurisdiction upon the district courts of the United States to provide injunctive relief against discrimination in public accommodations, to authorize the Attorney General to institute suits to protect constitutional rights in public facilities and public education, to extend the Commission on Civil Rights, to prevent discrimination in federally assisted programs, to establish a Commission on Equal Employment Opportunity, and for other purposes.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That this Act may be cited as the "Civil Rights Act of 1964".*

### TITLE I—VOTING RIGHTS

Sec. 101. Section 2004 of the Revised Statutes (42 U.S.C. 1971), as amended by section 131 of the Civil Rights Act of 1957 (71 Stat. 637), and as further amended by section 601 of the Civil Rights Act of 1960 (74 Stat. 90), is further amended as follows:

(a) Insert "1" after "(a)" in subsection (a) and add at the end of subsection (a) the following new paragraphs:

"(2) No person acting under color of law shall—

"(A) in determining whether any individual is qualified under State law or laws to vote in any Federal election, apply any standard, practice, or procedure different from the standards, practices, or procedures applied under such law or laws to other individuals within the same county, parish, or similar political subdivision who have been found by State officials to be qualified to vote;

"(B) deny the right of any individual to vote in any Federal election because of an error or omission on any record or paper relating to any application, registration, or other act requisite to voting, if such error or omission is not material in determining whether such individual is qualified under State law to vote in such election; or

"(C) employ any literacy test as a qualification for voting in any Federal election unless (i) such test is administered to each individual and is conducted wholly in writing, and (ii) a certified copy of the test and of the answers given by the individual is furnished to him within twenty-five days of the submission of his request made within the period of time during which records and papers are required to be retained and preserved pursuant to title III of the Civil Rights Act of 1960 (42 U.S.C. 1974-74e; 74 Stat. 88); *Provided, however,* That the Attorney General may enter into agreements with appropriate State or local authorities that preparation, conduct, and maintenance of such tests is accordance with the provisions of applicable State or local law, including such special provisions as are necessary in the preparation, conduct, and maintenance of such tests for persons who are blind or otherwise physically handicapped, meet the purposes of this subparagraph and constitute compliance therewith.

"(3) For purposes of this subsection—

"(A) the term 'voter' shall have the same meaning as in subsection (c) of this section;

"(B) the phrase 'literacy test' includes any test of the ability to read, write, understand, or interpret any matter."

(b) Insert immediately following the period at the end of the first sentence of subsection (c) the following new sentence: "If in any such proceeding literacy is a relevant fact there shall be a rebuttable



Civil Rights Act of 1964 , 07/02/1964  
Courtesy National Archives  
ARC Identifier 299891 / MLR Number A-1 5A

# *Historical Perspective*

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Since the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, the quest for social justice has been long and circuitous. In the public sector, EEO had its statutory roots in the Civil Rights Act (CRA) of 1964, the landmark legislation of the Great Society. In 1969, President Nixon issued Executive Order 11478, which banned discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, handicap, or age, and required Federal agencies to establish affirmative employment programs to foster EEO for minorities and women. That order led to the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, which amended the CRA to extend coverage of the act to Federal employees.

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has had advisory authority for these affirmative employment functions in the Federal sector since 1978, including the responsibility to review and approve annual Federal agency equal opportunity plans. EEOC implemented the Federal affirmative employment program requirements through a series of management directives requiring agencies to determine underrepresentation of minorities and women in various employment categories, and to submit plans for addressing such underrepresentation.

Since that time, the field of EEO and affirmative action has changed dramatically. In the 1980s, the concept of EEO expanded into “respecting differences” and eventually was transformed by the groundbreaking work of Dr. R. Roosevelt Thomas, who introduced the concept of “diversity management” in his book *Beyond Race and Gender; Unleashing the Power of Your Work Force by Managing Diversity*. Born largely in the private sector, the field of diversity management emerged from economic necessity and an increasingly compelling business case for diversity.

In 2003, the EEOC published Management Directive (MD) 715 to succeed and supplant previous directives on affirmative employment. The new directive required all Federal agencies to perform annual self-assessments against six “essential elements” to create a “model EEO program” and to perform extensive demographic analyses of their workforces to identify disparities and develop plans to eliminate identified barriers to equal opportunity. MD 715 is also unique in that it does not focus on minorities; it requires agencies to focus on any group that has a low participation rate.

Over time, the concept of EEO moved from a reactive, exclusively legalistic model to a more proactive, business-driven paradigm. The millennium also ushered in a new framework for diversity. The focus was now shifting from diversity to inclusion, a rapidly emerging trend also born in the private sector. This sea change occurred quietly as companies found themselves vigorously competing for diverse workforce talent in a globalized economy. They soon realized that it was not enough to simply recruit a diverse workforce, but they must also retain and leverage that diverse workforce to advance the mission. Organizations began

looking internally at the organizational culture and the institutional processes that negatively impacted employees' ability to fully participate and contribute to the goals of the organization. This required examining systemic barriers in all aspects of the organization—including cultural norms, business practices, communications, leadership development, training and education, management accountability, and work life. Organizational inclusion became the means to actualize the enormous potential of workforce diversity. The concept of inclusion galvanized the field of diversity management by stressing inclusion of all employees, not just legally-protected classes.

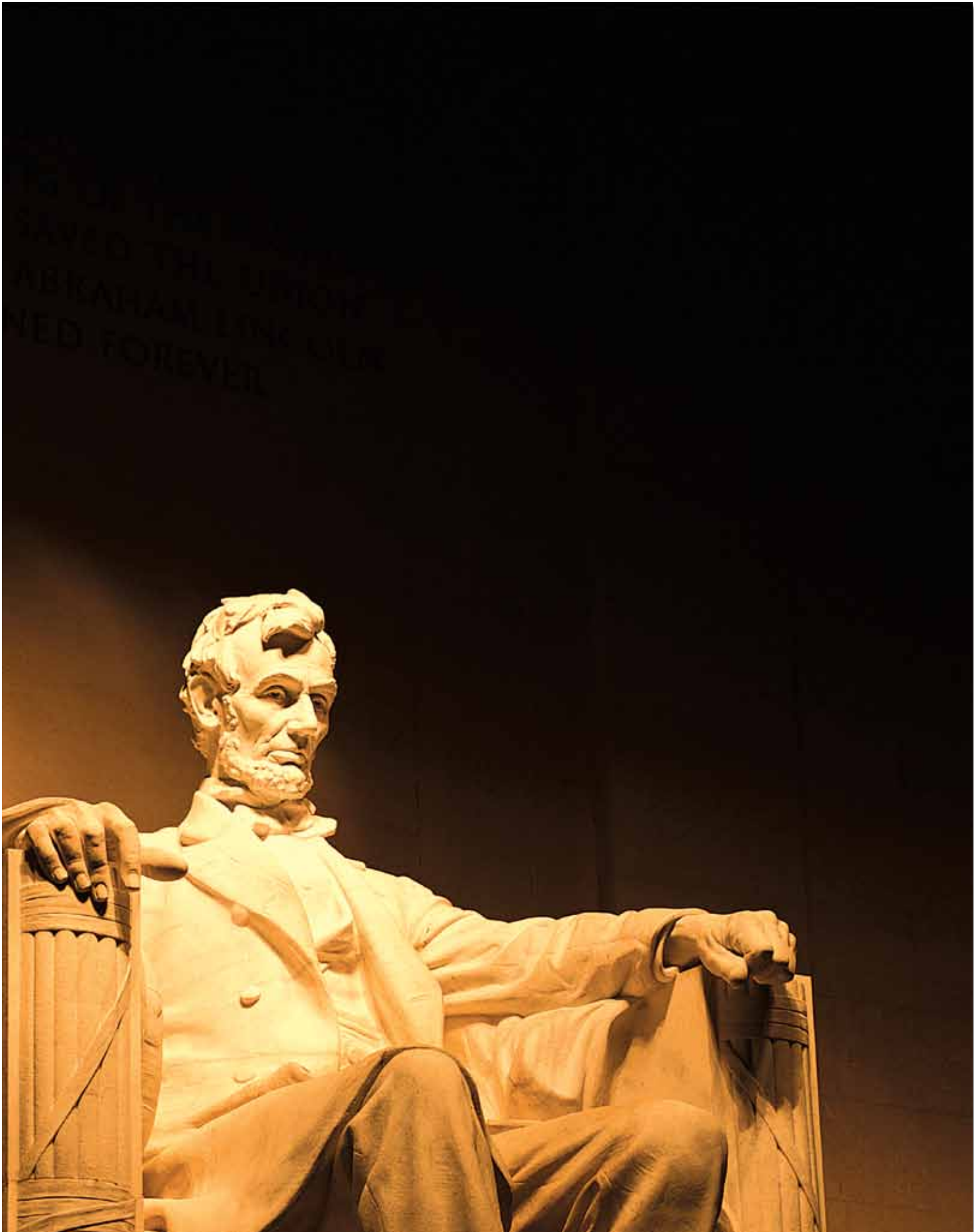
In VA, the EEO and affirmative employment functions operated in a decentralized structure until 1997. In 1997, Congress mandated that VA's EEO complaints management function be centralized at headquarters. Affirmative employment operations continued to be decentralized to the field facilities, while EEO policy and planning functions remained at headquarters. In 2001, VA asked the National Academy of Public Administration to review the Department's diversity and EEO policies, organizational structure, and staffing. The purpose of the review was to recommend improvements to VA's diversity program that would contribute to the attraction and retention of a high-quality workforce, to the support of the Department's strategic mission, and to the delivery of outstanding and cost-effective services to VA's internal and external customers. The Academy made more than a dozen recommendations for improvement, including the recommendation that VA's diversity management strategy concentrate on three paramount goals: a harmonious and productive work environment, a diverse workforce, and outstanding service to all Veterans.

In 2008, OPM issued regulations to implement certain provisions of the Chief Human Capital Officers Act of 2002, which set forth new responsibilities and requirements related to improving the strategic management of the Federal workforce. Federal agencies are now required to maintain a current strategic human capital plan based on the Human Capital Assessment and Accountability Framework (HCAAF), and provide to OPM an annual human capital management report. The HCAAF establishes and defines five human capital systems: strategic alignment, leadership and knowledge management, results-oriented performance culture, talent management, and accountability. The HCAAF includes requirements for addressing workforce diversity and organizational inclusion.

Also in 2008, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of Diversity Management and EEO led the development of VA's first *Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan*. To comport with this new direction, the Office of Diversity Management and EEO was restructured and renamed the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI), to reflect the emerging need to complement the focus on workforce diversity with a focus on organizational inclusion (that is, leveraging diversity). Through this focus on both diversity and inclusion, VA can create the facilitating conditions to enable all employees to contribute their fullest to VA's mission of providing optimum service to Veterans and their families.



In 2009, VA issued the *Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan for FY 2009–2013*. As recommended by the National Academy of Public Administration, the plan focuses on three primary goals: a diverse, results-oriented, high-performing workforce; a flexible and inclusive work environment; and outstanding customer service and stakeholder relations. This annual report on diversity and inclusion chronicles the Department’s progress toward meeting those three goals.



# Strategic Alignment

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The mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is to fulfill President Abraham Lincoln's promise "to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan" by serving and honoring the men and women who are America's Veterans. President Barack Obama has charged VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki with transforming VA into a 21<sup>st</sup> century organization—one that adapts to new realities, leverages new technologies, and serves a changing population of Veterans with renewed commitment.

The *Department of Veterans Affairs Strategic Plan Refresh 2011–2015* is the cornerstone of VA's transformation effort. That plan identifies four strategic goals, with three integrated objectives, 14 integrated strategies, 16 major initiatives, and 20 supporting initiatives.

The four strategic goals represent the top priorities of the Department:

1. Improve the quality and accessibility of health care, benefits, and memorial services while optimizing value.
2. Increase Veteran client satisfaction with health, education, training, counseling, financial, and burial benefits and services.
3. Raise readiness to provide services and protect people and assets continuously and in time of crisis.
4. Improve internal customer satisfaction with management systems and support services to achieve mission performance and make VA an employer of choice by investing in human capital.

The VA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan is aligned with strategic goal four. The three integrated objectives provide a common set of premises upon which operational strategies and initiatives are based:

1. Make it easier for Veterans and their families to receive the right benefits, meeting their expectations for quality, timeliness, and responsiveness.
2. Educate and empower Veterans and their families through proactive outreach and effective advocacy.
3. Build our internal capacity to serve Veterans, their families, our employees, and other stakeholders efficiently and effectively.

## Strategic Alignment

The VA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan is aligned with integrated objective three. Among the integrated strategies for achieving objective 3 is: “Recruit, hire, train, develop, deploy, and retain a diverse VA workforce to meet current and future needs and challenges.”

The *Department of Veterans Affairs Strategic Human Capital Plan FY 2010–2020* is dedicated to identifying the right people, in the right jobs, with the right skills, at the right time by aligning their talents with the Department’s mission-critical requirements. The human capital plan identifies five broad objectives:

1. Institutional knowledge is captured and shared throughout VA.
2. VA leaders at all levels are inspiring and effective.
3. Workforce and succession management results meet the agency mission to care for Veterans today and into the future.
4. Employees are engaged and satisfied.
5. Individual performance is aligned with organizational results.

The *Department of Veterans Affairs Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan for FY 2009-2013* was developed with this underlying **mission** in mind: “to foster a diverse workforce and inclusive work environment that ensures equal opportunity through national policy development, workforce analysis, outreach, retention, and education, to best serve our Nation’s Veterans.” The strategic plan for diversity and inclusion is designed to achieve three over-arching goals:

1. Create a diverse, results-oriented, high-performing workforce that reflects the communities we serve by identifying and eliminating barriers to equal opportunity.
2. Cultivate a flexible and inclusive work environment that enables full participation through outreach and retention.
3. Facilitate outstanding customer service and stakeholder relations by promoting cultural competency, accountability, education, and communication.

This Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report measures the progress made against those aligned goals and objectives.

The **vision** described in the diversity and inclusion strategic plan is that the Department becomes a leader in creating and sustaining a high-performing workforce by leveraging diversity and empowering all employees to achieve superior results in service to our Veterans.

The **values** identified in the diversity and inclusion strategic plan include respect, trust, and responsiveness to promote a culture of performance excellence. In service to our Nation's Veterans, we are committed to pursuing the Department's mission and fully utilizing the creativity, energy, and diversity of our workforce.

Having a diverse workforce and an inclusive workplace will help VA provide compassionate, culturally competent service to the broad diversity of Veterans who are our clients.



# Organizational Overview

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Responsibility for creating a diverse workforce and an inclusive workplace rests with *all* VA employees at *all* levels of the organization.

## **Office of the Secretary**

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs has the responsibility of demonstrating commitment to equality of opportunity and access to programs for all employees and applicants for employment, and communicating this commitment throughout the Department, as detailed in VA Directive 5975 “Diversity Management and Equal Employment Opportunity.” The Secretary is also responsible for making diversity and EEO an integral part of VA’s strategic mission; issuing to all VA employees an annual policy statement prohibiting discrimination and affirming the value of diversity and EEO; ensuring the enforcement of EEO and diversity program requirements; annually certifying that VA is in full compliance with Federal laws, regulations, and Executive orders; and ensuring that final judgments from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (and other adjudicatory bodies) are tracked and fully implemented.

## **VA Diversity Council**

The VA Diversity Council (VADC) serves as an independent executive level body that provides advice and recommendations to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on areas related to diversity and inclusion. The Council comprises representatives from each of the Department’s major organizations, staff offices, and stakeholders. It serves as a communications link between the workforce and leadership and as a forum to share best practices, consider new initiatives, monitor progress, leverage resources, and provide accountability in the area of organizational diversity and inclusion. The VADC also ensures that diversity and inclusion considerations are integrated throughout VA’s strategic planning efforts, business practices, and organizational components.

## Administrations

### Veterans Health Administration

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) leads the nation in measures of health care quality. For our Veterans that is not enough; VHA seeks to transform the delivery of health care by “Defining Excellence in Health Care.” To do this, VHA is transforming to a patient centered care model characterized by team care that is continuously improving and evidence based. VHA is leveraging diversity to establish excellence in health care. It is through a diverse workforce that innovative strategies are born. It is through an inclusive workforce that innovative thought flourishes. Leaders and employees must understand and appreciate the various cultures represented in our Veteran patients and our workforce. To provide patient centric care and meet the challenges of health promotion and disease management, VHA is striving to:

- Create a diverse and inclusive environment that seeks and encourages diverse backgrounds, opinions and perspectives.
- Develop the cultural competency of all staff leading to appreciation, accommodation and respect for Veteran’s and co-worker’s beliefs, life styles and practices.

The VHA Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Subcommittee plays an integral role in “Defining Excellence in Health Care.” The primary objectives for the committee are to cultivate a culture of inclusion, develop cultural competency, engage leadership, and positively impact workforce diversity and inclusion through effective recruitment and retention strategies.

### Veterans Benefits Administration

The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) provides benefits and services to Veterans and their families in a responsive, timely, and compassionate manner in recognition of their service to our Nation. Those benefits and services include compensation, pension, education, loan guarantee, vocational rehabilitation and employment, insurance, and fiduciary services. In order to carry out this mission effectively, VBA is committed to the implementation of equal and affirmative employment policies and objectives that support recruiting, retaining, and advancing highly skilled individuals, who will enhance the quality, productivity, and diversity of its workforce.

VBA’s policy is to provide equal employment opportunity for all employees and applicants by prohibiting discrimination in all aspects of employment based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, and disability. Elimination of these forms of discrimination serves to promote a positive, affirmative employment program designed to eradicate barriers to



employment and advancement with special emphasis on promoting diversity by increasing the representation of minorities, women, and people with disabilities at all levels of the organization.

### **National Cemetery Administration**

The National Cemetery Administration (NCA) honors Veterans and their families with final resting places in national shrines and with lasting tributes that commemorate their service and sacrifice to our Nation. NCA provides burial space for Veterans and their eligible family members, maintains national cemeteries as national shrines, marks Veterans' graves with a Government-furnished headstone, marker or medallion, provides Presidential Memorial Certificates in recognition of Veterans' service to a grateful nation, and administers grants for establishing or expanding state and tribal government Veterans cemeteries.

NCA has the responsibility to manifest sustained progress towards a diverse workforce which is attuned with the American population. This is accomplished through NCA leadership's commitment to ensuring the administration is in compliance with Management Directive 715, as well as other EEO reporting requirements. NCA will persist in improving barrier identification, and ensuring the administration has systems in place to analyze applicant flow data, onboard workforce data, and HR actions. NCA will continue issuing updated information to field components to aide in development of diversity programs incorporating assessment of their ability to evaluate, and increase diversity in their own departmental areas. NCA remains devoted to the equality of opportunity for all employees and applicants, and demonstrates it by communicating it throughout the administration, to managers as well as employees, and by training employees and managers on a wide range of diversity topics. In order to meet these requirements, NCA continues to employ inventive methods including the self assessment approach through utilization of NCA's Organizational Assessment and Improvement (OAI) program, which assesses the efforts of the national cemeteries on "their ability to evaluate and increase diversity."

## Assistant Secretaries and Staff Offices

### Office of Management

The Office of Management (OM) provides strategic and operational leadership for VA's budget, financial management, and asset enterprise management activities. The Office also promotes public confidence through stewardship and oversight of VA business activities, ensuring their consistency with national policy, law, and regulation. OM promotes diversity and inclusion by providing a forum allowing for sharing of best practices among its staff, developing initiatives, monitoring progress, leveraging resources and ensuring accountability in the area of organizational diversity and inclusion. OM fosters a diverse workforce and an inclusive work environment and ensures that diversity and inclusion are integrated into OM strategic planning efforts. OM encourages its employees to attend programs, activities and observations that emphasize diversity and inclusion. An OM senior executive serves on the VA Diversity Council, actively participating in meetings and voting on recommendations made by the Council. The senior executive provides OM with oversight in matters dealing with diversity and inclusion within the organization.

### Office of Information and Technology

The Office of Information and Technology (OIT) provides strategy and technical direction, guidance, and policy to ensure that IT resources are acquired and managed for the Department in a manner that implements various Federal laws and regulations. OIT is the steward of VA's IT assets and resources, and is responsible for ensuring the efficient and effective operation of VA's IT Management System to meet mission requirements of the Secretary, Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and other key officials.

### Office of Policy and Planning

The Office of Policy and Planning (OPP) serves as the principal advisor to VA leaders on all matters of policy and organizational strategy. OPP is responsible for guiding the development of the VA Strategic Plan, the cornerstone of VA's transformation efforts. The Strategic Plan was developed with the underlying mission: "to foster a diverse workforce and inclusive work environment that ensures equal opportunity through national policy development, workforce analysis, outreach, retention, and education to best serve our Nation's Veterans."

### **Office of Operations, Security, and Preparedness**

The Office of Operations, Security, and Preparedness (OSP) is the principal advisor to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary on VA's capability and readiness to continue services to Veterans and their families, respond to contingency support missions to the DoD and other Federal agencies engaged in emergency response activities and respond effectively during national emergencies. To ensure preparedness to meet emergent national needs is one of the 13 major initiatives in the VA Strategic Plan for FY 2011 – 2015. VA's Third Integrated Objective is to build our internal capacity to serve Veterans, their families, our employees, and other stakeholders efficiently and effectively by ensuring that VA environments for care and administration are safe, security and as free as possible from the threat of physical danger or property loss.

### **Office of Human Resources and Administration**

The Office of Human Resources and Administration (OHRA) is responsible for providing VA-wide guidance for such programs as human resources management, diversity and inclusion, discrimination complaint resolution, labor-management relations, training, and general administrative support (primarily services to VA Central Office (VACO)). The Assistant Secretary serves as the Department's Designated Agency Safety and Health Official and is responsible for administering the Occupational Safety and Health and Workers' Compensation programs. The Assistant Secretary also serves as the Department's Chief Human Capital Officer and EEO Director, advising and assisting the Secretary in carrying out VA's responsibilities for selecting, developing, training, and managing a high quality workforce in accordance with merit systems principles and EEO laws and regulations. Under the auspices of the OHRA, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) is responsible for leading the effort to foster a diverse workforce and inclusive work environment through policy development, workforce analysis, outreach, retention, and education strategies. The Office of Resolution Management (ORM) is responsible for managing the EEO complaint and alternative dispute resolution (ADR) programs in VA.

### **Office of General Counsel**

The Office of General Counsel (OGC) provides legal advice and services to the Secretary and all organizational components of the Department. The General Counsel is, by statute, the Department's chief legal officer. OGC interprets all laws, regulations, Executive Orders, and judicial precedents pertaining to the Department and advises Department officials. It also serves as the final legal authority in issuing departmental regulations that have the force of law. OGC represents the Secretary in various administrative forums and works in close cooperation with the Department of Justice in defending legal actions brought against VA, as well as prosecuting affirmative claims, throughout the country. Further, OGC directly represents the Secretary in all cases litigated before the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. Working

in close cooperation with Department officials, OGC prepares for the Secretary's approval draft bills and legislative testimony for presentation to Congress. Among its various other responsibilities, OGC manages the Department's ethics program.

### **Office of Inspector General**

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducts audits, investigations, and inspections of VA programs, operations, and other activities carried out or financed by VA to recommend policies that promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness; and to prevent and detect criminal activity, waste, abuse, and mismanagement in VA. OIG is dedicated to helping VA ensure that Veterans and their families receive the care, support, and recognition they have earned through service to their country. OIG strives to help VA achieve its vision of becoming the best-managed service delivery organization in Government. OIG continues to be responsive to the needs of its customers by working with the VA management team to identify and address issues that are important to management and the Veterans served.

### **Board of Veterans' Appeals**

The Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) is the component of the Department of Veterans Affairs responsible for making decisions on behalf of the Secretary when claims for Veterans' Benefits are presented for appellate review. The Board's mission is to conduct hearings and issue timely, understandable, and quality decisions for Veterans and other appellants in compliance with the requirements of law. The Board's responsibilities relative to diversity and inclusion parallel those for VA as a whole: to actively foster a diverse workplace and an inclusive work environment that ensures equal opportunity and respect for an inclusive value system to best serve our Nation's Veterans. The Board actively supports an environment where VA's Strategic Human Capital Plan and Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan are closely aligned to expand recruitment efforts and capitalize on best qualified and diverse applicants. The Board is fully engaged in seeking similarities, understanding differences, and celebrating the diversity of its workforce in the achievement of its mission. BVA's recruitment efforts focus on establishing a career, not simply a job. The Executive in Charge serves as a member on the VA Diversity Council, and the Board's two SES officials regularly participate in the council meetings. The Board's entire supervisory staff participates in the ODI's annual training and has committed to fulfilling its objectives. By valuing the diversity of the Board's staff, BVA is able to make the most of their strengths and valuable insights and foster creative and cooperative solutions to a wide array of issues.

**Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs**

The Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs (OPIA) serves as the Department's liaison in all intergovernmental affairs matters and is the primary point of contact with Federal, state, local, American Indian/Alaska Native Government officials. In international affairs, OPIA coordinates with other Federal agencies in developing programs and subject matter exchanges for representatives of foreign governments concerning Veteran issues. The National Veterans Outreach Office assesses, standardizes and coordinates outreach activities for the entire Department. Under OPIA's consumer affairs mandate, OPIA initiates and maintains customer service activities that facilitate interactions between VA, Veterans and their families. Among its other responsibilities, OPIA oversees Homeless Veterans Programs; rehabilitative National Veterans Sports Programs for disabled Veterans; National Observances, such as Veterans Day; and the full spectrum of public affairs for the Department.

**Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs**

The Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (OCLA) has the overall responsibility for coordinating Departmental relations and activities with Congress. OCLA is the focal point for the Department's interactions with Congress and the management and coordination of congressional affairs. OCLA manages congressional hearings, briefings, and site visits, and ensures Congress receives pertinent and timely information about VA programs and policies and items of congressional interest. In addition, OCLA provides support and assistance with respect to specific legislative issues and develops and manages the Department's annual legislative program. OCLA also provides administrative support to the Department's 24 advisory committees, which provide the Secretary with important feedback on VA's programs and services. The mission of the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs is to improve the lives of Veterans and their families by advancing pro-Veteran legislation and maintaining responsive and effective communications with Congress.

**Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construction**

The Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construction (OALC) is a multifunctional organization responsible for directing the acquisition, logistics, construction, and leasing functions within VA. OALC is implementing its reorganization as part of the Secretary's initiative to transform VA's acquisition and facilities management activities. The reorganization includes establishment of the new Office of Acquisition Operations (OAO) which will focus on operational aspects of the acquisition process, including planning, procurement, management, and close out. The Strategic Acquisition Center (SAC) is a new organization that was established in FY 2011 under the purview of the Office of Acquisition and Operations (OAO).

### **Center for Minority Veterans**

The Center for Minority Veterans (CMV) serves as the principal advisor to the Secretary, identifies barriers to benefits and health care access for minority Veterans, promotes awareness of minority Veteran-related issues, develops strategies for improving the participation in existing VA benefits and programs, and provides support for the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans. The CMV also serves as an advocate for minority Veterans, conducts outreach activities to promote the awareness and utilization of VA benefits and services, and evaluates the overall effectiveness of the provision of VA benefits and services. Specifically, minority Veterans are from the following groups: African American, Hispanic, Asian American, Pacific Islander, and Native American, including American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian. Cultural, economic, ethnic differences may hinder Veteran minority groups from accessing VA services. Outreach activities, surveys, site visits, and direct contact with Veterans are some of the channels through which the CMV gathers information to identify opportunities for improvement.

### **Center for Women Veterans**

The Center for Women Veterans (CWV) monitors and coordinates VA's administration of health care, benefits services, and programs for women Veterans; serves as an advocate for a cultural transformation (both within VA and in the general public) in recognizing the service and contributions of women Veterans and women in the military; and raises awareness of VA's responsibility to treat women Veterans with dignity and respect. CWV's Director serves as the primary advisor to the Secretary on all matters related to policies, legislation, programs, issues, and initiatives affecting women Veterans. CWV's goals are to make health care and benefits services and programs for women Veterans part of VA's institutional consciousness, through education and communication; identify and recommend effective VA policies, practices, programs, and related activities for women Veterans and promote the implementation of these actions throughout the Department; encourage acknowledgment of women Veterans' service and contributions through training and in-reach efforts; advocate and support awareness of entitlement to VA benefits by promoting images of women Veterans through mass media; collaborate with other Federal, state and local agencies, Veteran Serving Organizations (VSO), faith-based, and community partners to promote and provide information on women Veterans; and promote a culture that honors their military service and treats them with dignity and respect.

### **Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication**

The Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication (OEDCA) issues final agency decisions and orders on the merits of EEO complaints and on any relief that may be available, and reports cases involving a finding of intentional discrimination or retaliation against employees to the VA Secretary or Deputy Secretary. Complainants who are dissatisfied with a final agency decision or order may either appeal to the EEOC (or in some cases the Merit Systems Protection Board) or file a civil action in an appropriate United States District Court.





# Fiscal Year 2011

## Status and Accomplishments

**GOAL 1:**  
**A Diverse, Results-Oriented, High-Performing Workforce**

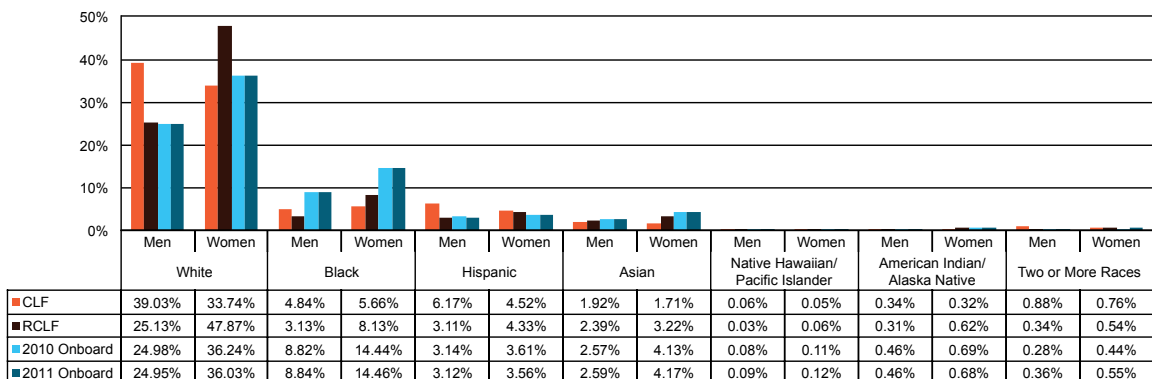
Workforce diversity may be one of the most transformative challenges facing public and private employers in the next decade. Globalization and the advancement of technology have led to the erosion of national boundaries leading to greater competition of human capital now more than ever before. The Federal Government must be positioned to recruit, hire, promote, and retain a more diverse workforce so that the diversity can be leveraged to improve services to the public.

### Status

#### Workforce Representation

Federal regulations require agencies to maintain statistics on the demographic composition of its workforce. While VA defines diversity broadly, including the diversity of thought and perspective, we measure diversity by the demographic composition of our workforce as compared to the relevant civilian labor force (RCLF)<sup>1]</sup> and the civilian labor force (CLF)<sup>2]</sup>. The following graph is a comparison of VA's workforce with the RCLF and the CLF at the end of FY 2010 and FY 2011.

**VA Workforce vs. CLF and RCLF (FY 2010 and FY 2011)**  
 Permanent and Temporary



**Data Source:** VSSC Human Resources UREP Report retrieved on January 16, 2012. Exclude Manila citizens and medical residents. Include permanent and temporary employees in full-time, part-time, and intermittent and pay status. CLF and RCLF data are as of 2000 from Census Bureau.

1] RCLF reflects all people in America, by race, gender, and ethnicity, who are employed in or actively seeking employment in a specific occupation—the occupations representative of the VA workforce. The RCLF compares the applicants seeking specific VA occupations such as Doctors, Nurses, Human Resources, etc.

2] CLF consists of all people, 16 years of age or over, excluding those in Armed Forces, who are employed or seeking employment. The CLF contains all occupations and is an accurate comparative basis for Federal Government-wide comparison, the largest employer in the U.S. with all occupations represented. Although VA also tracks hiring of People with Targeted Disabilities, there is no CLF or RCLF for this group.

The participation of Black men and women, Asian men and women, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander men and women, and Two or More Races men and women increased in FY 2011. VA employment of White women and Hispanic women continues to be below their participation rates in the RCLF; VA's employment of White women is 75 percent of their expected representation per the RCLF and employment of Hispanic women is at 82 percent of the RCLF. Since FY 2010, both groups have experienced slight decreases in representation, further compounding their low participation rates. While the onboard representation of Hispanic men decreased relative to FY 2010 levels, their representation in the VA workforce has been at the RCLF since FY 2009.

Comparing the workforce changes of each demographic group to the change in the total workforce can further show our progress in addressing low participation rates. While VA grew at a rate of 2.54 percent from FY 2010 to FY 2011, White men and women, Hispanic men and women, and American Indian/Alaska Native women experienced slower growth rates.

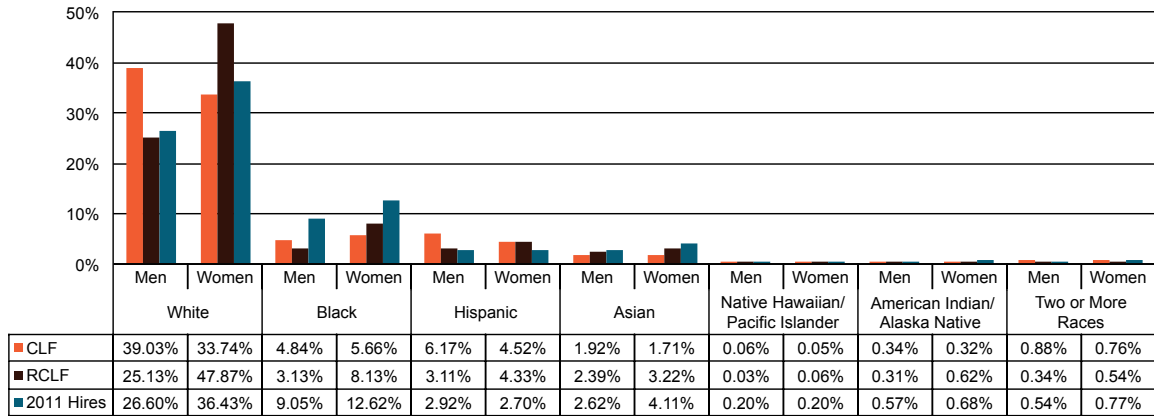
**Net Change by Race, Ethnicity, and Gender (FY 2010 – FY 2011)**  
Permanent and Temporary

	Number		Net Change
	2010	2011	
Total Workforce	307,322	315,116	2.54%
White Male	76,772	78,636	2.43%
White Female	111,360	113,543	1.96%
Black Male	27,116	27,858	2.74%
Black Female	44,384	45,571	2.67%
Hispanic Male	9,659	9,835	1.82%
Hispanic Female	11,106	11,218	1.01%
Asian Male	7,886	8,159	3.46%
Asian Female	12,690	13,155	3.66%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Male	242	290	19.83%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Female	338	371	9.76%
American Indian/Alaska Native Male	1,424	1,460	2.53%
American Indian/Alaska Native Female	2,134	2,156	1.03%
Two or More Races Male	864	1,134	31.25%
Two or More Races Female	1,347	1,730	28.43%

**Data Source:** VSSC Human Resources UREP Report retrieved on January 16, 2012. Exclude Manila citizens and medical residents. Include permanent and temporary employees in full-time, part-time, and intermittent and pay status.

Workforce demographic distribution is affected by hires as well as separations. Hires of White men, Black men and women, Asian men and women, American Indian/Alaska Native men and women, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander men and women, and two or more races were above RCLF availability. However, comparing the demographic distribution of the RCLF with the demographic distribution of employees hired in FY 2011, the representation of White women and Hispanic men and women were less than would be expected. More specifically, Hispanic women were hired at 62 percent of their availability according to the RCLF, the lowest among all groups, and White women were hired at 76 percent of their RCLF availability, the second lowest.

**VA Hires vs. CLF and RCLF (FY 2011)**  
Permanent and Temporary



**Data Source:** VSSC Human Resources UREP Report retrieved on January 16, 2012. Exclude Manila citizens and medical residents. Include permanent and temporary employees in full-time, part-time, and intermittent and pay status. CLF and RCLF data is as of 2000 from Census Bureau.

Since 2007, the number of employees in virtually all demographic groups has generally increased along with the total workforce. The change data for the demographic composition of the workforce over the past five years is provided in the figure below.

**Workforce Trend (FY 2007 – FY 2011)**  
Permanent and Temporary

		2007		2008		2009		2010		2011	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
White	Men	63,938	25.27%	68,750	24.79%	73,591	24.89%	76,772	24.98%	78,636	24.95%
	Women	90,764	35.88%	100,431	36.21%	107,421	36.33%	111,360	36.24%	113,543	36.03%
Black	Men	22,714	8.98%	24,755	8.93%	26,067	8.82%	27,116	8.82%	27,858	8.84%
	Women	37,578	14.85%	41,334	14.90%	43,394	14.68%	44,384	14.44%	45,571	14.46%
Hispanic	Men	8,067	3.19%	8,625	3.11%	8,946	3.03%	9,659	3.14%	9,835	3.12%
	Women	8,909	3.52%	9,782	3.53%	10,255	3.47%	11,106	3.61%	11,218	3.56%
Asian	Men	6,709	2.65%	7,254	2.62%	7,545	2.55%	7,886	2.57%	8,159	2.59%
	Women	10,762	4.25%	11,967	4.31%	12,272	4.15%	12,690	4.13%	13,155	4.17%
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	Men	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	232	0.08%	242	0.08%	290	0.09%
	Women	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	337	0.11%	338	0.11%	371	0.12%
American Indian/ Alaska Native	Men	1,145	0.45%	1,373	0.50%	1,600	0.54%	1,424	0.46%	1,460	0.46%
	Women	1,744	0.69%	2,096	0.76%	2,413	0.82%	2,134	0.69%	2,156	0.68%
Two or More Races	Men	275	0.11%	431	0.16%	650	0.22%	864	0.28%	1,134	0.36%
	Women	369	0.15%	563	0.20%	931	0.31%	1,347	0.44%	1,730	0.55%
Total	Men	102,848	40.66%	111,188	40.09%	118,631	40.12%	123,963	40.34%	127,372	40.42%
	Women	150,126	59.34%	166,173	59.91%	177,023	59.88%	183,359	59.66%	187,744	59.58%
	All	252,974	100.00%	277,361	100.00%	295,654	100.00%	307,322	100.00%	315,116	100.00%

**Data Source:** HR Employee cube retrieved in ProClarity retrieved on January 16, 2012. Exclude Manila citizens and medical residents. Include pay, permanent and temporary employees in full-time, part-time, and intermittent status. Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander data separation occurred in 2009.

## People with Disabilities

People with disabilities have had historically low participation rates in the Federal workforce and have the highest unemployment rate among the U.S. population. At the end of FY 2011, employees with disabilities were 10.88 percent of the VA workforce. Employees with targeted disabilities, the most severe forms of disability identified by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) for special emphasis including deafness, missing extremities, partial paralysis, total paralysis, epilepsy, severe intellectual disability, psychiatric disability, and dwarfism, were 1.65 percent of the VA workforce.

While this ratio is lower than VA’s two percent onboard goal, the representation of people with targeted disabilities in VA has been steadily increasing since FY 2009. From FY 2010 to FY 2011, the onboard ratio for people with targeted disabilities grew over four times faster than the VA workforce; that is, 11.81 percent compared to 2.54 percent.

### People with Disabilities Onboard (FY 2010 – FY 2011)

Permanent and Temporary

	Number		Percentage		Net Change
	2010	2011	2010	2011	
Total Workforce	307,322	315,116	100.00%	100.00%	2.54%
No Disability Reported	276,313	280,828	89.91%	89.12%	1.63%
Other Disability	26,360	29,090	8.58%	9.23%	10.36%
Targeted Disability	4,649	5,198	1.51%	1.65%	11.81%

**Data Source:** VSSC HR Employee cube retrieved in ProClarity on January 16, 2012. Exclude Manila citizens and medical residents. Include pay permanent and temporary employees in full-time, part-time, intermittent status.

People with targeted disabilities remain a critical focus for the nation as well as VA. To that end, VA in FY 2011 implemented a 2 percent hiring goal for people with targeted disabilities, a legally compliant strategy. At the end of FY 2011, VA’s hiring of people with targeted disabilities in its permanent and temporary workforce was 1.89 percent, just short of the 2 percent goal. Hires of permanent employees with targeted disabilities surpassed the 2 percent hiring goal.

### People with Disabilities Hires (FY 2010 – FY 2011)

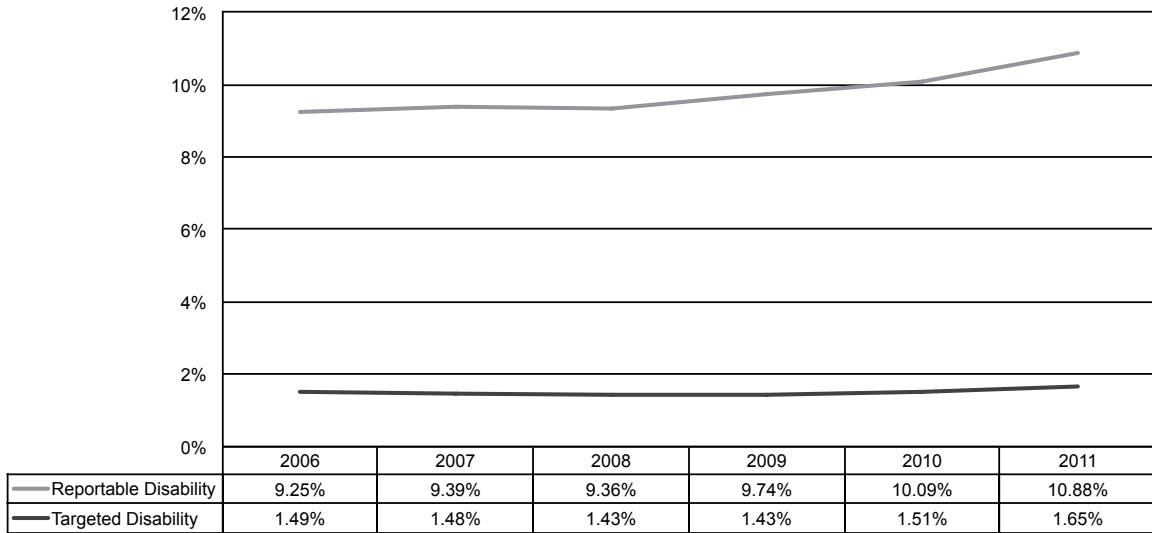
Permanent and Temporary

	Number		Percentage		Net Change
	2010	2011	2010	2011	
Total Workforce	40,208	38,466	100.00%	100.00%	-4.33%
No Disability Reported	36,105	33,425	89.80%	86.89%	-7.42%
Other Disability	3,521	4,117	8.76%	10.70%	16.93%
Targeted Disability	582	727	1.45%	1.89%	24.91%

**Data Source:** VSSC HR Employee cube retrieved in ProClarity on January 16, 2012. Exclude Manila citizens and medical residents. Include pay permanent and temporary employees in full-time, part-time, intermittent status.

The overall employment of people with reportable disabilities in VA has increased since 2006. The employment trend for people with targeted disabilities began rising in FY 2010 after a steep decline from FY 2000 to 2009. The increase in this area can be attributed to VA’s continuous efforts to develop and implement effective targeted hiring and retention strategies.

**People with Disabilities Trend (FY 2006 – FY 2011)**  
Permanent and Temporary



**Data Source:** HR Employee data cube retrieved in ProClarity on January 16, 2012. Exclude Manila citizens and medical resident. Include pay, permanent and temporary employees in full-time, part-time, and intermittent status.

## Veterans

On November 9, 2009, President Obama signed an Executive order launching the Government-wide Veterans Employment Initiative, designed to increase the number of Veterans in the Federal workforce. The initiative stresses the importance of recruiting and training Veterans and helping them adjust to Government service as civilians.

At the end of FY 2011, over 32 percent of VA employees were Veterans, still short of VA’s goal of 40 percent. VA ranks second only to the Department of Defense in Veteran representation. Disabled Veterans are nearly 10 percent of the VA workforce. Both groups increased at a higher rate than the net change for the total workforce, which demonstrates VA’s commitment to hiring Veterans and disabled Veterans.

**Veterans (FY 2010 – FY 2011)**

Permanent and Temporary

	Number		Percentage		Net Change
	2010	2011	2010	2011	
Total Employees	307,322	315,116	100.00%	100.00%	2.54%
<b>Disabled Veterans</b>	<b>27,735</b>	<b>30,277</b>	<b>9.02%</b>	<b>9.61%</b>	<b>9.17%</b>
Total Veterans	91,560	101,062	29.79%	32.07%	10.38%
White Male	39,829	43,187	12.96%	13.71%	8.43%
White Female	12,097	14,180	3.94%	4.50%	17.22%
Black Male	20,065	21,417	6.53%	6.80%	6.74%
Black Female	7,951	9,362	2.59%	2.97%	17.75%
Hispanic Male	5,691	6,002	1.85%	1.90%	5.46%
Hispanic Female	1,409	1,613	0.46%	0.51%	14.48%
Asian Male	2,002	2,179	0.65%	0.69%	8.84%
Asian Female	522	633	0.17%	0.20%	21.26%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Male	140	189	0.05%	0.06%	35.00%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Female	55	82	0.02%	0.03%	49.09%
American Indian/Alaska Native Male	770	828	0.25%	0.26%	7.53%
American Indian/Alaska Native Female	235	266	0.08%	0.08%	13.19%
Two or More Races Male	520	742	0.17%	0.24%	42.69%
Two or More Races Female	274	382	0.09%	0.12%	39.42%

**Data Source:** VSSC Human Resources Veteran Change Report retrieved on January 16, 2012. Excludes Manila citizens and medical residents. Includes pay, permanent and temporary employees in full-time, part-time, and intermittent status.

**Leadership**

Studies have shown that workforce diversity is a key component for high performance. Accordingly, in order to have a high performing organization in an increasingly globalized society, diversity in leadership is essential. Therefore, in addition to looking at overall diversity, we also look at diversity at the senior leadership levels to ensure there are no “glass ceilings” or other barriers to equal opportunity.

The Senior Executive Service (SES) is the Federal Government’s cadre of senior leadership. Since 2006, diversity has increased in the SES ranks. The following graph provides perspective on diversity in VA’s SES.

**SES Onboard Trend (FY 2006 – FY 2011)**  
 Permanent and Temporary, Exclude T-38 Equivalents

		Number						Percentage					
		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
White	Men	184	177	171	173	175	194	64.79%	59.00%	56.07%	55.63%	54.01%	54.04%
	Women	56	76	81	85	92	99	19.72%	25.33%	26.56%	27.33%	28.40%	27.58%
Black	Men	16	15	17	16	15	19	5.63%	5.00%	5.57%	5.14%	4.63%	5.29%
	Women	9	13	15	15	16	20	3.17%	4.33%	4.92%	4.82%	4.94%	5.57%
Hispanic	Men	8	8	9	9	12	12	2.82%	2.67%	2.95%	2.89%	3.70%	3.34%
	Women	2	2	3	3	4	4	0.70%	0.67%	0.98%	0.96%	1.23%	1.11%
Asian	Men	2	2	3	3	4	4	0.70%	0.67%	0.98%	0.96%	1.23%	1.11%
	Women	1	1	1	1	1		0.35%	0.33%	0.33%	0.32%	0.31%	0.00%
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	Men	0	0	0	1	1	1	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.32%	0.31%	0.28%
	Women	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
American Indian/ Alaska Native	Men	5	5	5	4	3	2	1.76%	1.67%	1.64%	1.29%	0.93%	0.56%
	Women	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.28%
Two or More Races	Men	1	1	0	0	1	2	0.35%	0.33%	0.00%	0.00%	0.31%	0.56%
	Women	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.32%	0.00%	0.28%
Total	Men	216	208	205	206	211	234	76.06%	69.33%	67.21%	66.24%	65.12%	65.18%
	Women	68	92	100	105	113	125	23.94%	30.67%	32.79%	33.76%	34.88%	34.82%
	All	284	300	305	311	324	359	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

**Data Source:** VSSC Human Resources Onboard by Race and Gender Report retrieved on January 16, 2012. Exclude Manila citizens, medical residents, Title-38 Equivalents. Include pay permanent and temporary employees in full-time, part-time, and intermittent status.

Similar to SES, diversity in the leadership pipeline (GS/GM grades 13 through 15) has improved since 2006. The following table provides perspectives on diversity in VA's leadership pipeline (employees in GS/GM grades 13, 14, and 15).

**GS/GM 13-15 Onboard Trend (FY 2006 – FY 2011)**  
Permanent and Temporary

		Number						Percentage					
		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
White	Men	6517	6769	6992	7520	7917	8422	45.96%	44.50%	42.23%	41.04%	39.89%	39.33%
	Women	4676	5116	5806	6556	7186	7794	32.98%	33.64%	35.07%	35.78%	36.21%	36.40%
Black	Men	681	719	777	881	959	1067	4.80%	4.73%	4.69%	4.81%	4.83%	4.98%
	Women	1023	1138	1278	1454	1623	1782	7.21%	7.48%	7.72%	7.93%	8.18%	8.32%
Hispanic	Men	317	354	390	429	498	520	2.24%	2.33%	2.36%	2.34%	2.51%	2.43%
	Women	273	320	364	381	441	466	1.93%	2.10%	2.20%	2.08%	2.22%	2.18%
Asian	Men	355	390	435	465	500	537	2.50%	2.56%	2.63%	2.54%	2.52%	2.51%
	Women	255	288	350	398	432	484	1.80%	1.89%	2.11%	2.17%	2.18%	2.26%
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	Men	0	0	0	7	7	8	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.04%	0.04%	0.04%
	Women	0	0	0	16	15	15	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.09%	0.08%	0.07%
American Indian/ Alaska Native	Men	38	51	64	76	71	73	0.27%	0.34%	0.39%	0.41%	0.36%	0.34%
	Women	36	44	58	73	65	72	0.25%	0.29%	0.35%	0.40%	0.33%	0.34%
Two or More Races	Men	4	11	24	34	64	81	0.03%	0.07%	0.14%	0.19%	0.32%	0.38%
	Women	5	10	17	34	69	91	0.04%	0.07%	0.10%	0.19%	0.35%	0.42%
Total	Men	7912	8294	8682	9412	10016	10708	55.80%	54.53%	52.44%	51.36%	50.47%	50.01%
	Women	6268	6916	7873	8912	9831	10704	44.20%	45.47%	47.56%	48.64%	49.53%	49.99%
	All	14180	15210	16555	18324	19847	21412	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

**Data Source:** VSSC Human Resources Onboard by Race and Gender Report retrieved on January 16, 2012. Exclude Manila citizens and medical residents Include pay permanent and temporary employees in full-time, part-time, and intermittent status. Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander data separation occurred in 2009.

## Results-Oriented Performance Culture

Having a diverse workforce is not enough to ensure optimum individual and organizational performance. For that reason, the first goal of VA's Strategic Plan for Diversity and Inclusion aims for a "diverse, results-oriented, high-performing workforce," the key to which—as identified in the Human Capital Assessment and Accountability Framework (HCAAF)—is a performance management system that differentiates between high and low levels of performance and links individual/team/unit performance to organizational goals and desired results effectively.

As described in the HCAAF, a results-oriented performance culture system consists of the following critical success factors that work together to create a diverse, results-oriented, high performance workforce:

- **Communication.** The agency has a process for sharing information and ideas about the organization with all employees. This vital process includes eliciting employee feedback



and involvement so that all employees play an appropriate role in planning and executing the mission.

- **Performance Appraisal.** The agency has a process under which performance is reviewed and evaluated.
- **Awards.** The organization takes actions to recognize and reward individual or team achievement that contributes to meeting organizational goals or improving the efficiency, effectiveness, and economy of the Government. Such awards include, but are not limited to: employee incentives which are based on predetermined criteria, rating-based awards, or awards based on a special act or service.
- **Pay for Performance.** The agency uses pay-for-performance systems, where authorized by law and regulation, to link salary levels and adjustments to an individual's overall performance and contribution to the agency's mission. Employees receive base salary adjustments within their assigned bands.
- **Diversity Management.** The agency maintains an environment characterized by inclusiveness of individual differences and responsiveness to the needs of diverse groups of employees.
- **Labor/Management Relations.** The organization promotes cooperation among employees, unions, and managers. This cooperation enhances effectiveness and efficiency, cuts down the number of employee-related disputes, and improves working conditions, all of which contribute to improved performance and results.

To measure the extent to which VA meets that standard, we examine items in the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS). The Results-Oriented Performance Culture Index is made up of 13 survey items from the FEVS. The resulting index score is the average of favorable responses from the selected items. Since 2006, the scores for VA have remained relatively consistent.

**Results-Oriented Performance Culture Index**  
Percent Favorable Responses

Survey Question	2006	2008	2010	2011
12. I know how my work relates to the agency's goals and priorities.	85%	87%	87%	86%
14. Physical conditions (for example, noise level, temperature, lighting, cleanliness in the workplace) allow employees to perform their jobs well.	64%	64%	66%	64%
15. My performance appraisal is a fair reflection of my performance.	60%	64%	70%	68%
20. The people I work with cooperate to get the job done.	77%	81%	70%	70%
22. Promotions in my work unit are based on merit.	30%	36%	28%	33%
23. In my work unit, steps are taken to deal with a poor performer who cannot or will not improve.	32%	33%	29%	30%
24. In my work unit, differences in performance are recognized in a meaningful way.	30%	32%	34%	35%
30. Employees have a feeling of personal empowerment with respect to work processes.	41%	44%	42%	45%
32. Creativity and innovation are rewarded.	36%	38%	36%	38%
33. Pay raises depend on how well employees perform their jobs.	19%	25%	22%	24%
42. My supervisor supports my need to balance work and other life issues.	75%	69%	68%	71%
44. Discussions with my supervisor/team leader about my performance are worthwhile.	50%	56%	58%	60%
65. How satisfied are you with the recognition you receive for doing a good job?	42%	47%	50%	47%
<b>Index Score (Average)</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>52%</b>

**Data Source:** Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey data retrieved from <http://www.fedview.opm.gov/> on January 16, 2012.

## VA Diversity and Inclusion Indices

Empirical studies have shown positive correlations between diversity, inclusion, and organizational performance. The quest to measure such correlation in VA started in FY 2009 with the development of the VA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion, a program office within the Office of Human Resources and Administration, began researching and developing a simple metric that is both flexible and scalable to measure an organization's state of diversity and inclusion.

The traditional measure of workforce diversity has always been to compare the workforce representation ratio of each race, ethnicity, and gender (REG) group to their respective benchmark in the RCLF or the CLF. This approach, while valid, poses significant challenges when the analytical lens grows wider, for example, at the national level. In order to correlate organizational performance, the need for a singular measure is apparent.

We embarked on this initiative under three guiding principles: the metric must be empirically valid, legally defensible, and efficient. Also, the resulting algorithm must be scalable to any organizational level, occupational, or demographic group. For example, to be optimally useful the metric must be scalable to a VBA Regional Office or a VHA facility.

Literature review suggests a singular measure for both diversity and inclusion could only be achieved with the intuitive use of weighting—a technique that is scientifically difficult to defend. Therefore, we need to develop two distinct metrics: the Diversity Index to measure an organization's workforce distribution compared to the CLF, RCLF or other accepted benchmark, and a separate Inclusion Index to measure the qualitative data points based mainly on the results of the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey.

The application of these indices extend much further than correlating an organization's diversity and its key performance indicators. Among other things, the Diversity and Inclusion Indices can be used to:

- Track an organization's progress in workforce diversity,
- Assess the impact of programs and initiatives on workforce diversity,
- Compare the diversity and inclusion status across Federal Government on an agency-by-agency basis,
- Correlate the effects of diversity and inclusion on productivity, and
- Develop an empirical database to support the business case for diversity in VA.

While we continue to develop the Inclusion Index, we are proud to present the computational model for the Diversity Index.

### The VA Diversity Index

In short, the Diversity Index is a single measure of workforce diversity based on the convergence of an organization’s aggregate workforce representation by REG with an appropriate benchmark, the CLF or the RCLF depending on the organization’s size. At the national level, the benchmark for VA is the CLF. The computational formula is shown below.

*Let  $P_i$  = Normalized value of REG group in Workforce,*

*Let  $X_i$  = Normalized value of REG group in CLF*

$$\frac{\sum_1^n \min \left( \frac{P_i}{X_i}, 1 \right)}{n - M}$$

*Where  $M$  = total instances where  $P_i$  is 0 and  $X_i$  is 0*

The Diversity Index is essentially the mean ratio of the normalized workforce composition by REG to its corresponding normalized CLF baseline, with maximum value of 100 percent. The rate is capped at 100 percent to avoid skewing the data due to overrepresentation of any group. The intent is to focus on underrepresentation. For each REG group, one of four possibilities exists:

Value of “M”		
	Value of REG Group in CLF = 0	Value of REG Group in CLF > 0
Value of REG Group in Workforce = 0	Remove REG group from computation model; increment M by 1	Keep REG group in computation model;
Value of REG Group in Workforce > 0	Keep REG group in computation model;	Keep REG group in computation model;

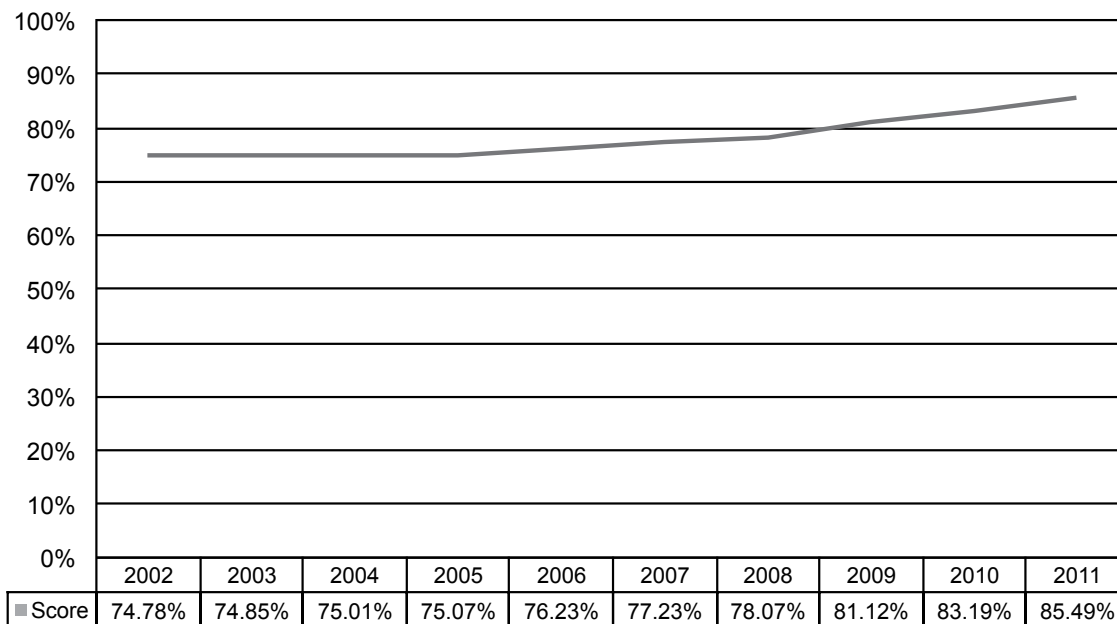
The value of M, therefore, is incremented only when the value of the REG group in the workforce and its corresponding benchmark value, the CLF or RCLF, are zeros. That is, when the representation of a specific group in the workforce and the CLF equals zero, the group is

removed from the computational model to minimize the skewing effects of the mathematical mean construct.

Applying this computation model to the VA dataset, we noticed an increasing trend. This is consistent with the traditional analytical approach; that is, diversity in VA's workforce has been increasing over time. At the end of FY 2011, the REG distribution in the VA workforce is at about 85 percent of the CLF.

The score shown below is adjusted for the Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander data separation which occurred in FY 2009.

**Diversity Index Score Trend (FY 2002 – 2011)**  
Permanent and Temporary



We fully acknowledge the limitations of our method; primarily that it excludes disability, age, religion, and a host of non-statutory dimensions of diversity. While we continue to examine efficient and defensible ways to measure these other important dimensions, we remain confident that this method serves as a valid and significant first step in establishing an effective tool for internal analysis and inter-agency comparisons.

### The VA Inclusion Index

The Inclusion Index is intended to measure an organization's inclusion based on the perspective of its employees. The Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) was used as the data source in order to serve as a government-wide benchmark.

While researchers continue to develop a universally accepted definition and framework for measuring organizational inclusion, our literature review has yielded several common, overarching themes. In developing the basis for our Inclusion Index, we relied primarily on Shore's analysis of the pertinent literature, and Nishii's specific research. Nishi identified three primary dimensions of inclusion: fairness of employment practices; integration of differences; and inclusion in decision-making. In the interest of being comprehensive, we reviewed work by other reputable researchers (Mor Barak & Cherin, 1998; April & Blass, 2010; Netter, 1998) and identified similar and additional emerging themes. We then cross-walked similar themes to the 79 FEVS items based on content validity. With the assistance of the National Center for Organizational Development, we then conducted multiple factor analyses to identify the most statistically salient items that comprised our Inclusion Index items. We identified the following six dimensions that will serve as the basis for our Index:

- fairness of employment practices (removal of barriers)
- integration of differences (empowerment of individual voices)
- inclusion/participation in decision-making
- inclusive management and leadership
- information access/open communication
- freedom from stereotyping

The development of this metric is ongoing and we expect to finalize and implement the methodology in FY 2012.

## ***FY 2011 Organizational Accomplishments***

### **Office of the Secretary**

In FY 2011, VA launched a new initiative to combat homelessness among Veterans. Through partnerships with community groups, VA awarded more than \$41.9 million in grants to organizations in 40 states. The Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program provides grants and per diem payments to help public and nonprofit organizations establish and operate new supportive housing and service centers for homeless Veterans.

The \$41.9 million is broken into two categories. About \$26.9 million will help renovate, rehabilitate or acquire space for 1,352 transitional housing beds. A second group of awards, valued at \$15 million, will immediately fund 1,216 beds at existing transitional housing for homeless Veterans this year. The awards will cover daily living costs based upon the number of homeless Veterans being served in transitional housing.

A key component of VA's plan to eliminate homelessness among Veterans within five years, the grants and per diem payments helped reduce the number of Veterans who were homeless on a typical night last year by 18 percent to about 107,000 Veterans within one year.

The Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program is another homeless prevention initiative that provides supportive services to very low-income Veterans and their families who are in or transitioning to permanent housing. In FY 2011, VA awarded \$59.5 million to fund 85 organizations under SSVF.

VA's strategy to eliminate homelessness among Veterans is to implement a "no wrong door" approach, meaning Veterans who seek assistance should find it in any number of VA's programs, from community partners or through contract services.

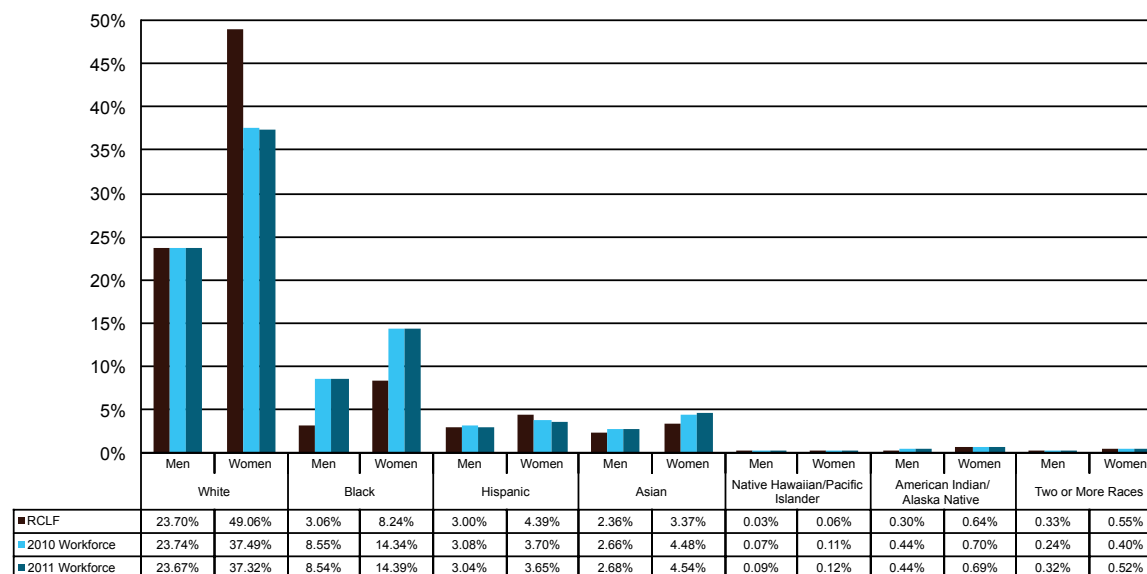
## **Administrations**

### **Veterans Health Administration**

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) implemented the Secretary's requirements for all Senior Executive Service members to be held accountable for the measureable results outlined in the VA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan. VHA choose to implement this in a manner to optimize impact and change. Rather than establishing a standard intervention at the national level, VHA created a standard process with interventions and metrics established locally. Each VISN and Program Office was required to review their data (All Employee Survey, EEO, workforce demographics, succession, etc.) and determine their critical gaps. They developed an action plan to address the gaps, including at least two interventions, measuring the results of the interventions and taking action again based on the results. Action plans focused on recruitment, outreach, employee development and retention. The VHA Diversity and Inclusion Office monitored progress quarterly providing consultation and assistance. Plans were graded at the end of the year for impact.

Below is a graph of VHA's workforce compared to the RCLF. Hispanic and White women have low participation rates.

**VHA Workforce vs. RCLF (FY 2010 – FY 2011)**  
Permanent and Temporary



**Data Source:** VSSC UREP Report retrieved on January 16, 2012. Exclude Manila citizens and medical residents. Include pay permanent and temporary employees in full-time, part-time, intermittent status.

VHA continues to analyze workforce trends and projections, determine skill gaps and needs, and devise succession planning strategies to attract a more diverse workforce, and to ensure that VHA is people centric, results driven, and forward looking. By the end of FY 2017, 40 percent of the current full- and part-time workforce will become eligible for regular retirement with 21.2 percent projected to actually retire. Based on these projections, VHA anticipates the need to hire an average of 27,000 employees annually.

VHA continues to provide training to its employees to promote the concept that a diverse workforce creates strength for the entire organization by leveraging the value of understanding differences, identifying an organization's culture, and cross-cultural communication. In FY 2011, VHA EEO Managers continued to work with their HR counterparts to conduct barrier analysis to determine and remove barriers for equal employment opportunities for groups with low participation rates. As a result of this analysis, programs were identified to address upward mobility opportunities for these groups.

VHA's Workforce Succession Strategic Plan encompasses a comprehensive analysis of the total workforce, leadership positions, program office considerations, and top occupations, as well as an array of strategies (i.e. employee development, leadership development and succession programs, organizational health assessments and initiatives, and recruitment and retention



strategies), and was recognized by VA and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) as a federal best practice.

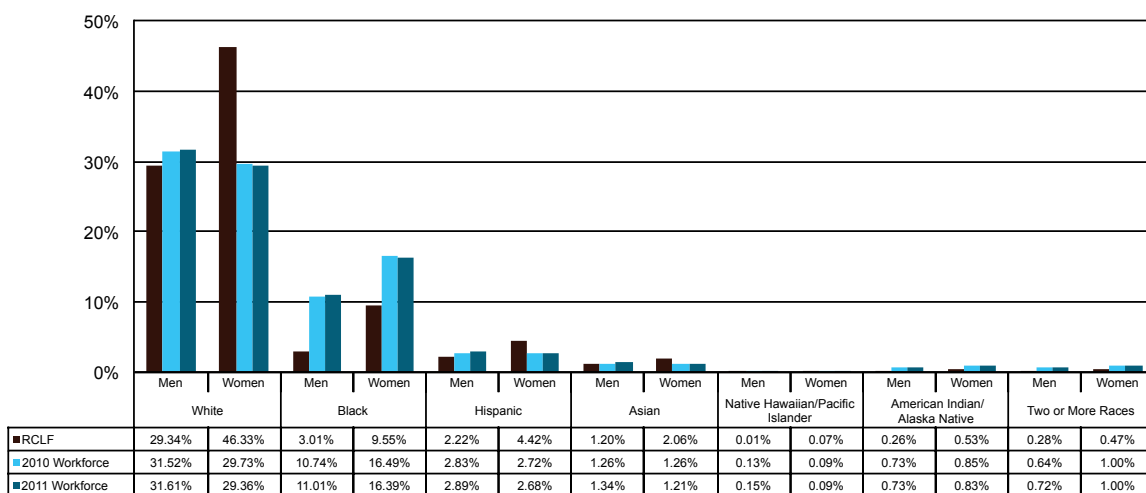
The Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) provided opportunities for students to gain Federal work experience while pursuing their studies. This program continued to be utilized under a cooperative education agreement with Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI), Historical Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), and Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCU). Upward mobility and career-ladder positions were utilized as internal recruitment tools for lower-grade employees to compete for positions with targeted grade levels.

### Veterans Benefits Administration

The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) continued to utilize the following recruitment strategies: 1) Advertised job vacancies in bilingual communities, 2) Utilized the services of city and state employment offices, 3) Participated in job fairs to identify applicants from under-represented groups and provided hiring information to these prospects, 4) Participated in job fairs and college job fairs to encourage individuals from these groups to submit applications for employment, 5) Maintained contact with College Career Counselors, and 6) Utilized Student Employment Program to recruit students from REG groups with low participation rates.

The graph below depicts VBA’s workforce compared to the RCLF at the end of FY 2011.

**VBA Workforce vs. RCLF (FY 2010 – FY 2011)**  
Permanent and Temporary



**Data Source:** VSSC UREP Report retrieved on January 16, 2012. Exclude Manila citizens and medical residents. Include pay permanent and temporary employees in full-time, part-time, intermittent status.

★ *VBA'S NOTEWORTHY ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN FY 2011:*

- In FY 2011, there were 468 (2.31%) employees with targeted disabilities.
- Analyzed workforce demographic data in comparison with the Relevant Civilian Labor Force to identify triggers and potential barriers to EEO. (See OFO Letter 20F-07-11).
- Compiled data, conducted annual barrier analysis, and submitted annual EEO Plan and Program Status report to Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in compliance with Management Directive 715 (MD 715).
- Compiled data and submitted the Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Report (FEORP) to Office of Personnel Management.
- Partnered with ODI and conducted face-to-face EEO, diversity and inclusion training at the Records Management Center and nine regional offices. There were a total of 1,500 participants, including managers, supervisors, and employees, who received this training.
- Continued to cultivate and develop the next generation leaders in the workplace through the Summer Internship Program. VBA sponsored 11 participants in the Summer Internship Program in 2011. VBA invested \$122,644 in stipends that directly benefited women and minority students.
- In FY 2011, VBA had a decrease of informal complaints and an increase in ADR offer rate. Of VBA's four areas, the Central Area (Area 3) maintains the highest offer rate at 100%, with a participation rate of 63%, and a resolution rate of 56 percent.
- Continued its internal recruitment initiatives through employee development and career planning programs, such as the Leadership Enhancement and Development (LEAD) Program. VBA had 35 candidates in the FY 2011 program: there were seven White females; fifteen White males; six African American females; two African American males; two Asian females; one Hispanic female, and two Hispanic females.

**National Cemetery Administration**

The National Cemetery Administration (NCA). In FY 2011, 73 percent of NCA's employees were Veterans, the highest level of any agency in the Federal Government. One-hundred percent of the FY 2011 SES at NCA participated in Equal Employment Opportunity, Diversity, and Conflict Management Training for SES members and equivalents.

Through the Cemetery Director Intern program, NCA continued to increase the ratios in leadership positions for groups that have low participation rates. The 2011 graduating class consisted of (2) African American females, (1) African American male, (1) Asian Pacific Islander female and (3) White males. The participants upon successful completion of the program were assigned to cemeteries as cemetery director, assistant director, or assistant to the director.

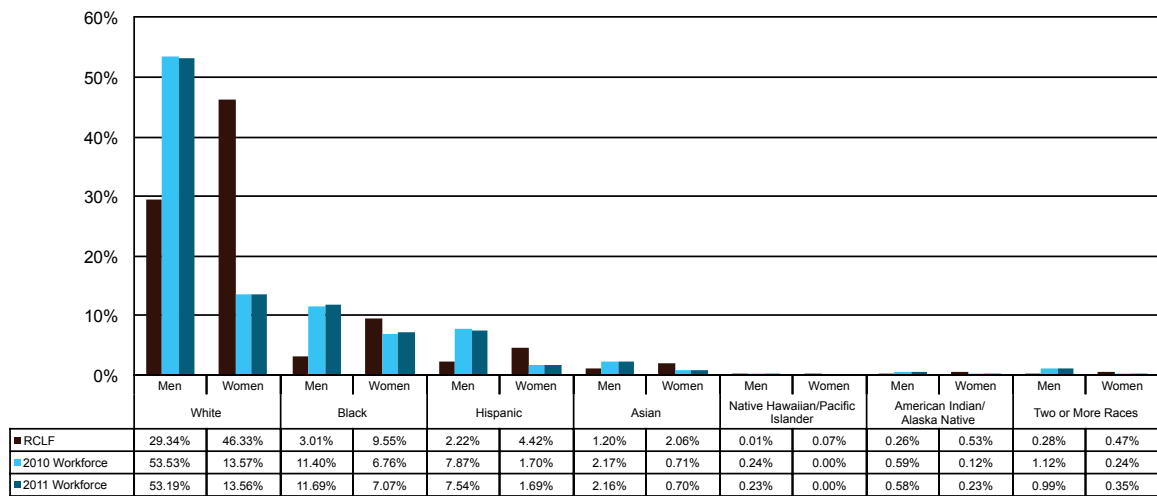
NCA also employed the Diversity Non-Traditional Intern program to recruit, retain and promote to leadership positions people from REG groups with low participation rates and continues to encourage employees to participate in programs that will enhance their career

development. Three employees from the FY 2011 student intern program were selected for permanent positions.

In FY 2011 two supervisory sessions were held, training forty supervisors. For FY 2011, (12) employees completed NCA’s Cemetery Foreman Training program, (11) employees completed NCA’s Cemetery Forman Boot Camp and (58) employees completed the newly developed Cemetery Caretakers training program.

Below is a graph of the NCA’s workforce compared with the RCLF. Women from each race/ethnicity group have a low participation rate.

**NCA Workforce vs. RCLF (FY 2010 – FY 2011)**  
Permanent and Temporary



**Data Source:** VSSC UREP Report retrieved on January 16, 2012. Exclude Manila citizens and medical residents. Include pay permanent and temporary employees in full-time, part-time, intermittent status.

## Assistant Secretaries and Staff Offices

### Office of Management

The Office of Management (OM) has worked diligently to establish a working environment that fosters an inclusive workplace, meeting all established hiring goals for a diverse, results-oriented, high-performing workforce. In FY 2011, OM sponsored several financial training venues including the following:

- Three financial management training conferences (training an estimated 2,700 employees)
- CFO Academy (training 19 employees)

- Certified Government Financial Manager (training 203 employees)
- Association of Government Accountants (AGA) Professional Development conference (training 81 employees)
- Certified Internal Auditor (training 30 employees)
- Certified Government Auditing Professional (CGAP) (training 20 employees)

This training allowed the Department to make an investment in employee professional and personal growth and strengthened the foundation needed to support VA's transformation into a 21<sup>st</sup> century Cabinet-level agency.

### **Office of Information and Technology**

The Office of Information and Technology (OIT) in an effort to create a diverse, results-oriented, high-performing workforce, partnered with internal organizations to increase outreach to affinity organizations resulting in increased diversity in the workforce, especially for people with targeted disabilities and Veterans. In FY 2011, OIT increased the hiring of people with targeted disabilities to nearly 1.93 percent, a 0.78 percentage point increase from 1.15 percent in FY 2010. Veterans represented 70.40 percent of gains for OIT in FY 2011. OIT's current hiring of Veterans surpasses the Secretary's goal of 40 percent.

### **Office of Policy and Planning**

The Office of Policy and Planning (OPP) hired 36 new employees in FY 2011 with a goal of creating well-qualified, diversity workforce dedicated to helping VA ensure that Veterans and their beneficiaries receive the care, support, and recognition they have earned. OPP selected the 36 new hires from a variety of sources, i.e. other VA organizations and government agencies, private sector, the military and Veteran community, and universities and colleges. The consistent pursuit of diversity has created an OPP workforce that is comprised of 47 percent women, 39 percent minorities, 46 percent Veterans, and 2 percent with targeted disabilities. Each of these measures demonstrates OPP's commitment to and realization of diversity and inclusion.

### **Office of Operations, Security, and Preparedness**

The Office of Operations, Security, and Preparedness (OSP) ensures a diverse workforce from many educational backgrounds and abilities in order to ensure a diverse results-oriented, flexible and inclusive environment and outstanding customer service and stakeholder relations. Training and educational awareness is made available to every employee and OSP ensures every employee is properly train to perform their job and provides outstanding customer service and stakeholder relations.

## **Office of Human Resources and Administration**

The Office of Human Resources and Administration (OHRA) is the parent office of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the Office of Resolution Management, and the VA Learning University.

### *Office of Diversity and Inclusion*

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI), a program office within OHRA, has primary responsibility for initiatives related to workforce diversity and organizational inclusion. In FY 2011, ODI accomplished the following pursuant to Goal 1 of the Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan:

- Increased the representation of people with targeted disabilities from 1.51 percent in FY 2010 to 1.65 percent in FY 2011.
- Increased hires of people with targeted disabilities to 1.89 percent.
- Increased employment of disabled Veterans from 9.02 percent in FY 2010 to 9.61 percent in FY 2011.
- Increased diversity of Senior Executive Service (SES), specifically the representation of Black men and women.
- Implemented new VA-wide Mandatory EEO, Diversity and Inclusion Performance Element for all SES and managers and supervisors.
- Conducted virtual Management Directive 715 trainings to field facilities.
- Developed and implemented an innovative new Diversity Index to measure VA's workforce diversity.
- Designed and implemented a system to capture component-based applicant flow data for SES vacancies.
- Distributed and posted "Recruitment & Selection Best Practices Guide" on-line VA-wide.
- Re-designed the ODI Web site and refreshed online content.

### *Office of Resolution Management*

The Office of Resolution Management (ORM) leadership participated in several outreach programs focused on recruiting persons with disabilities and Veterans into entry level positions in FY 2011. As a result from these efforts, ORM staff was composed of 33.8 percent Veterans, 10.7 percent disabled Veterans and 3 percent employees with targeted disabilities at the end of FY 2011. In addition, ORM encouraged use of Veterans preference internships such as the VA work study program for Veterans sponsored by the Buffalo VA Regional Office, and utilized Presidential Management Fellow candidates to further diversify its workforce. Finally, ORM led a series of EEO/diversity trainings with executives to discuss EEO policies, provide examples of prohibited conduct and share EEO/diversity best practices; and provided two face-to-face EEO briefings to the National Council for Labor Management Relations.

### *The VA Learning University*

The VA Learning University (VALU) works in tandem with the VA Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) to ensure training is made available to assist with recruitment, development and retention of a competent, committed and diverse workforce that provides high-quality service to Veterans and their families. The close collaboration and communication between VALU and ODI is demonstrated through shared values, missions and objectives.

### **Office of General Counsel**

The Office of General Counsel (OGC) actively supported and facilitated the work of a number of Departmental work groups and task forces dedicated to building and sustaining a diverse, results-oriented, high-performing workforce, including the VA Diversity Council, the VA Strategic Planning Workgroup, the VA Leadership Competencies Task Force, the Employee Development Task Force, and the VA Leadership Assessment Design Workforce. OGC also fostered diversity and high performance within its own workforce through targeted training on diversity and related topics in the FY 2011-2012 OGC Leadership Development Program.

### **Office of Inspector General**

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) values diversity in thought and perspective as much as it values differences based on external characteristics. All supervisors are encouraged to emphasize hiring highly qualified and diverse employees, and are held accountable for results through the performance appraisal process. The OIG strives to create a work environment that focuses on inclusivity, productivity, communication, and collaboration.

During FY 2011, OIG hired more than 50 new employees with the goal of creating an exceptionally qualified, diverse workforce dedicated to helping VA ensure that Veterans and their families receive the care, support, and recognition they have earned through service to our country. To support diversity in thought and perspective, OIG selected employees from other VA organizations and Government agencies, private business, the military and Veteran community, and universities and colleges. These different sources provide a depth of perspective that contributes positively to the diversity within OIG. Bringing in new employees from different backgrounds, rather than hiring exclusively from within the Inspector General community, has helped to increase the flow of new ideas and contributions to the organization.

### **Board of Veterans Appeals**

The Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA) routinely conducts strategic workforce planning to ensure that our workforce is mission ready now and in the future. Various staff components work in unison to review projected hiring needs based upon achievement of a diverse workforce, risk areas for mission critical occupations, and workload considerations. This 360 degree approach

helps build a talented, diverse, and results-oriented Board. Approximately two-thirds of BVA's staff members are attorneys. BVA continues to rely on a longstanding tradition of dedicated recruiting efforts with law schools, both locally and nationwide. High-ranking BVA staff members routinely attend job fairs for law schools in the DC area and maintain relationships with career services offices across the country. These recruiting efforts allow BVA to attract highly motivated attorneys who bring unique skill sets and diversity to the workforce.

The Board also routinely participates in job fairs geared toward attracting Veterans, to fully leverage the wide range of talent and skills that Veterans can provide to the workplace. The Board has fostered a cooperative and results-oriented relationship with local Marine and Army Wounded Warrior Regiments, to reach out to returning Veterans to obtain their resumes and then actively seeks to place them via the Veteran Recruitment Appointment authority. Several supervisory staff members participate on task forces focused on the effective and enhanced recruitment of Veterans. The Board continues to be an active supporter of Student Education Employment Programs, like the Student Career Experience Program and the Student Temporary Employment Program, which provide federal employment for post-secondary students. These programs afford BVA maximum flexibility in providing developmental opportunities to students and in discovering first-hand the abilities of potential future employees. The Board has hired several former student employees as permanent staff members.

### **Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs**

The Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs (OPIA) actively supported and facilitated the VA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan. In addition to OPIA entities, OPIA worked with a number of Departmental work groups and task forces, as well as individual VA office programs, designed to build and sustain a diverse, results-oriented, high-performing workforce. In both depth and breadth, OPIA initiated and developed multiple programs to interact with American Indian/Alaska Native populations, as well as insular affairs with island populations, contributing to diversity and inclusion of these communities across all levels. OPIA provides diversity and inclusion multimedia support for both internal and external populations inclusive of the full range of programs. The National Veterans Outreach Office established an outreach work group made up of leads from various program offices, such as Center for Minority Veterans, Homeless Program, and Women Veterans. In addition, OPIA is a lead agent in development and implementation of hiring programs that directly contributes to achieving VA's diversity and inclusion workforce goals.

### **Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs**

The Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (OCLA) hired 27 new employees in FY 2011. In building a high-performing workforce, OCLA's new employees included 70 percent Veterans. Additionally, OCLA hired a new employee with a targeted disability. At the end of FY 2011, OCLA's diversified workforce was 50 percent Veterans.

## **Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construction**

The Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construction (OALC) has made great strides in increasing employee diversity. OALC further promotes diversity by encouraging current staff to market career opportunities within its offices to potential applicants and networks with the assistance of Veteran service coordinators to hire disabled Veterans under direct hiring authority. OALC is the parent organization of the Office of Acquisition Operations, Strategic Acquisition Center (SAC), the Office of Acquisition Operations, Acquisition Service of Frederick (AS-F), and the Technology Acquisition Center (TAC).

### *Office of Acquisition Operations, Strategic Acquisition Center*

The Office of Acquisition Operations, Strategic Acquisition Center (SAC) embarked on the first phase of its three phase hiring approach to recruit and bring on-board six new employees in FY 2011. In an effort to identify and recruit acquisition professionals who meet the highly-specialized training and certification requirements, the SAC has used traditional recruitment tools (i.e., USAJOBS.gov) as well as tapping into several innovative recruitment outreach programs, such as coordination with the Veterans Employment Coordination Service (VECS) Program, representation at the National Contract Management Association (NCMA) Job Fair in Bethesda, Maryland, and participation in the NCMA World Congress in Denver, Colorado. During the latter half of FY 2011, preliminary steps were also taken for a VA-sponsored job fair to be held in the Fredericksburg, Virginia area (this event was deferred to a later date).

As part of the on-boarding process, new SAC employees are required to complete Prevention of Workplace Harassment and No Fear Act training. To date, all training has been completed on time. In FY 2011, the SAC's Associate Executive Director completed the mandatory face-to-face EEO, Diversity and Conflict Management Class at the SES Executive Forum in April 2011. Additionally, the SAC is fully compliant with applicable EEO laws, regulations, and Executive Orders.

### *Office of Acquisition Operations, Acquisition Service of Frederick*

The Office of Acquisition Operations, Acquisition Service of Frederick (AS-F) held three levels of on-site MS Excel training for the staff to enhance their proficiency. AS-F held team building events including potluck luncheons, ice cream socials, and an "End of the Year" Tailgating celebration held in November. AS-F also established peer-to-peer award recognition certificates for special contributions of individuals and teams. "Welcome" emails for all new employee and/or promotions with their biographies are sent out to the organization.

### *Technology Acquisition Center*

The Technology Acquisition Center (TAC). Workforce analysis shows the distribution of TAC's employees to be more female (53 percent) than male (47 percent). We mentored and grew three of our new key leaders of which two were women. The TAC recruited 19 new employees of which were one Veteran, and nine women. The TAC implemented a mentoring program to grow our employees and increase their skills. This assists in filling higher graded journeyman positions and possible leadership vacancies. Our lower graded employees get



hands on, valuable experience from some of our most experienced, talented, seasoned workforce enabling the transfer of the needed knowledge and skills to develop more highly skilled, competent employees. We assessed the success of these mentors and adjust as needed to assure the success of the process.

The TAC leadership has initiated monthly All-Hands meetings to communicate initiatives, strategies, and provide a forum to discuss challenges and ask questions. We also had regularly scheduled staff meetings for leadership in order to exchange ideas and share information. Staff notes from these meetings were published to all TAC employees. The Director conducted exit interviews addressing any issues, concerns or shortfalls. We participated in an Organization Climate Assessment and feedback was compiled and strategies were developed to remedy issues. The Director created a suggestion box where employees were able to anonymously offer suggestions or voice complaints. Any issues raised were addressed and resolved.

### **Center for Minority Veterans**

The Center for Minority Veterans (CMV) conducted the 11<sup>th</sup> biennial Minority Veterans Program Coordinators (MVPC) conference in June 2011 to train, educate and equip MVPCs to enhance their outreach efforts and cultural competency to better serve minority Veterans and sensitize their internal and external stakeholders to the needs and challenges of minority Veterans. In addition, an interactive presentation on “Cultural Communications/Awareness” was given by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. This presentation enhanced the MVPCs’ knowledge in conducting culturally sensitive interactions with clients and staff, and in creating culturally sensitive material to support their outreach efforts.

### **Center for Women Veterans**

The Center for Women Veterans (CWV) accomplished many activities in FY 2011 including “The 2011 National Training Summit on Women Veterans,” where the purpose was to educate women Veterans, female active duty, Reserves and National Guard service members, women Veterans advocates, Veterans service organizations, Congressional representatives, and all those who have an interest in women Veterans issues; to gather and receive information on VA’s enhancements to benefits and services; to share the Department of Defense initiatives for female service members; and to provide a forum for the exchange of information. The Summit accommodated nearly 700 attendees. During the Summit, the Secretary announced plans for establishing a Task Force on Women Veterans to identify gaps in services and opportunities to better serve women Veterans. CWV staff attended all major Department-wide workgroups, task forces, and committees, and joint federal collaborative committees. CWV’s Director serves as VA’s designated representative on the White House Interagency Council on Women and Girls, and on the EEO Council on Diversity and Inclusion, helping to craft the EEO second Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan.

### **Office of Employment Discrimination Complain Adjudication**

The Office of Employment Discrimination Complain Adjudication (OEDCA) had numerous achievements in the area of Diversity and Inclusion in FY 2011 including:

- OEDCA Director served as a judge for the VA's Diversity Award competition
- Collaborated with ODI, ORM, and OGC to establish internal complaint processing procedures for sexual orientation discrimination complaints
- Provided EEO training at two SES orientation programs
- Provided quarterly articles for ODI's Diversity Newsletter spotlighting VA discrimination findings and offering practice pointers to avoid discrimination findings
- Prepared trend analysis of OEDCA findings for the senior leadership and provided recommendations for training initiatives
- Collaborated with ODI, ORM, and OGC to develop FAQs focusing on reprisal and reprisal per se; the FAQs were disseminated agency-wide to managers and supervisors

**GOAL 2:****A Flexible and Inclusive Work Environment**

The American workplace has changed dramatically over the last half-century. Groups with historically low participation are entering the workforce with greater frequency. Dual-income households have become the hallmark of American society. In recent years, the National Center for Education Statistics reported that the percentage increase in the number of college students age 25 and over has been larger than the percentage increase in the number of younger students—this trend is expected to continue. As a result, the American worker has greater demands to balance employment with other responsibilities. Employers who are actively investing resources to create and sustain a flexible and inclusive work environment are reaping rewards as researchers have highlighted direct correlations between an organization’s environment and its ability to retain employees, increase productivity, and decrease absenteeism, aside from reduced administrative and logistic costs.

***Status*****Workplace Flexibility**

A flexible work environment refers to how work gets done—when one works, where one works, and how one works. Examples of workplace flexibilities include telework and alternative work schedules. The progress of realizing a truly flexible work environment in the Federal Government has been incremental—that is, until last year.

The spirit of workplace flexibility began in the Federal Government with the passing of the Federal Employees Flexible and Compressed Work Schedules Act of 1982. This revolutionized the Federal workplace—employees, for the first time, have more control of their working hours than ever before. This act was the first definitive milestone for the quest for workplace flexibility in the Federal Government and paved the road for telework.

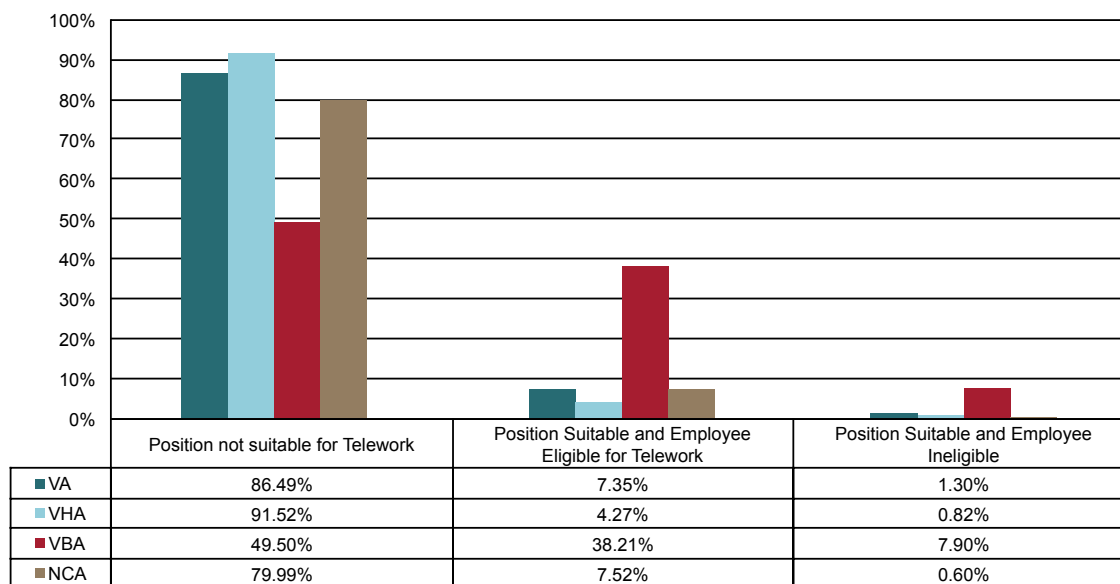
The principle of telework has existed in the Federal Government for many years under different headings including “work at home,” “flexible work,” and “telecommuting.” The official inception of telework into the legislative framework occurred in 2000 with Public Law 106-346. This law ultimately planted the inevitable seed-of-change in the Federal workplace.

The significant milestone for telework in the Federal Government occurred with the passing of the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 (the Act). The Act specified roles, responsibilities and expectations for all Federal executive agencies with regard to telework policies, employee eligibility and participation, program implementation, and reporting. The Act further established baseline expectations for the Federal telework program and agencies. In VA, the Act motivated agency-wide reassessment of telework eligibility and improved data collection.

According to OPM’s Telework Report for FY 2010, VA has the highest number of positions ineligible for telework. The Department of Homeland Security is next followed by the Railroad Retirement Board and the Social Security Agency. As of FY 2011, over 86 percent of VA positions are ineligible for telework. The low eligible rate is due to VA’s mission focus requiring a significant portion of the workforce to be physically present on a daily basis in order to support critical systems, processes, and services. This is especially true for VHA, with over 91 percent of its workforce ineligible for telework, as a large proportion of its workforce is in the medical services field.

The graph below shows the proportion of positions suitable for telework and employee eligibility by administration.

**Telework Suitability and Eligibility by Administration**  
(FY 2011)



**Data Source:** VSSC Employee Report retrieved on January 16, 2012. Exclude virtual employees. Include permanent and temporary employees in full-time, part-time, and intermittent and pay status.

The ratio of positions suitable for telework varies significantly by administration (sum of position suitable for telework regardless of employee eligibility): 5.09 percent of VHA positions are eligible, 46.11 percent of VBA are eligible, and 8.12 of NCA are eligible.

Of the positions suited for telework and employees are eligible for telework, total telework participation for VA is over 52 percent, for VHA is nearly 65 percent, and for VBA is 7.84 percent. NCA data is unavailable.

**Telework Participation Compared to Eligible**

	VA	VHA	VBA	NCA
Ad hoc	31.41%	41.51%	2.62%	N/A
Regular	20.85%	23.45%	5.22%	N/A
TOTAL	52.26%	64.95%	7.84%	N/A

However, when compared to the size of the total workforce, telework participation throughout VA is low. Compared to Federal Government average of 10.4 percent provided in OPM’s Telework Report FY 2010, VA is less than 4 percent. Total telework participation for VA is 3.84 percent, for VHA is 2.77 percent, and VBA is 3.00 percent. NCA data is unavailable.

**Telework Participation Compared to Workforce**

	VA	VHA	VBA	NCA
Ad hoc	2.31%	1.77%	1.00%	N/A
Regular	1.53%	1.00%	2.00%	N/A
TOTAL	3.84%	2.77%	3.00%	N/A

**Survey Results**

It may be tempting to shrug off efforts to ensure that federal employees are satisfied with their jobs and their organizations, but satisfaction drives employee engagement and ultimately leads to better performance and retention. Investing in the workforce and paying attention to employee viewpoints isn’t about happiness, it’s about building a more effective organization and delivering results to our Nation’s Veterans. To better understand workplace flexibility from the employee’s perspective, we examine selected questions from the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS).

When asked to describe the employee’s current teleworking situation, 8.4 percent of 12,483 respondents indicated they participate in some kind of telework. About 10 percent of respondents indicated that they chose not to telework. However, over 30 percent indicated that they cannot obtain their supervisor’s approval for telework, even though the job is suitable; an increase of nearly 9 percentage points from 2010. (The FEVS first included telework related question in 2010 and response options was expanded in 2011.)

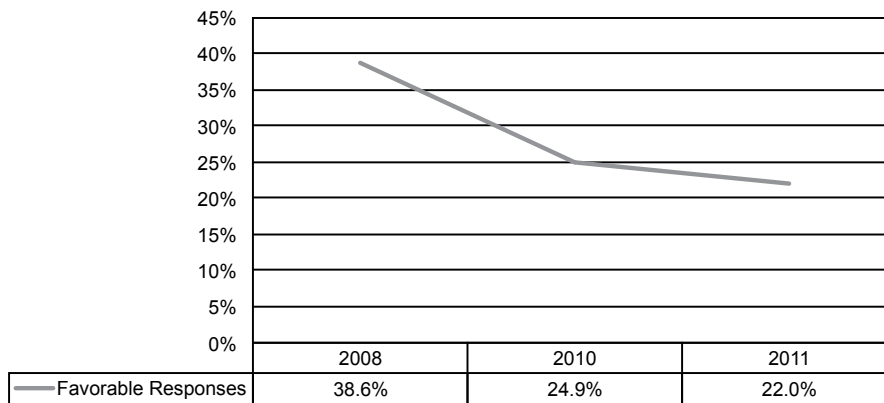
**Survey Item 73: Please select the response below that BEST describes your current telework situation.**

	2010	2011
I telework very infrequently, on an unscheduled or short-term basis.	6.5%	3.3%
I do not telework because I have to be physically present on the job (e.g., Law Enforcement Officers, Park Rangers, Security Personnel).	50.8%	45.8%
I do not telework because I have technical issues (e.g., connectivity, inadequate equipment) that prevent me from teleworking.	5.3%	5.8%
I do not telework because I did not receive approval to do so, even though I have the kind of job where I can telework.	21.7%	30.6%
I do not telework because I choose not to telework.	7.1%	9.4%
Telework on a regular basis	8.6%	5.1%
I telework 3 or more days per week.	N/A	2.4%
I telework 1 or 2 days per week.	N/A	1.7%
I telework, but no more than 1 or 2 days per month.	N/A	1.0%

**Data Source:** Partnership for Public Service retrieved on January 20, 2012 at <http://www.fedview.opm.gov/>.

When asked “How satisfied are you with telework?” only 22 percent responded favorably (sum of very satisfied and satisfied). This is a decrease of nearly three percentage points from FY 2010 and about 16 percentage points from 2008.

**Telework Satisfaction**  
(FY 2008, FY 2010, and FY 2011)



**Data Source:** Partnership for Public Service retrieved on January 20, 2012 at <http://www.fedview.opm.gov/>.

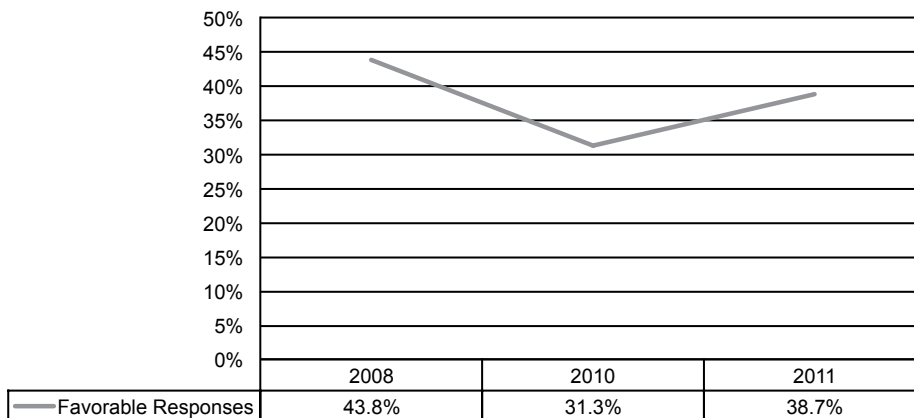
**Survey Item 79: How satisfied are you with the following Work/Life programs in your agency? Telework.**

	2008	2010	2011
Very Satisfied	11.8%	8.9%	7.2%
Satisfied	26.8%	16.0%	14.8%
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	40.5%	56.5%	54.9%
Dissatisfied	12.7%	10.0%	11.4%
Very Dissatisfied	8.2%	8.6%	11.8%

**Data Source:** Partnership for Public Service retrieved on January 20, 2012 at <http://www.fedview.opm.gov/>.

Another measure of workplace flexibility includes the availability and the opportunity to use Alternative Work Schedules (AWS). Employees are more satisfied with alternative work schedules compared to telework; nearly 39 percent answered favorably when asked about AWS satisfaction, an increase of over 7 percentage points from 2010 but still lower than 2008 results.

**Satisfaction with Alternative Work Schedules**  
(FY 2008, FY 2010, and FY 2011)



**Data Source:** Partnership for Public Service retrieved on January 20, 2012 at <http://www.fedview.opm.gov/>.

**Survey Item 80: How satisfied are you with the following Work/Life programs in your agency? Alternative Work Schedules.**

	2008	2010	2011
Very Satisfied	13.0%	10.2%	13.9%
Satisfied	30.8%	21.1%	24.8%
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	32.2%	40.3%	38.2%
Dissatisfied	9.9%	12.8%	11.2%
Very Dissatisfied	13.1%	15.7%	11.9%

**Data Source:** Partnership for Public Service retrieved on January 20, 2012 at <http://www.fedview.opm.gov/>.

## An Inclusive Workplace

Workforce diversity alone does not yield higher performance outcomes if the organizational environment is not inclusive. An organization can be very diverse with respect to race, ethnicity and gender and not be high performing because the diversity may actually result in greater workplace conflict. Simply put, diversity without inclusion will not deliver the promised performance outcomes.

In order to reap the benefits of workforce diversity, work environments must maintain the facilitating conditions that enable diverse perspectives to be heard and empower all participants to contribute. This requires deliberate efforts by leadership to provide flexibility; promote robust collaboration (through teamwork, participatory work systems, and matrix management); and engage all employees (through cultural competency, accommodation, pluralistic business processes, and constructive conflict management). These are more than retention strategies; they are strategies that engage and develop our human resources so that they may advance the VA mission.

Organizational inclusion refers to the way an organization configures opportunity, interaction, communication, information, and decision-making in order to utilize the potential of diversity. By extension, an inclusive work environment is one where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and where the talents and skills of different groups are valued and leveraged.

The Partnership for Public Service summarizes the results of the FEVS using various indexes created from combinations of survey items. The Partnership’s “Support for Diversity” index placed VA at number 20 out of 31 ranked agencies in 2011.

### The Best Places to Work Ranking – VA

Index	2010		2011		Variance
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	
Support for Diversity	52.9	23 of 28	56.7	20 of 31	3.8
Effective Leadership - Supervisors	56.5	27 of 28	60.1	27 of 30	3.6
Effective Leadership	49.7	23 of 28	52.3	22 of 30	2.6
Strategic Management	56	18 of 28	58.1	11 of 30	2.1
Work/Life Balance	54.7	26 of 28	56.8	23 of 30	2.1
Performance Based Rewards and Advancement	42.5	23 of 28	43.7	23 of 30	1.2
Teamwork	62.3	21 of 28	62.8	24 of 30	0.5
Training and Development	61.3	13 of 28	61.4	13 of 30	0.1
Pay	53.2	28 of 28	53.3	30 of 30	0.1
Effective Leadership - Fairness	No Data	No Data	53.7	15 of 30	N/A
Effective Leadership - Leaders	No Data	No Data	47.3	21 of 30	N/A
Effective Leadership - Empowerment	No Data	No Data	45.1	22 of 30	N/A
Employee Skills/Mission Match	81.7	2 of 28	80.7	5 of 30	-1
Family Friendly Culture and Benefits	26.7	28 of 28	25.7	29 of 30	-1

**Data Source:** Partnership for Public Service retrieved on January 20, 2012 at <http://bestplacestowork.org/BPTW/rankings/>.



The Partnership for Public Service also provided results by Administration. For VHA, the largest point increase was also in the “Support for Diversity” dimension.

**The Best Places to Work Ranking – VHA Score**

	2010	2011	Variance
Support for Diversity	52.4	56.7	4.3
Effective Leadership	49.4	52.2	2.8
Work/Life Balance	54.3	56.7	2.4
Strategic Management	55.8	57.9	2.1
Performance Based Rewards and Advancement	42.2	43.6	1.4
Pay	51	51.8	0.8
Teamwork	61.8	62.3	0.5
Effective Leadership - Empowerment	No data	45.4	0
Effective Leadership - Fairness	No data	53.9	0
Effective Leadership - Leaders	No data	47.1	0
Effective Leadership - Supervisors	No data	60	0
Training and Development	62.1	61.6	-0.5
Employee Skills/Mission Match	82.1	81	-1.1
Family Friendly Culture and Benefits	26.2	24.9	-1.3

**Data Source:** Partnership for Public Service retrieved on January 20, 2012 at <http://bestplacestowork.org/BPTW/rankings/>.

For VBA and NCA, the largest point increase was in the area of “Training and Development,” which had a score increase of 2.3 and 1.7 percentage points, respectively.

**The Best Places to Work Ranking – VBA Score**

	2010	2011	Variance
Training and Development	56.4	58.7	2.3
Performance Based Rewards and Advancement	40.6	42.8	2.2
Employee Skills/Mission Match	78.2	79.9	1.7
Support for Diversity	55.9	57.4	1.5
Effective Leadership	50.9	51.3	0.4
Effective Leadership - Empowerment	No data	40.1	0
Effective Leadership - Fairness	No data	51.2	0
Effective Leadership - Leaders	No data	47.7	0
Effective Leadership - Supervisors	No data	60.6	0
Teamwork	68.3	68.2	-0.1
Strategic Management	60.3	60.1	-0.2
Family Friendly Culture and Benefits	28.6	28.2	-0.4
Work/Life Balance	56.6	55.6	-1
Pay	73.8	68.6	-5.2

**Data Source:** Partnership for Public Service retrieved on January 20, 2012 at <http://bestplacestowork.org/BPTW/rankings/>.

**The Best Places to Work Ranking – NCA Score**

	2010	2011	Variance
Training and Development	62.6	64.3	1.7
Effective Leadership - Empowerment	No data	52.3	0
Effective Leadership - Fairness	No data	58.9	0
Effective Leadership - Leaders	No data	55.5	0
Effective Leadership - Supervisors	No data	59.1	0
Support for Diversity	57.2	57.1	-0.1
Employee Skills/Mission Match	85.4	84.4	-1
Effective Leadership	58.9	56.7	-2.2
Strategic Management	64.8	62.2	-2.6
Teamwork	68	63.3	-4.7
Family Friendly Culture and Benefits	26.9	22	-4.9
Performance Based Rewards and Advancement	54.2	48	-6.2
Work/Life Balance	70.2	64	-6.2
Pay	64.2	55.7	-8.5

**Data Source:** Partnership for Public Service retrieved on January 20, 2012 at <http://bestplacestowork.org/BPTW/rankings/>.

## Accommodation of Individuals with Disabilities

Individuals with disabilities represent an important aspect of VA's workforce diversity. Aside from the legal imperative, providing reasonable accommodation for qualified applicants and employees with disabilities is an essential strategy to promoting full inclusion in the 21<sup>st</sup> century VA. Accommodations may be needed for an individual to (1) apply for a job; (2) perform the essential functions of a job; and (3) enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment.

There are a number of possible reasonable accommodations that an employer may have to provide in connection with modifications to the work environment or adjustments in how and when a job is performed. These include but are not limited to:

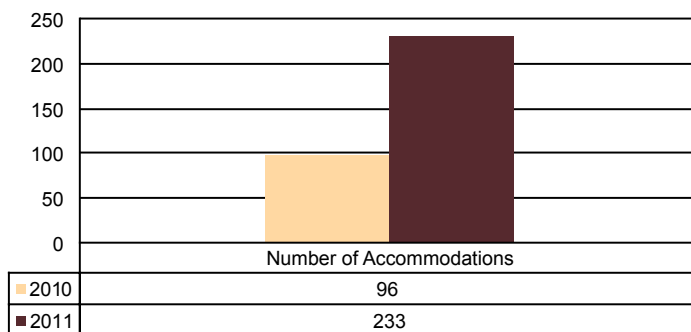
- making existing facilities accessible
- job restructuring
- part-time or modified work schedules
- acquiring or modifying equipment
- changing tests, training materials, or policies
- providing qualified readers or interpreters
- reassignment to a vacant position

In FY 2010, VA, through the Human Capital Investment Plan, established a centralized fund to reimburse to offices and facilities the cost of providing accommodations to applicants and employees with disabilities. This strategy not only reduces the budgetary burden of

first line supervisors and managers but also complements the existing resources provided by the Department of Defense’s Computer/Electronic Accommodation Program. Since its creation in April, 2010, the centralized fund has refunded 329 accommodations ranging from sign-language interpreter services to mobility scooters. Other accommodations include:

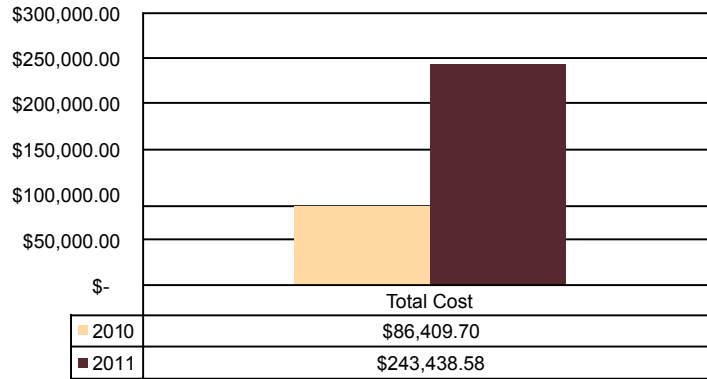
- Interpreter Svc.
- Sport Foam Seat
- Herman Miller Task Chair
- Alternative Keyboards
- Mat
- Real-Time Captioning
- Large Screen Monitor
- High Back Chair with Headrest
- Glare Screen & Copy Holder
- Amplified Speakers
- Ergonomic Chair
- Wheelchair Accessible Desk
- Human Scale Task Chair
- Keyboard Tray
- Trackball Mouse
- Computer-Assisted Captioning
- Seat Slider
- Raised Work Surface
- Footrest
- Migraine Sunglasses
- Nursing Bench
- Amplified Stethoscope
- Roller Mouse Keyboard
- Cell Phone Amplifier
- Antifatigue Mat
- Sit-to-Stand Stool
- Scripting Training
- Monitor
- Incandescent Lamps
- Overhead Lift
- SFS Sport Foam Chair
- Mobility Travel Scooter
- Speech Recognition
- Adaptive Equipment
- Specialized Desk
- Lounge Chair
- Mobile Computer Stand
- Air Purifiers
- Air Filter
- Specialized Roller Mouse
- Flat Panel Monitor
- Specialized Chair
- File Cart
- Heated Blanket
- Wheelchair Lift

**Reasonable Accommodations**  
By Year (FY 2010 – FY 2011)



**Data Source:** Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

**Reasonable Accommodations**  
Reimbursements By Year (FY 2010 – FY 2011)

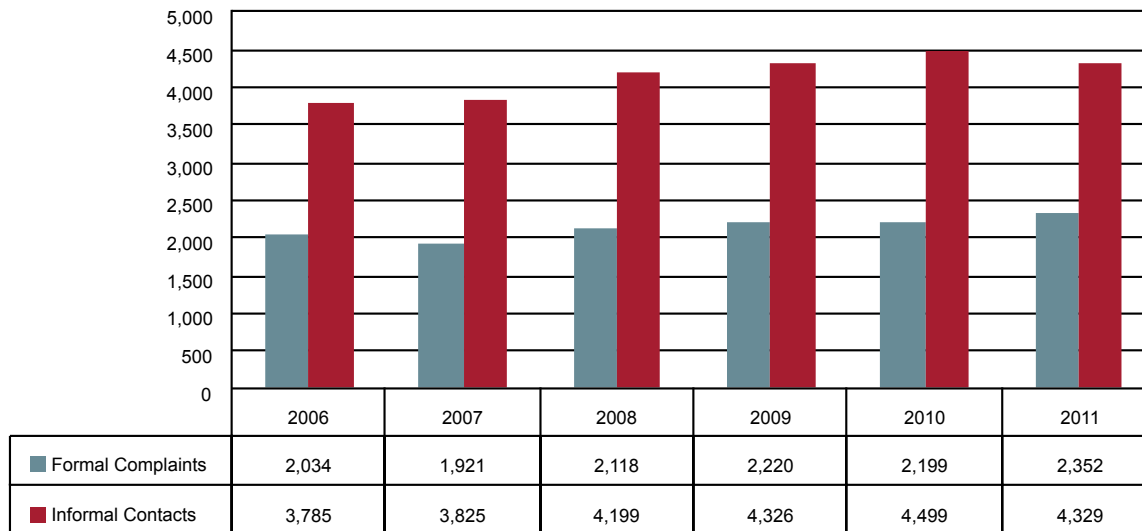


**Data Source:** Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

**EEO Complaints**

Another measure of organizational inclusion focuses on EEO complaint activity. From FY 2006 through FY 2011, the number of formal EEO complaints ranged from a high of 2,352 to a low of 1,921, with an average of 2,141 complaints per year. The per capita formal EEO complaint filing rate increased from 0.72 in FY 2010 to 0.75 in FY 2011. There was an increase of 153 cases filed over that of last year.

**EEO Complaint Activity Trend**  
(FY 2006 – FY 2011)

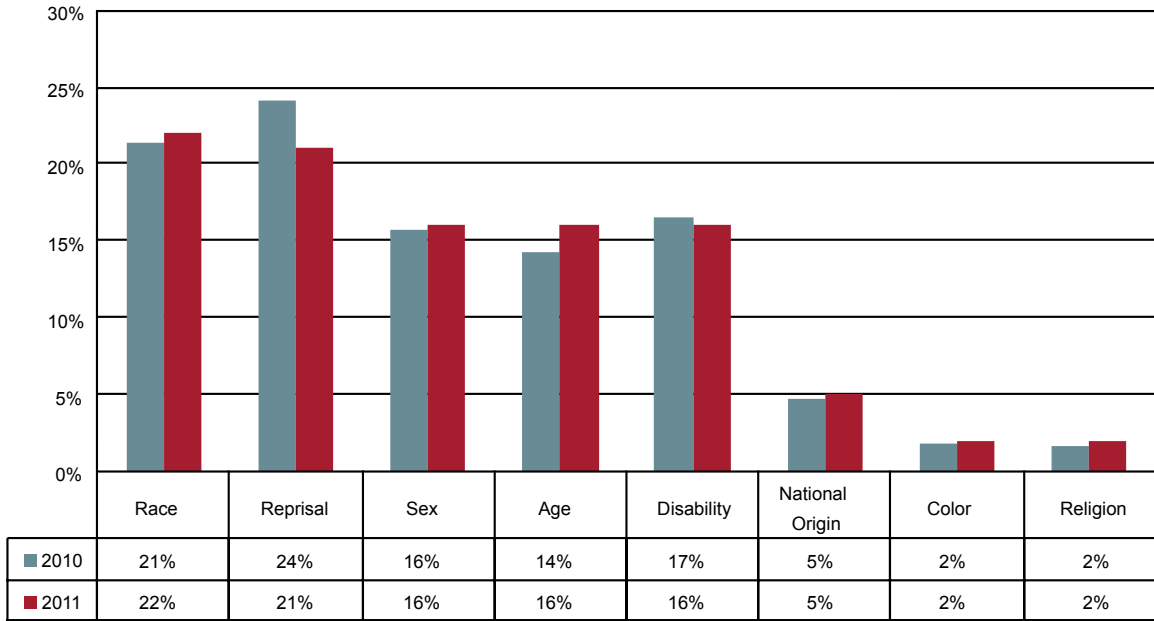


**Data Source:** Office of Resolution Management.

The most frequently cited bases in EEO complains are race, reprisal, sex, and age in order of frequency.

**EEO Complaint by Basis**

(FY 2010 – FY 2011)



**Data Source:** Office of Resolution Management.

In FY 2011, as in FY 2010, the top three specified issues cited in EEO complaints were non-sexual harassment, promotions/non-selection, and disciplinary action in that order.

**EEO Complaints by Issue (FY 2010 – FY 2011)**

	2011	2010
Harassment (Non-Sexual)	32%	42%
Promotion/Non-Selection	17%	16%
Disciplinary Action	14%	15%
Termination	11%	11%
Time and Attendance	6%	7%
Assignment of Duties	5%	6%
Reasonable Accommodation	5%	6%
Appointment/Hire	4%	3%
Evaluation/Appraisal	4%	6%
Reassignment	4%	4%
Terms/Conditions of Employment	3%	4%
Harassment (Sexual)	3%	3%
Pay Including Overtime	3%	4%
Training	2%	3%
Duty Hours	2%	3%
Retirement	1%	1%
Awards	1%	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Data Source:** FY 2010 EEOC Form 462 provided by the Office of Resolution Management. Percent represents the percentage of the total number of complaints filed and may not total to 100 percent because a complainant may have multiple claims.

**Alternative Dispute Resolution**

The use of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) to address workplace disputes has risen dramatically in VA over the last four years. In FY 2011, the number of disputes engaging in ADR increased nearly ten percent from FY 2008. The rate at which these complaints were resolved using ADR also increased, from 79 percent in 2008 to 87 percent in 2011. ORM’s ADR program has had an extremely positive impact on the efficiency of VA’s EEO program nation-wide. VA reached an important milestone in this area in FY 2009 when the three Administrations (VHA, VBA, and NCA), signed Memoranda of Understanding with ORM, allowing ORM to offer ADR in initial EEO counseling. For FY 2011, this process improvement achieved a 98 percent offer rate within the informal EEO complaint process. ADR is used for both EEO and non-EEO disputes with very positive results:

**ADR in EEO Process (FY 2008 – FY 2011)**

	2008	2009	2010	2011
Contacts	4,186	4,315	4,485	4,324
Offers <sup>3)</sup>	76%	83%	97%	98%
Participation <sup>4)</sup>	46%	48%	52%	54%

<sup>3)</sup> ADR offer rate represents the percentage of informal EEO complaints in which VA offers the aggrieved person an opportunity to participate in ADR versus traditional counseling.

<sup>4)</sup> ADR election rate represents the percentage of informal EEO complaints in which both VA and the aggrieved person agree to participate in ADR.

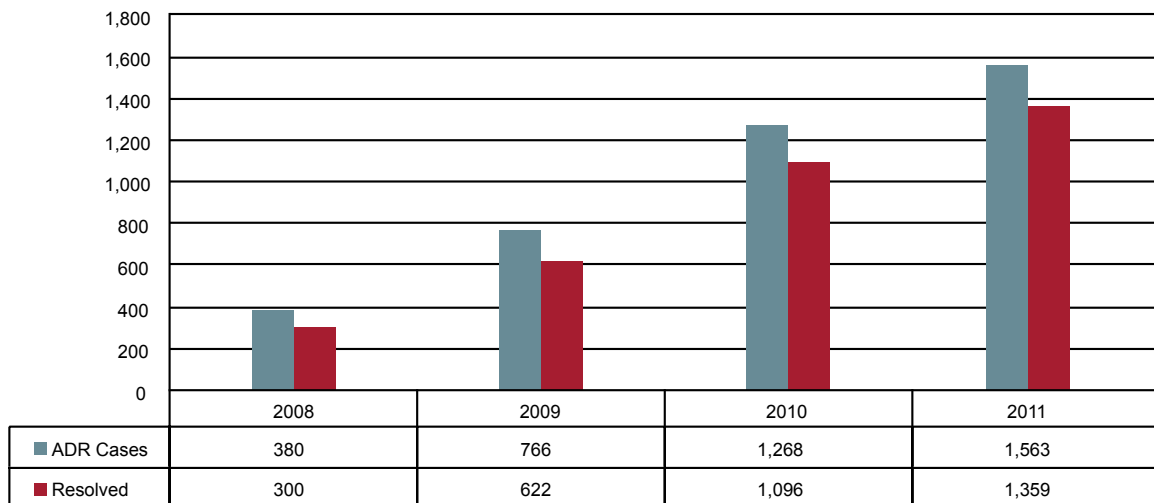
**ADR Outcomes (FY 2008 – FY 2011)**

	EEO				Non EEO			
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2008	2009	2010	2011
Completed	1,133	1,998	2,000	2,229	380	766	1,258	1,561
Resolved	54%	44%	45%	45%	79%	81%	86%	87%

VA estimates that without early intervention, approximately 50 percent of these conflicts could become EEO complaints. The early resolution of these conflicts translates into an estimated \$9 million or more in annual cost avoidance.

**ADR Used for Workplace Disputes**

(FY 2008 – FY 2011)

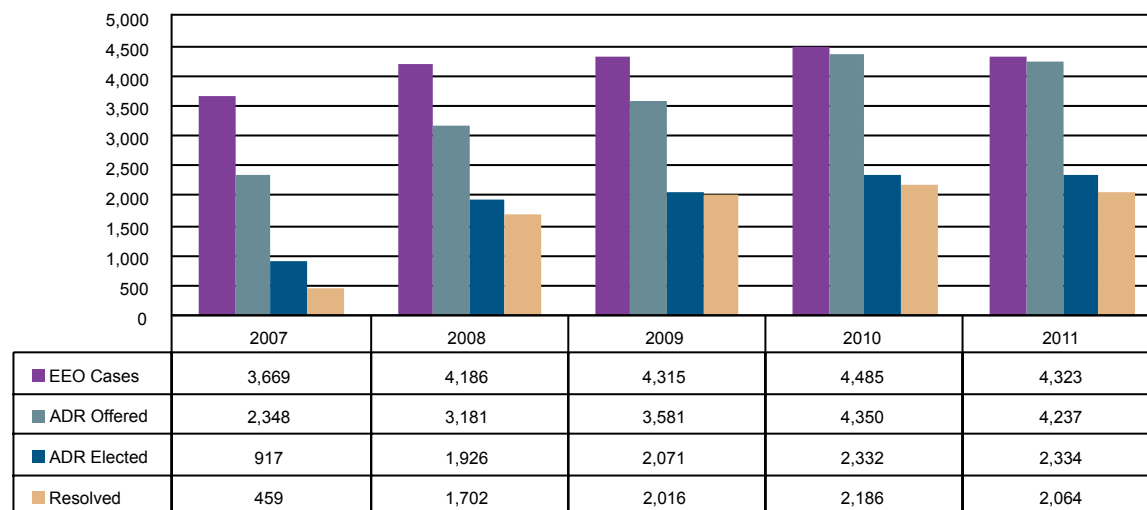


**Data Source:** Office of Resolution Management.

VA's commitment to ADR is clearly evident in the rising offer and participation rates. In FY 2009, VA's ADR offer rate for informal complaints was 83 percent, the ADR participation rate was 48 percent, and the resolution rate was 49 percent. In FY 2011, VA's ADR offer rate

increased to 98 percent, ADR participation rate increased to 54 percent, and the resolution rate was 47 percent.

**ADR Used in the EEO Compliant Process**  
(FY 2007 – FY 2011)



**Data Source:** Office of Resolution Management.

## Leadership Development

Approximately 50 percent of VA’s leaders are either currently eligible or will be eligible to retire in the next five years. As such, it is imperative that VA be prepared to address the impending challenges through succession planning and leadership development.

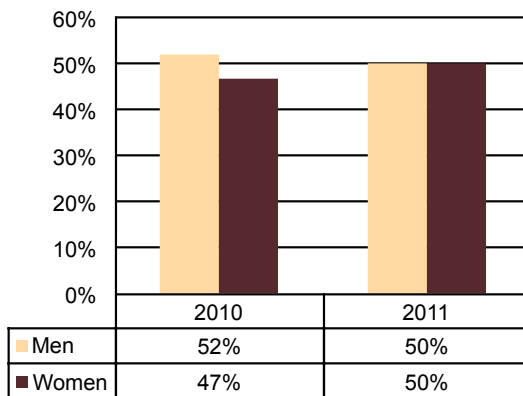
VA administers several leadership development programs to provide developmental opportunities for employees aspiring to leadership positions. These include: The Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program (SESCDP), the Senior Executive Strategic Leadership Course (SESLC), and Leadership VA (LVA).

HRA’s VALU is responsible for the overseeing the Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program. The SESC DP is a Department-wide competitive program designed to develop a cadre of qualified candidates for SES positions. The principal goals for VA’s SESC DP are to identify and prepare individuals to lead change within the Department and to advance the concept of a “corporate SES,” a diverse corps of career executives who share a Government-wide perspective. The SESC DP is an important ingredient in creating a pool of qualified individuals ready to step into executive positions within the Department. The program has helped to increase the diversity in VA’s senior ranks by increasing the pool of qualified women and minorities available to fill SES positions.



The program provides an intensive training and development opportunity based on mastery of the five executive core qualifications (ECQs) required for appointment into the SES. The core qualifications are leading change, leading people, results driven, business acumen, and building coalitions. Candidates have up to 24 months to complete the program requirements. During FY 2011 there were two classes held. The 2010 class completed all program requirements necessary for graduation (December 2010) and the 2011 class spent the second year of their program completing their individual VA/OPM requirements.

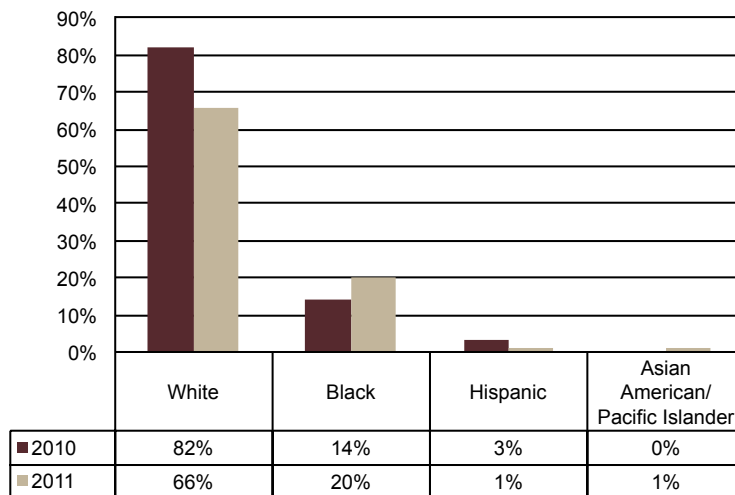
**SESCDP Participation by Gender**  
(FY 2010 – FY 2011)



Data Source: VA Learning University.

The charts to the right and below show the demographic characteristics of the SESCO FY 2010 and FY 2011 classes.

**SESCDP Participation by Race and Ethnicity**  
(FY 2010 – FY 2011)



Data Source: VA Learning University.

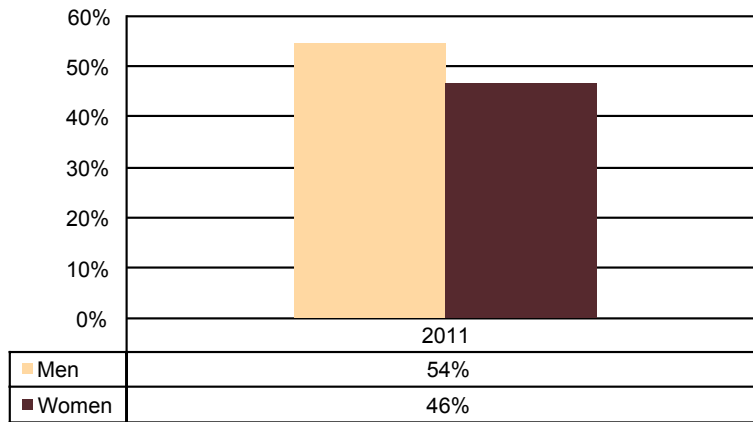
The Corporate Senior Executive Management Office (CSEMO) is responsible for the oversight of VA’s Senior Executive Strategic Leadership Course (SESLC) at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. This course is designed to assist VA executives to excel at the strategic level. It is a 5½-day course where executives learn key content and insight, and participate in simulations and group activities in areas such as executive decision making, managing high performance, strategy and execution, negotiation and partnerships, financial

resource management and driving strategic change. The overall goal of this course is to further develop an executive’s enterprise and business skills in an increasingly complex, volatile, and dynamic world.

VA conducted its first SESLC in March 2011 and its second course in June 2011. Based upon the positive feedback from the Senior Executives who attended the course, VA set a goal to have all Senior Executives attend SESLC by the end of FY 2012. VA scheduled fourteen more classes, one in FY 2011 and thirteen in FY 2012.

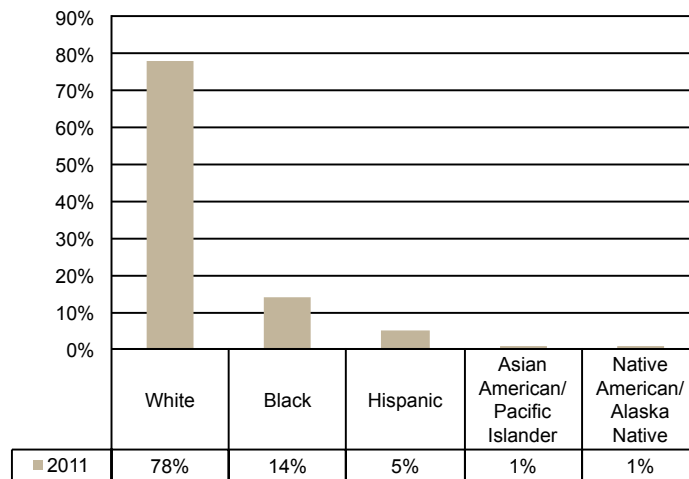
SESLC participation by REG are shown in the following two graphs.

**SESLC Participation by Gender**  
(FY 2011)



**Data Source:** Corporate Senior Executive Management Office.

**SESLC Participation by Race and Ethnicity**  
(FY 2011)

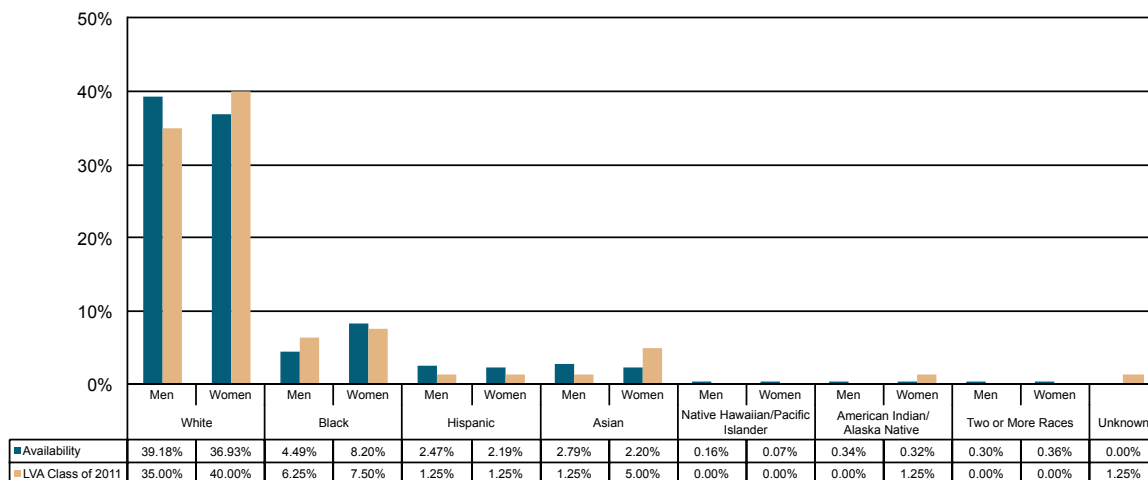


**Data Source:** Corporate Senior Executive Management Office.

One of the top VA wide leadership development program is LVA, available to employees in grades 13 through 15. This program is instrumental in developing leadership and acceding to VA’s imminent succession planning needs. As such, it is important that these programs are representatively diverse and harbor no barriers to equal opportunity.

Below is a chart compares the LVA class of 2011 against 2010 eligible applicants by grade.

**LVA Class of 2011 vs. FY 2010 Availability**



**Data Source:** LVA data provided by VA Learning University. Workforce data from HR Employee cube retrieved in ProClarity on January 16, 2012. Include permanent and temporary employee in full-time, part-time, intermittent, and pay status. Availability includes GS/GM 13-15 and Title-38 Equivalents.

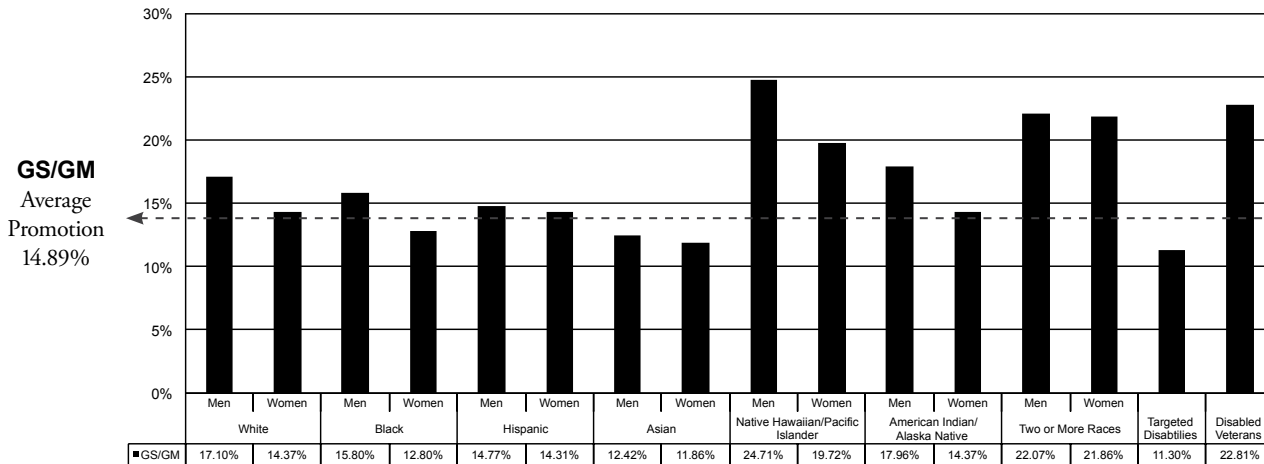
## Promotions

An inclusive environment offers equal upward mobility opportunities to all qualified employees. Comparing the demographic characteristics of the overall workforce with the demographic characteristics of employees who were promoted highlights some areas of concern. The analysis presented here utilizes a moving average of onboard representation calculation. This metric is the average of the beginning onboard count and ending count of the fiscal year. This widely recognized standard in human capital planning reduces skewing of data. This technique, however, has limitations particularly for groups with low representation on board and in the RCLF, such as Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

Analysis of promotion data presents additional challenges for VA, as medical occupations often have education requirements. Therefore, the ratio of promotions for Title-38 medical occupations, compared to on board ratios is significantly smaller than in the GS/GM pay plan. This caveat necessitates the separate evaluation of promotion by GS/GM, Title-38, and Wage and Canteen pay plans.

The GS/GM pay plan makes up the largest proportion of the VA FY 2011 workforce, at nearly 63 percent. At the same time, about 80 percent of VA promotions were in the GS/GM occupations. Disproportionate promotion rates are apparent when compared to the GS/GM average promotion rate of 14.89 percent. Promotion rates for Black women, Asian men and women, and People with Targeted Disabilities are much lower than the average. Promotion rates for White women and Hispanic men and women are slightly lower than the average.

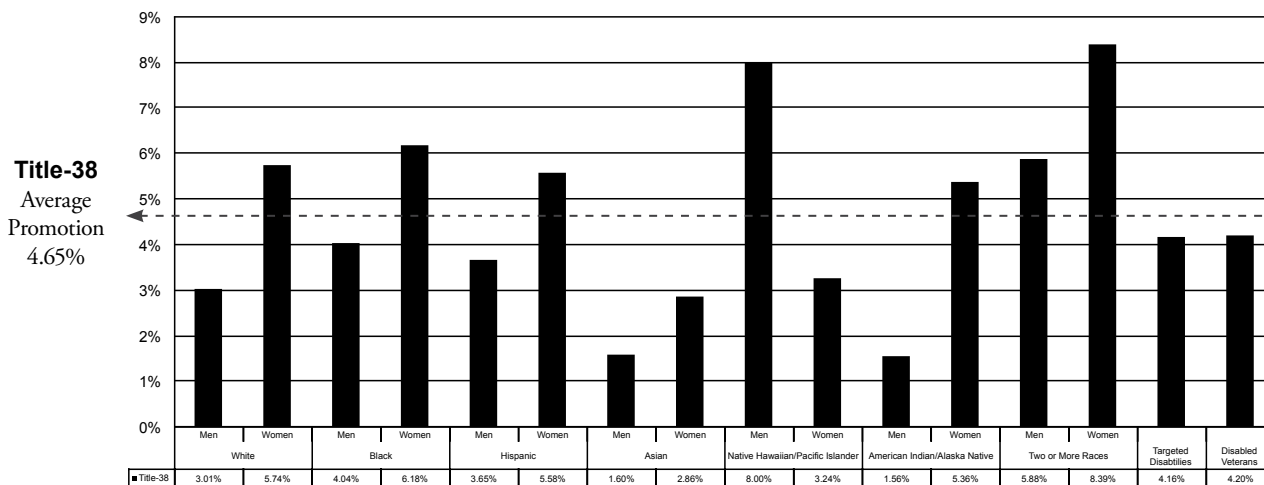
### GS/GM Promotions Permanent and Temporary



**Data Source:** Nature of Action data cube retrieved on January 16, 2012. Include GS/GM pay, permanent and temporary employees in full-time, part-time, and intermittent status. Promotion rate is calculated by dividing the number of promotions by the average onboard count at beginning of the fiscal year and the end of the fiscal year for each demographic group.

Title-38 positions make up about 27 percent of VA’s workforce. Among all promotions of VA employees in FY 2011, less than 11 percent occurred in the Title-38 occupations. The promotion trend for this pay plan highlights lower than expected promotion rates for White, Black, and American Indian/Alaska Native men, Asian men and women, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander women, employees with targeted disabilities, and disabled Veterans when compared with the Title-38 average promotion rate of 4.65 percent. The data for Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander employees is a bit skewed because the group is so small.

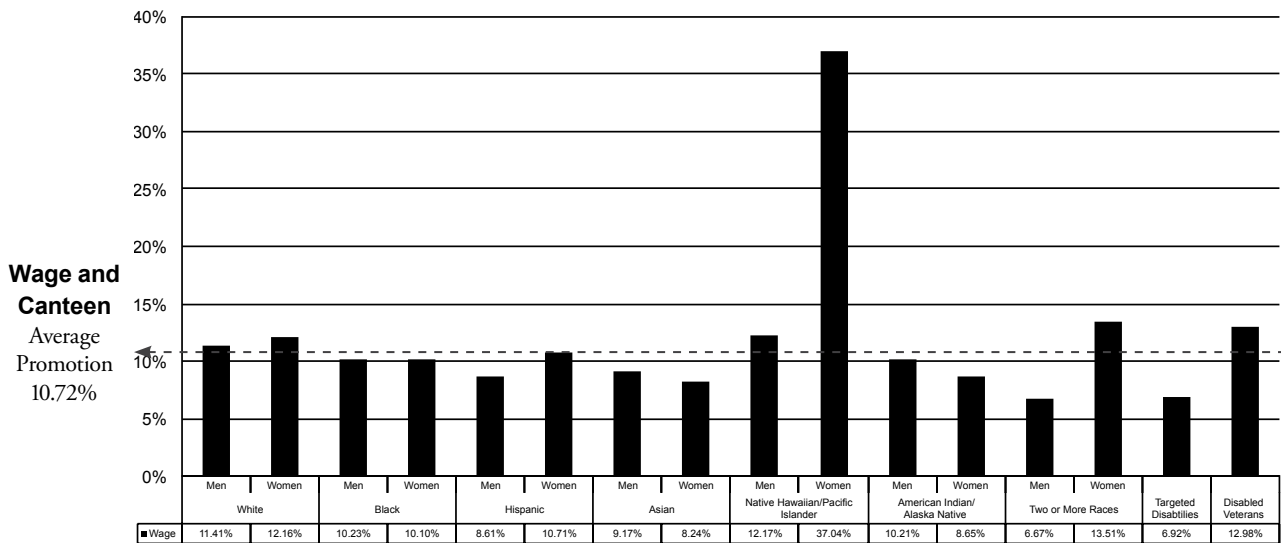
### Title-38 Promotions Permanent and Temporary



**Data Source:** Nature of Action data cube retrieved on January 16, 2012. Include Title-38 pay, permanent and temporary employees in full-time, part-time, and intermittent status. Promotion rate is calculated by dividing the number of promotions by the average onboard count at beginning of the fiscal year and the end of the fiscal year for each demographic group.

The Wage and Canteen pay plan make up about 10 percent of the VA workforce. Of the total 36, 377 promotions in FY 2011, about 10 percent were for employees in the Wage and Canteen pay plan. Lower than expected promotion rates are apparent for, Hispanic men, Asian men and women, American Indian/Alaska Native women, and People with Targeted Disabilities. Black men and women, Hispanic women, and American Indian/Alaska Native men had a slightly lower promotion rate compared to the average.

**Wage and Canteen Promotions**  
Permanent and Temporary



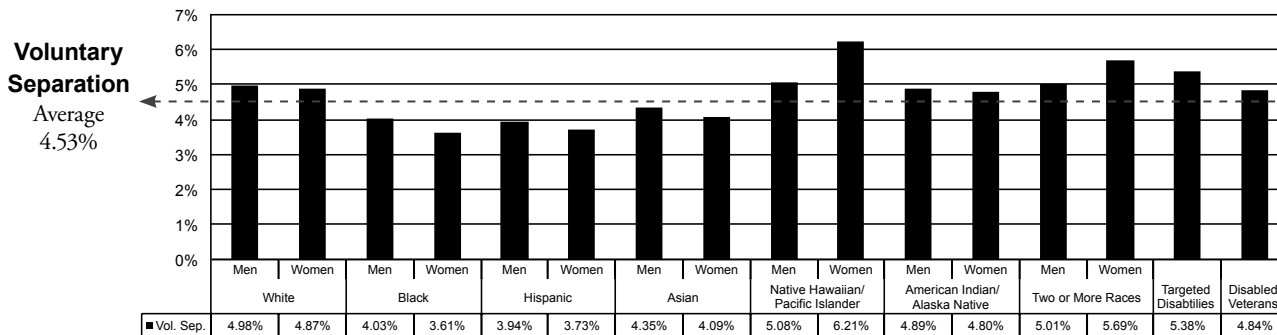
**Data Source:** Nature of Action data cube retrieved on January 16, 2012. Include Wage and Canteen pay, permanent and temporary employees in full-time, part-time, and intermittent status. Promotion rate is calculated by dividing the number of promotions by the average onboard count at beginning of the fiscal year and the end of the fiscal year for each demographic group.

**Separations**

An indicator of inclusion involves the analysis of the demographic characteristics of employees who leave VA, voluntarily or involuntarily. Similar to the promotion dimension, we calculate the promotion rates by dividing the total separations of each demographic by the average onboard count at the beginning of the fiscal year and at the end of the fiscal year.

Voluntary separations include employees leaving VA for another agency, retirement, death, or a non-Federal position. In FY 2011, White men and women, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander men and women, American Indian/Alaska Native men and women, men and women of two or more races, employees with targeted disabilities, and disabled Veterans left VA at rates higher than the average voluntary separation rate of 4.53 percent.

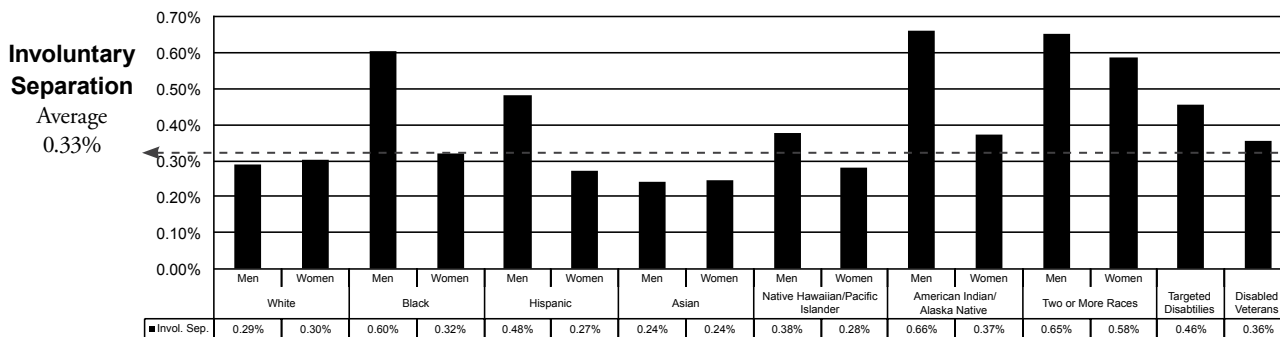
### Voluntary Separations Permanent and Temporary



**Data Source:** Nature of Action data cube retrieved on January 16, 2012. Exclude Manila and medical residents. Include pay, permanent and temporary employees in full-time, part-time, and intermittent status. Separation rate is calculated by dividing the number of separations by the average onboard count at the beginning of the fiscal year and the end of the fiscal year for each demographic group.

Additional insights can be derived from examining involuntary separation data. Involuntary separations are agency driven actions to remove an employee from the workforce. In FY 2011, the average involuntary separation rate was 0.33 percent. Black, Hispanic, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander men, American Indian/Alaska Native men and women, men and women of two or more races, employees with targeted disabilities, and disabled Veterans experienced higher involuntary separation compared to the average rate.

### Involuntary Separations Permanent and Temporary



**Data Source:** Nature of Action data cube retrieved on January 16, 2012. Exclude Manila and medical residents. Include pay, permanent and temporary employees in full-time, part-time, and intermittent status. Separation rate is calculated by dividing the number of separations by the average onboard count at the beginning of the fiscal year and the end of the fiscal year for each demographic group.


## Organizational Accomplishments

### Office of the Secretary

Core Values describe an organization’s culture and character, and serve as the foundation for the way individuals interact with each other, as well as with people outside the organization. In FY 2011, VA adopted Core Values and Characteristics that apply universally across the Department. The Core Values define “who we are,” our culture and how we care for Veterans, their families and other beneficiaries. The five Values are Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect and Excellence (“I CARE”). The Core Characteristics define “what we stand for,” and help guide how we will perform our core mission; they shape our strategy, and will influence resource allocation and other important decisions made within VA. The Characteristics are Trustworthy, Accessible, Quality, Agile, Innovative, and Integrated.

VA consists primarily of VACO, which includes seven staff offices and several other staff organizations, and the National Cemetery Administration (NCA), Veterans Benefit Administration (VBA), and Veterans Health Administration (VHA). These organizations provide support and services to Veterans, their families and other beneficiaries. The Core Values and Characteristics provide all of these organizations with one common foundation of shared principles which will guide and influence the behavior of all members of the VA workforce and influence all key organizational decisions.

Throughout the history of VA, its dedicated and professional workforce has always demonstrated a strong commitment to Veterans and exhibited many worthwhile values aimed at providing the best-possible services, care and support to Veterans. However, there has not been one set of Core Values and Characteristics that applied to all VA employees. The Core Values and Characteristics are more than just words. They represent an individual and an organizational commitment to do the best we can every day to perform our crucial mission of taking care of Veterans, family members, and other beneficiaries.

Core Values (“I CARE”)				
				
<p><b>I</b>ntegrity</p> <p>Act with high moral principle. Adhere to the highest professional standards. Maintain the trust and confidence of all with whom I engage.</p>	<p><b>C</b>ommitment</p> <p>Work diligently to serve Veterans and other beneficiaries. Be driven by an earnest belief in VA’s mission. Fulfill my individual responsibilities and organizational responsibilities.</p>	<p><b>A</b>dvocacy</p> <p>Be truly Veteran-centric by identifying, fully considering, and appropriately advancing the interests of Veterans and other beneficiaries.</p>	<p><b>R</b>espect</p> <p>Treat all those I serve and with whom I work with dignity and respect. Show respect to earn it.</p>	<p><b>E</b>xcellence</p> <p>Strive for the highest quality and continuous improvement. Be thoughtful and decisive in leadership, accountable for my actions, willing to admit mistakes, and rigorous in correcting them.</p>

## Administrations

### Veterans Health Administration

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Diversity & Inclusion Committee re-formed in October FY 2011. The committee reviewed workforce and employee data and determined that there is a critical need to move VHA beyond the EEO compliance mindset to a strategic business mindset that capitalizes on the innovation that comes from a diverse and inclusive environment. To this end, the committee charged a multidisciplinary workgroup to investigate opportunities for VHA field and central office executives to engage in an experiential learning activity. The group determined that training on Unconscious Bias was the appropriate venue for VHA given our innovation efforts in the areas of patient centered care and change management. Discovering bias is foundational to building cultural competency. A three hour experiential training module was developed to engage leaders in discovery of personal decision patterns that stand in the way of innovation.

VHA encourages the use of alternative workplace arrangements to permit eligible employees to participate in telework to the maximum extent possible without diminishing employee performance and Departmental operations. Telework supports VA goals for improving environmental stewardship and providing employees with greater work life flexibilities, as well as providing an effective and efficient means to continue performing mission critical functions during local or national incidents.

### Veterans Benefits Administration

The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) had many achievements and initiatives in FY 2011.

- Provided guidance to Regional Offices and Centers on best practices in recruitment outreach strategies. (See OFO Letter 20F-07-11)
- Partnered with Office of Human Resources Management and Office of Resolution Management in conducting consolidated technical assistance on-site reviews through the Occupational Climate Assessment Program.
- Provided training and guidance in the area of Special Emphasis Programs (SEP) and related mandated reports.
- Compiled data and information for the annual submission of Federally mandated SEP/diversity related reports (e.g., Hispanic Employment in Federal Government, Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program, etc.).



### **National Cemetery Administration**

The National Cemetery Administration (NCA) convened its First Human Capital Architecture Planning Committee through the collaborative efforts of HR, EEO, and Training. Its purpose is to develop strategies addressing barriers that may obstruct development of a diverse, culturally competent workforce representative of America's population. NCA also selected its first Special Emphasis Program (SEP) Coordinator, Gregory Winston. Mr. Winston attended four Special Emphasis Conferences: FEW, BIG, AGI and the National Organization for Mexican American Rights; NCA's EEO office participated in the administration's strategic planning, and incorporated diversity objectives from the Department of Veterans Affairs plan into NCA's strategic plan; NCA employees participated in over (70) outreach events in FY 2011, many of which were geared specifically for targeted groups, including LULAC, the National Women's Conference, LULAC's National Conference/Expo/Career Fair, National Image Incorporated Training Conference, Federal Asian American Pacific Islander Conference, Federal Hispanic Women's Executive Conference, and the National Urban League Career Fair/Expo. During NCA's National Training Conference, managers were trained by NCA's EEO staff on a variety of topics, including Prevention of Workplace Harassment, EEO, Diversity, and Alternative Dispute Resolution.

### **Assistant Secretaries and Staff Offices**

#### **Office of Management**

The Office of Management (OM) established and implemented a work-from-home program, continued to promote and support flexible work schedules, recruited and hired interns through the federal career internship program, and hired college students as interns. These programs serve as a communications link between the workforce and leadership and a forum to share best practices, leverage resources, and ensure accountability on organizational diversity and inclusion.

#### **Office of Information and Technology**

The Office of Information and Technology (OIT) encouraged greater workplace flexibilities for its employees. In FY 2011, nearly 20 percent of OIT employees participate in ad-hoc telework compared to only 6 percent in FY 2010. The number of employees participating in some type of telework increased 8 percent from last year (25.34 percent to 33.01 percent). In addition to greater employee participation in the telework program, the number of positions marked eligible for telework increased to 25.25 percent from 15.85 percent.

## Office of Policy and Planning

The Office of Policy and Planning (OPP) completed a review of all of its positions to determine which ones were suitable for telework or alternate work schedule arrangements. All OPP employees were notified as to whether their positions were suitable and whether they were eligible for telework and provided instructions on how to pursue telework agreements.

## Office of Human Resources and Administration

### *Office of Diversity and Inclusion*

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI), a program office within the OHRA, has primary responsibility for initiatives related to workforce diversity and organizational inclusion. In FY 2011, ODI accomplished the following to promote inclusion in the VA workforce:

- Increased the number of Reasonable Accommodations (RA) funded by the VA Centralized RA Fund to 233 accommodations (considered a best practice Government-wide).
- VA's Centralized Reasonable Accommodation (RA) Fund to refund the cost of 233 accommodations to the employee's organization (considered a best practice Government-wide).
- Disseminated new standardized VA-wide RA Procedures to ensure timely compliance with EEOC regulations.
- Implemented VA's first Centralized Workforce Recruitment Program to centrally fund interns with disabilities.
- Implemented new centralized Diversity Internship Fund supporting a record-breaking number of 164 diverse internships including 20 from the Puerto Rico, and hired 40 percent of interns who were employment ready.
- Administered six Technical Assistance Reviews at field facilities to evaluate EEO program strengths and deficiencies.
- Implemented the VA "Plan for Increasing Employment of Individuals with Disabilities for FY 2011-2015" in support of Executive Order 13548.
- Procured a customized contract to obtain registers of candidates with targeted disabilities qualified for VA jobs and eligible for immediate hire under Schedule A.
- Worked with the Compensated Work Therapy staff to facilitate the hiring via the Schedule A excepted appointment authority of 366 disabled Veterans who were homeless or at risk of homelessness into temporary positions.
- Established new lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) employee resource group as a committee under the VA Diversity Council.
- Distributed "Guidance Regarding the Employment of Transgender Individuals in the Federal Workplace" VA-wide.

### **Office of General Counsel**

The Office of General Counsel (OGC) expanded the availability of telework and alternative work schedules for its employees in FY 2011, enhancing the flexibility of the work environment for all. Although a hiring freeze was in place throughout the fiscal year, several OGC offices targeted their summer intern/extern programs' outreach to improve diversity.

### **Office of Inspector General**

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) strives to provide a flexible, inclusive work environment where employees can communicate ideas, suggestions, and concerns. Several different programs help foster the OIG's atmosphere of constructive communication. The OIG Advisory Council helps employees identify issues, concerns, and recommendations for improvements to senior management in a confidential manner thru Council Members selected by the OIG workforce. The Advisory Council has taken on many issues that have resulted in higher efficiency and improved morale. The second program the OIG uses to promote communication is the Ombudsman Program. This program offers employees an informal option to resolve concerns and issues through a neutral, confidential representative. All of these outreach efforts help to create an atmosphere where different viewpoints and ideas work to strengthen and unite the organization.

### **Board of Veterans Appeals**

The Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA) established itself as a work environment where diversity is valued and employees are engaged and motivated to contribute the full extent of their knowledge, skills, and experience. The Board uses a formal Flexiplace Plan that serves as a valuable recruitment and retention tool and compliments President Obama's Telework Enhancement Act of 2010. This program enables the Board to retain attorneys who have rather arduous commutes and would otherwise work somewhere else. The Flexiplace Oversight Group, composed of management officials and local labor partners, ensures the fair operation of the program. Current participation in the Board's formal program (i.e. 2 or less days in the office on a regular basis) is 140 attorneys, and the Board also supports some positions for ad hoc telework.

Shadowing opportunities and developmental details are made available by several high level positions to fully leverage the diverse makeup of our workforce and promote professional development. BVA also seeks to publicly recognize the contributions of staff members. A multitude of communication venues are utilized to facilitate the sharing of knowledge, to review and discuss current pertinent events, to provide a forum for recognition of diverse achievements, and to solicit staff feedback.

BVA has a structured mentoring program for aspiring managers and new hires to ensure they have the opportunity and means to reach their maximum potential. The individualized aspect of the BVA's mentoring program allows the Board to embrace the contributions of all employees and pursue an inclusive vision of joining staff from diverse backgrounds in the pursuit of exceptional service to Veterans and their families.

### **Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs**

The Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs (OPIA) realigned its organizational structure in a manner that enhances its capabilities to support diversity and inclusion goals, particularly in OPIA's programs with American Indian/Alaska Native populations, and with disabled Veterans through the creation of the Office of National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events (NVSPSE). Working with the U.S. Olympic Committee, the NVSPSE implemented the U.S. Paralympics Integrated Adaptive Sports Program that develops national, regional, and community-based paralympic and adaptive sports programs to improve accessibility and facilities in which VA can provide rehabilitative adaptive sport therapy to disabled Veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces. In addition, OPIA further developed the availability of telework and alternative work schedules for its employees, which improves the flexibility of the work environment for all. OPIA also enhanced employee knowledge in conducting culturally sensitive interactions with clients and staff. OPIA disseminated information supporting special observances to increase cultural awareness among VA employees.

### **Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs**

The Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (OCLA) completed its transformational reorganization that resulted in greater inclusion of the entire workforce. In designing a more responsive organizational structure, OCLA leadership empowered employees to be proactive in establishing effective communications with Congress. Following the results of the FY 2010 All Employee Survey (AES), OCLA's leadership immediately took action on the issues raised by its employees. OCLA's FY 2011 AES results showed the biggest turn around in VA. OCLA had 34 meaningful increases and no meaningful decreases. OCLA's leadership continues to solicit employee feedback and recommendations in order to create a highly effective organization.

### **Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construction**

The Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construction (OALC) is the parent organization of the Office of Acquisition Operations, Strategic Acquisition Center (SAC), the Office of Acquisition Operations, Acquisition Service of Frederick (AS-F), and the Technology Acquisition Center (TAC).

*Office of Acquisition Operations, Strategic Acquisition Center*

The Office of Acquisition Operations, Strategic Acquisition Center (SAC) required new employees to complete the Prevention of Workplace Harassment and No Fear Act training as part of the on-boarding process. To date, all training has been completed on time. In FY 2011, the SAC's Associate Executive Director completed the mandatory face-to-face EEO, Diversity and Conflict Management Class at the SES Executive Forum in April 2011. Additionally, the SAC is fully compliant with applicable EEO laws, regulations, and Executive orders.

*Office of Acquisition Operations, Acquisition Service of Frederick*

The Office of Acquisition Operations, Acquisition Service of Frederick (AS-F) held several health and wellness activities throughout FY 2011 to include VA2K Walk and Roll, annual flu vaccination program, and a walking and Zumba group that exercise daily.

AS-F established a diversity outreach committee that meets monthly and held numerous functions throughout FY 2011 to celebrate diversity. Functions included a Diversity potluck that observed Cinco de Mayo, Asian-Pacific American, Jewish American, and Caribbean American Heritage months. Diversity Dessert Day celebrated Hispanic and European American Heritage month. A movie/documentary viewing with popcorn was held for both African-American Heritage Month in February and National American Indian Heritage month in November. Diversity posters are displayed throughout the organization highlighting various observances.

The diversity outreach committee created a quarterly newsletter, which is distributed to all members of the organization. It highlights upcoming observances, planned events, and an employee spotlight. The employee spotlight features one employee who voluntarily shares a personal cultural aspect.

*Technology Acquisition Center*

The Technology Acquisition Center (TAC) requires employees to complete at least 40 Continuous Learning Points (CLPs) per year to support employees continued education (this year 11,306 CLPs were earned). Over 65 percent of the workforce has attained a Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting or Program/Project Management. All of our employees completed Prevention of Sexual Harassment and No Fear; Conflict Management; Conflict Resolution; Alternative Dispute Resolution; EEO; and Diversity Training.

TAC representatives attended seven college career fairs where we were able to approach potential candidates with a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds, disabilities, and/or Veterans giving them guidance on applying for the TAC's vacancy announcements through USAJOBS.

The TAC has initiated a program called TAC Gives Back. We held fundraisers to raise money to support our Veterans. Veteran programs that TAC supported were: Warrior Transition Unit at Fort Dix, Fisher House Foundation, Homes for Our Troops, and Suits for Vets. Our employees contributed items and participated in the 2011 North Jersey Veterans Stand Down. Our employees also visited our Veterans at the Lyon's hospital giving out treats, playing video

games and conversing with our Country's Veterans. These volunteer events were performed by TAC employees utilizing their own personal time.

### **Center for Minority Veterans**

The Center for Minority Veterans (CMV) staff serves as active participants and leaders in BIG and FAPAC Chapters, and in VA's Special Emphasis Programs recognizing ethnic heritage monthly observances designed to increase culture awareness and appreciation among VACO employees.

### **Center for Women Veterans**

The Center for Women Veterans (CWV) specifically continued the "Her Story" campaign highlighting a women Veteran employee and sharing "Her Story" of military service and her current position at VA (with narrative and photos).

### **Office of Employee Discrimination Complaint Adjudication**

The Office of Employee Discrimination Complaint Adjudication (OEDCA) provided columns to the Office of Diversity and Inclusion's bimonthly newsletter, *Diversity@Work* to spotlight recent OEDCA decisions on reasonable accommodation protocols, age discrimination claims, and per se reprisal actions.

**GOAL 3:****Outstanding Customer Service and Stakeholder Relations**

Underpinning the business case for diversity and inclusion is the correlated improvements in organizational performance and greater customer satisfaction. Diverse teams are more creative, perform better in problem-solving, and result in better decision-making than homogeneous teams. Racial diversity yields higher performance when diverse perspectives are leveraged as resources for product development. Similarly, gender diversity results in more effective group processes in people-oriented performance environments. Diversity is especially important to VA because a diverse workforce helps us understand and serve the diverse populations of Veterans.

***Status*****Customer Satisfaction**

Veterans and their families are the centerpiece of VA. They are our customer and stakeholder and we are charged with anticipating and addressing Veterans' ever evolving needs and commit the full range of support of our organization to addressing their concerns. Improved diversity and inclusion is a business imperative because studies show that it leads to improved customer service. When people work alongside of individuals from diverse background, they obtain a better understanding of how to relate to Veterans of diverse backgrounds. While we continue to develop a VA-wide customer satisfaction measure, we currently gauge customer satisfaction by examining the results of customer focused surveys.

The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) provides information on the satisfaction of some VA customers. It is the only national, cross-industry measure of satisfaction with the quality of goods and services available in the United States. Since 1999, the Federal Government selected ACSI to measure citizen satisfaction. More than 100 federal agencies have used ACSI to gauge consumer satisfaction with more than 200 services and programs. The Index was founded at the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business and the survey is produced by ACSI, LLC.

Some of the VA specific ACSI measures include the satisfaction of outpatients at VA clinics, inpatients at VA medical centers, relatives of Veterans buried at national cemeteries, and users of VA's main Web site and the MyHealthy Vet Web site. By those measures, VA customer satisfaction is fairly high, especially for the NCA.

For the fourth consecutive time in ten years, the system of national cemeteries operated by NCA has bested the nation's top corporations and other federal agencies in a prestigious, independent survey of customer satisfaction. The ACSI survey polled the people who had arranged for the interment of a loved one in a VA national cemetery within the previous six

months to one year. More than 1,900 people received the survey and 444 responded, a high response rate for a mail survey.

In the ACSI survey for FY 2010, NCA received ratings in the categories of “customer service” and “user trust” of 94 out of a possible 100 points, indicating respondents are exceptionally pleased with their experience at VA national cemeteries and willing to recommend their services to others. NCA feels strongly that its emphasis on diversity and inclusion, especially on mutual respect, was instrumental in achieving this success.

**American Customer Satisfaction Index Scores (FY 2007 – FY 2010)**

	2007	2008	2009	2010
VHA: Inpatients at VA medical centers	83	85	N/A	85
VHA: Outpatients at VA clinics	83	81	N/A	82
VHA: Users of the Civilian Health and Medical Program	82	N/A	88	N/A
NCA: Relatives or individuals responsible for interment	95	N/A	N/A	94
VA Web sites	72	72	73	72

Source: <http://www.theacsi.org>

## *Organizational Accomplishments*

### **Office of the Secretary**

VA announced the Badges for Vets contest for creating the digital “badge” systems to help Veterans translate their military skills into civilian jobs. A “digital badge” recognizes skills obtained through non-traditional learning, such as work-related training, online courses, and experience. VA was joined by the Departments of Education, Energy, and Labor to sponsor the “Badges for Vets” contest as part of the Badges for Lifelong Learning Competition administered by a consortium supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Mozilla Foundation. VA Innovations Initiative (VAi2) will award up to three \$25,000 prizes in five categories to teams that demonstrate they can develop and deliver digital badges representing skills learned in the military that are desired by civilian employers. The use of these badges will help Veterans “translate” their military skills to civilian needs and help them be more employable.



## VA Diversity Council

Over the past few years, VA has made great strides in promoting and supporting a high-performing organizational culture through the establishment of a diverse workforce and an inclusive work environment. VA's leadership, however, identified the need to strengthen the foundation needed to support VA's transformation into a 21<sup>st</sup> century Cabinet-level agency. As diversity was seen as integral to the transformational effort, leadership sought to establish a body that was charged with ensuring that diversity and inclusion policies and practices were institutionalized and integrated at all organizational levels. The VA Diversity Council (VADC) was established from this need.

In its first two years of existence, the VADC established its infrastructure and successfully executed operations in accordance with the aims articulated in its charter. The launch of the VADC was cited as one of the "best practices" leading to VA being ranked as one of the top two Federal agencies for diversity in DiversityInc's Top Federal Agencies for Diversity for 2010.

In 2010 and 2011, the Council met and, among other notable activities, it convened Screening and Judging Committees for the Secretary's new Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Awards Program established to recognize exemplary accomplishments in each of the three goal areas reflected in the VA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan: (1) create a diverse, results-oriented, high-performing workforce that reflects the Veterans and communities we serve by identifying and eliminating barriers to equal opportunity, (2) cultivate a flexible and inclusive work environment that enables full participation through strategic outreach and retention, and (3) facilitate outstanding customer service and stakeholder relations by promoting cultural competency, accountability, education, and communication.

In 2011, the Council established five committees to focus on specific areas of interest that have emerged from the Council's quarterly meetings. These committees report their recommendations and advice to the VADC for full deliberation and discussion:

1. **Diversity and Inclusion Communications Committee:** to communicate any messages from the VADC throughout VA as the Council sees fit and to create and communicate diversity and inclusion messages on behalf of the Council.
2. **Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan and Annual Performance Report Committee:** to assist with the update of VA's Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan and to coordinate the compilation of VA-wide information to report in the Department of Veterans Affairs' Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report every fiscal year.
3. **Emerging Issues in Diversity and Inclusion Committee:** to consider emerging issues in the area of diversity and inclusion both internal and external to VA and procure the services of the National Center for Organization Development to study perceptions of fairness and empowerment in the VA Workforce and the Senior Executive Service (SES) on the basis of race, ethnicity, and gender (REG).

4. **Disability Committee:** to examine issues and challenges related to people with disabilities in the workforce and educate the workforce accordingly.
5. **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Committee:** to address LGBT issues affecting the VA workforce and the Veterans we serve, particularly in light of the repeal of Don't Ask Don't Tell and its impact on policies, practices, and protections; and to educate the workforce on related issues.

Other notable accomplishments since 2010 include:

The Council embarked on the challenging process of increasing awareness on diversity and inclusion matters and promoting outreach strategies with program leaders and stakeholders. VA now has a common diversity and inclusion dialogue shared among its senior leaders that can then be disseminated throughout VA. To that end, the Council accomplished the following activities:

- Established a VADC web page to post meeting agendas, minutes, and presentations to promote transparency and public access. This site also houses the VADC charter and current roster list: <http://www.diversity.va.gov/council>.
- Promoted the activities of VA's employee resource groups such as the Federal Asian Pacific American Council and the Society for American Indian Government Employees.
- Addressed the Partnership for Public Service survey results regarding disparate perceptions of empowerment based on gender in VA and contracted a study to examine the issues and make recommendations for improvement.
- Received briefings on annual White House Initiative plans and reports, including the White House Initiative on Women and Girls.
- Received a presentation on VA's Hispanic Employment Outreach Plan and promulgated strategies to enhance targeted outreach in this area.
- Received an update on the enhanced Workforce Recruitment Program for College Students with Disabilities and the National Diversity Internship Program to increase diversity in the VA recruitment pipeline.
- Provided updates on workforce diversity status in VA and the Administrations.
- Received a presentation on VA's new Diversity Index and Inclusion Index developed by ODI as a means of measuring diversity and inclusion in the Department and voted to implement these indices throughout VA, and included them in VA's EEO and Diversity Executive Dashboard.

The Council has proactively engaged, promoted, and made recommendations in the following policy areas involving diversity and inclusion:

- Promulgated the Secretary's 2010 and 2011 Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), Diversity, and No FEAR Policy Statement.

- Received a briefing on VA's Corporate Senior Executive Management Office (CSEMO) initiatives addressing diversity in the SES and discussed policy options to address potential barriers to diversity.
- Presented VA's Management Directive 715 EEO Plan and Report and Diversity State of the Agency briefing.
- Promoted VA's new EEO, Diversity, and Conflict Management SES Performance Element and briefed executives on strategies for meeting and exceeding the performance expectations.
- Promulgated the Secretary's two percent goal of hiring People with Disabilities, in alignment with Executive Order 13548, and briefed on the centralized fund for reasonable accommodation administered by ODI.

The Council engaged in the following activities to increase education and cultural competency in the VA workforce:

- Promoted and enforced the VA's Mandatory EEO, Diversity, and Conflict Management Training for the 417 SES and Title 38 executives and 27,000 managers and supervisors VA-wide.
- Received a briefing on and promulgated information on cultural competency in health care training.
- Received training and promulgated information on emerging LGBT issues.
- Distributed the Veterans Health Administration's and the Office of Personnel Management's "Guidance Regarding the Employment of Transgender Individuals in the Federal Workplace."

As a result of a briefing on pay grade disparities and career bottlenecks in the workforce, the Council recommended the creation of a Career Pathways initiative, a comprehensive career mapping and development program for VA designed to: enable employees to increase their skill sets to better prepare for future roles; send a clear message that VA is committed to employee development and advancement; help employees understand the connections between everyday work to long-term aspirations; and facilitate powerful personal and professional development. This recommendation led to the recent kick-off of the MyCareer@VA initiative by the VA Learning University.

## **Administrations**

### **Veterans Health Administration**

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is committed to Veteran hiring and the use of special hiring authorities; in the summer of 2011 VHA and the Veteran Employment Services

Office partnered to do something revolutionary. VHA chose to nationally target recruitment to Veterans for positions in the newly expanded Tele-health program. A multidisciplinary team of professionals at headquarters and in the field led the charge launching face-to-face recruiting events and virtual recruitment. As of December 1, 2011, 320 positions were filled; 38 percent with Veterans.

The VHA Workforce Management Consulting (WMC) Office focused on recruitment of individuals with targeted disabilities identification of attitudinal and systemic barriers. A workgroup was formed to investigate and take action. This resulted in focused training and tools on outreach, Schedule A hiring, and cultural competency. Self identification campaigns were launched with current employees to update their SF-256. WMC directly supported the Department of Labor (DOL) Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) by providing recruiters who met with students with disabilities and interviewed them for the WRP.

In FY 2011 the VHA Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Office launched a D&I Community of Practice (COP) and SharePoint site. The COP is designed as a grass roots effort to assist employees, supervisors and managers with furthering the concepts of diversity and inclusion through quarterly training calls, SharePoint site and email exchanges.

In FY 2011 the newly formed VHA D&I office focused on building effective partnerships and leveraging efforts across the VA systems. Several internal initiatives were launched with VA and VHA program offices. The Director actively sought relationships with outside agencies such as the National Organization for LGBT Health, the Health Equality Index, and D&I professionals from other organizations including government, education, and health care.

### **Veterans Benefits Administration**

The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) significant accomplishments and demonstrated outstanding customer service and stakeholder relations are identified below:

- Sponsored VBA's 3<sup>rd</sup> EEO and Diversity Training Conference from August 29 to September 2, 2011, to increase the knowledge and enhancement of skills of the 51 participants, who were EEO Program Managers and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Coordinators.
- Conducted quarterly conference calls with Regional Office (RO) EEO program managers and ADR Coordinators to provide appropriate information and guidance on various EEO related topics.
- Ensured that mandatory EEO training was provided through TMS for all RO and Center employees (to include EEO Program Managers and ADR Coordinators).
- Completed Phase III of the One-VA EEO Pilot, which was effective September 1, 2009 thru August 21, 2010. The participating office was the St. Louis RO. Phase IV of the EEO Pilot has started and VBA is soliciting new participants. ROs that participated in

the pilots showed a decrease in the filing of EEO complaints through the use of ADR techniques including facilitation and mediation. In FY 2011, VBA had 298 informal complaints and 180 formal complaints with a resolution rate of 47 percent. Additionally, the offer rate for ADR was 99 percent, and the participation rate was 55 percent.

- The VBA EEO Staff has been actively involved in developing the new reasonable accommodation tracking system for VA.

### **National Cemetery Administration**

The National Cemetery Administration (NCA) awarded the first grant for building National Cemeteries on Native American Tribal land, in an effort to improve customer service. NCA was recognized by the Virginia Senate Productivity and Quality Award (SPQA) program for Performance Excellence. Award selection criteria were based on the Malcolm Baldrige Performance Excellence criteria. This is the second highest level award given by Virginia SPQA. The criteria for the award include customer focus. NCA was also recognized by the Federal Consulting Group, receiving a plaque for sustained high levels of customer satisfaction. Each time NCA has participated (2001, 2004, 2007, and 2010), it received the highest index score of all participants. In 2005, approximately 75 percent of our Veteran customers had access to an open national or state Veterans cemetery within 75 miles, in 2011, the ratio of Veterans who lived within 75 miles of a Veterans cemetery rose to roughly 90 percent. Improvement in customer access resulted from NCA's strategy to meet Veterans' burial needs. This approach includes expanding existing cemeteries to keep them open, constructing new national cemeteries, and partnering with states and tribal governments to establish Veterans cemeteries on state and tribal trust land. To support efforts to retain workers with disabilities, NCA participated in the FY 2011/FY 2012 validation and fielding of the VA On-line Reasonable Accommodation Tracking System, and is currently updating information on all administration personnel to ensure current data is recorded on employees with disabilities.

NCA intends to continue providing our customers with the best services possible; to that effect the administration is currently expanding to reach an even broader customer base, these initiatives include construction of new National Cemeteries, expanding some of the current cemeteries, and construction of State Cemeteries. We also contract directly with businesses owned by disabled Veterans. In 2010, NCA spent \$88.1 million - or about 66 percent of our total procurement dollars with Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSBs). NCA continues to expand on implementation of the Limited English Proficiency Program (LEP) further enhancing the administration's ability to better serve our customer bases in communities throughout the American landscape.

## **Assistant Secretaries and Staff Offices**

### **Office of Management**

The Office of Management (OM) Executive in Charge (EIC) established a new awards program to support the workforce and place a special emphasis on VA's Core Values and Characteristics (ICARE). This program provides the EIC with a venue for recognizing and rewarding exemplary customer service contributions, accomplishments and achievements by OM employees. The program allows for the overall visibility of employees' specific accomplishments and encourages OM employees to strive for greater productivity, efficiency, and achievement. All OM employees are encouraged to participate in this program and to nominate their peers for awards. Presentations of awards are made at quarterly OM "Town Hall" meetings so that employees can be recognized publicly for their outstanding contributions and achievements. This awards program has increased employee morale, commitment and pride, and overall customer satisfaction.

### **Office of Information and Technology**

The Office of Information and Technology (OIT) began collecting data on customer satisfaction through its Internal Customer Satisfaction Survey in FY 2010. When OIT began its data collection initiative, the reported satisfaction index score was 67. While still two points higher than the government average, OIT increased this score to 73 in FY 2011. Respondents were asked to compare services to a year ago in the following areas: availability of staff, professionalism, timeliness of response and response effectiveness. Professionalism, the highest rated of these attributes, also fared the best in comparisons to last year. Nearly half (46 percent) thought professionalism was about the same while 37 percent thought it was slightly or much better than last year, and only 6 percent thought professionalism was slightly or much worse.

### **Office of Policy and Planning**

The Office of Policy and Planning (OPP) designed an awards program that recognizes and rewards individual or team achievements which contribute to meeting organizational goals. In addition, the performance management system within OPP has been designed to differentiate between high and low levels of customer service and links individual performance to organizational goals.

## Office of Human Resources and Administration

### *Office of Diversity and Inclusion*

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) has primary responsibility for initiatives related to workforce diversity and organizational inclusion. In FY 2011, ODI provided training to over 31,000 VA employees including managers and supervisors online and face-to-face. Furthermore, ODI accomplished the following:

- Reinforced employee protections (for sexual orientation and, parental status, marital status and political affiliation) and added a new employee protection for genetic information and gender identity to the Secretary's EEO, Diversity, and No FEAR Policy Statement for FY 2012.
- Trained 36 Community Based Outpatient Clinic senior medical professional representatives from 26 states on "Cultural Competency Considerations in Healthcare" with 5 face to face training sessions at the Rural Health Professions Institute in partnership with East Tennessee State University in two locations at Johnson City, TN and Portland, OR.
- Achieved 98 percent completion rate for VA's Mandatory EEO, Diversity, and Conflict Management Training for Executive, Managers, and Supervisors; trained 417 SES and Title 38 executives and over 26,000 managers and supervisors VA-wide.
- Reviewed diversity and inclusion content in VA's "Supervisory Essentials" e-learning module and developed face-to-face training on "Championing Diversity."
- Implemented new diversity and inclusion onboard briefing at new employee orientation.
- Launched the Change Academy – a series of customized programs based on VA strategic goals and objectives as well as the desired outcomes of individual facilities or organizations.
- Organized the first Social Learning Summit, which brought together social learning thought leaders (in VA and industry) to engage in dialogue with VA employees about social learning concepts, strategies and technologies.
- Issued six bimonthly newsletters (Diversity@Work); distributed 52 weekly diversity-focused news summaries (NewsLink); produced 12 monthly video broadcasts (Diversity News).

### ★ *SECRETARY'S SECOND ANNUAL DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION EXCELLENCE AWARDS PROGRAM*

Secretary's Second Annual Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Awards Program. VA established the Secretary's Annual Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Awards Program in 1988 to recognize EEO achievements associated with legally-protected classes established by EEO laws. In FY 2009, ODI redesigned the awards program as "The Secretary's Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Awards Program" to align with the three goals of VA's Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan for FY 2009-2013 endorsed by Secretary Eric K. Shinseki on May 22, 2009. The criteria for selection are based on individuals' and teams' demonstrated efforts in: (1) creating

a diverse, high-performing workforce that reflects the communities VA serves; (2) cultivating an inclusive workplace that enables full participation; and (3) facilitating outstanding customer service and stakeholder relations. There are three award categories: (1) Manager/Supervisor, (2) Nonsupervisory Employee, and (3) Team. ODI and the Office of Resolution Management joined together to recognize VA employees who have made exemplary accomplishments in furthering VA's goals in the areas of alternative dispute resolution and diversity and inclusion. VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki presented the second annual ADR Excellence and Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Awards at a ceremony held Friday, October 21, 2011, in the G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery Conference Center at VA Central Office in Washington, D.C.

### *VA Learning University*

The VA Learning University (VALU), in response to Secretary Shinseki's call to transform VA into a 21<sup>st</sup> century organization, in 2010, launched the **Change Academy** – a series of customized programs based on VA strategic goals and objectives as well as the desired outcomes of individual facilities or organizations. These programs provide an inclusive environment to engage staff at all levels of the organization.

VALU organized VA's first **Social Learning Summit**, which brought together social learning thought leaders (in VA and industry) to engage in dialogue with VA employees about social learning concepts, strategies and technologies. These concepts will enable ODI to better engage VA employees in diversity and inclusion conversations and initiatives across VA enterprise by encouraging boundless networking, mentoring and coaching opportunities.

VALU provided numerous programs and training resources that focus on individual learning and development. Nearly 20,000 VA employees completed web-based diversity and inclusion training on the VA Talent Management System (TMS). VALU offers more than 20 conflict resolution course titles, nearly 40 mediation course titles and more than 20 diversity and inclusion course titles on the TMS. The courses are accessible to VA employees 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Offering these courses to all employees provides equal access, which supports diversity and inclusion.

The **Talent Management System** (TMS) is a new and improved online training system that gives VA employees the tools they need to excel in their careers. The TMS has no geographic or demographic boundaries. Therefore, VA employees at all levels and locations of the organization can access development opportunities when and where it is most appropriate and convenient for them to do so, and set a pace that is comfortable for them. New content includes courses on equal employment opportunities, conflict management and diversity, as well as mandatory supervisory training.

**MyCareer@VA** is a new, interactive, web-based employee development tool that provides leading-edge career planning for both current and potential VA employees. This innovative tool provides a four-step career planning process to help individuals prepare for success, explore career opportunities, plan their future and develop their career at VA.



**Office of General Counsel**

The Office of General Counsel (OGC) organizational performance targets for FY 2011 focused on improving the timeliness and responsiveness of legal service from the perspective of both organizational clients and Veteran stakeholders. We used a balanced-scorecard approach, measuring success through client- and employee-satisfaction survey scores as well as service delivery time data.

**Board of Veterans' Appeals**

The Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) continues to garner much success in the realm of customer service through effective use of in-house training efforts and the Quality Review staff. The combination of these tools has resulted in high quality decisions and a heightened attention to customer satisfaction for both internal and external stakeholders. Staff members also participate on a wide array of committees and taskforces focused on agency-wide goals, as well as on the emergence of legal trends affecting the appellate system.

**Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs**

The Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs (OPIA) is committed to outstanding customer service and stakeholder relations both through its achievement of designated programs and also through its vital role as a facilitator and enabler of other VA programs supporting diversity and inclusion strategic goals. OPIA's daily data mining of multimedia sources, analysis of information relevant to VA, and dissemination to leaders throughout VA, provides a core element of feedback to assess Department customer service and stakeholder relations. OPIA also utilizes other means such as surveys to support programs and its outreach programs to inform internal and external audiences on the facts. Current initiatives in Veteran homelessness, paralympic and adaptive sports, Veteran employment, and intergovernmental affairs reflect the awareness of both customer service and stakeholder relations.

**Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs**

The Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (OCLA) continued to provide support to all of VA's advisory committees, specifically the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans and the Advisory Committee on Women Veterans. OCLA conducted a comprehensive employee training program included classes on world class customer service support and executive writing.

## Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construction

The Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construction (OALC) is the parent organization of the Office of Acquisition Operations, Acquisition Service of Frederick, and the Technology Acquisition Center.

### *Office of Acquisition Operations, Acquisition Service of Frederick*

The Office of Acquisition Operations, Acquisition Service of Frederick (AS-F) maintained 100 percent compliancy with mandatory EEO, Workplace Harassment, and No FEAR training for all AS-F employees throughout FY 2011.

AS-F has a 93 percent customer satisfaction rate for FY 2011. Employees have incorporated the ICARE core values and characteristics into their daily interactions with internal and external customers. ICARE enables the organization to be more mission-focused as a whole to achieve the objectives that directly impact our Veterans.

Following up on recommendations made during a July 2011 training session for VA Core Values and Characteristics, AS-F sponsored ten employees to take part in a Veteran community outreach on November 22, 2011, by visiting the Martinsburg VA Medical Center. Volunteers visited with Veteran patients during lunch, providing companionship and assistance to individuals as needed. Quality time was spent with Veterans, listening to stories of their time in the service, families and playing games. Cards prepared by local Kindergarteners were distributed to Veterans to thank them for their service and wish them a “Happy Thanksgiving.” Participants noted that the visit was helpful for them to personally connect to the agency’s mission caring for those who served.

### *Technology Acquisition Center*

The Technology Acquisition Center (TAC) created a Virtual Office of Acquisition portal where data can be shared and is transparent to the public, vendors, customers, and VA leadership. A virtual presence has been established with all of these stakeholders in mind, thereby allowing the VA acquisition community to communicate effectively with our customers.

To improve VA’s execution of Information Technology (IT) projects the Transformation Twenty-One Total Technology “enterprise-wide solutions” strategy was developed and implemented. This is a total solutions approach providing services and products that will cover all phases of an IT systems life cycle, and includes program planning and management, systems and software engineering, cyber security, and operations and maintenance.

The TAC developed and implemented customer training that offered a myriad of acquisition-related material to VA personnel, covering essential topics such as market research, performance work statements, cost estimates, and technical evaluations. Each of these training units, along with ‘hands-on’ workshops were intended to provide the customer with fundamental information that would help them to better understand the acquisition process and associated documentation. The TAC has trained well over 300 customers.

### **Center for Minority Veterans**

The Center for Minority Veterans (CMV) promoted VA job opportunities when collaborating with external stakeholders to encourage more diverse applicants to seek VA as their employer of choice. The CMV included VA's HR representatives in outreach activities to share opportunities provided by the Veterans Employment Coordination Service and VA for Vets. Events in FY 2011 included the Congressional Black Caucus, Blacks in Government (BIG), American GI Forum, and Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC).

### **Center for Women Veterans**

The Center for Women Veterans (CWV) provided consultation and support to the Advisory Committee on Women Veterans for three meetings. This statutory Committee provides advice and guidance to the Secretary on the administration of benefits and services by the Department for women Veterans, and submits a biennial report to the Secretary on its findings and recommendations. The next report is due July 1, 2012.



# *FY 2012 Planned Initiatives*

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In FY 2012 and beyond, VA will focus on building upon current initiatives and adding new strategies in furtherance of its goal of “fostering a diverse workforce and an inclusive work environment.”

## **Office of the Secretary**

In the Department of Veterans Affairs *Strategic Plan Refresh for Fiscal Years 2011–2015*, Secretary Shinseki describes his commitment to President Obama’s charter to transform the Department of Veterans Affairs into a high-performing 21<sup>st</sup> century organization focused on our Nation’s Veterans as its clients. As he describes it, the 21<sup>st</sup> century VA will be built around three guiding principles: *people-centric, results-driven, and forward-looking*.

Major initiatives described in the *Strategic Plan Refresh* include developing capabilities and enabling systems to drive performance and outcomes, establishing a strong VA management infrastructure and integrated operating model, and transforming human capital management by investing in the development of employees to help them reach their full potential.

## **VA Diversity Council**

VADC will move into its third year of operation under the charter in FY 2012. VADC will increase its efforts and engagement in driving the diversity and inclusion initiatives essential for VA meet its commitment to 21<sup>st</sup> century excellence. The Council will take a prominent role in updating the VA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan in accordance with the President’s new Executive order on Establishing a Government-wide Diversity and Inclusion Initiative, to ensure that VA stays in the vanguard of diversity and inclusion practices in the public sector. This commitment must come from top leadership and the Council.

In order to meet this commitment, the VADC proposes to adhere to the following Action Plan in FY 2012 and beyond:

- Update the VA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan within 120 days of the publishing of the Government-wide Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan in accordance with the new Executive order Establishing a Coordinated Government-wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in the Federal Workforce. (Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan and Annual Performance Report Committee)
- Expand a VA-wide diversity and inclusion communications and shared accountability campaign to all corners of VA to emphasize the business case for diversity and inclusion in

VA and underscore the importance of a diverse workforce and an inclusive workplace to VA as a 21<sup>st</sup> century organization. (Diversity and Inclusion Communications Committee)

- Collaborate with CSEMO and ODI to further examine the impact of SES Candidate Development Program policies on the diversity of the SES cadre. This may include examining adverse impact analyses conducted by ODI on those selection processes and making recommendations to the Secretary for improvements, including expanding outreach by announcing all SES opportunities. (Emerging Issues in Diversity and Inclusion Committee)
- Explore the creation of a formal LGBT Special Emphasis Program VA-wide to address emerging issues resulting from legislative changes impacting this group. (LGBT Committee)

## **Administrations**

### **Veterans Health Administration**

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Diversity and Inclusion Committee will continue to explore strategies to close the representation gap for non-white females in supervisory positions and diversity at higher graded positions. The committee is developing a comprehensive communication plan and tool kit of best practices to assist executives, managers, and supervisors in the creation of an inclusive work environment.

The FY 2011 WMC Targeted Disabilities Workgroup identified manual entry of the SF-256 “Self-Identification of Disability” as a barrier to new and current employees who want to identify their disability. The VHA EEO/AE and D&I offices are working with VHA Support Services Center (VSSC) to create a direct entry portal for employees to update their SF-256. Testing of the portal is underway and a communication strategy is developed to launch the new tool. Additionally, the relationship with Department of Labor’s WRP will continue with local HR and EER managers conducting the student interviews in their areas.

The Unconscious Bias experiential training will be offered to VHA executives in early 2012. The Diversity and Inclusion Committee is developing a plan and content to integrate this training into its leadership development programs at all levels.

The Diversity and Inclusion Committee is launching a workgroup to develop an “Inclusive Language Guide” for the field and headquarters. The guide will assist staff in assuring communications, policies, procedures etc. are written in inclusive language that reflects current cultural norms.

On August 24, 2011, the Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Health (PDUSH) chartered the Health Equality Workgroup, which developed a set of sound recommendations to advance

VHA towards achievement of health equity and national leadership in eliminating disparities. The primary focus of these recommendations was the establishment of an Office of Health Equity. The office was approved and will be implemented in 2012. The office will coordinate and implement activities across VHA that focus on the elimination of health and health care disparities. It is anticipated that the office will need six – eight months to hire staff and get underway. In the interim, the PDUSH launched a LGBT workgroup to identify ten immediate actions VHA can take that would have an important impact on improving health equity for LGBT Veterans.

### **Veterans Benefits Administration**

The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) has the following planned activities for FY 2012:

- Expand and enhance recruitment methods to overcome barriers to under representation of select groups (Hispanics, White Females, and Asians).
- Participate in community based outreach programs and programs sponsored by affinity groups to increase the pool of qualified and diverse employees within the workforce.
- Expand participation in job fairs to obtain qualified applicants from diverse backgrounds including Veterans and persons with disabilities.
- Implement special emphasis programs to increase diversity awareness.
- Continue to require managers and supervisors to complete the online version of mandatory training on Prevention of Sexual Harassment.
- Continue mandatory EEO, ADR, Workplace Harassment, and No Fear training for all employees, managers, and supervisors.
- Continue to conduct quarterly conference calls with RO EEO program managers and ADR Coordinators to provide appropriate information and guidance on various EEO related topics.
- Provide training to EEO managers on the reasonable accommodation tracking system.
- Continue to decrease EEO complaints by using ADR and providing diversity and inclusion training.
- Conduct additional training on selected topics for RO and Center employees and educate employees and managers on EEO, diversity, and inclusion matters to promote competency in maintaining a fair, high performing, and healthy work environment.
- Continue to promote effective communication with employees and stakeholders on diversity and inclusion issues to heighten awareness and share best practices.

### **National Cemetery Administration**

The National Cemetery Administration (NCA) will continue to incorporate the career development module for the Cemetery Directors Intern program. NCA will continue to encourage all employees to fully utilize MyCareers@VA and the Equal Employment Opportunity Occupational Family Web site from Veterans Affairs Learning University (VALU). NCA's goal is to establish career maps across all occupational groups, allowing employees to identify the steps needed to qualify for positions both internal and external to their current occupational group. NCA's Education and Training department is currently in the process of evaluating all training programs at the administration to assess their effectiveness, and make necessary changes to increase value. The NCA EEO office is a part of that effort. NCA is partnering with external and internal organizations such as VHA, VBA, COSD, VET-Force, and the Wounded Warrior Program to leverage opportunities to outreach and recruit targeted groups, including Veterans.

In FY 2012, NCA is taking a versatile approach for sustained progression towards diversifying the workforce. New programs at NCA, such as the Wounded Warrior Program, NCA's National Special Emphasis Program Committee (SEAPAC), Limited English Proficiency Program; Title VI program; and the Reasonable Accommodation Program will be implemented; one of the initial Special Emphasis programs will be the Hispanic Employment Program, which will focus heavily on identifying and eliminating barriers to employment, retention, and promotion for Hispanic employees and applicants. NCA will continue to expand its outreach efforts to both schools and communities with a large population of Hispanics or people from other groups with low participation rates. NCA will continue work with the Career Opportunities for Students with Disabilities (COSD) program, as well as the Wounded Warrior and Operation War fighter programs. NCA in collaboration with the VA Strategic Communications & Outreach Service in DVA's Office of Human Resources is developing a memorandum of understanding with schools with Horticultural programs. In February 2012, NCA is scheduled to participate in the Black College Expo in Atlanta, GA to recruit students for participation in Student Programs at NCA. The Human Capital Investment Architecture Plan Committee will continue to conduct meetings monthly developing strategies and best practices for addressing barriers which may hinder development of a diverse and culturally competent workforce representative of the American population.

NCA intends to continue providing our customers with the best services possible; to that effect the administration is currently expanding to reach an even broader customer base, these initiatives include construction of new National Cemeteries, expanding some of the current cemeteries, and construction of State Cemeteries. We also contract directly with businesses owned by disabled Veterans. In 2010, NCA spent \$88.1 million - or about 66 percent of our total procurement dollars with Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSBs). NCA continues to expand on implementation of the Limited English Proficiency Program (LEP) further enhancing the administration's ability to better serve our customer bases in communities throughout the American landscape. The NCA EEO office will conduct training for all designated Local Reasonable Accommodation Coordinators (LRAC), and NCA has



planned updating of all employees race, nationality, origin and disability data in FY 2012 to insure current information is accurate.

## **Assistant Secretaries and Staff Offices**

### **Office of Management**

The Office of Management (OM) managers will continue to maintain a working environment that fosters an inclusive workplace through established hiring goals for a diverse, results-oriented, high-performing workforce in FY 2012. Due to the popularity of the work-from-home program and flexible work schedules, OM will assess the feasibility of expanding the programs. OM plans to continue its training program if funding is available.

OM will continue to serve as an active partner on the VA Diversity Council in 2012. While the OM senior executive role on the Council will remain the same, it is fully expected this important council will continue to serve as a communication link between the workforce and leadership, providing guidance to advance the Department's goals for diversity and inclusion.

The Executive in Charge will continue the OM employee awards program emphasizing VA's Core Values and Characteristics (I CARE), diversity and inclusion in the workforce, and staff participation in the program.

### **Office of Information and Technology**

The Office of Information and Technology (OIT) will analyze workforce data to ascertain OIT's successes in eliminating barriers to full employment, particularly with groups with lower than expected representation. OIT will assess diversity characteristics of its senior leadership and establish long term strategies to address any identified areas. OIT plans to establish a Diversity Management Working Group and build partnerships with organizations and educational institutions serving groups with historically low participation. OIT will develop a plan to create training for senior leadership and continue to evaluate employee satisfaction by analyzing OPM and VA annual employee surveys.

### **Office of Policy and Planning**

The Office of Policy and Planning (OPP) will apply the same rigorous standards to recruiting in FY 2012 as was done in FY 2011 with the goal of maintaining the workforce diversity that was built. OPP expects to see employees begin to request telework agreements. OPP will continue to monitor its award and performance systems to ensure they are achieving the desired results.

## Office of Operations, Security, and Preparedness

The Office of Operations, Security, and Preparedness (OSP) planned initiatives for FY 2012 related to VA's diversity and inclusion strategic goals involve hiring more Veterans, which include male and female workers. OSP is also focused on ensuring telework agreements and flexible work environment are made available. By extending telework opportunities to employees, customer service and stakeholder relations will be improved.

## Office of Human Resources and Administration

### *Office of Diversity and Inclusion*

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI), a program office within OHRA, has primary responsibility for initiatives related to workforce diversity and organizational inclusion. In FY 2012 and beyond, ODI will lead the following initiatives:

- Develop and implement a new VA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan for FY 2012-2016.
- Implement VA's new Inclusion Index and apply the algorithm as a standardized metric to assess progress on organizational inclusion.
- Implement an applicant flow system in USAStaffing to identify barriers to EEO in all recruitment and selection processes.
- Increase the awareness and participation of the Workforce Recruitment Program Fund to support hiring of interns with disabilities.
- Expand marketing and use of the centralized VA reasonable accommodation fund.
- Expand marketing and use of the centralized VA diversity internship program fund.
- Expand the diversity and inclusion training portfolio and deploy customized training on, multi-generational, disability employment (Schedule A), reasonable accommodation, and LGBT issues.
- Implement a training evaluation instrument and program metrics to assess the short- and long-term impacts of training and reasonable accommodation initiatives on VA culture.
- Designate local reasonable accommodation coordinators and selective placement coordinators in all field facilities.
- Expand marketing and participation in MyCarrer@VA, new pathways program to support upward mobility of entry level employees and bridge career gaps.

### *Office of Resolution Management*

The Office of Resolution Management (ORM) developed and launched a new EEO, diversity and ADR dashboard to communicate the status of key indicators in those areas to senior leadership in FY 2011. This tool is now available to all of VA; ORM will continue to encourage its use and expand its capabilities in FY 2012. ORM will also continue to market and expand the use of ADR in FY 2012 and beyond, to resolve workplace conflict at its earliest stage.

### **Office of General Counsel**

The Office of General Counsel (OGC) representatives in FY 2012 will continue to support VA-wide initiatives focused on building and sustaining a diverse, results-oriented, high-performing workforce, including the work of the VA Diversity Council, the VA Strategic Planning Workgroup, and the Corporate Employee Development Board Task Force. OGC will also continue to foster diversity and high performance within its own workforce through the FY 2011-2012 OGC Leadership Development Program.

OGC will continue to offer alternative work schedules, telework opportunities, and other flexibilities to enhance workplace access for all employees. OGC will also continue to target outreach to groups with low participation rates, through its summer intern/extern program.

OGC's organizational performance targets for FY 2012 continue to focus on improving the timeliness and responsiveness of legal service from the client and Veteran perspective. This year we are also focused on ensuring that service to clients and customers is consistently timely, responsive, and efficient throughout the OGC organization. We will continue to monitor client- and employee-satisfaction survey scores as well as service delivery time data.

### **Office of Inspector General**

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) will strive to meet or exceed current level of diversity and inclusion in FY 2012 through the use of a broad range of recruitment strategies and communication mechanisms. The OIG will continue to seek highly qualified candidates of all backgrounds and experiences whenever a vacancy arises. Veterans will continue to make up a significant portion of the hiring pool. Furthermore, the OIG will use the recently released "Best Places to Work in the Federal Government" survey results to identify actions needed to ensure the OIG remains the employer of choice for individuals seeking a meaningful career in the Federal Government.

### **Board of Veterans' Appeals**

The Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) will continue to emphasize multifaceted recruitment techniques and outreach efforts aimed at a diversified and results-oriented workforce in FY 2012. In this manner, we can better reflect the diversified constituency we service. BVA will continue to fully review and analyze workforce composition data to ensure that it attracts and retains a diverse applicant pool. The Board will continue to internally promote and champion diversity and inclusion through education and open communication, with the aim that all staff members embrace the diversity of the Board's workforce and recognize that every employee is important and valued.

The Board will continue to utilize and build upon the integrated approach used in FY 2011 to maintain and expand its inclusive, diversified, and engaged workforce. The Board will carefully review the results of the Employee Survey to determine if enhancements or changes to this engagement and sustainability program are needed and/or desired. This integrated, multifaceted approach rewards the workforce's achievements, aids with recruitment efforts, and promotes retention of skilled staff.

The Board's senior leaders will continue to serve as role models and champions for exceptional service delivery and customer satisfaction with a strong emphasis on quality work products. Said efforts will be founded upon sound and real diversity and inclusion commitments and fully functioning initiatives, which recognize the importance of building teams, engaging employees, and using strong interpersonal and decision making skills to drive inclusion. The overarching goals for FY 2012 will focus on an inclusive and diversified workforce operating in a flexible work environment resulting in excellent customer service and a complete commitment to Veterans. All of these efforts will permit the Board to respect and build upon its current diverse workforce.

### **Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs**

The Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs (OPIA) will continue to support VA-wide programs and initiatives designed to build and sustain a diverse, results-oriented, high-performing workforce by increasing diversity and inclusion in its own workforce. OPIA will maintain strategic communications and other programs to inform internal and external populations on diverse subjects that enhance achievement of a flexible and inclusive work environment. Also, OPIA will continue to offer a flexible workplace that offers alternative work schedules, telework opportunities, and other flexibilities to enhance workplace access for all employees. OPIA will maintain its continuous function of strategic communications which include a daily feedback source for environmental awareness, a means of outreach across the spectrum of VA functions, and a means to gauge customer service and stakeholder relations. OPIA will continue to assess its own capabilities and achievement of this objective across all functional areas.

### **Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs**

The Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (OCLA) will strive to create a high-performing workforce. OCLA is a very dynamic organization and values initiative of its employees and their ability to rapidly re-prioritize work actions. OCLA seeks results-oriented employees who will be major contributors to accomplishing the organization's mission. OCLA will continue to nurture and develop its workforce. Working in concert with VA's Learning University, OCLA will conduct quarterly training designed to benefit the entire workforce. OCLA has implemented an "I CARE" Awards Program to recognize those employees whose

service to our Nation's Veterans exemplifies VA's core values. "I CARE" Awards are presented to OCLA employees on a quarterly basis.

### **Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construction**

#### *Office of Acquisition Operations, Strategic Acquisition Center*

The Office of Acquisition Operations, Strategic Acquisition Center (SAC) will in FY 2012 complete phases two and three of its three phased hiring process using recruitment strategies to include participation in a VA Virtual Acquisition Job Fair (date TBD). Participation in the VA for Vets Career Fair and Expo is scheduled for January 18, 2012, and future recruitment endeavors at local universities are planned.

Resolution Management Training is scheduled on-site at the SAC for February 16, 2012. At the conclusion of the all-hands training, an additional breakout session is planned for supervisors and leadership of the SAC. Additionally, a SAC EEO liaison will be identified and will receive ORM training. The SAC will also post EEO policies/No Fear Act while continuing to promote a diverse and professional work environment.

In FY 2012, the SAC will form a Diversity Outreach Committee. Planned functions include monthly themed lunches aimed at promoting diversity within the workplace. In keeping with the monthly theme, diversity posters will be displayed throughout the organization. Local outreach programs are also planned, such as annual food and clothing drives.

#### *Office of Acquisition Operations, Acquisition Service of Frederick*

The Office of Acquisition Operations, Acquisition Service of Frederick (AS-F) will continue to strive for a diverse, results-oriented, high-performing workforce by selecting well qualified candidates for positions. The organization is coordinating an on-site effective communication course for the staff to improve communication among team members and customers. AS-F plans to coordinate themed brown bag lunches to strengthen two-way communication throughout the fiscal year, along with future on-site soft skills and supplemental training.

AS-F will continue to hold health and wellness activities throughout the year and include all personnel. AS-F will continue to hold diversity outreach events to ensure that all staff are aware of diversity in the workplace.

AS-F will continue to strive for 100 percent compliancy with all mandatory EEO, Workplace Harassment and No FEAR training for all AS-F employees throughout every fiscal year. AS-F will strive to maintain to exceed our 93 percent customer satisfaction rate by continuing employee training and customer outreach.

#### *Technology Acquisition Center*

The Technology Acquisition Center (TAC) will continually analyze its workforce data assessing workforce diversity and assure that promotions, awards, recognitions, training and upward

mobility opportunities are occurring equitably. We will assess our attrition and recruitment strategies as we go forward, utilizing exit interviews to obtain feedback and reviewing the diversity of candidates.

In 2012, we will continue to strive to recruit a diverse workforce while also mentoring and growing employee skills from within to fill critical positions that are needed now and in the future. We will also continue to communicate with our workforce through All-Hand meetings, staff meetings, staff notes, suggestion box, climate assessments and exit interviews.

The TAC has taken action in providing physical environment accommodations in the newest temporary facilities at TAC-East by installing automatic door openers. The automatic door openers provide unassisted access to the main entrance of the building; to the entrance door of the organization's actual work area; and to the restrooms. The TAC will ensure that any new facilities in the planning stages will be compliant with the American Disabilities Act of 1990 and the latest building codes.

We will continue to encourage our employees to increase their skills through formal education and participation in professional organizations (AFCEA, NCMA, etc).

When updates are available, we will analyze Human Capital Assessments and Surveys to identify trends with regard to diversity and inclusion.

The TAC will continue to take measures to recruit people from groups with low participation rates by attending local college/university career fairs and Veteran outreach programs to encourage potential candidates to apply to vacancy announcements.

The TAC will continue to encourage more Diversity and Inclusion Committee events. Our TAC Gives Back program will continue to support events that assist our Country's Veterans. The TAC will also support a Telework agreement with their employees giving them additional workplace flexibility and continue to offer alternate work schedule for its employees.

The TAC will continue to improve information technology resources for better responsiveness to support customer requirements and reporting needs.

The TAC provided over 14 on-site training opportunities for the VA workforce in FY11. Customer training has already been held numerous times in FY 2012 and will continue to be conducted while there is demand from the OIT and customer communities. Some of these training events were held on-site with our customers and we are currently investigating offering more on-site training to our customers throughout FY 2012.

**Center for Minority Veterans**

The Center for Minority Veterans (CMV) staff will serve as advocates for minority Veterans in FY 2012 in various working groups and task forces to ensure that the needs of minority Veterans are articulated and addressed. The CMV’s advocacy for eliminating health disparities among the Veteran population, contributed to VHA establishing a Health Care Equality Task force that provided recommendations on what the Department should do to address health disparities and ensure health equality for all Veterans. The CMV was actively involved in drafting the proposal for establishing an Office of Health Equity, which is now being developed.

**Center for Women Veterans**

The Center for Women Veterans (CWV) will facilitate a report of the Women Veterans Task Force as well as a report of the Advisory Committee on Women Veterans in FY 2012. Also CWV will focus on a celebration during Women’s History Month for women Veterans and women Veterans employees and a meeting of the Advisory Committee on Women Veterans during March 2012, and (planned) at the end of the FY 2012 or in early FY 2013.





# Appendix

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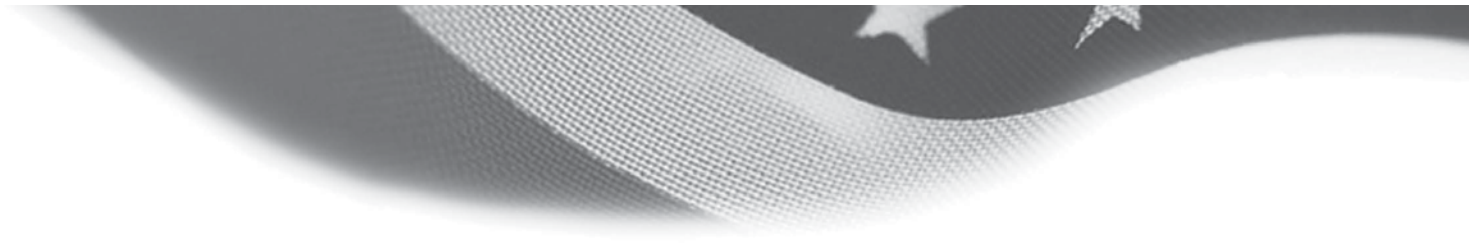
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# DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGIC PLAN FOR FY 2009-2013

*A framework  
for creating and sustaining  
a diverse workforce*

**Office of Diversity and Inclusion**  
February 2009





## MESSAGE FROM THE DAS

Dear Colleagues:

It is with great pride that we present the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) first *Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan* (Plan). This Plan, developed in collaboration with VA’s Administrations, Staff Offices, and many other stakeholders internally and externally, serves as a living road map to guide our efforts in making VA a leader in creating and sustaining a high-performing workforce that leverages diversity and empowers all employees to achieve superior results in serving our Nation’s Veterans.

The *Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan* is specifically aligned with VA’s strategic objective to “recruit, develop, and retain a competent, committed, and diverse workforce that provides high-quality service to Veterans and their families.” VA is the second-largest of the 15 Cabinet departments, with over 280,000 employees in its ranks all working to fulfill President Abraham Lincoln’s promise: “To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan.” As a major health care and benefits provider, VA must maintain a workforce that is reflective of the communities it serves and treat its employees with fairness and dignity.

The Plan was developed with the underlying mission in mind: “to foster a diverse workforce and inclusive work environment that ensures equal opportunity through national policy development, workforce analysis, outreach, retention, and education to best serve our Nation’s Veterans.” It is designed to achieve three over-arching goals:

1. Create a diverse, results-oriented, high-performing workforce that reflects the communities we serve by identifying and eliminating barriers to equal opportunity;
2. Cultivate a flexible and inclusive work environment that enables full participation through strategic outreach and retention; and
3. Facilitate outstanding customer service and stakeholder relations by promoting cultural competency, accountability, education, and communication.

In order to be a high-performing organization in the 21st century, VA must tap into the rich resources of our global community and strengthen our commitment to equity and justice in the workplace. We must also define diversity in its broadest context, including but not limited to the legally protected classes. Diversity must encompass all that makes us unique, including the diversity of thought and perspective that accompanies our human identity. Only then can we realize the full performance potential and competitive advantages of a diverse workforce. This is more than a legal or moral imperative, it is the business case for diversity that we in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion will also champion.

The implementation of this *Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan* reflects the Department's continued efforts to improve service to our Nation's Veterans. As a public service agency, diversity and inclusion must be the cornerstones of our human capital management strategy. Working collaboratively with you—the highly-dedicated employees, managers, and stakeholders of VA—we will seize the challenges and opportunities to create and sustain a diverse and inclusive workforce that best serves our Nation's most precious assets—our Veterans.

We invite you to join us in this important journey. Thank you for your support.

*Georgia Coffey*

*Deputy Assistant Secretary for Diversity and Inclusion  
Department of Veterans Affairs.*

## FOREWORD

**I**n 2008, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI), formerly the Office of Diversity Management and Equal Employment Opportunity, embarked on strategic planning initiative for the office—the first of its kind in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The intent was to develop a leading-edge, living road map for incorporating diversity and inclusion in VA based on the best practices in the public and private sectors.

The public sector is on the cusp of a major transformation that presents us with great challenges and even greater opportunities in the area of workforce diversity and inclusion. As we witness the dramatic effects of the globalization of our economy, never before has it been more critical that we adapt to the rapidly changing profile of our global marketplace. Equally important is how we demonstrate our commitment to equal opportunity, fairness, and justice in this new emerging workforce. The viability of agencies in the 21st century will depend on their ability to service an increasingly diversified market through a strategically managed workforce that reflects the global community it serves.

As a result of extensive benchmarking, it was revealed that the field of equal employment opportunity (EEO) and diversity management had changed dramatically since its statutory inception in the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In the 1970, EEO evolved into Affirmative Action; in the 1980s, it expanded into “respecting differences”; and in the 1990s, it was transformed by the groundbreaking work of Dr. R. Roosevelt Thomas who introduced the concept of “diversity management.” With each of these iterations, the concept of EEO moved from a reactive, exclusively legalistic model to a more proactive, business-driven paradigm.

The millennium has also ushered in a new framework. In recent years, the focus has shifted from diversity to inclusion, a rapidly emerging trend born in the private sector. This sea of change occurred quietly as companies found themselves vigorously competing for diverse workforce talent in a globalized economy. They soon realized that it was not enough to simply recruit a diverse workforce, but they must also retain and leverage that diverse workforce to advance the mission.

Companies began looking internally at the organizational culture and the institutional processes that impacted employees' ability to fully participate and contribute to the goals of the organization. This required examining systemic barriers to include all aspects of the organization: cultural norms, business practices, communications, leadership development, training and education, performance management, management accountability, strategic recruitment, and work life. Organizational inclusion became the means to actualize the potential of workforce diversity.

The term “diversity and inclusion” reflects the emerging need to complement diversity practices which focused largely on recruitment outreach, with internal retention strategies to sustain, develop, and leverage the diversity in all human resources. The concept of inclusion galvanized the field of diversity management by stressing inclusion of *all* employees, not just legally-protected classes. Through inclusion, organizations create the facilitating conditions in the work environment that enable the competitive advantages of diversity to flourish. This relatively new terminology of “diversity and inclusion” supports the *business case for diversity*, a concept championed by ODI. The business case spoke to the higher performance outcomes associated with workforce diversity and inclusion.

In championing this “*business case for diversity and inclusion*,” we rely on the research in this area. Empirical studies have shown that workforce diversity offers quantifiable advantages to organizational performance and productivity. Specifically, studies show that under facilitating conditions, workforce diversity is positively correlated with higher performance outcomes and greater economic returns. The Diversity Research Network conducted a major study on Fortune 500 companies and found that racial diversity was positively associated with higher performance outcome measures in organizations that “integrate and leverage diverse perspectives.” It also found that gender diversity yielded more effective group processes and performance in organizations with “people-oriented” performance cultures. Research is demonstrating the strong link between perceptions of fairness in the workplace and employee engagement. This speaks to the need for strategies that support “inclusion” as well as diversity in the workplace.

The renowned Center for Creative Leadership conducted a large scale study on team dynamics and work productivity which revealed that diverse teams were more creative and performed better than homogenous teams. The study team analyzed employer and employee data of over 20,000 business establishments in the manufacturing, retail, and service commercial sectors. The results showed



## FOREWORD

that racial and gender diversity was positively correlated with establishment productivity, product quality, and economic return on investment. Similarly, in 2004, the Urban League reported that diverse companies generated 18 percent higher productivity than the U.S. economy overall. Finally, a study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* and *Science Daily* illustrated the business case for diversity in patient care. This study revealed that medical students who attend racially and ethnically diverse medical schools say they are better equipped to care for patients in a diverse society. Here again, empirical data illuminates the nexus between workforce diversity and higher performance outcomes in the health care field.

While the private sector is in the business of profits, government is in the business of equity—equity of service, protections, opportunity. The same benefits apply in this context and the stakes are even higher. As a major health care and benefits provider, VA must maintain a workforce that is reflective of constituencies it serves so it can provide high quality, responsive, and equitable services. This is not only a matter of legal compliance, but smart business.

It is important to note that the business case for diversity in no way diminishes our commitment to the legal and social imperatives for equal opportunity. VA remains unequivocally committed to ensuring the statutory protections for equal employment opportunity as prescribed by law. We will continue to enforce the laws that protect all of our rights to work free from discrimination in the workplace, and assiduously commit ourselves to fairness in the workplace. This is the foundation upon which the business case can thrive. We must first protect the fundamental civil rights of every individual in the workplace. Only then can individuals feel safe and empowered to contribute to their optimum potential in support of the mission. In fact, the social imperatives are strengthened by the business case. The business case is predicated on the value of diversity of thought—which is rooted in our human diversity. It is the inseparable link between diversity of thought and our human diversity that makes equal opportunity in the workplace essential.

ODI defines diversity in its broadest context to include all that makes us unique: race, color, gender, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, age, disability, culture, educational background, socioeconomic status, intellectual perspective, organizational level, and more. By doing so, we are able to harvest the full performance potential and competitive advantages diversity has to offer. We are proud to lead the effort to promote policies in VA operationalize this concept so that we can provide superior service to our Veterans and all Americans. To that end, we present to you VA's inaugural *Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan for FY 2009-2013*.

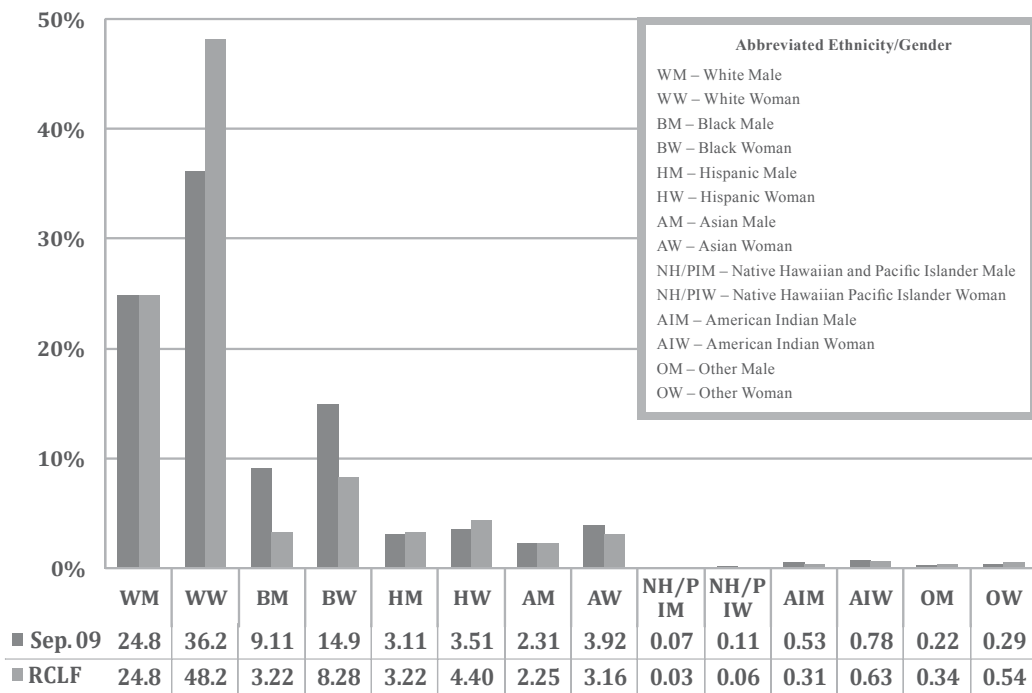
## THE CURRENT STATE OF VA

In order to design a responsive strategic plan that addresses diversity and inclusion in the workforce, we must first examine the strengths and challenges in the area of the current workforce.

### Overall Workforce

Although the Department of Veterans Affairs defines diversity in the broadest possible sense, a key measure of diversity is the demographic composition of the workforce by race, gender, ethnicity, disability and Veteran status. We measure success by comparing these demographic to the relevant civilian labor force (RCLF). The RCLF reflects all the people in the U.S. employed in or actively seeking employment in specific occupations that VA hires.

VA Workforce vs. RCLF



At the end of FY 2009, the comparison of VA’s workforce to the RCLF shows that VA is one of the most diverse agencies in the Federal government. However,

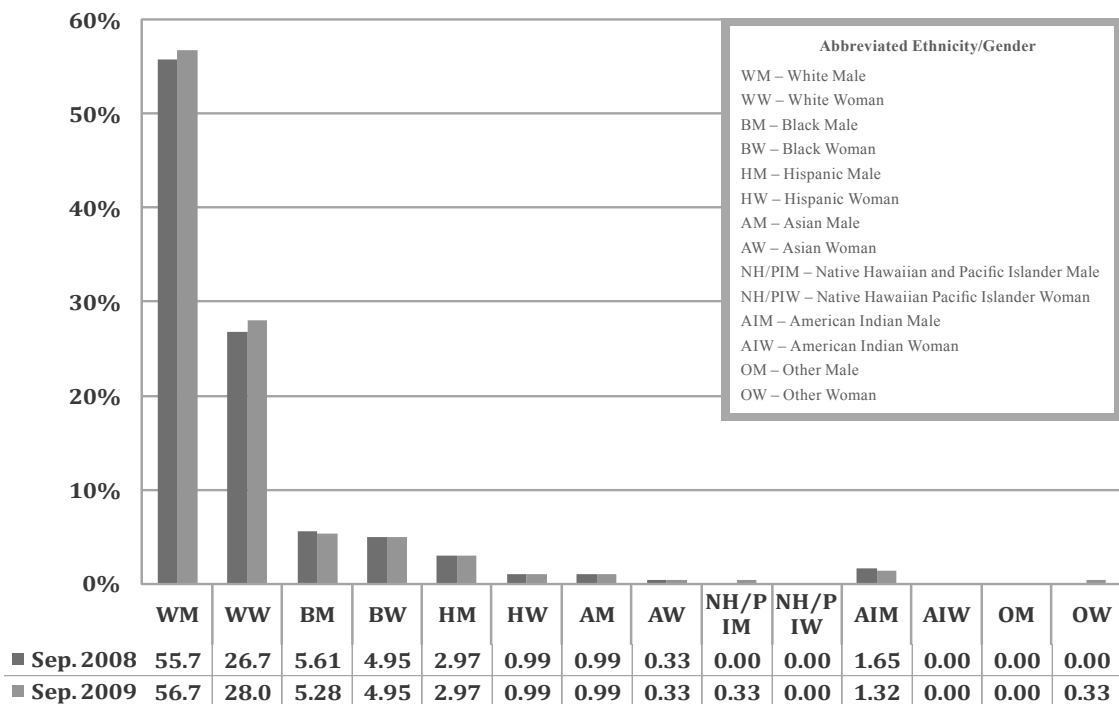
while there is parity in some areas, there are challenges in others. For example, representation of Blacks, Asians, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders, and American Indians are all above the RCLF. White women and Hispanics are below their RCLF levels.

Underrepresentation of White women is a national issue affecting every occupation and every administration—VHA, VBA, NCA, and Staff Offices. Hispanic men are slightly underrepresented while Hispanic women are underrepresented to a greater degree, but their underrepresentation is localized to specific regions—primarily the Southwestern region of the United States. In addition, a little over 30 percent of VA permanent employees were Veterans, approximately 10 percent of VA employees reported having a disability, and 1.49 percent of VA employees reported having a targeted disability—50 percent higher than the government average.

### Senior Executive Service

Senior Executive Service represents VA’s highest ranked career employees. The demographic breakout of VA’s Senior Executive Service shows that almost 85 percent are White men or White women. About 10 percent are represented by Black men and Black women. Hispanic, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, American Indian, and Other (two or more races) make up the remaining 5 percent.

### Senior Executive Service Onboard



THE CURRENT STATE OF VA

**Hires and Separations**

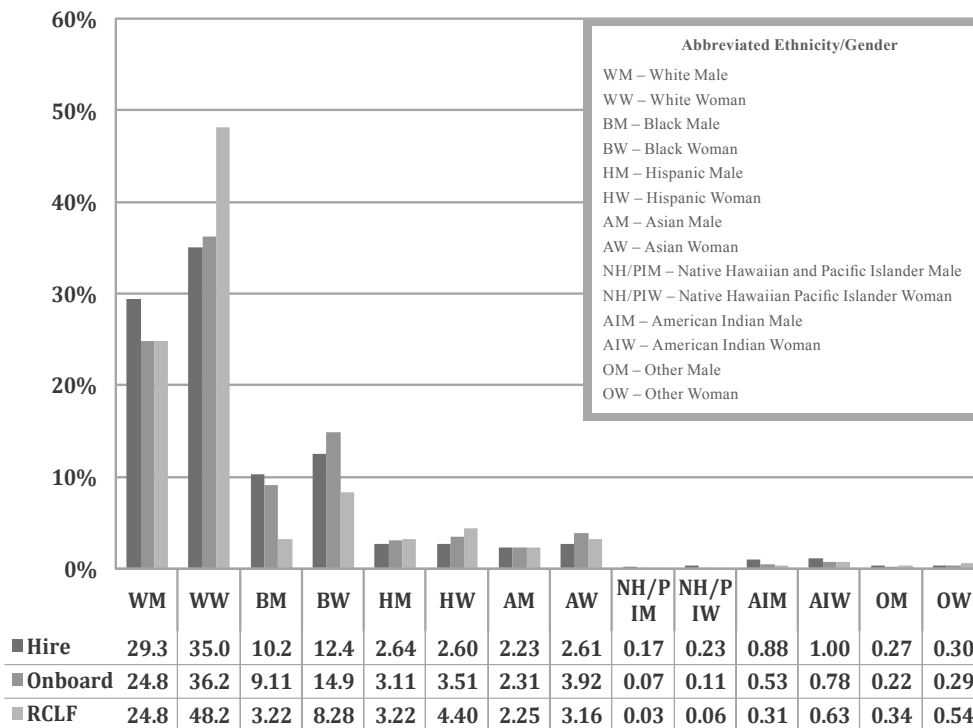
Workforce composition is affected by the hires and separation of employees. From FY 2008 to FY 2009, VA hired 27,350 permanent employees, equivalent to approximately 10 percent of its total workforce.

All groups, except for White women and Hispanics, were hired above national availability. White women and Hispanics were hired at rates lower than their availability in the RCLF.

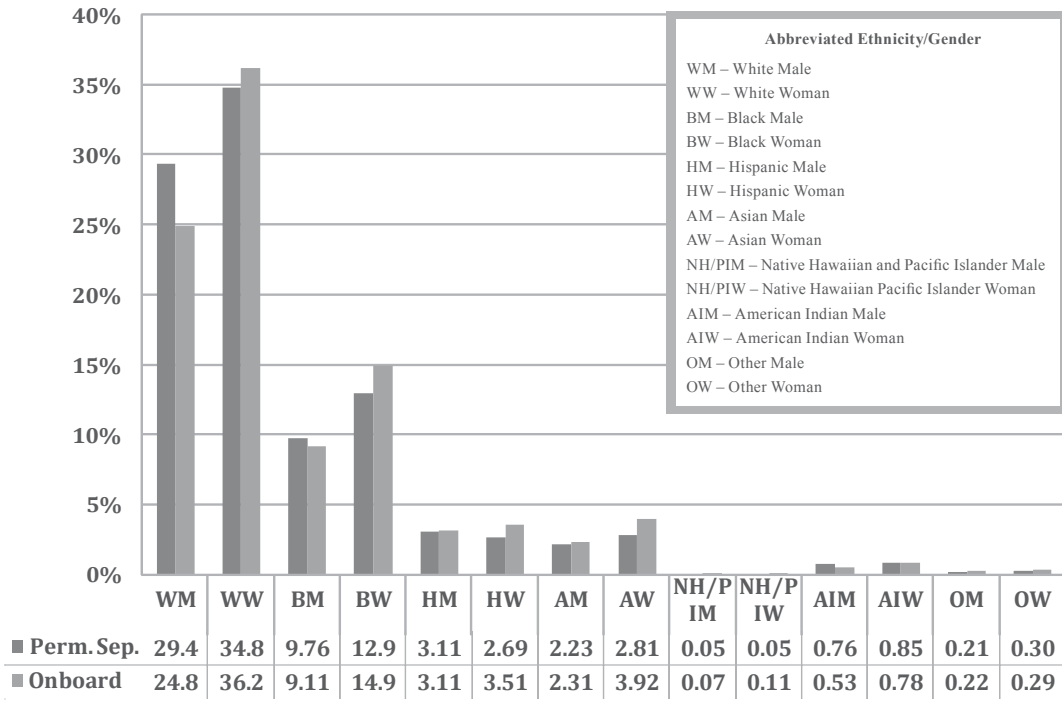
From FY 2008 to FY 2009, a total of 15,488 (approximately 6 percent) permanent employees left VA through retirement, resignation, termination of appointment, death, or separation. Nearly 80 percent of separations are attributed to voluntary retirement and resignation.

White women had the highest rate of resignation at 38 percent while White men had a resignation rate of almost 26 percent. White men, the oldest group in VA’s workforce, matched White women in voluntary retirement from FY 2008 to FY 2009 at 35 percent. White men and White women left VA through voluntary retirement at 35 percent. Black women ranked third in voluntary retirement at almost 11 percent followed by Black men at about 9 percent. At the current rate of hire, Hispanic men would reach RCLF parity within the coming year.

**FY 2009 Hires vs. Onboard and RCLF**



### Separation vs. Onboard



Of all demographic groups measured, only White men, Black men, and Asian men separated at rates higher than their onboard representation.

#### Conclusion

The workforce data presented above serves as a context for the strengths and challenges inherent in our strategic planning process.

The goals, objectives, and strategies presented in this strategic plan are intended to build upon the existing diversity in VA’s workforce and address the current challenges that remain. The three goals presented herein are generally focused on addressing these challenges in the workforce, workplace, and marketplace.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Mission

The mission of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) is to foster a diverse workforce and an inclusive work environment that ensures equal opportunity through national policy development, workforce analysis, outreach, retention, and education to best serve our Nation's Veterans.

### Vision

It is the vision of ODI that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is a leader in creating and sustaining a high-performing workforce by leveraging diversity and empowering all employees to achieve superior results in service to our Veterans.

### Values

We serve our Nation's Veterans. We are committed to pursuing the agency's mission and fully utilizing the creativity, energy, and diversity of our workforce. To this end, we hold ourselves to the values of respect, trust, and responsiveness to promote a culture of performance excellence.

### Goals

The following primary goals have been identified in pursuit of this mission:

1. Create a diverse, results-oriented, high-performing workforce that reflects the communities we serve by identifying and eliminating barriers to equal opportunity.
2. Cultivate a flexible and inclusive work environment that enables full participation through strategic outreach and retention.
3. Facilitate outstanding customer service and stakeholder relations by promoting cultural competency, accountability, education, and communication.

### Implementation

The following pages present the programmatic objectives, strategies, and measures designed to achieve the identified goals. The *Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan* is intended to be a multi-year effort and is not intended to be a static document as changing conditions will likely require refinement to the strategies published here. Implementation of this Plan will be led by the staff of ODI, in partnership with VA's internal and external stakeholders. VA's leadership plays a key role in the effective implementation of this Strategic Plan. Each year, ODI will revisit the Plan and in concert with VA's stakeholders, evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies outlined here in a *Diversity and Inclusion Annual Performance Report*.



## GOALS, OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

### Goal 1

Create a diverse, results-oriented, high-performing workforce that reflects the communities we serve by identifying and eliminating barriers to equal opportunity.

### Objective 1A

Identify underrepresentation in the VA workforce in accordance with equal employment opportunity (EEO) laws, regulations, and management directives.

### Strategies

- Analyze workforce demographic data in comparison with the Relevant Civilian Labor Force (RCLF) to identify triggers and potential barriers to EEO.
- Compile data, conduct annual barrier analysis, and submit annual EEO Plan and Program Status report to Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) in compliance with Management Directive 715 (MD 715).
- Compile data and submit Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Report (FEORP) to Office of Personnel Management (OPM).
- Compile workforce diversity data for Monthly Performance Reviews (MPR) for agency leadership.
- Conduct monthly technical assistance meetings with agency EEO and diversity managers and annual briefings with agency leadership on MD 715 planning and reporting.
- Conduct individualized live and virtual MD 715 EEO Plan technical assistance conferences with all VA subcomponents.
- Provide ad hoc workforce diversity reports and trends analyses to internal and external stakeholders.
- In partnership with key business process owners, identify and implement an automated applicant flow/adverse impact analysis system to identify barriers to equal opportunity in the selection process.

### Measures

- Reduce number of historically underrepresented groups in the VA workforce.
- Reduce underrepresentation in historically underrepresented groups in VA workforce and leadership pipeline each year.
- Submit timely and accurate MD 715 Report to EEOC by designated deadline each year.
- Submit timely and accurate FEORP Report to OPM by designated deadline each year.
- Provide monthly performance report (MPR) updates and quarterly workforce analyses on EEO program metrics to agency leadership by 2009.
- ODI will provide ad hoc workforce diversity reports and trends analyses within five business days of request.
- Improve quality of agency sub-component and facility level EEO plans and reports.
- Identify appropriate applicant flow data system by 2010 and implement applicant flow data system by 2012.

### Objective 1B

Develop strategies to address underrepresentation and eliminate identified barriers to equal employment opportunity.

### Strategies

- Analyze workforce data to determine if promotions, awards, recognitions, training, and upward mobility opportunities are occurring equitably.
- Benchmark “best practices” in recruitment outreach strategies in the field and provide consultation service to field components.
- Assess attrition rates and develop models to support diversity in succession planning efforts.
- Collaborate with Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) to design and administer employee exit surveys six months after employee leaves the organization.
- Analyze exit survey data to identify trends and potential EEO-related root causes for attrition.
- Analyze employee separation data to identify triggers for barriers to equal opportunity.

**GOALS, OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES****Measures**

- ODI will respond to requests for data analysis on promotions, awards, recognitions, training, and upward mobility opportunities within five days of initial request.
- ODI will provide customized guidance to VA Administrations, VA Central Office (VACO), and field components annually in first quarter of fiscal year MD 715 to support their MD 715 EEO planning efforts.
- Provide timely workforce data and technical assistance in support of VA succession planning efforts as requested.
- Implement pilot delayed exit surveys in FY 2010.
- Reduce “regrettable losses” (i.e., pre-retirement age separations) of employees in mission critical occupations agency-wide.

**Objective 1C**

Maintain state-of-the-art EEOC-compliant standardized workforce analysis system to efficiently support the agency’s workforce data management needs.

**Strategies**

- Continually upgrade and enhance VSSC to remain accurate, legally compliant, and user-friendly to aid managers in workforce planning efforts.
- Train and facilitate EEO managers on the use of the VHA Support Service Center (VSSC) workforce analysis system VA-wide.
- Perform random quality assurance checks on VSSC workforce data accuracy.
- Utilize a variety of communication tools to distribute workforce analysis information (newsletter, video, CDs, Web site).

**Measures**

- Produce reliable and accurate workforce analysis tables in support of the MD 715 planning.
- Receive accurate, responsive, and reliable EEO plans and reports from VA Administrations and VACO.
- Reduce number of MD 715 EEO Program Status Report deficiencies cited by EEOC.

## Goal 2

Cultivate a flexible and inclusive work environment that enables full participation through strategic outreach and retention.

### Objective 2A

Promote strategic recruitment outreach in order to maintain a competent, committed, and diverse workforce.

#### Strategies

- Conduct Technical Assistance Reviews (TARs) at agency facilities to address EEO program strengths and deficiencies and perform follow-up activities to ensure responsive corrective actions are implemented.
- Provide guidance to agency Administrations, VACO, and field components on best practices in recruitment outreach strategies.
- Partner with OHRM and Office of Resolution Management (ORM) in conducting consolidated technical assistance on-site reviews.
- Provide training and guidance in the area of Special Emphasis Programs (SEP) and related mandated reports.
- Compile data and information for annual submission of Federally mandated SEP/diversity related reports (e.g., Hispanic Employment in Federal Government, Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program, etc.)
- Design educational programs and outreach campaigns to promote science, medical, technology, engineering, and math occupations in diverse communities.
- Develop strategic partnerships and collaborations with community organizations, public and private agencies, affinity groups, professional associations, and educational institutions to promote recruitment outreach to underrepresented populations.
- Develop Recruitment Outreach and Selection Process Guide providing guidance on conducting a barrier-free and EEO-compliant selection process and citing strategic use of special hiring authorities for underrepresented groups.
- Administer Community Prosperity Partnership (CPP) to leverage community resources for outreach to underrepresented communities.
- Establish a full-time EEO Manager position in VACO.

## GOALS, OBJECTIVES &amp; STRATEGIES

- Develop diversity-focused Employment Outreach Plans to promote strategically focused outreach to communities with low representation in the VA workforce.

#### Measures

- Perform a minimum of six TARs on an annual basis at facilities based on established multidimensional needs assessment criteria.
- Perform follow-up to TARs within six months of initial visit to monitor progress on implementation of recommended corrective actions.
- Provide issue-updated guidance to agency subcomponents on “best practices” in recruitment outreach strategies in first quarter of fiscal year.
- Develop a TAR tracking system to ensure continuity in recommending best practices.
- Provide SEP training at 20 percent of the facilities by end of FY 2013.
- Submit timely and accurate SEP/diversity-related Federally mandated reports to oversight agencies by designated deadlines each year.
- Distribute SEP announcement memoranda to agency subcomponents annually and 30 days in advance of the SEP event.
- Participate in six national affinity group conferences or outreach venues annually.
- ODI will coordinate three CPP events annually based in diverse, underrepresented communities.
- ODI will issue Recruitment Outreach and Selection Process Guide by end of FY 2009.
- Establish a baseline for the purpose of measuring and improving diversity in applicant pools in underrepresented areas by 2012.
- Increase representation of people with targeted disabilities to 2 percent of the agency workforce by 2013.
- Reduce EEO complaints based on non-selection through appropriate EEO training for managers and supervisors.
- Recruit EEO Manager for VACO by 2010, budget permitting.
- Issue the first diversity-focused Employment Outreach Plan on Hispanic Outreach by March 30, 2010.

## Objective 2B

Support the retention and full participation of employees in order to provide high-quality service to Veterans and their families.

### Strategies

- Analyze Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS) and Annual Employee Survey (AES) data to identify trends with regard to diversity and inclusion.
- Coordinate with national selective placement services to place applicants/employees with disabilities.
- Implement accurate reasonable accommodation tracking system to report national data.
- Establish and train selective placement coordinators for placement of people with disabilities utilizing Schedule A Hiring Authorities.
- Improve partnership and build strategic alliances with OHRM on EEO, diversity, and inclusion issues.

### Measures

- Increase retention of historically underrepresented groups in VA workforce and mission critical occupations.
- Increase favorable responses to diversity related items on employee surveys over prior year baselines.
- Implement automated reasonable accommodation tracking system by FY 2010.
- Identify baseline and increase timeliness of processing of reasonable accommodation requests by 2010.
- Produce one marketing/promotional material on reasonable accommodation requests by end of FY 2009.
- Reduce EEO complaints based on failure to accommodate through appropriate EEO training of managers and supervisors.
- Establish selective placement coordinator function in all facilities by FY 2010; provide initial training in FY 2010.
- Implement monthly strategy meetings between ODI and OHRM key staff in FY 2009.

## GOALS, OBJECTIVES &amp; STRATEGIES

**Objective 2C**

Create a diverse pipeline for recruitment and career advancement opportunities in order to support agency succession planning and leadership development.

**Strategies**

- Coordinate agency-wide student non-traditional internship programs, including but not limited to Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, American Indian Science and Engineering Society, Washington Internships for Native Students, Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP), The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars, and the International Leadership Foundation.
- Create a national internship database for tracking the recruitment of non-traditional interns and track work experience in database and on Standard Federal 50 forms.
- Develop mentoring program framework and coaching toolkit to support diversity in succession planning.
- Monitor Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program (SESCDP) and Leadership VA (LVA) candidate selection processes to ensure there are no barriers to equal opportunity.
- ODI will collaborate with OHRM to develop a diversity focused marketing/outreach plan to market the SESCO and LVA programs.
- Send VA SES job opportunity announcement to diversity organizations through diversity listserv.
- Include voluntary race, gender, ethnicity disclosure form with all SES vacancies to anonymously track diversity of leadership applicant pool.
- Develop Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with diverse institutions of higher education and professional organizations to facilitate recruitment outreach to underrepresented groups.
- Develop a guide on conducting EEO-compliant selection process, including legally compliant ways to incorporate diversity in selection panels.
- In conjunction with OHRM, increase use of “open continuous” database in mission critical occupational categories.

### Measures

- Sponsor 20 WRP and 50 HACU interns annually.
- Convert 5 percent of qualified, sponsored WRP students utilizing special hiring authorities (e.g., Schedule A, 30 percent disabled Veterans) annually, subject to availability of budget resources.
- Establish a non-traditional internship database by end of FY 2009.
- Establish a guide and materials on mentoring and coaching to improve retention and enhance diversity in leadership pipeline by FY 2011.
- Increase marketing and outreach for leadership development programs such as SESCO and LVA.
- Increase number of internships, work-study cooperative arrangements, and student/faculty exchanges under MOUs.
- Issue guidance on conducting EEO-compliant selection processes by FY 2010.
- Develop “open continuous” database for diverse candidates in mission critical occupational categories by FY 2011.



## GOALS, OBJECTIVES &amp; STRATEGIES

**Goal 3**

Facilitate outstanding customer service and stakeholder relations by promoting cultural competency, accountability, education, and communication.

**Objective 3A**

Develop agency policies that ensure commitment to and accountability for maintaining a diverse workforce and inclusive workplace.

**Strategies**

- Develop consolidated EEO, Diversity and Inclusion, and No FEAR Policy and related guidance in coordination with process owners.
- Develop and implement *VA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan*.
- Develop *VA Diversity and Inclusion Annual Performance Report*.
- Implement office name change from “Office of Diversity Management and Equal Employment Opportunity” (DM&EEO) to “Office of Diversity and Inclusion.”
- Develop recommended performance elements addressing EEO, diversity, and inclusion in management and supervisory performance plans.
- Update reasonable accommodation and accessibility (RA) policy directive; and provide timely and effective (RA) guidance and training.
- Establish local reasonable accommodation coordinator function throughout agency.
- Develop and implement VA Diversity and Inclusion Awards program.
- Benchmark best practices for diversity and inclusion.
- Develop and implement diversity product surveys.

**Measures**

- Issue consolidated EEO, Diversity and Inclusion, and No FEAR Policy and related guidance annually and within 6 months of appointment of new Secretary.
- Develop and implement initial *Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan* in FY 2009; update the Plan no later than FY 2014.
- Issue first *VA Diversity and Inclusion Annual Performance Report* by

January 2010; issue succeeding Annual Reports within 100 days of the close of the reported fiscal year.

- Publish and market best practices in diversity and inclusion by end of FY 2009.
- Promulgate office name change to “Office of Diversity and Inclusion” by FY 2009.
- Establish recommended EEOC MD 715 compliant diversity and inclusion performance element for SES, supervisors, and manager performance plans by FY 2010.
- Issue new agency-wide Reasonable Accommodation Directive by May 2009.
- Begin training of reasonable accommodation coordinators in FY 2010.
- Increase nominations for Diversity and Inclusion Awards by FY 2009.

### **Objective 3B**

Educate employees and managers on EEO, diversity, and inclusion matters to promote competency in maintaining a fair, high-performing, and healthy work environment.

### **Strategies**

- Develop minimum standards for diversity, EEO, and conflict management training for all managers and supervisors.
- Evaluate and update EEO, Harassment, No FEAR, and diversity-related training for employees.
- Develop and conduct training on Business Case for Diversity and Inclusion, including diversity of thought and perspective in workforce, internal operations, and service delivery.
- Add content of the business case for diversity and inclusion to the ODI Web site.
- Perform organizational needs assessments to assess need for cultural competency training in workforce management and service delivery.
- Implement cultural competency training and evaluations to address identified workforce and client services needs in this area.

## GOALS, OBJECTIVES &amp; STRATEGIES

**Measures**

- Develop VA-wide standards for recurring diversity, EEO, and conflict management training (content and delivery) for managers and supervisors by end of FY 2009; implement supervisory training by FY 2010.
- Train supervisors/managers in diversity, EEO, and conflict management annually in accordance with timeframes contained in VA policies and directives.
- Conduct training on Business Case for Diversity and Inclusion at a minimum of four leadership venues annually beginning in FY 2009.
- Reduce VA's per capita rate of EEO complaints through appropriate EEO and diversity training.
- Post diversity-related training content to diversity Web site agency-wide by end of FY 2009; update training content annually.
- Improve patient/client satisfaction scores in workforce and diverse communities.

**Objective 3C**

Promote effective communication with employees and stakeholders on diversity and inclusion issues to heighten awareness and share best practices.

**Strategies**

- Implement VA Diversity Advisory Council and provide coordination and staff support.
- Redesign ODI Web site to feature more content in a user-friendly format.
- Enhance format and informational content of *Diversity@Work* newsletter.
- Enhance educational format and content of *Diversity News* video broadcast.
- Electronically disseminate educational articles in the area of diversity and inclusion on *NewsLink*.
- Develop systems to track viewership of communications vehicles and establish baseline measures.
- Monitor responses on diversity-related survey items on FHCS and AES; participate in the development of diversity-related items as appropriate.
- Develop a survey for recipients of diversity products to measure their effectiveness.
- Develop and distribute marketing materials on diversity and inclusion.

### Measures

- Standup VA-wide Diversity Advisory Council by FY 2009 and provide staff support as needed.
- Redesign ODI Web site by FY 2010.
- Increase electronic distribution of *Diversity@Work* newsletter annually.
- Establish baseline of *Diversity News* viewership on diversity Web site by end of FY 2009, and increase viewership by 5 percent in FY 2010.
- Increase distribution of diversity-related Web-based *NewsLink* annually.
- Increase favorable responses to EEO and diversity-related survey items in employee surveys (FHCS or AES) beginning in FY 2010.
- Majority of respondents to diversity product surveys indicate understanding of business case for diversity and inclusion.
- Implement at least one diversity and inclusion initiative annually agency-wide beginning in FY 2010.





**For more information, please contact:**

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THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
WASHINGTON

June 13, 2011

**TO ALL EMPLOYEES**

**SUBJECT: The Secretary's EEO, Diversity, and No FEAR Policy Statement**

As Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), I convey my strong commitment to equal employment opportunity (EEO), diversity and inclusion, and workplace conflict resolution to maintain a high performing organization in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

To deliver the highest quality services that our Veterans deserve, we must ensure an environment that eliminates barriers to full participation, encourages diverse perspectives, and actively supports constructive conflict resolution. It is critical that we harvest our collective knowledge and talent to focus on the needs and expectations of Veterans and their families. Each and every one of us bears the responsibility to ensure that discrimination is not tolerated and that diversity is valued. VA empowers every individual to contribute to his or her fullest potential.

Supervisors and managers bear a special responsibility in promoting the complementary principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace. The attached EEO, Diversity, and No FEAR Policy Statement provides a summary of VA's workplace policies. Review the Policy Statement with your staff, and encourage discussion of these expectations. Your leadership and participation are crucial at this time.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Eric K. Shinseki".

Eric K. Shinseki

Attachment

## Summary of VA's EEO, Diversity, and No FEAR Policies

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is committed to ensuring equal employment opportunity (EEO), promoting diversity and inclusion, and resolving workplace conflict constructively to maintain a high performing workforce in service to our Nation's Veterans. To that end, the Department will vigorously enforce all applicable Federal EEO laws, regulations, Executive Orders, and Management Directives to ensure equal opportunity in the workplace for all VA employees. This document summarizes VA's EEO and diversity-related policies. For additional information, please consult the references listed at the end of this memorandum.

### EEO and Prohibited Discrimination

VA will not tolerate discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, pregnancy, gender identity, parental status, sexual orientation, age, disability, genetic information, or retaliation for opposing discriminatory practices or participating in the discrimination complaint process. This applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including recruitment, hiring, promotions, transfers, reassignments, training, career development, benefits, and separation. In addition, VA will provide reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities and accommodations for religious practices in accordance with applicable laws and procedures.

VA's Office of Resolution Management (ORM) is responsible for administering an impartial and effective complaints-management process to address and resolve complaints of employment discrimination at the earliest possible stage. Employees may report allegations of discrimination to ORM at (888) 737-3361. The regulations governing the Federal EEO complaint process are found in 29 CFR Part 1614. Employees seeking redress under this process must contact an EEO Counselor in person, by phone, or in writing within 45 calendar days of the date of the alleged incident. Employees may also report allegations to their immediate local facility EEO program manager or a management official in their chain of command, or they may raise discrimination issues through the Negotiated or Administrative Grievance Process, as appropriate. While a discrimination allegation may be raised through these additional avenues, it does not constitute initiation of an EEO complaint with an EEO Counselor through the Federal sector EEO complaint process, and it does not extend the 45-day time limit to initiate an EEO complaint with ORM.

While sexual orientation, gender identity, and parental status are not listed as protected bases in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, discrimination on these bases is strictly prohibited by VA. Complaints of discrimination filed on these bases will be processed according to the aforementioned Federal EEO complaint process up to and through the investigation stage of the EEO process. The VA Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication will issue a Final Agency Decision on the merits



of the claim within 60 days of its receipt of the complaint file. Complaints filed solely on this basis will not proceed to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Other avenues of redress available to raise a claim of discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or parental status include the Negotiated or Administrative Grievance Procedure. Both permit claims of discrimination, and if otherwise appealable, raising the matter with the Office of Special Counsel and/or the Merit Systems Protection Board if the claim of discrimination is coupled with adverse impact and/or prohibited personnel practices. While a discrimination allegation may be raised with these avenues, it does not constitute initiation of a complaint through this internal complaint process, and it does not extend the 45-day time limited to initiate such complaint with ORM.

### **Workplace Harassment**

Harassment is a form of discrimination and will not be tolerated. Workplace harassment is defined as any unwelcome, hostile, or offensive conduct taken on the bases listed above under prohibited discrimination that interferes with an individual's performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. Harassment by or against VA employees, applicants, contract employees, clients, customers, and anyone doing business with VA is prohibited.

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination that involves unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when: (1) submission to or rejection of such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of one's employment, or (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by a person is used as a basis for career or employment decisions affecting that person, or (3) such conduct interferes with an individual's performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Both supervisors and employees bear responsibility in maintaining a work environment free from discrimination and harassment. Employees must not engage in harassing conduct and should immediately report such conduct to their supervisor, another management official, collective bargaining unit, Employee Relations Specialists, Labor Relations Specialists, or ORM, as appropriate. Harassment claims will be handled confidentially to the greatest extent possible. If an employee brings an issue of harassment to a supervisor's attention, the supervisor must promptly investigate the matter and take appropriate and effective corrective action, as necessary. Allegations of discrimination and harassment will be taken seriously and appropriate corrective action – up to and including termination – will be taken if allegations are substantiated. Supervisors are strongly encouraged to seek guidance from their local EEO Manager, ORM, Employee and Labor Relations staff, or the Office of the General Counsel when addressing issues of discrimination or harassment.

## **No FEAR/Whistleblower Protection**

The Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act (No FEAR) of 2002 protects Federal employees from unlawful discrimination and reprisal for participation in protected EEO and whistle-blowing activity. The Whistleblower Protection Act prohibits retaliation against public employees or applicants for employment who report official wrongdoing, including gross waste, fraud, and abuse of authority. Retaliation against individuals for reporting violations of laws, opposition to discrimination, or participation in the discrimination-complaint process is unlawful and will not be tolerated. This includes complainants, witnesses, and others who provide information concerning such claims. The U.S. Office of Special Counsel is responsible for addressing complaints of whistleblower retaliation.

## **Alternative Dispute Resolution**

Conflict in the workplace is inevitable. Left unmanaged, it can lead to organizational disruption, high attrition, low productivity, and poor employee morale. To maintain a respectful, productive, and harmonious work environment, it is the policy of VA to resolve workplace disputes at the earliest possible stage. VA offers Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) services such as mediation and facilitation to assist parties in constructively resolving conflicts. ADR involves a neutral third-party working with the employee, supervisor, or group to engage in constructive communication, identify issues and concerns, and develop collaborative solutions. I encourage all VA employees to consult with their Administration's ADR Coordinator or VA's Workplace ADR program for assistance in quickly and informally resolving workplace disputes.

## **Accommodations**

VA is committed to providing reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities in accordance with law, unless doing so poses an undue hardship as provided by the applicable law. For people with disabilities, a reasonable accommodation is any change in the work environment or in the manner work is accomplished that enables them to perform the essential functions of their jobs and enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment. Individuals who believe they need such accommodation should request accommodation from immediate supervisors. The procedures for requesting and processing requests for reasonable accommodation are contained in VA Directive 5975.1. VA has also established a centralized reasonable accommodation fund to support requests for accommodation that may not be otherwise funded. For information on this, contact the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

VA is also committed to providing religious accommodations to employees. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ("Title VII") prohibits employers from discriminating against individuals because of their religion in hiring, firing, and other terms and conditions of employment. Title VII also requires employers to reasonably

accommodate the religious practices of an employee or prospective employee, unless to do so would create an undue hardship upon the employer. Individuals who believe they need such accommodation should request accommodation from immediate supervisors.

### **Mandatory EEO, Diversity, and Conflict Management Training**


The No FEAR Act of 2002 requires all employees to take No FEAR training within 90 days of their initial hire and every 2 years thereafter. VA also requires workplace harassment prevention training for all employees every 2 years. This training is available to all employees through the VA Talent Management System (TMS). Managers and supervisors are also required to take Mandatory EEO, Diversity, and Conflict Management Training for Managers and Supervisors every 2 years. This training is mandatory for all senior executives, managers, and supervisors and is available in face-to-face format and online through TMS.

### **Toward Diversity and Inclusion**

To be a high performing organization in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we must cultivate an inclusive work environment that reflects the diversity of our global community and leverages the diverse talents of our human resources. Diversity and inclusion in the workplace are more than legal imperatives; they are business imperatives in this millennium. We all share the responsibility to ensure we promote the fundamental principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion at VA.



Secretary of Veterans Affairs



Date

**Related Laws, Executive Orders, and Resources:**

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964: <http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/titlevii.cfm>

Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended: <http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/rehab.cfm>

Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1975, as amended:  
<http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/age.cfm>

Equal Pay Act of 1963 as amended: <http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/epa.cfm>

Guidelines on Religious Exercise and Religious Expression in the Federal Workplace:  
<http://clinton2.nara.gov/WH/New/html/19970819-3275.html>

Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978:  
<http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/pregnancy.cfm>

Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act:  
<http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/gina.cfm>

Executive Order 13152, as amended by Executive Order 11478:  
<http://archive.eeoc.gov/federal/eo11478/eo13152.html>

Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act (No FEAR Act) of 2002: <http://www.diversity.hr.va.gov/exec/hr169.htm>

H.R. 2981: Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 2009:  
<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h111-2981>

Filing Whistleblower Disclosures: [www.osc.gov/osc.gov/wbdisc.htm](http://www.osc.gov/osc.gov/wbdisc.htm)

Executive Order 11478, as amended by Executive Order 13087:  
<http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/11478.html>

EEO Discrimination Complaints Process, VA Directive 5977, February 7, 2007:  
[http://www1.va.gov/vapubs/viewPublication.asp?Pub\\_ID=343&FType=2](http://www1.va.gov/vapubs/viewPublication.asp?Pub_ID=343&FType=2).

All Employees Memorandum entitled Processing Equal Employment Opportunity Complaints Based on Sexual Orientation dated May 13, 2010, signed by Secretary Shinseki.

Mandatory EEO, Diversity, and Conflict Management Training for Senior Executives, Managers and Supervisors dated May 19, 2010, signed by Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration.

Diversity Management and EEO, VA Directive 5975, March 6, 2007:  
[http://www.diversity.hr.va.gov/docs/policies/Directive 5975.pdf](http://www.diversity.hr.va.gov/docs/policies/Directive%205975.pdf)

VA Directive 5975.1, Processing Requests for Reasonable Accommodation by Employees and Applicants with Disabilities:  
[http://www.diversity.hr.va.gov/docs/policies/Directive 5975-1.pdf](http://www.diversity.hr.va.gov/docs/policies/Directive%205975-1.pdf)

VA Policy on Employee and Management Relations:  
<http://vaww1.va.gov/ohrm/Directives-Handbooks/Documents/5021.doc>

The Secretary's EEO, Diversity, and No FEAR Policy Statements  
Office of Diversity and Inclusion: <http://www.diversity.hr.va.gov/index.asp>

VA Workplace Alternative Dispute Resolution:  
<http://www1.va.gov/adr/workplaceADR.asp>

Office of Labor-Management Relations: <http://www1.va.gov/lmr>

Employee Relations: <http://vaww1.va.gov/ohrm/EmployeeRelations/ERhome.htm>

U.S. Office of Special Counsel: <http://www.osc.gov>



<b>EEOC FORM 715-01 PART E</b>	<b>U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission FEDERAL AGENCY ANNUAL EEO PROGRAM STATUS REPORT</b>
<b>Department of Veterans Affairs</b>	
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	
<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is proud to present VA's Management Directive (MD) 715 Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Program Status Report for fiscal year (FY) 2011 and EEO Plan for FY 2012. This report addresses all the required elements of EEOC's MD 715 toward building and sustaining a <i>Model EEO Program</i>.</p> <p>VA provides health care, benefits, and memorial services for approximately 22 million Veterans. VA provides these services through three major organizational subcomponents: the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), with 152 medical centers, 971 outpatient clinics (including hospital-based, independent, mobile, and community-based outpatient clinics), 133 community living centers, 98 domiciliary rehabilitation treatment programs, and 299 readjustment counseling centers; the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), with 57 centers; and the National Cemetery Administration (NCA), with 131 cemeteries. In addition to the national cemeteries, NCA supports VA's Cemetery Grant Program which is designed to complement NCA's national cemeteries across the country. The Veterans Cemetery Grants Program assists states, federally recognized tribal governments, and U.S. Territories for the purpose of establishing, expanding, or improving existing Veterans cemeteries. To date, the program has helped establish, expand, or improve 84 Veterans cemeteries in 41 states and territories to include Northern Mariana Islands, and Guam. Four new state cemeteries are proposed to be open in FY 2012 at Corpus Christie, Texas; Ft. Polk, Louisiana; Charleston, West Virginia; and Birdeye, Arkansas. The VA Central Office (VACO) is the national headquarters office comprising numerous Staff Offices reporting to the Secretary.</p> <p>Unlike most Federal agencies, VA maintains a tri-partite structure for the administration of its Department-wide EEO and diversity management functions. The respective functions and responsibilities are distributed among three independent offices as described below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI)</i> develops Department-wide EEO and diversity policies; performs workforce analyses and reporting; develops outreach and retention programs, and provides training and communication on EEO and diversity topics.</li> <li>• <i>The Office of Resolution Management (ORM)</i> administers the EEO complaint processing system (counseling, acceptance, investigation, and compliance) and oversees VA's Workplace Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) Program.</li> <li>• <i>The Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication (OEDCA)</i> issues final agency decisions based upon an investigative record or a final order after receiving and/or appealing EEOC administrative decisions.</li> </ul>	
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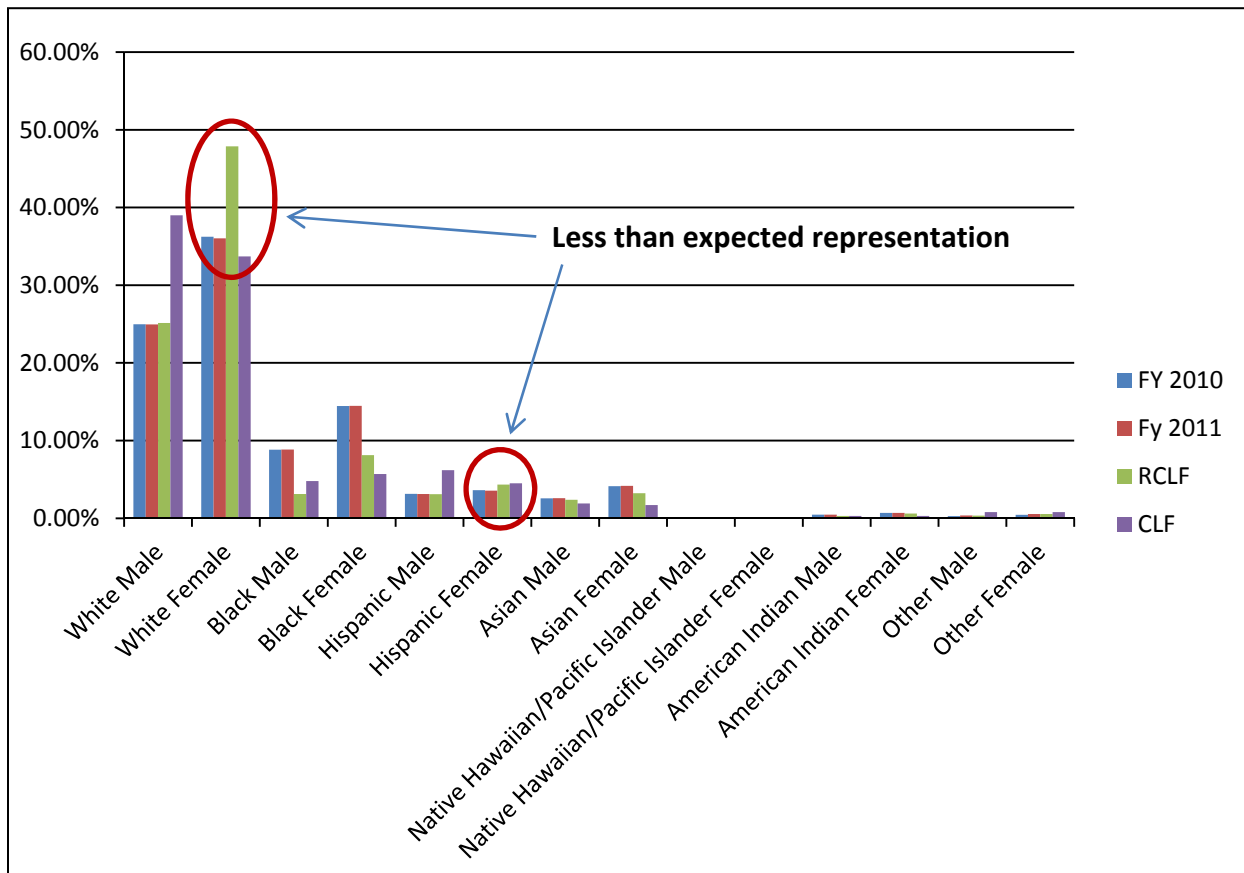
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**Workforce Composition**

As the second largest Cabinet level department, VA is proud to be one of the most diverse agencies in the Federal Government. Compared to the Relevant Civilian Labor Force (RCLF<sup>1</sup>), VA's workforce is at or above the RCLF representation in all areas except for White and Hispanic females. While the overall representation of most demographic groups increased in FY 2011, the proportional representation of Hispanic females decreased from 3.61 percent to 3.56 percent. The proportional representation of the White female decreased from 36.24 percent to 36.03 percent.

Figure 1 depicts VA's current on-board representation as compared with last year's representation and the civilian and relevant civilian labor force (CLF), respectively.

**Figure 1. VA Onboard versus RCLF/CLF (Permanent and Temporary)**



Civilian Labor Force (CLF) & Relevant Civilian Labor Force (RCLF) - Derived from 2000 Census), CLF all occupations and RCLF which is limited to VA occupations in VA proportions

<sup>1</sup> RCLF reflects all the people in America 16 years of age or over, employed in or actively seeking work in VA specific occupations (used as a comparative baseline for demographic analysis). The CLF is defined as people in America 16 years of age and over, except those in the armed forces, who are employed or are unemployed and seeking work.



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At the end of FY 2011, VA's workforce totaled 315,116 employees, including 19,657 temporary employees<sup>2</sup>. The overall workforce increased by 7,794 (2.5 percent) during FY 2011. The number of employees in each of the reported race and ethnicity categories (White; Black/African American; Asian; Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander; Hispanic) increased in FY 2011. There was very minimal increase for the American Indian or Alaskan Native. The net change for the Hispanic female (1.01 percent) and the White female population (1.96 percent) fell below the total workforce population net change (2.5 percent), a contributing factor to the continued less than expected representation of these groups. To ensure EEO, VA will continue to place special emphasis on recruitment and retention efforts for Hispanic women and White women, given their lower than expected growth rate and higher than expected attrition rate, which both contribute to the overall less than expected participation rate for these groups. Table 1 provides a detail of the net changes of the total workforce by race, ethnicity, and gender groups. The net change for each race/ethnicity and gender group is compared to the net change for the total employees. Net changes below the average net change for the entire workforce are highlighted in red at Table 1.

**Table 1. Net Change Analysis**

TOTAL  EMPLOYEES	RACE/ETHNICITY											
	Hispanic or Latino		Non-Hispanic or Latino									
			White		Black or African American		Asian		Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander		American Indian or Alaska Native	
All	male	female	male	female	male	female	male	female	male	Female	male	female
2.54%	1.82%	1.01%	2.43%	1.96%	2.74%	2.67%	3.46%	3.66%	19.83%	9.76%	2.53%	1.03%

*Net change is calculated by dividing difference between the number of current employees and the number of employees in the prior year by the number of employees in the prior year.*

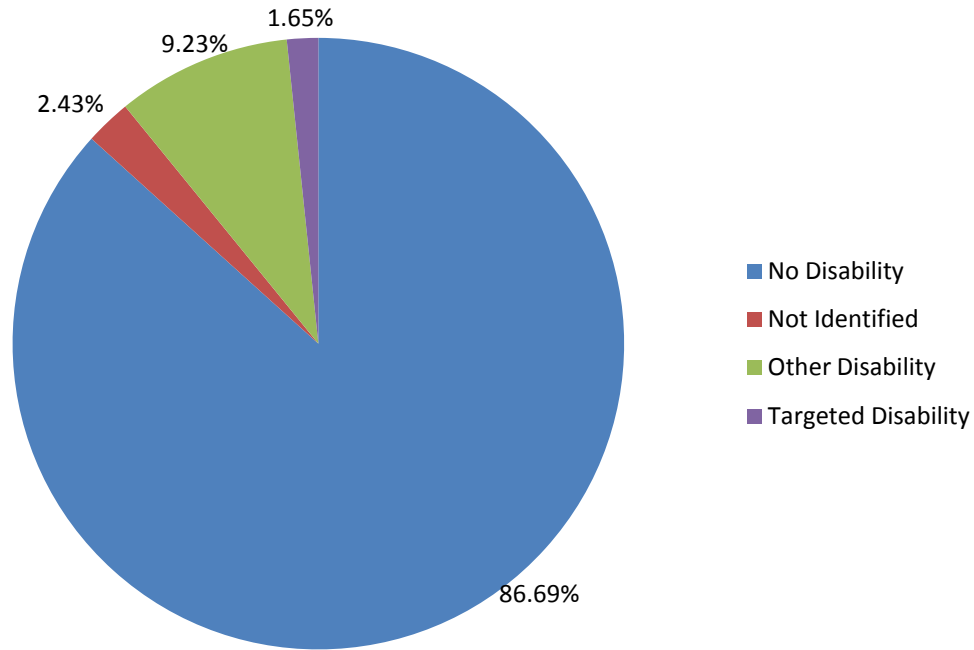
For FY 2010, the loss permanent employees totaled 19,785 (a 7.30 percent loss rate). For FY 2011, VA experienced a loss of 22,051 permanent employees (a 7.73 percent loss rate). Based on Table A-14 data, approximately 90 percent of the FY 2011 permanent employee losses were voluntary. Additional analytical tools were used to provide the distribution of the losses of the permanent workforce by type of nature of action (NOA) groupings. Voluntary and involuntary losses do not appear to have an impact on the low participation rates for White and Hispanic women.

**Targeted Disabilities**

Continuing with last year's trend, the representation of people with targeted disabilities (permanent and temporary) increased from 1.51 percent in FY 2010 to 1.65 percent in FY 2011. We believe this is a testament to the success of VA's focused efforts as guided by its FY 2009-2013 Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan, and the Secretary's 2 percent hiring goal for people with targeted disabilities. Provided in Figure 2 is information on the workforce profile by disability categories. Permanent employees with targeted disabilities increased from 1.55 percent in FY 2010 to 1.65 percent in FY 2011. According to Figure 2 at least 11 percent of the total workforce has a disability. VA met the Secretary's 2 percent goal for permanent hires of people with targeted disabilities for FY 2011.

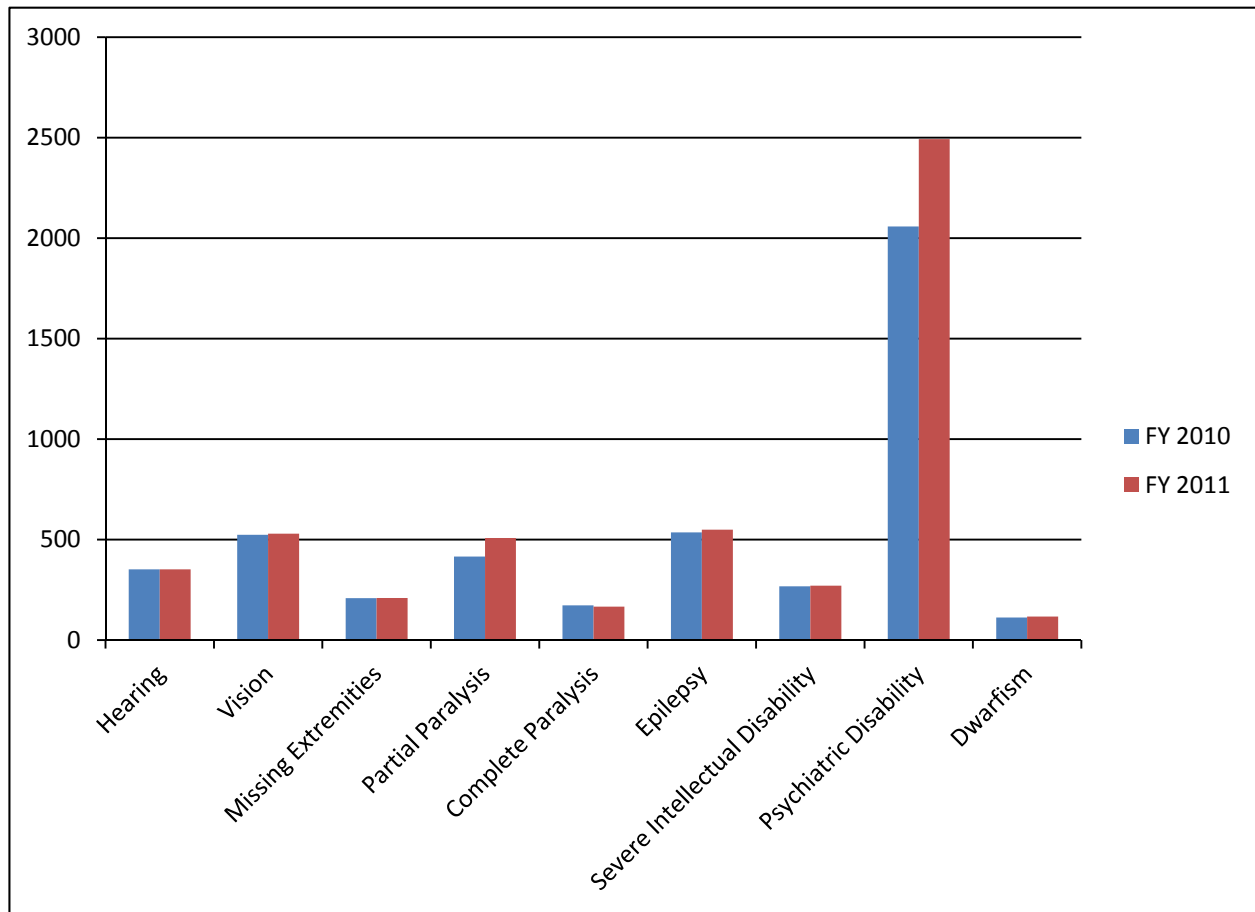
<sup>2</sup> This figure includes intermittent employees, so it is greater than the figure in Part B of this Report which excludes intermittent employees.

**Figure 2. Workforce by Disability/Non-Disability Classification**



According to Figure 3, there was an increase of employees with targeted disabilities who self-identified as having a psychiatric disability. People with psychiatric disabilities are the largest of the targeted disability groups in VA. The number of employees identified with a psychiatric disability increased from 2,058 in FY 2010 to 2,493 in FY 2011. Based on additional analysis this group also has the highest involuntary separation rate. Many of these employees are disabled Veterans. The separation rate for permanent employees with targeted disabilities is of particular concern. Although they represent 1.65 percent of the permanent workforce, their voluntary separation rate is 2.21 percent, and their involuntary separation rate is 3.40 percent. This high separation rate impacts VA's efforts to reach its 2 percent onboard goal for people with a targeted disability.

**Figure 3. Comparison of Targeted Disabilities by Type of Disability.**



**Plan to Achieve Model EEO Program (Parts G and H)**

In FY 2011, VA continued to make progress toward implementing a *Model EEO Program* in accordance with EEOC’s six essential elements. ODI monitors VA’s status on these elements through a sophisticated Web-based system that enables VA components to enter and track their self-assessment on MD-715 Parts G and H at all organizational levels. Deficiencies identified at the national level focused mainly on structural challenges such as inconsistent coordination between EEO and human resources (HR) staff, and lack of centralized tracking and enforcement in some areas. These issues have been addressed in Part H. Table 2 displays the percent of the “Compliance Indicators” assessed as met in Part G of the report and is grouped by each Model EEO program essential element. Overall, 91 percent of all “Compliance Indicators” in Part G were assessed as being met. The paragraphs after Table 2 depict some of VA’s major accomplishments and challenges under each of the six essential elements. Deficiencies identified (scores under 100 percent in Table 2 below) under each essential element are noted and addressed in Part H.

**Table 2. Percent of Compliance Indicators met by EEOC Essential Element**

EEO Essential Element	Percent
Demonstrated Commitment by Agency Leadership	100%
Integration of EEO into the Agency's Strategic Mission	100%
Management and Program Accountability	60%
Proactive Prevention of Unlawful Discrimination	90%
Efficiency	97%
Responsiveness and Legal Compliance	100%

**DEMONSTRATED COMMITMENT BY AGENCY LEADERSHIP:** The Secretary of VA, Eric Shinseki demonstrated his strong commitment to EEO and diversity in the workforce through several initiatives. In FY 2010, Secretary Shinseki launched a major Department-wide initiative aimed at transforming the VA into a 21<sup>st</sup> century organization that will be built around three guiding principles: “people centric, results oriented, and forward looking.” A key component of this initiative is the Human Capital Investment Plan (HCIP), an unprecedented investment in human capital that supports talent management, employee engagement, and leadership development. In FY 2011 more than 98 percent of VA’s executives, managers and supervisors completed VA’s mandatory *EEO, Diversity and Conflict Management Training for Executives, Managers and Supervisors*; and a mandatory *EEO, Diversity and Inclusion Critical Performance Element* was added in their performance. Additionally, new employee protections (on sexual orientation, gender identity, parental status) were added to the Secretary’s *EEO and Diversity Policy Statement*, and VA created an internal complaint process to address complaints based on these categories.

The Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration and the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Diversity and Inclusion continue to co-chair and expand the membership of VA’s Diversity Council to include employee unions and affinity group representatives. The VA Diversity Council established four standing committees; Disability Committee, Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan and Annual Performance Report Committee, Emerging Issues in Diversity and Inclusion Committee, and Diversity and Inclusion Communications Committee. The Secretary also recognized VA leaders in EEO at VA’s second award ceremony for Diversity and Inclusion Excellence, and separately, for the Alternative Dispute Resolution Award which are linked to the VA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan goals.

The establishment of VHA’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion and the restructure of the VHA Diversity and Inclusion demonstrate a commitment to promote and maintain inclusion of all in the VHA workforce. VHA developed a competency model for EEO Managers which identifies major responsibilities, and the necessary technical skills and competencies. This model offers a competency checklist that enables EEO Managers to monitor their threshold, operational, and mastery knowledge base. It also provides recommended activities that assist in the development of a mastery competency level. This model was distributed to all VHA EEO Managers and training was provided during the VHA National EEO Managers Conference in June 2011. Additionally, VHA integrated EEO benchmarks in each Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Directors’ performance plans for Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) goals including the offer, participation,

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and resolution rates. A scorecard was developed to monitor their progress. The EEO Director's performance measures were a part of the VISN Directors' and Medical Center Directors' performance plan for FY 2011.

VBA demonstrated its commitment to promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace by ensuring that its managers, supervisors and employees are informed about EEO provisions and requirements and comply with them by supporting and funding EEO and Diversity and Inclusion Training. In FY 2011, VBA's Office of Diversity Management and EEO partnered with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and conducted face-to-face EEO, Diversity and Inclusion Training at the Records Management Center, and 9 Regional Offices. There were a total of 1500 participants that attended this training. VBA sponsored its 3<sup>rd</sup> annual EEO and Diversity Training Conference from August 29 to September 2, 2011 for the purpose of increasing the knowledge and enhancement of skills of its EEO Program Managers and ADR Coordinators.

NCA's Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs (USMA) has shown strong commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion in the workplace. In FY 2011, the USMA issued the new EEO Policy statements nation-wide. During the annual supervisory training program, he ensured that the topics of diversity and inclusion were discussed during the plenary sessions with all participants present. He personally participated and frequently was a keynote speaker at several multi-cultural outreach events throughout the year. Recognizing the importance of records that truly reflect the diversity of this organization, the USMA has authorized the resurveying of staff, giving them the opportunity to update their Ethnicity and Race Identification and Self-Identification of Disability information. Not only is his commitment to diversity internal, but he also has a great concern for our external customers. He demonstrated this by supporting the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) survey throughout NCA which helps to identify barriers that may be impeding the LEP populations in accessing NCA services and benefits. In FY 2011, NCA selected its first National Special Emphasis Program Manager who is tasked with developing new initiatives that will ensure that NCA is reflective of the rich diversity of this country. To further support the Special Emphasis Program, the USMA publishes a commemorative article highlighting the contributions of various special emphasis groups in NCA's history. The USMA also worked with the Memorial Service Networks directors to increase NCA's representation of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) Veterans. In FY 2011, NCA hired 104 OEF and OIF Veterans. NCA also hired seventy-six 30 percent disabled Veterans in FY 2011, which represents a 37 percent increase from FY 2010. And finally, the Veteran Cemetery Grants Program awarded three grants to tribal organizations.

As a result of VA's demonstrated commitment to diversity, the *Hispanic Association for Colleges and Universities (HACU)* named VA as the Federal Partner of the Year; *HBCUConnect* ranked VA #7 in hiring Historically Black College and University student interns; *DiversityInc* named VA as one of the top 5 Federal Agencies for diversity; the *Partnership for Public Service* named VA Best Federal Agency for Employees starting their careers/under 30; *Latinos for Hire Magazine* named VA as the Best Federal Agency; *Careers and the Disabled Magazine* named VA as the 7<sup>th</sup> ranked Federal Agency; and the *Office of Personnel Management (OPM)* modeled its Government-wide Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan after VA's Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan. VA is cited by OPM as one of only four Cabinet Departments that is making great strides in the employment of Hispanics, a group with chronically low participation rates in the Federal workforce.

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**INTEGRATION OF EEO INTO THE AGENCY'S STRATEGIC MISSION:** VA completed the third year of implementation of its groundbreaking five-year *Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan*. The Plan was strategically aligned with VA's updated Strategic Plan, the MD 715 Plan, and organizational sub-component diversity plans. Progress on the strategic objectives was reported to the Secretary, senior leadership, and disseminated publicly in the VA's second *Diversity and Inclusion Annual Performance Report for FY 2010, and FY 2011*, currently in development. Additionally, the EEO Director meets regularly with the Secretary and Deputy Secretary on diversity issues. The Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration and the Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) for Diversity and Inclusion co-chair the VA Diversity Council. Additionally, the DAS for Diversity and Inclusion participates on the Monthly Performance Review Council, the Office of Human Resources and Administration's senior staff meetings, and the VA Learning University Leadership Development Oversight Boards to ensure integration of EEO and diversity policies in Departmental operations.

In FY 2011, VA rolled out a new application, called MyCareer@VA, which enables employees to explore VA careers and provides information and guides that help align professional preferences to job opportunities at VA. Employees can use the toolkit resources to identify a long-term career path that is a good fit based on personal interests, preferences, knowledge, skills and career goals.

VHA conducted its annual National Training Program for New EEO Managers again in FY 2011 to ensure a cadre of trained EEO professionals who possess the competencies, both technical and administrative, to manage a model EEO Program. VHA's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)/Affirmative Employment Office (AEO) participated in the EEO Masters Technical Career Field Program. Six interns from the FY 2009 intern program were placed in permanent positions as EEO managers or specialists.

EEO goals are incorporated into VBA's Strategic Plan for 2009-2014, which includes the goal to reengineer the role of EEO Program Managers to become more proactive in using ADR techniques including facilitation and mediation to resolve workplace disputes at the earliest stage. Even though the overall number of EEO complaints has not decreased as compared to FY 2010, in FY 2011 the use of mediation has increased as demonstrated in the increase of both the offer and participation rate. VBA resolved 56 out of the 120 informal EEO cases. VBA continues to cultivate and develop the next generation of leaders in the workplace through the Summer Internship Program. In FY 2011, VBA had a total of 22 summer interns that were sponsored. VBA funded 11 interns and the Central Office (ODI) funded an additional 11 interns.

The NCA EEO Office participated in the NCA strategic planning retreat held in December 2010 to coordinate the development and alignment of EEO plans with NCA's strategic plans. The goals directly related to NCA's EEO and the diversity and inclusion program are to increase the proactive measures to prevent EEO complaints; develop a special emphasis program for NCA; increase NCA's Civility Index measured by the annual All Employee Survey to 4.0. In addition, NCA is developing a plan of action to improve and strengthen its outreach efforts through VA's Minority Veterans Programs Coordinators Program.

EEO and diversity policies and initiatives are widely communicated through ODI's expansive nationwide communication vehicles, including the monthly *Diversity News* television broadcast, weekly *NewsLink* e-mails, bi-monthly *Diversity@Work* newsletters; technical assistance publications, and the re-designed ODI internet Web page.

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**MANAGEMENT AND PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY:** In FY 2011, VA implemented a mandatory EEO, diversity and inclusion critical performance element in all Senior Executive Service performance standards. This critical element was directly linked to demonstrated progress on items in the VA *Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan* and MD 715 EEO Plans. VA executives were rated against appropriate performance metrics to ensure accountability on this element nationwide. In FY 2011, ODI implemented new nationwide *Reasonable Accommodation (RA) Procedures* and contracted for VA's first centralized *RA Request Tracking System* (expected to be implemented by March 2012) to ensure timely compliance with EEOC regulations; implement the new mandatory EEO, Diversity and Inclusion Performance Element for all SES, managers, and supervisors; and add new employee protections (sexual orientation, gender identity, parental status) to the Secretary's *EEO and Diversity Policy Statement*. These strategies contributed to increasing VA's employment of people with targeted disabilities (permanent and temporary workforce) from 1.51 percent in FY 2010 to 1.65 percent in FY 2011. The employment of these strategies was also instrumental in meeting the Secretary's 2 percent hiring goal for people with a targeted disability. VA's eventual goal is a 2 percent on board rate for employees with targeted disabilities.

ODI performed quarterly progress review meetings with all Administrations and performed six on-site Technical Assistance Reviews in field facilities to analyze hires, separations, promotions, EEO complaints, and employee survey results systematically to identify potential barriers to EEO. ODI continued to report EEO workforce statistics to the senior leadership through quarterly workforce diversity reports and briefings.

ODI hired a new Hispanic Employment Program Manager. In FY 2011, VA created its first *National Diversity Internship Program* under a blanket contracting vehicle that funded over 100 interns from diverse groups, including over 20 from Puerto Rico, at lower costs. This program created a diverse pipeline for VA employment and saved VA hundreds of thousands of dollars by providing staffing resources to organizations unable to hire due to budget constraints. In FY 2011, VA converted to full time employment 40 percent of the interns who were employment ready. Utilizing the new VA *Centralized Fund*, ODI reimbursed the cost of 207 accommodations to the employee's office or facility. ODI developed VA's first *Centralized Workforce Recruitment Program* to centrally fund the salary costs of interns with disabilities for ten weeks. In addition, ODI developed an innovative *Diversity and Inclusion Index Methodology* to measure VA's workforce diversity and organizational inclusion results in an efficient manner. Relative to the CLF, VA's *Diversity Index* has been steadily increasing at a 2 percent growth rate from FY 2008 to FY 2011. From FY 2003 to the end of FY 2007, VA's *Diversity Index* ranged from 75 to 78 percent. The Diversity Index, as of September 30 FY 2011, is 86 percent. To support program accountability, ORM developed a new EEO Executive Dashboard to report on EEO complaints, workforce analysis, and ADR participation by VA subcomponents.

VHA has steadily increased its representation of disabled Veterans through its Veterans Employment Coordination Service (VECS), which served as a model for the President's Executive Order on Veteran Employment Outreach. To help ensure program accountability VHA-wide, VHA's EEO/AEO participated in several on-site Technical Assistance Reviews (TARS) and on-going Organizational Climate Assessment Program (OCAP) reviews, which systematically analyzed personnel actions including hiring, separations, promotions, awards, and other areas that impact the EEO Program.

VBA has incorporated the mandatory EEO, Diversity and Inclusion Element in their Senior Executive Service performance standards to ensure accountability. VBA conducts annual internal audits to determine the progress of EEO and Diversity programs in VBA's Regional Offices through OCAP. In FY 2011, an OCAP audit was conducted at the Boston Regional Office. This audit was followed up with a report that provided an assessment of the overall progress of these programs within the Boston

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Regional Office and additionally provided recommendations for those areas that needed improvement.

NCA incorporated the mandatory EEO, Diversity and Inclusion element in their Senior Executive Service performance standards to ensure accountability. NCA converted three interns from the National Diversity Internship program to the Student Temporary Employment Program during FY 2011. The National Diversity Internship Program is one venue used to support NCA's long range recruitment strategy.

**PROACTIVE PREVENTION OF UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATION:** Under ODI's leadership, in FY 2010, VA implemented several major risk mitigation practices to proactively address and pre-empt unlawful discrimination. In FY 2011, 98 percent of VA's executives, managers, and supervisors completed ODI's new mandatory *EEO, Diversity and Conflict Management Training for Executives, Managers and Supervisors Training*. ODI expanded its corporate EEO and diversity training program and consultative function for the agency, and provided face-to face training to over 4,000 employees in FY 2011, in addition to the on-line training provided. ODI trained over 2,000 hiring managers and HR staff on disability employment.

ODI developed new consolidated *Mandatory Workplace Harassment/No FEAR Training* (including meeting the Secretary's 2 percent hiring goal for People with Targeted Disabilities) for all employees. VA's Administrations also conducted EEO training, including VHA training on cultural competency, VBA training for new and current EEO Program Managers, eight hours of training for ADR Coordinators, and topical Leadership training. VHA and NCA also provided required training to its managers and employees covering EEO, diversity, disability program management, and ADR.

In FY 2011, VHA's Workforce Management and Consulting Office and VHA's EEO and Affirmative Employment Office conducted Reasonable Accommodation Training. The Office of General Counsel also conducted Reasonable Accommodation Training at VHA's EEO National Conference and the New EEO Managers Training during FY 2011.

VBA conducted self-assessments of its 57 Regional Offices EEO programs for the MD-715 Report, Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program (FEORP) Report, and Selective Placement Programs and the Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP) Report and Plan. The self-assessments enable VBA to monitor progress of its EEO programs, identify barriers that may operate to exclude certain groups, and develop plans to eliminate those barriers.

Two of NCA's EEO staff were trained and certified to teach Civil Treatment Training for Managers and Employees in the Federal Workforce. The EEO office is constantly looking for and developing training to provide managers/supervisors with the tools to equip them to address a variety of challenges in the workplace. NCA's EEO Office initiated the newly established Human Capital Investment Architecture Strategic Planning Committee to improve the overall workforce. VHA and VBA initiated similar committees as well. VA's EEO Dashboard shows that in FY 2011, NCA exceeded the 80 percent target for ADR being offered, NCA had a 100 percent offer rate. NCA also exceeded the participation rate target of 48 percent by 8.1 percent.

In the area of ADR, ORM continues to administer a highly effective ADR program, achieving an 87 percent resolution rate for non-EEO disputes and increasing its ADR participation rate in EEO disputes to 54 percent. ORM also expanded its ADR personnel resources in the field.



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In the area of recruitment, ODI performed adverse impact analysis on the Leadership VA 2011 program applicant selection process, and the placement of VA's SES Candidate Development program (CDP) into SES positions.

**EFFICIENCY:** ORM's ADR program has had an extremely positive impact on the efficiency of VA's EEO program nationwide with ADR being offered in 98 percent of all informal EEO complaints. ADR election rate of informal EEO complaints in which both VA and the aggrieved person agree to participate in ADR was 54 percent. For FY 2011, VA's ADR offer rate within the informal EEO complaint process increased by 1 percent. ADR is used for both EEO and non-EEO disputes with very positive results:

*ADR in EEO Process*

	FY 2010	FY 2011
Contacts	4,485	4,324
Offers <sup>3</sup>	97%	98%
Participation <sup>4</sup>	52%	54%

*ADR Outcomes*

	<i>EEO</i>	<i>EEO</i>	<i>Non EEO</i>	<i>Non EEO</i>
	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2010	FY 2011
Completed	2,000	2,229	1,258	1,561
Resolved	45%	45%	87%	87 %

VA estimates that without early intervention, approximately 50 percent of the non-EEO disputes could become EEO complaints. The early resolution of these conflicts translates into an annual cost avoidance estimated at \$20 million (reported as a \$9 million estimate in the FY 2010 EEO report)

ORM also increased VA's efficiency in processing EEO complaints, reducing processing time to well below the regulatory 180 day time frame. VA's capability to process, track, and report data concerning the EEO process has been increased through the use of the *Complaints Automated Tracking System (CATS)*. CATS allows ORM to track EEO complaint processing for each stage of the EEO complaint process from the initial informal contact through closure. Simultaneously, VA has developed *ADRTracker*, a distinct electronic monitoring system of EEO and non-EEO ADR activity that also generates relevant reports. *ADRTracker* includes an interface with CATS, which permits greater consistency in information and reporting by the two separate but related systems. ODI is now working with ORM to add a RA case tracking module to this system to ensure quality and timeliness of RA case processing.

<sup>3</sup> ADR offer rate represents the percentage of informal EEO complaints in which VA offers the aggrieved person an opportunity to participate in ADR versus traditional counseling.

<sup>4</sup> ADR participation rate represents the percentage of informal EEO complaints in which both VA and the aggrieved person agree to participate in ADR.

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For FY 2011, VHA's accomplishments towards addressing this EEO essential element include: mediations were offered to resolved disputes in other forums (i.e. negotiated grievances, agency grievances, Merit System Protection Broad appeal, EEOC hearings); seventy-six Senior managers (i.e. SES and GS13-15) attended Conflict Management and ADR Training to enhance their conflict resolution skills; reasonable accommodation policy was revised to comply with agency directive 5975.1 which required submission of denials to VA ODI, Regional Counsel or General Counsel; EEO staff provided various training sessions for departments on teambuilding, Civility, Respect, and Engagement in the Workplace (CREW), and conflict management.

VBA continues to encourage the widespread use of the ADR program for the early resolution of workplace disputes and EEO complaints as evidenced in the above results. VBA had an overall offer rate that increased from 94 percent in FY 2010 to 100 percent in FY 2011. VBA's ADR participation rate increased from 46 percent in FY 2010 to 55 percent in FY 2011. The resolution rate for VBA was 50 percent in FY 2010, which slightly decreased to 47 percent in FY 2011. Even though there was a slight decrease in the resolution rate, there was a significant increase in the offer and participation rate because more disputes and complaints are being mediated. VBA uses ORM's ADR Tracking system, CATS, and Diversity Dashboard to monitor the status of complaints, the issues and bases of the complaints, complaint resolution, and the length of time elapsed at each stage. VBA also utilizes the data taken from the above tracking systems to identify, monitor, and determine historical trends in complaint processing activity.

NCA signed a Memorandum of Understanding with ORM for mediation services in the initial EEO counseling stage. Additionally, NCA managers/supervisors are mandated by policy to participate in ADR appropriate mediations. Through continued training such as the EEO, Diversity and Conflict Management Training, managers are taught the great benefits of addressing conflicts at the lowest level. The use of ADR is encouraged at all levels of the organization. Mediation is the most frequently used form of ADR; however, other forms such as facilitations are employed as well. In FY 2011, 100 percent of informal complaints were offered ADR and 56 percent elected to participate in ADR.

**RESPONSIVENESS AND LEGAL COMPLIANCE:** ODI, ORM, the Office of Employment Complaint and Adjudication (OEDCA), Office of Human Resources Management, and the Administrations share responsibility for responsiveness and legal compliance in the area of EEO. In FY 2011, ORM counselors averaged 27 days per counseling episode, slightly below EEOC's mandate of 30 days, and completed the counseling process in which ADR was elected in an average of 73 days, well below the EEOC requirement of 90 days. In the last two years, ORM has sustained the number of days required to complete a formal investigation. In FY 2009 the number of days to complete investigations was 172 days. In FY 2011 the investigation time was 172 days, making VA one of the few Federal agencies in compliance with the regulatory requirement of 180 days.

ORM is engaged in projects to further reduce EEO case processing times. ORM has partnered with the Defense Logistics Agency Document Service (DLA Document Service) to replicate and digitize EEO complaint files reducing our reliance on paper "hard copy" records. Through our working relationship with DLA Documents Service, ORM has achieved greater efficiency, reduced costs and furthered VA's overall "Green Initiative." ORM is currently participating in EEOC's Hearing Electronic Case Processing System (HECAPS) and EEOC File Exchange (EFX) pilot. ORM's use of digital files is fully compliant with EEOC requirements for HECAPS and EFX. The use of digital files has resulted in the use of less paper records being exchanged between the two agencies. ORM also has an

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initiative to auto-populate routine EEO documents, such as the EEO Counselors Report, which would lessen the sheer burden of preparing such reports and the time needed to do so.

VA has been a vigorous proponent of MD-715 since it was published and continues to improve and lead the Federal Government in the area of workforce analysis. For EEO reporting purposes, ODI developed the first government software for producing the tables and analytic tools, and made the software available to other agencies at no cost.

Each VA administration (VHA, VBA, and NCA) is in compliance with the law, including EEOC regulations, orders, and other provisions as specified in 42 U.S.C. 2000e-16 (b). Each VA administration annually submits a MD-715 Report and complies with EEOC's review and recommendations of its EEO Program. Agency management also complies with final EEOC orders for corrective action and relief in EEO matters, and ensures that the terms set forth in settlement agreements are met.

### Barrier Analysis

VA has identified six primary triggers in its barrier analysis. The first trigger focuses on less than expected representation in the workforce as compared to the RCLF. Historically, VA has experienced less than expected representation of White and Hispanic females when compared with the RCLF. Less than expected Hispanic representation is primarily concentrated in blue collar occupations and in the southwestern United States where the relative availability is high. In VA's total workforce, the other Race/Ethnicity groups are either at or above RCLF availability. VA's representation of people with targeted disabilities is at least 60 percent above the government average. Nevertheless, VA continues to address challenges in this area in its Part I and J Plans, so that we can reach VA's 2 percent onboard and hiring goals for this group.

VA is able to track and report on its barrier analyses and corrective strategies through its Web-based workforce data system, VHA Service Support Center applications (VSSC). The system facilitates user-friendly data entry, tracking, and reporting on barriers and corrective strategies at all levels of the organization in the Part I Plans. In order to fully integrate VA's *Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan* goals with Administration operations, ODI embedded the Department-wide goals into the objectives of the MD 715 Part I Plans. This was done to ensure that field components assume some accountability for Departmental goals because their EEO offices do not report directly to ODI. While the goals are Department-wide, subcomponent organizations were encouraged to identify and address their organization-specific triggers in their Part I Plans. This was communicated through quarterly Microsoft Live web-based technical assistance meetings with field entities to assist them in the development of their organization-specific EEO Plans.

The six triggers identified in the VA Part I plan are:

- 1) **Less than expected representation of specific race/ethnicity and gender groups:** White and Hispanic women (permanent and temporary employees) had less than expected representation in the VA workforce. White women are 36.03 percent (25 percent below the RCLF of 47.87 percent) and Hispanic women are 3.56 percent (18 percent below the RCLF of 4.33 percent). Corrective strategies will focus on the job series where these groups experienced most of the less than expected representation. Specifically, the primary occupations in which White women had less than expected representation were in, Veterans Claims Examiner job series. The primary occupations in which Hispanic females

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had less than expected representation were in mission critical occupations such as Nursing Assistant, Veterans Claims Examiner, and Claims Assistance and Examining.

- 2) **Grade disparity:** To comply with EEOC's reporting requirements, VA's Title 38 pay tiers were extrapolated to fit GS/GM grade levels (Table 4). In an ideal environment one would assume that the overall percentage of participation of any group would be consistent in all facets of an organization's structure, e.g., grade, pay plan, pay tier (Title 38) etc. VA has Title 5 positions which use the classic GS/GM pay grades, but most VA jobs are Title 38 positions which use other pay classifications. In VA, we find three groups that show some form of pay disparity: Blacks, Women, and Hispanics. (Employees with targeted disabilities experience pay disparities, but are addressed separately.)

In VA, Black men and women represent 9.06 percent and 14.62 percent of the permanent workforce, respectively. Women represent 59.53 percent of the permanent workforce. Hispanic men and women represent 3.20 percent and 3.62 percent of the permanent workforce, respectively. In an ideal environment one would expect this level of representation of these three groups be consistent at each grade level of VA's organization. This is not the case. Black men have a glass ceiling at GS/equivalent 10 and the ceiling for Black women is at GS/equivalent 8. White women are close to their expected participation except for at the GS 15/equivalent pay level. Hispanic women have a glass ceiling at the GS/equivalent 8. Hispanic men have a glass ceiling at the GS/equivalent 10, except for above average participation at the GS 15/equivalent level.

Of the total VA permanent workforce, 0.13 percent is in SES level positions. Of the total of Black women in VA's permanent workforce, 0.05 percent is in SES, of White women, 0.09 percent are SES, and of Hispanic women, 0.04 percent are in SES. Of the total Asian men, 0.04 percent are in SES, and of the American Indian/Alaskan Native women, 0.05 percent are in SES. VA will be investigating the cause of these low participation rates and seeking ways to increase SES level recruitment from these groups. (Detailed pay data is on Table 4-2.)

- 3) **Proportion of people with targeted disabilities:** Since FY 2000, VA's on board ratio for people with targeted disabilities declined every year until FY 2010. VA's goal is for this group to be 2 percent of its employees. At present, this group has a high separation rate, especially for employees with psychiatric disabilities, and VA has challenges in providing timely accommodations and promotion opportunities. A low glass ceiling for this group may also be contributing to the retention issue. In FY 2011, the percent of VA's workforce with a targeted disability increased to 1.65 percent, up from 1.55 percent in FY 2010 (permanent employment only - see Table B1). This is the second year of growth for this group.

Secretary Shinseki is committed to attaining the 2 percent hiring goal for this group. Further corrective strategies will focus on 1) Identification of Designated Special Placement Coordinators for all facilities; 2) Implementation of the Reasonable Accommodations Compliance System; and 3) Training HR and managers on the use of Schedule A and VA's reasonable accommodation procedures.

- 4) **Representation of Disabled Veterans.** The representation of disabled Veterans in VA increased from 27,735 (9.02 percent of workforce) in FY 2010 to 30,277 (9.6 percent of the workforce) in FY 2011. The total Veteran population represents 32.07 percent of the

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workforce as of September 30, 2011. Since FY 2007 the rate of growth of the population of disabled Veterans is more than double the rate of growth of the entire VA workforce (55.1 percent vs. 24.6 percent, respectively).

- 5) **Unfavorable survey responses on EEO and diversity issues:** This barrier requires identifying facilities with high concentrations of unfavorable responses and then implementing customized training and other organizational development interventions. Overall, VA employee responses on diversity related items in employee surveys, including the FY 2011 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS), are below the median range. These responses vary widely by facility. The facilities with less favorable employee survey results are often those with higher rates of EEO complaints (see Barrier 6).

The 2011 Employee Viewpoint Survey includes five indices: the four Human Capital Assessment and Accountability Framework (HCAAF) Indices. These indices provide a dependable and consistent method for Federal agencies to assess different facets of the workforce. The HCAAF Indices were developed to help agencies meet the requirements of OPM's mandate under the Chief Human Capital Officers Act of 2002 to design systems, set standards, and development metrics for assessing the management of Federal employees. The FEVS provides supplementary information to evaluate Leadership and Knowledge Management, Results-Oriented Performance Culture, and Talent Management, and provides an additional index on Job Satisfaction. For FY 2011 VA is ranked (out of 37 agencies) as:

- 26<sup>th</sup> on the Leadership and Knowledge Management Index (24<sup>th</sup> in FY 2010)
- 31<sup>st</sup> on the Results-Oriented Performance Culture Index (30<sup>th</sup> in FY 2010)
- 18<sup>th</sup> on the Talent Management index (22<sup>nd</sup> in FY 2010)
- 15<sup>th</sup> on Job Satisfaction Index (20<sup>th</sup> in FY 2010)

Both FEVS and the All Employee Survey (AES) reveal marginal decreases in favorable responses on the diversity related questions in 2010. The Partnership for Public Service generates a "Support for Diversity Index" which calculates Federal agency standings in this area on the basis of employee responses on the Federal Human Capital Survey. In FY 2011, VA's ranking increased from 23 to 17 out of 33 of the large Federal agencies. Principle corrective strategies continue to focus on improving communications, education, and competencies on EEO and diversity issues.

- 6) **High volume of discrimination complaints:** From FY 2010 to FY 2011, the per capita filing rate at the informal stage decreased to 1.37 percent (slightly higher than the government wide average of 1.12 percent); and the formal filing rate increased from 0.72 percent to 0.75 percent (still higher than the government wide average is of 0.49 percent). While the Department has made some progress in the last couple of years, continued work is needed to reach the government wide levels. VA experienced an increase in findings of discrimination for FY 2010 (22 in FY 2009 versus 33 in FY 2010). Reprisal, sex, and disability were the most prevalent bases of discrimination in those findings. In FY 2011, the number of findings in discrimination complaints was the same as it was for FY 2010 (33 in 2010 and 33 in 2011). Reprisal, disability, and sex were the most prevalent bases of discrimination in those findings. Some corrective strategies to focus on include increasing use of ADR, developing and implementing standardized and customized competency-based EEO, diversity, and conflict management training for VA

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managers and supervisors focused on meeting EEO obligations, increasing EEO and consultative services.

### The Road Ahead (FY 2012 Plan)

The following list summarizes the planned initiatives laid out in Part H, I, and J for FY 2012 to eliminate identified barriers or correct program deficiencies.

- Continue implementation of its Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan; update Plan in accordance with OPM's Diversity and Inclusion Plan.
- Continue with mandatory Workplace Harassment/No FEAR Training for all employees.
- Expand EEO, diversity and inclusion training portfolio by deploying multi-generational training program; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) training program; and a reasonable accommodation training program.
- Implement training evaluation instrument and metrics.
- Designate Local Reasonable Accommodations Coordinators and Selective Placement Coordinators at all field facilities.
- Expand marketing and use of Centralized VA Reasonable Accommodation fund.
- Expand marketing and use of Centralized VA Diversity Internship Program fund.
- Partner with OPM to implement Applicant Flow/Adverse Impact Analysis System in USA Staffing.
- Finalize and implement ODI's Recruitment, Outreach, and Development (ROAD) map system for each Special Emphasis Program (SEP).
- Develop and implement Employment and Retention Plan for People with Disabilities.
- Track participation in *MyCareeratVA* and *VA for Veterans* programs.
- Refine and federalize the Diversity Index as a standardized metric for all federal agencies.
- Develop an Inclusion Index as a standardized metric to assess progress on organizational inclusion.
- Integrate personnel demographics to the Talent management System (TMS) and generate new training reports by demographic groups.
- Expand the use of ADR and training in conflict management.

VA is proud to be a leader in building and maintaining a *Model EEO Program*.

## Glossary

*Affirmative Action:* Positive steps taken by an employer to address any barriers that prevent equal employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Note that the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's MD 715, issued in 2003, does not refer to affirmative action for race/ethnicity or gender groups.

*Affirmative Employment Plans (AEP):* Written plans for programs required by Executive Order 11478 and other laws and regulations that prohibit employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, handicap, or age, and require agencies to promote the full realization of equal employment opportunity through a continuing affirmative program. AEPs may contain workforce analysis of the distribution of each group compared to the benchmark, noting any areas where the group has a low participation rate. The AEP may include goals and timetables for addressing any identified barriers to full participation.

*Bias:* A term used to describe a tendency or preference towards a particular perspective, ideology or result, especially when the tendency interferes with the ability to be impartial, unprejudiced, or objective. The term biased is used to describe an action, judgment, or other outcome influenced by a prejudged perspective. It is also used to refer to a person or body of people whose actions or judgments exhibit bias. In this context, the term "biased" is often used as a pejorative.

*Civilian Labor Force (CLF):* Persons, 16 years of age or over, excluding those in the Armed Forces, who are employed or seeking employment. CLF data is used as a benchmark for analyzing the distribution of an agency's workforce by race/ethnicity and gender.

*Class Complaint/Class Action:* A complaint stated or filed by a group of people who feel that personnel or management policies or practices discriminate against them as a group. Members of the group believe that the characteristic they share -- race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability -- forms the basis for the discrimination. For example, a class may be made up of women who believe they have been consistently discriminated against at an agency because of their sex. In such a case, all female employees, past and present, and all female applicants would be included in the complaint. When a class complaint goes to court, it becomes a class action. As with complaints by individuals, illegal discrimination may or may not have occurred.

*COIN PAID:* Computer Output Identification Number Personnel and Accounting Integrated Data system reports are the historical source for automated personnel data in VA.

*Complaint:* The first step taken by an employee who believes he or she has been discriminated against. An EEO complaint is an allegation of illegal discrimination, filed by a person who believes s/he was unfairly treated against a person because of their characteristics that cause them to be part of a protected class: race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, or disability. The allegation itself is not proof that illegal discrimination has taken place. The investigation that follows the filing of a complaint will determine whether illegal discrimination has, in fact, occurred. A person who files a complaint is called the complainant.

*Discrimination:* Discrimination means noticing the differences between things or people that are otherwise alike, and making decisions based on those differences. We discriminate when we buy one product over another, when we choose our friends, and when we make personnel decisions based on merit-related factors. All these forms of discrimination are legal and necessary.

However, some types of discrimination in employment are not legal. Illegal discrimination is unfavorable treatment of a person by category, class, or group rather than objective treatment on the basis of merit. Under EEO law, it is illegal to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, or disability. Illegal discrimination can be intentional or unintentional. See Disparate Treatment and Disparate Impact.

*Disparate Impact:* Under Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) law, this is a less favorable effect for one group than for another. A disparate impact results when rules applied to all employees have a different and more inhibiting effect on one or more protected groups than on the workforce as a whole or most groups in the workforce. For example, nonessential educational requirements for certain jobs can have a disparate impact on certain groups looking for work, if they are limited in their access to educational opportunities.

*Disparate Treatment:* Inconsistent application of rules and policies to one group of people over another. Discrimination may result when rules and policies are applied differently to members of one or more protected classes compared to others. Disciplining Hispanic male employees for tardiness, while ignoring tardiness among other employees, is an example of disparate treatment. Such inconsistent application of rules often leads to EEO complaints.

*Diversity:* The state or fact of being diverse; difference; unlikeness. Diversity goes well beyond race, ethnicity, gender, disability status and age; it encompasses mutable characteristics like education and immutable characteristics like birth order.

*Diversity Management:* A process intended to create and maintain a positive work environment where the similarities and differences of individuals are valued, so that all can reach their potential and maximize their contributions to an organization's strategic goals and objectives.



*Ethnic Group:* A group of people who share a common religion, color, or national origin. Irish Americans, Mexican Americans, German Americans, Italian Americans are examples of ethnic groups. Some members of ethnic groups participate in the customs and practices of their groups, while others do not. Discrimination based on these customs and practices may be illegal under EEO law. See Discrimination.

*Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO):* The goal of EEO laws is to make some types of discrimination in employment illegal. Under EEO law, only job-related factors can be used to determine whether an individual is qualified for a particular job.

*Equal Employment Opportunity Laws:* Six laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability in any terms, conditions, or privileges of employment. The six EEO laws are:

- The Equal Pay Act of 1963, as amended
- Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 and the Pregnancy Disability Act of 1978
- The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended
- The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, as amended
- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2009
- The Civil Rights Act of 1991

*FEORP:* The annual Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program report is published by OPM and presented to Congress. The report covers on Federal agency recruiting initiatives designed to eliminate low participation rates for certain groups in the Federal workforce.

*Gender Identity:* An individual's internal sense of being male or female. Source: The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (<http://www.opm.gov/diversity/Transgender/Guidance.asp>).

*Goals:* In an affirmative action context, a goal is a numerical value or flexible target that an agency aims to meet. Agencies are required to set hiring goals for people with disabilities and people with targeted disabilities. This is the only group for which agencies are required or even permitted to set hiring goals.

*Grade:* A term used for the pay levels of Title 5 employees. Although Title 38 employees are ranked by Tiers instead of GS levels, their pay data is extrapolated for the agency data tables on pay distribution.

*Grade Groupings:* An accumulation of a group of people in specific grades, usually grades one through four, five through seven, nine through twelve, and thirteen through fifteen.

*Harassment:* Any unwelcome, hostile or offensive conduct taken on a prohibited basis that interferes with an individual's performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment."

*Human Resources Flexibilities:* Policies and practices that an agency has the authority to implement in managing its workforce. Existing flexibilities that are most effective in managing the workforce are work/life programs (such as alternative work schedules, child care assistance, and transit subsidies), monetary recruitment and retention incentives (such as recruitment bonuses and retention allowances), special hiring authorities (such as student employment and outstanding scholar programs), and incentive awards for notable job performance and contributions (such as cash and time-off awards).

*Inclusion:* A practice that enables the full participation and contribution of the workforce in support of the mission of the organization by eliminating implicit and explicit barriers. Inclusion practices allow agencies to leverage the diverse talents and attributes of the entire workforce by configuring work opportunities, business processes, functional operations, rewards systems, work-life options, professional interactions, communications, information-sharing, and decision-making to empower the full potential of all employees.

*Job Related:* Essential to job performance. The knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience necessary to perform a particular job. Tests are job related if they test whether an applicant or employee can perform the job in question. A rule or practice is job related if it is necessary for the safe and efficient performance of a particular job. For example, a rule prohibiting employees from wearing loose, flowing clothing around high-speed rotating equipment is job related. However, the same rule applied in an office with no rotating equipment is not job related and may have a disparate impact on some ethnic groups.

*Labor Force/Labor Market:* Labor Force describes all civilians who are at least 16 years old and are employed or looking for work. The labor market is a group within the labor force whose members could fill a particular job. To be considered part of the labor market for a GS-5 clerical position, for instance, an individual must meet all minimum job-related requirements for that grade and classification. For most jobs, employers can find enough applicants in the local labor market. For jobs that have high minimum qualifications, employers may need to tap the national labor market to find enough applicants.

*LGBT:* An acronym for "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender." For additional information, visit our LGBT Organizations page: <http://www.diversity.va.gov/org/lgbt.aspx>.

*Major Occupations:* Those occupational series within an agency that have the largest number of authorized positions either actual or projected, or are deemed mission critical.

*Merit Principles:* The rules established by the Office of Personnel Management that the federal government must follow in hiring, promoting, and all terms and conditions of employment. One of those rules states that selection and advancement shall be made on the basis of an applicant or employee's abilities, knowledge, and skills in fair and open competition.

*Minority:* The smaller part of a group. In EEO context, a minority is a group within a country or state that differs in race, religion, or national origin from the dominant group.

*Numerical Goal:* A target number of qualified individuals hired and advanced within a given period of time through an Affirmative Action Program. A numerical goal for hiring is permitted only for people with disabilities. EEOC requires numerical goals for the hiring of people with targeted disabilities. A numerical or ratio goal for recruitment and applications may be established for any group.

*OPM:* The U.S. Office of Personnel Management establishes standards for recruitment and hiring for positions in public service.

*PAID Reports:* Reports containing Personnel Accounting Integrated Data.

*Participation Rate:* The percentage of people from each race/ethnicity/gender group in the workforce. The participation rate is compared to the appropriate benchmark to determine if it is above or below the benchmark. For example, each group's ratio in the Civilian Labor Force (CLF) is used as a standard to determine low participation rates in the on board work force. Suppose there are 1,000 employees at an agency and 30 of them (or 3 percent) are black men. If the CLF for black men is 15 percent, black men have a low participation rate at this facility.

*PATCOB:* Professional, Administrative, Technical, Clerical, Other, and Blue Collar occupational categories established by EEOC. Note that these categories have fallen out of use because EEOC no longer provides CLF data for them.

*Pay Disparity:* When individuals in one or more race/ethnicity, gender, or disability group have not achieved the same pay distribution as the total facility or agency workforce. For example, if ten percent of the total workforce were in the GS 15/equivalent pay category, it would be expected that ten percent of the employees who are black men would be at GS 15/equivalent. Pay distribution is measured by EEOC's MD 715 Data Table 4-2.

*Person with a Disability:* A person who (1) has a physical or mental impairment that hampers their ability to perform one or more major life activities, (2) has a record of such impairment, or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment.

*Prima Facie:* This Latin term translates as “on first view” or “at first appearance.” In EEO cases, complainants present evidence and arguments to support a claim of discrimination. After the plaintiff has established a prima facie case, the burden of production shifts to the employer to articulate a legitimate, non-discriminatory reason for the complainant’s rejection. In the EEO area, statistics of low participation rates or underutilization have been sufficient to make a prima facie case for discrimination.

*Protected Class:* A group protected from employment discrimination by law. These groups include men or women on the basis of sex; any group that shares a common race, religion, color, or national origin; people over 40; and people with physical or intellectual disabilities. Every U.S. citizen is a member of some protected class and is entitled to the benefits of EEO law. However, the EEO laws were originally passed to correct a history of unfavorable treatment of women, minority group members, and people with disabilities.

*Quota:* Fixed hiring and promotion rates based on race, sex, or other protected class standards which must be met at all costs. In extreme cases, the courts have assigned quotas to some employers who have continued to practice illegal discrimination. An agency or any other employer cannot use quotas to meet their affirmative action/employment goals unless a court orders it.

*Racial or Ethnic Group:*

- American Indian or Alaska Native. A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.
- Asian. A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- Black or African American. A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa. Terms such as “Haitian” can be used in addition to “Black or African American.”
- Hispanic or Latino. A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.
- White. A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.

*RCLF:* Relevant Civilian Labor Force, reflects all the people in America employed in or actively seeking work in the specific occupations employed by VA (as opposed to the total CLF, which shows all workers). VA’s RCLF uses the number of people in each job series to calculate the correct ratio to use for that job series, and combines all job series for a total RCLF for VA or its components.

*Reasonable Accommodation:* A reasonable accommodation is any change in the work environment (or in the way things are usually done) to help a person with a disability apply for a job, perform the duties of a job, or enjoy the benefits and privileges of employment. The accommodation must be effective in meeting the needs of the individual by addressing the barrier created by the functional limitations caused by the disability. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, requires all Federal agencies to make accommodation is available to applicants and employees with known disabilities, regardless of whether they work full-time, part-time or are considered “probationary.” Generally, the individual with a disability must request a change, related to a disability or medical condition. For additional information, see <http://www.diversity.va.gov/programs/pwd.aspx#accommodation>.

*SES:* Senior Executive Service, which is a separate personnel system covering a majority of the top managerial supervisory, and policy-making positions in the Executive Branch of Government.

*Sexual orientation:* Homosexuality, bisexuality, or heterosexuality, whether such orientation is actual or perceived, and includes association with another individual of a particular sexual orientation. Source: The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ([http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/internal/sexual\\_orientation\\_order.cfm](http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/internal/sexual_orientation_order.cfm))

*SMSA:* Standard Metropolitan statistical Area, a parameter for local Census data used for local CLF.

*Targeted Disability:* Agencies are instructed by EEOC to set hiring goals and report progress in their employment of people with targeted disabilities (deafness, blindness, missing extremities, partial paralysis, complete paralysis, epilepsy, severe intellectual disabilities, psychiatric disabilities, and dwarfism). The data, by agency, is reported annually to Congress.

*Transgender:* Transgender individuals are people with a gender identity that is different from the sex assigned to them at birth. Someone who was assigned the male sex at birth but who identifies as female is a transgender woman. Likewise, a person assigned the female sex at birth but who identifies as male is a transgender man. Some individuals who would fit this definition of transgender do not identify themselves as such, and identify simply as men and women, consistent with their gender identity. Source: The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (<http://www.opm.gov/diversity/Transgender/Guidance.asp>)


*Underrepresentation:* A term that is no longer used. See Participation Rate.

*VSSC:* VHA Service Support Center, an intranet site maintained by VHA, provides numerous automated reports of personnel data.

*Workforce Diversity:* A school of thought that focuses on the differences and similarities that people bring to an organization. It is usually defined broadly to include dimensions beyond those specified legally in equal opportunity and affirmative action non-discrimination statutes. Diversity is often interpreted to include dimensions that influence the identities and perspectives that people bring, such as profession, education, parental status, Veteran status, and geographic location. The concept also encompasses differences among people concerning where they are from and where they have lived and their differences of thought and life experiences. Embracing workforce diversity heightens the ability of an agency to respect differences and reap the rewards of employing a workforce comprised of people with different viewpoints.

*Workforce Profile:* An organizational “snap shot” illustrating the dispersion of race, ethnicity, gender, and/or disability groups for the total workforce or within specified employment, pay, award, and other categories.





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