

Diversity@Work

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 5

JULY - AUGUST 2011



< WWW.DIVERSITY.HR.VA.GOV/CA/DAW.HTM >

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Coffey's Keynotes

I hope your summer is going well. ODI has been very busy reaching out to our stakeholders within VA and beyond. We recently hosted a preconference training event at VHA's National EEO Conference in Dallas, Texas, in early June. We addressed over 150 EEO and diversity practitioners from all across the country and provided a variety of training experiences in the area of VA's Diversity & Inclusion Strategic Plan, workforce diversity, cultural competency, and barrier analysis.

On June 22, ODI hosted VA Central Office's third annual Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Pride Month Event honoring the sacrifices and contributions of our Nation's LGBT Veterans. The Honorable Dr. Raul Perea-Henze, Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning, VA, provided welcome remarks and the Honorable Douglas B. Wilson, Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, Department of Defense (DoD), served as our featured speaker. Representatives from LGBT supporting organizations also participated and provided us with invaluable information. **[Continued on the following page.]**

Commemorate

WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY



VA proudly joins the Nation in commemorating the 91st anniversary of the passing of the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which gave American women the right to vote. This amendment was passed on August 26, 1920, after a 72 year campaign. August 26th was first designated by Congress in 1971 as "Women's Equality Day." Each president, in his own words, has recognized the long struggle for women's suffrage and supported ongoing efforts towards full equality for women.

This observance is in recognition of the long and ongoing battle for women's equality, including the right of women to vote.

Although women have struggled for centuries for equality, the official push began on July 13, 1848, with the first Women's Convention held in Seneca Falls, New York. Following this convention, these founding women endured their share of struggles including hostility, mistreatment, violence, and incarceration for fighting for those certain inalienable rights to which they were entitled. Finally, on August 26, 1920, after 72 years of battling, women were authorized the right to vote.

Like women in the private sector, women in the Federal government have also experienced their fair share of professional struggles. In a study published as recently as 1992 by the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) entitled "A Question of Equity: Women and the Glass Ceiling in the Federal Government," they concluded that there was a "glass ceiling" that limited the advancement of women in the Federal Government.

[Continued on page 8.]

BOOKMARKS

VA LEARNING UNIVERSITY
<www.valu.va.gov>

VANTAGE POINT
(VA'S OFFICIAL BLOG)
<www.blogs.va.gov/Vantage/>

WORKLIFE4YOU
<www.worklife4you.com/va>

Diversity organizations can be found on the ODI Web site:
<www.diversity.hr.va.gov/org>

Coffey's Keynotes (cont. from page 1)



Georgia Coffey

The groups included the National Coalition for LGBT Health, Servicemembers United, Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, National Center for Transgender Equality, DoD FED GLOBE, and Outserve. The video of this event is available for viewing on the VA Knowledge Network. Our VA counterparts across the Nation also held their own LGBT events. Pictures from some of those events can be viewed on [page 4](#).

We are pleased to report that the Secretary's EEO, Diversity, and No FEAR Policy, signed on June 13, 2011, is now available online at www.diversity.hr.va.gov/exec/policy.htm. Appropriate to the month in which it was issued, this year's policy statement added workforce protections on the basis of gender identity as well as parental status. We also recently delivered the EEO and Diversity State of the Agency to VA leadership, including the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Chief of Staff, and other officials. The presentation is posted on our Web site for your reference: www.diversity.hr.va.gov/workforce/md715.htm. Please take time to review these documents with your staff. ODI staff are available to brief your organizations on them upon request.

We are also pleased to report that the new National Diversity Internship Program administered by ODI is having another record-breaking year in placing interns from diverse institutions. We anticipate placing over 100 students during the 2011 internship program season. Our focus now shifts to converting those interns into permanent positions through programs such as the Student Career Experience Program. Last year we placed 39 percent of those interns who sought permanent positions. Help us break that record as we strive to cultivate a diverse workforce and inclusive VA workplace.

Look for my article on VA's diversity and inclusion program and other ADVANCE initiatives featured in June/July 2011 issue of *Diversity/Careers in Engineering & Information Technology* available online at <http://online.qmags.com/DC0711>. I was also happy to be featured in the Summer 2011 issue of VHA's *Organizational Health* newsletter, available on the VHA Organizational Health intranet Web site.

Finally, VA commemorates Independence Day and Women's Equality Day (read this article beginning on [page 1](#)). Both of these days celebrate the values we in ODI proudly champion—diversity and inclusion, and challenging the status quo!

Enjoy the summer and some well-deserved days of rest and relaxation!

~Georgia Coffey, VA Deputy Assistant Secretary for Diversity and Inclusion

FAST FACT:
There are an estimated nine million gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons in the U.S.

Field Notes

SECTION 508 TRAINING COMING AUGUST 2

Learn more about VA's Section 508 Program Office and how it works to ensure that Electronic Information Technology (EIT) products developed, procured, maintained, or used by VA are Section 508 conformant. The class will provide an overview of the law and its application to EIT including the technical, functional, and documentation/support standards surrounding Section 508 compliance. If you develop any of the following or supervise, procure, develop or administer policy relating to the following you should attend:

- Develop web pages
- Develop web-based applications
- Develop software
- Produce documents
- Develop or procure hardware
- Develop training materials
- Produce videos or other multimedia products
- Supervise activities above
- Develop or administer policy involving or relating to the above
- Have responsibility for the integration or maintenance of any of these items
- Are responsible for the procurement of any of these items
- Are involved in the contracting for the procurement of any of these items.

"General Section 508 Training," is scheduled for Tuesday, August 2, 2011, at VA Central Office. Seating is limited; however, the class will also be available via VANTS and Live Meeting. Live Meeting Training will be captioned. Contact Vicki Leon, Office of Information Technology, at Vicki.Leon@va.gov or (202) 461-5237 to register.

Field Notes (cont. from previous page)

LEADERSHIP VA ANNOUNCES 2011 SELECTEES



Leadership VA (LVA) is a unique, hands-on learning program with an active, experiential curriculum. LVA grooms high-potential leaders to take VA to the next level of excellence through a shared leadership framework, skill set and tool set. Please review the announcement of selectees at <www.valu.va.gov/Content/PDF/LVA_2011_Class_List_Final--6-8-2011.pdf> and join VA in congratulating them on this prestigious accomplishment.

SAVE THE DATE: 2011 BIG PRECONFERENCE EVENT

ODI is proud to present the Annual VA Preconference Forum during the Blacks in Government (BIG) 33rd Annual National Training Conference. This year's conference will be held August 22–25, 2011, at the John B. Hynes Veterans Memorial Convention Center in Boston, Massachusetts. The theme for this year's conference is "Explore and Navigate Your Leadership Journey through BIG."



The VA Preconference Forum will be held on August 23 from 8 a.m. until noon. This event is a special emphasis program training opportunity designed to provide information specific to VA's African American workforce including demographics, employment and advancement initiatives and opportunities, Veteran employment issues, and an overview and update of initiatives focused on African Americans.

VA employees in the local commuting area are encouraged to attend the VA Preconference Forum, with supervisory approval, at no registration cost. All associated costs to attend the main BIG conference must be authorized by your organization. For more information about the BIG conference, visit <www.bignet.org>. For more information about the Annual VA Preconference Forum, contact Trina R. Faison, VA's National African American Employment Program Manager, ODI, at <Trina.Faison@va.gov> or (202) 461-4044.



SAVE THE DATE: 2012 SAIGE CONFERENCE

The Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE) 9th Annual National Training Conference is planned for June 3–8, 2012, in Denver, Colorado. For more information, visit <www.saige.org>.

VACO NOTES

WELCOME!

Margaret (Maggie) Mele is a Workforce Recruitment Program summer hire. She will be working with Christy Compton on VA's National People with Disabilities Program. Ms. Mele's biggest project will be updating the Disability Handbook to reflect the changes in Equal Employment Opportunity Commission guidelines since the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008.

Ms. Mele is 25 years old and a student at UC Berkeley, graduating in the spring with a BA in Political Science. She has already completed her minor in Disability Studies. Ms. Mele is a former White House intern and writes for *The California Patriot*, a monthly student magazine. She also plays power wheelchair soccer, and her team placed 4th at Nationals in June.

LGBT Pride Month Events Across VA

Share your special emphasis event photos with us at odi@va.gov.



Canandaigua VA Medical Center/Rochester Community-Based Outpatient Clinic setting up for the 2010 Rochester Pride Parade celebrated in July each year

L to R: Wanda Martinez, Laura Mumford, Jacqueline Payne, Lorrie Sprecher (top), Tammy Castiglione, Elaine Slaughter

Matt Bessell (waving), Northport Medical Center, and community members including Veterans walk in the 21st Annual Long Island Pride Parade



Cyndia E. Ramirez, VA Caribbean Healthcare System, hosts an information table at the first LGBT Pride Month event at VA San Juan, Puerto Rico



Keynote Speaker Douglas Wilson, Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, Department of Defense, at the VA Central Office LGBT Pride Month "Welcome Home LGBT Veterans" Event



VA Core Values and Characteristics

Between now and August, leaders at all levels throughout VA will host meetings with their employees to provide details about VA's new Core Values and Characteristics, lead discussions about what they mean to us individually and as a Department, and address questions. 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. Most successful organizations have core values which form the foundation on which everything else is built. Values also serve as a common bond between employees. Our unique VA Core Values and Characteristics underscore our moral obligation to Veterans, their families, and other beneficiaries. While our Core Values define "who we are," our Characteristics define "what we stand for," and what we strive to be as an organization. Our Characteristics are aspirational goals that we want everyone—VA employees, Veterans, and the American people—to associate with our Department and with our workforce.

The process used to develop these Core Values and Characteristics was collaborative and inclusive involving participants from VA's Central Office and all three of VA's Administrations, and comprehensive—taking nearly two years. Participants from many different VA organizations provided invaluable input into the process. Based on this input and the recommendations of a variety of panels, work groups, and VA Senior Leaders, VA Core Value and Characteristics are as listed below. These are more than just words. They represent our promise to do our best every day to perform our crucial mission of caring for Veterans, family members, and other beneficiaries:

VA Core Values: Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, Excellence ("I CARE")

VA Core Characteristics: Trustworthy, Accessible, Quality, Innovative, Agile, Integrated

Visit the home page of VA's intranet Web site for materials that will enable supervisors to effectively introduce these Core Values and Characteristics to their staffs, answer questions they may have, and generate open and lively discussion about what these values and characteristics mean to VA as an organization and to the VA workforce.

Policy Alerts

RESERVIST DIFFERENTIAL

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) issued notification of the issuance of Public Law 111-8 dated March 11, 2009, which authorizes differential payments to eligible Federal civilian employees who are absent from employment with the Federal Government because they are ordered to perform active duty in the uniformed service (see **OPM Memorandum**). Payment of reservist differential is effective retroactively to the pay period beginning March 15, 2009, for qualifying periods on or after that date. Payment cannot be made for periods prior to March 15, 2009, and reservist differential is also not payable for post-active duty periods except for qualifying periods which fall between March 15, 2009 and December 19, 2009, during which time the employee was entitled to reemployment rights under USERRA. Human Resources Management Letter (HRML) No. 05-11-05 provides guidance for processing reservist differential for eligible Federal civilian employees who are reservists and have been called or ordered to active duty under certain specified provisions of Public Law 111-8. Additional guidance, including instructions for VA payroll calculation of reservist differential payments will be forthcoming from the Office of Finance. VA policy on miscellaneous pay authorities contained in VA Handbook 5007, Part VIII, Chapter 5 is being revised to incorporate reservist differential guidance. Status: Policy Process Step 4 – Policy Implementation/Release. Date of Release: May 26, 2011.

WORKPLACE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR NURSING MOTHERS

VA Handbook 5011, Part II, Chapters 2 and 3 is being revised to establish policy for allowing nursing mothers time to express breast milk for her nursing child up to one year after the child's birth. Status: Policy Process Step 1. Estimated date of release/implementation: July 2011. [**Continued on the following page.**]

Policy Alerts (cont. from previous page)

SECRETARY'S 2011 EEO, DIVERSITY, AND NO FEAR POLICY

VA is committed to ensuring equal employment opportunity (EEO), promoting diversity and inclusion, and constructively resolving workplace conflict 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. The Secretary's EEO, Diversity, and No FEAR Policy Statement, signed on June 13, 2011, is available online at <www.diversity.hr.va.gov/exec/policy.htm>. Major changes to this year's policy include a statement added to workforce protections on the basis of gender identity as well as parental status. For more information on this policy, contact Carolyn Williams, ODI, at (202) 461-4012 or <Carolyn.Williams12@va.gov>.

MILITARY LEAVE AND COURT LEAVE FOR EMPLOYEES APPOINTED UNDER 38 U.S.C. 7405(A)(1)(D) OR 7406

VA Handbook 5011, Hours of Duty and Leave, Part III, Chapter 3, paragraph 7, is being revised to allow employees appointed under 38 U.S.C. 7405(a)(1)(D) or 7406 to be entitled to use military leave and court leave. Status: Policy Process Step I. Estimated date of release/implementation: October 2011.

FINAL SICK LEAVE REGULATIONS DATED DECEMBER 3, 2010

VA Handbook 5011, Hours of Duty and Leave, Part III, Chapters 2 and 3 is being revised to make the following changes:

- Authorize title 5 and title 38 employees to use sick leave to provide care for a family member who has been exposed to a communicable disease when the family member's presence in the community would jeopardize the health of others;
- Authorize title 5 employees to be granted up to 104 hours of advance sick leave for general health care purposes (self and family) and up to 240 hours of advance sick leave for serious medical conditions (self and family);
- Authorize title 5 and title 38 employees to substitute up to 26 weeks of sick leave when invoking their Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) entitlement to provide care for a covered servicemember under 5 U.S.C. 6382(a)(3); and
- Add FMLA policy for employees appointed under 38 U.S.C. Status: Policy Process Step I. Estimated date of release/implementation: December 2011.

CLARIFICATION OF POLICY FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT REPORTING

VA Directive 0321, Section 2.a., January 21, 2010, requires all Serious Incidents in the VA to be reported to the VA Integrated Operations Center (VA IOC) as soon as possible but no later than 2 hours after the awareness of the incident.

Section 2.c.(9). Of VA Directive 0321 includes a requirement to report sexual assaults: "Incidents on VA property that result in serious illness or bodily injury to include sexual assault, aggravated assault and child abuse."

To ensure accurate reporting, sexual assault is defined as "any type of sexual contact or attempted sexual contact that occurs without the explicit consent of the recipient of the unwanted sexual activity. Assaults may involve psychological coercion, physical force, or victims who cannot consent due to mental illness or other factors. Falling under this definition of sexual assault are sexual activities such as forced sexual intercourse, sodomy, oral penetration, or penetration using an object, molestation, fondling, and attempted rape. Victims of sexual assault can be male or female. This does not include cases involving only indecent exposure, exhibitionism, or sexual harassment."

It is important that leadership know in a timely manner all allegations of sexual assault that occur on VA property or at any time while official VA duties are being performed. As such, effective immediately all Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and other Key Officials will ensure that the VA IOC is notified within two hours of any and all allegations of sexual assault. Notification may be made via telephone by calling (202) 461-5510 or via email to <vaiooc@va.gov>. It is understood that these initial notifications will be followed by more comprehensive information as it becomes available. For more information about these policy alerts or the policy communication schedule/timeline, visit VA's Office of Human Resources Management intranet Web site.

Recruitment

MILITARY CAREER FAIRS

VA is committed to ensuring our workforce is the most talented, dedicated and diverse possible, reflecting the Veterans we serve. Below is a list of careers fairs targeting Veterans and transitioning military for careers after military service. Each facility is encouraged to review these events for opportunities to recruit some of the best and brightest our nation has to offer. All facilities are encouraged to participate in recruiting/outreach events taking place in their geographic area, supporting the Secretary's desire to increase Veterans throughout our workforce and in keeping with the President's Veterans Employment Initiative to all Federal agencies. If your facility would like to participate in this type of event targeting Veterans or for a complete list of upcoming events, contact Robert Forney, Program Support Assistant, Veterans Employment Coordination Service, at (202) 461-5061.

July 12 Las Vegas, NV Military.com	July 19 Camp Pendleton, CA Military.com	July 21 Maxwell AFB, AL CivilianJobs.com	August TBD Chicago, IL Military.com	August 4 San Diego, CA Recruitmilitary.com
July 13 Fredericksburg, VA JobZoneOnline.com	July 19 Camp Pendleton, CA Hiring Heroes: Ty Redmond 703-696-6239	July 21 Colorado Springs, CO Recruitmilitary.com	August 2 West Point, NY Military.com	August 9 Hill AFB, UT Military.com
July 14 Dallas, TX Recruitmilitary.com	July 21 Ft. Huachuca, AZ Military.com	July 28 Philadelphia, PA Recruitmilitary.com	August 4 Robins AFB, GA CivilianJobs.com	August 10 Ft. Lewis, WA Hiring Heroes: Ty Redmond 703-696-6239
July 14 St. Louis, MO Recruitmilitary.com	July 21 Tacoma, WA JobZoneOnline.com	July 28 Birmingham, AL Recruitmilitary.com	August 4 Houston, TX Recruitmilitary.com	August 11 Minneapolis, MN Recruitmilitary.com

MARKETING & RECRUITMENT OUTREACH

VA recruits from a variety of sources, with a special interest in college students and graduates who seek careers at VA. VA's Office of Human Resources Management's Marketing & Recruitment Outreach Team, in support of the Hiring Reform initiative related to strengthening recruitment outreach outlined in the Hiring Reform Implementation 2010 Human Resources Management Letter, dated October 8, 2010, is committed to reaching out to a diverse pool of colleges and universities around the country to present employment opportunities to top talent. All HR facilities are invited to participate, at the expense of the Marketing & Recruitment Outreach Team, in future recruiting/outreach events taking place in your geographic area where you will have the opportunity to showcase your positions. For more information, please contact Joseph Campbell, Marketing and Recruitment Outreach Consultant, at (202) 461-6021 or you may reach any member of the team at <vaco059recruitment@va.gov>. In addition to university and college recruitment, this team is also prepared to assist your organization with developing recruitment strategies and developing marketing plans. For recruitment outreach assistance, email <vaco059recruitment@va.gov> and for marketing assistance email <vaco059marketing@va.gov>.

HEROES HIRING HEROES JOB FAIR

VA and the Office Personnel Management are jointly supporting the 2011 Heroes Hiring Heroes Veterans Job Fair, July 14, 2011, at Hotel Albuquerque in New Mexico. There is no admission charge for job-seeking Veterans, spouses, or their dependents; attendance is expected to exceed 1,500. The event is sponsored by the New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services, New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, Adelante Development Center, Inc., and the American GI Forum. The job fair will be preceded by a July 13 kick-off at the Uptown Sheraton Hotel from 10 am to 4:30 pm, where Veterans benefits and services information will be featured as part of the program. For more information, visit <www.heroeshiringheroes.com>. VA hiring officials or recruiters may e-mail <Jose.Marrero@va.gov> to confirm their interests in using VRA or Schedule A appointments for hiring Disabled Veterans.

Commemorate (cont. from page 1)

Such factors considered were supervisory and executive position representation, promotion, differences in grade level between men and women, employer expectations, employer assumptions, and stereotypes. The results of analyzing each of these factors led the MSPB to determine that the “playing field” for women in the Federal government seeking advancement was not level with that of men.

Since that time, however, both Federal and private sector employers have made significant advances in the equity of women in the workplace. As recently as May 2011 the MSPB published a new report entitled, “Women in the Federal Government: Ambitions and Achievements,” which identifies that the “representation of women in professional and administrative occupations and the Senior Executive Service has increased, there are less education differences between men and women, fewer women report that they are subjected to discrimination or stereotypes that hinder their advancement, and women and men express comparable levels of satisfaction with Federal employment and their treatment at work.”

Although these were great achievements, they also found there was still work to be done to ensure women are fully represented and utilized in the workforce. Such areas they advise for improvement are ensuring the representation of women at higher levels does not lag behind their representation at the lower levels, decision making is not based on non-merit factors such as favoritism, sustaining efforts to recruit highly-qualified women, striving for openness and fairness in personnel decisions, and remaining vigilant against prohibited discrimination.

Some of the ways employers can achieve a high-performing, diverse workforce is by helping employees understand the skills, education, and accomplishments needed to advance and by selecting supervisors who can effectively manage employees.

ODI is on the leading edge of ensuring VA has both culturally-competent supervisors and employees by providing required diversity and inclusion training to

all VA supervisors (including executives) and standardizing online diversity and inclusion training to employees, as well as partnering with internal and external organizations to ensure this message is passed on. In addition, the VA Learning University (VALU) just launched a revamped Talent Management System (TMS) to provide employees with information, tools, and online courses to progress in their careers. VA is continuously striving to improve opportunities for employees to advance their careers. Most notably is the recent launch of the ADVANCE initiative to ensure VA has a highly competent, diverse, and high-performing workforce in order to provide the best care and service to our Nation’s Veterans.

FAST FACT:
Women earn the majority of doctoral degrees awarded in the U.S.

VA also strives to ensure women are treated equally in our workforce and as Veterans who are clients. As of September 30, 2010, women represented 59.66 percent of the total

VA workforce. Although VA has increased in size, representation of women has decreased from 59.75 percent in 2009 to 59.66 percent in 2010. This number remains 12.86 percent above the National Civilian Labor Force (CLF), but 5 percent below the Relevant CLF (RCLF) of 64.67 percent. On the positive side, women in VA’s leadership pipeline (GS-12 through GS-14) have increased from 53.19 percent in 2009 to 62.73 percent in 2010. Women in Senior Executive Service (SES) have increased from 33.75 percent in 2009 to 35.09 percent in 2010. Additionally, 18.11 percent of the VA workforce are women Veterans; of those, 3.97 percent are Disabled Veterans. The percentage of women Veterans employed by VA has also increased from 24.23 percent in 2009 to 36.91 percent in 2010. VA has established a strategic goal to increase our Veteran workforce to 33 percent.

VA Central Office will hold a Women’s Equality Day event hosted by Rosa Franco, Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for Office of Resolution Management, and featuring Fatima Goss Graves, Vice President for Education and Employment at the National Women’s Law Center, on Thursday, August 25, in the G.V. “Sonny” Montgomery Conference Center, Room 230 at noon.

Cleveland Empowers Vets, People with Disabilities

On May 5, 2011, the Cleveland VA Medical Center hosted its first-ever career fair strictly for Veterans and people with disabilities. “The focus of the event was to knock down barriers that Veterans and people with disabilities often face when seeking employment, by arranging informational meetings with managers in our organization,” said recruiter Chuck Bonacci. Out of the 79 jobseekers who attended, 11 are being considered for hire as full-time employees.

“This fair was not formed to hire Veterans and people with disabilities; rather, it was formed to hire highly qualified individuals whom happen to be Veterans and people with disabilities,” said event coordinator Shawn Beham.

Supervisors praised the jobseekers for their enthusiasm and motivation to work for the Cleveland VA. Angel Hawkins, a supervisor in Patient Care Administration Service, said that “all of [her] interviews were fantastic and I was very impressed with the quality of applicants. Each of the candidates I interviewed were prepared and determined to get a job.” Many of these jobseekers had targeted disabilities or were Veterans with service-connected disabilities.

“The organization, preparation and conduct of the event...was rock-solid! I will be pleased to support a future effort,” said Phil Rutledge, Chief of Logistics Service.

The event was consistent with the VA’s goal of raising the percentage of people with disabilities from 1.6 percent to two percent, and of Veterans from 27 percent to 33 percent, and was one of many initiatives that the Cleveland VA has supported in the last year related to hiring people and Veterans with disabilities.

FAST FACT:
Approximately 1 in 5 Veterans discharged from active duty between 2002 and 2005 had significant military service-connected disabilities.

WRP Student Recognition Awards

The Workforce Recruitment Program for College Students with Disabilities (WRP) intends to recognize up to five outstanding student employees at this year's awards ceremony and reception to be held in Washington, DC on Friday, August 5, 2011, at the Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW. To that end, the WRP is soliciting nominations from Federal organizations. Awardees do not have to be present at the ceremony. Once a decision has been made, the WRP will notify the awardees' nominating supervisors or superiors, as well as the organizations' points of contact, via an email message or a phone call.

The award criteria:

1. Nominee must be in this year's WRP database.
2. Nominee must be a temporary or permanent Federal government employee.
3. Nominee must be an outstanding employee who has made a significant contribution to the work unit's mission.

Please submit a nomination package for each nominee, signed by the employee's supervisor or other superior. The deadline for submission is close of business on Friday, July 22, 2011. Submit the nomination package electronically to Mr. David Murphy at <David.Murphy.ctr@osd.mil>.

Nomination packages are to include the following:

1. On the first page of a Microsoft Word document:
 - a. Nominee's name, work address, email address, job title, and work unit.
 - b. Name, job title, work address, email address, and telephone number for nominee's supervisor or the nominating superior.
 - c. Name, job title, work address, email address, and telephone number of a point of contact for the nominating organization. This will usually be the WRP coordinator for the organization.
2. On the second page of the Word document: a single-spaced narrative (no more than one page in length) summarizing the nominee's accomplishments that support the award criteria.

Compliance Corner

VA PARKING POLICIES AND REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION



The Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication (OEDCA) recently issued two decisions finding violations of the Rehabilitation Act due to misapplication of VA parking policies. The complainants, who were both physically disabled, were reasonably accommodated when they were allowed to park in the main parking lots of their respective medical centers. As a result of medical center construction, both complainants lost their onsite parking privileges and were required to park in satellite lots. Shuttle services, including trolleys, buses, and golf carts, were used to transport the complainants to their worksites.

Neither complainant was satisfied with their loss of onsite parking and requested the use of disabled parking spaces reserved for medical center patients. In both cases, medical center managers cited VA parking policies as authority precluding disabled VA employees from parking in spaces reserved for disabled patients. They also argued the complainants' physical disabilities were accommodated because shuttle services were provided between the satellite lots and the medical facilities.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has held that while management is not obligated to provide the accommodation of the complainant's choice, management is obligated to provide an effective accommodation. Complainant one testified that the shuttle service was not an effective accommodation because he had to rely on coworkers to transport him in a golf cart from the satellite lot to his office. He further testified that he often had to wait for his coworkers to pick him

up, the golf cart was painful to ride in and difficult to enter and exit, and that he was harassed by his coworkers because they were required to pick him up each day.

The second complainant, who was an amputee, testified that both the shuttle bus and trolley used to transport her were difficult to enter and exit. She also stated that the shuttle operated on a 15 minute schedule and on one occasion never arrived. Finally, the complainant testified that she had to walk in her poorly fitted and painful prosthesis at least 100 feet from the shuttle stop to her building, climb several steps to access the shuttle, and when the trolley was used as a shuttle, it was not handicapped accessible.

In both cases, OEDCA found unlawful discrimination based on disability because the reasonable accommodations offered were not effective. OEDCA further determined that the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 supersedes VA parking policies, if such policies in their application, deny a qualified individual with a disability, reasonable access to his workplace. Finally, in neither case did VA management show that allowing the complainants to park in the patients' parking lots were either impossible or posed an undue hardship on the facility.

~Maxanne R. Witkin, Director, VA's Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication





ODI on the Internet

DIVERSITY@WORK

is published by the Office of Diversity & Inclusion, a program office within VA's Office of Human Resources & Administration. To subscribe or unsubscribe, e-mail <odi@va.gov>

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Visit our Web site

<www.diversity.hr.va.gov>
for additional staff
e-mail addresses.

OTHER USEFUL LINKS

VA's Office of Human Resources & Administration
<www.va.gov/ofcadmin>

VA Learning University

<www.valu.va.gov>

VA's Office of Resolution Management

<www.va.gov/orm>

VA's Office of Human Resources Management

<www.va.gov/ohrm>

VHA Office of Diversity & Inclusion Community of Practice
<Michael.Youngblood@va.gov>

GOT NEWS?

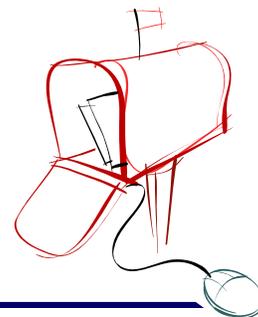
We want to hear from you! If you'd like to share your story ideas, comments, or suggestions, e-mail us at <odi@va.gov> with the words DIVERSITY@WORK in the subject line.

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. Here's a sampling of online tools available at <www.diversity.hr.va.gov> that can help leverage diversity and build inclusion:

- ▶ Women's Equality Day and other special observance resources.
- ▶ Training resources, guides, and reports.
- ▶ Links to professional and community organizations.
- ▶ Best practices for diversity management.

ODI in Your E-mail Inbox

Once a week, ODI sends out *NewsLink*, an e-mail message with annotated links to current news items and other information related to leveraging diversity and building inclusion. For a FREE subscription to this weekly electronic news service, e-mail <odi@va.gov> with the words SUBSCRIBE NEWSLINK in the subject line. Find a sample of *NewsLink* at <www.diversity.hr.va.gov/ca/newslink.htm>.



ODI on Your TV or PC

Diversity News is a monthly video program produced by the VA Central Office Broadcast Center for ODI. *Diversity News* follows VA News on the VA Knowledge Network, Content Distribution Network channel 2. Programs are also available at <www.diversity.hr.va.gov/ca/diversitynews.htm>.

From the 2011 Diversity Calendar

<www.diversity.hr.va.gov/calendar>

JULY

Independence Day
July 4

VA HR Conference 2011
July 11–15; Orlando, FL
<www.regonline.com/builder/site/tab2.aspx?EventID=972361>

National Conference of the American GI Forum
July 13–17; Albuquerque, NM
<<http://www.implanners.com/AGIF2010>>

Federally Employed Women National Training Program
July 18–22; Philadelphia, PA
<www.fewntp.org>

NAACP Convention
July 23–28; Los Angeles, CA
<www.naacp.org>

National Urban League Conference
July 27–30; Boston, MA
<www.nul.org>

AUGUST

Section 508 Training
August 2; Washington, DC

Disabled American Veterans National Convention
August 6–9; New Orleans, LA
<www.dav.org>

American Veterans National Convention
August 6–13; St. Louis, MO
<www.amvets.org>

Annual Federal Dispute Resolution Conference
August 8–11; Palm Desert, CA
<www.fdrconferences.org>

VA HR Conference 2011
August 8–12; Orlando, FL

Veteran Small Business Conference and Exposition
August 15–18; New Orleans, LA
<www.nationalveteransconference.com>

Federal Hispanic Women's Executives Career Enhancement Conference
August 16–18; Arlington, VA
<www.ialpae.org>

Blacks in Government National Training Conference
August 22–25; Boston, MA
<www.bignet.org>

Women's Equality Day
August 26



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Ave. NW (06)
Washington, DC 20420

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