

Diversity@Work

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<[HTTP://WWW.DIVERSITY.VA.GOV/PRODUCTS/DAW.ASPX](http://www.diversity.va.gov/products/daw.aspx)>

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BOOKMARKS

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

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

WORKLIFE4YOU
<www.worklife4you.com/va>

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
<www.opm.gov/ehs/Eappage.htm>

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

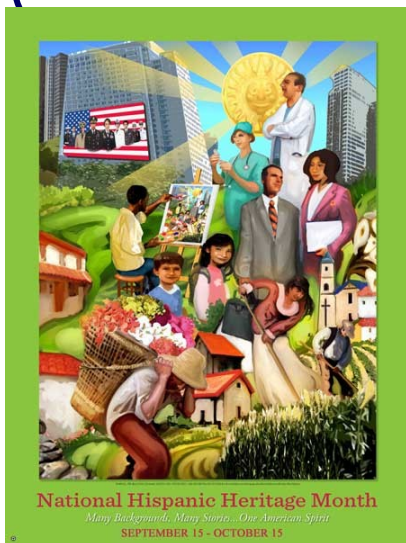
Coffey's Keynotes

Greetings! The Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) is pleased to commemorate National Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15–October 15 and National Disability Employment Awareness Month during October. VA is planning a number of events over the next two months in honor of these observances. Please read more below.

ODI is proud to share with you the President's recently-issued Executive Order on Establishing a Coordinated Government-wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in the Federal Workforce (read more at <www.whitehouse.gov>). VA's ODI played a prominent role in the issuance of this Executive Order. Currently, the Office of Personnel Management, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission are working to develop and issue a Government-wide Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan. As you may know, VA already has such a plan in place (visit <www.diversity.va.gov/products/files/StrategicPlan.pdf>) which served as the model for the Government-wide Plan. The VA Diversity Council will revisit this plan to ensure that it aligns with the new Government-wide plan generated by this Executive Order.

ODI was also pleased to participate in VA's highly successful 2011 HR Conference in July and August. I want to thank each of you who attended and who stopped by our ODI booth.

[Continued on the following page.]



Commemorate!

NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

VA joins the Nation in commemorating National Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15 through October 15, 2011. This year's theme is "Many Backgrounds, Many Stories... One American Spirit." Hispanic Heritage Month is a celebration of the history, achievements, culture, and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Mexico, Spain, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. It begins on September 15th, the day of independence for five Latin American countries: El Salvador, Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. Interestingly, Mexico won its independence on September 16th, while Chile gained its freedom on September 18th. Author Rebecca M. Cuevas De Caissie stated: "Long before Columbus or any of his predecessors ever set foot on this land, there were many nations living here and a way of life that exists even to this day and largely makes up the culture of the Hispanic heritage we share and know of today. Unlike many other races, within the Hispanic community in the Americas, you will find many things you will never find in other cultures. We are a very diverse and complex people, individual in our own nationalities yet intimately tied to each other through history, religion, cultural similarities and many other factors that truly make us unite in the common cause of furthering our future as one people." [Continued on page 9.]

Coffey's Keynotes (cont. from page 1)



Georgia Coffey

ODI staff served as facilitators for four of the courses offered at the Conference: Diversity Outreach and Recruitment; Attracting, Leading, and Retaining a Cross-Generational Workforce; Schedule A Authority for Hiring Individuals with Disabilities; and Reasonable Accommodation Procedures. If you missed any of these courses, or if you missed the Conference all together, see the article on ODI's Training and Communications team below to learn more about how we can assist you with your training needs.

We are also proud to share that VA was selected by the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) to receive the Outstanding HACU Public Partner Award in recognition of the Department's commitment to this important segment of our workforce diversity. To that end, ODI was proud to have HACU as a partner in its new National Diversity Internship Program through which we sponsored over 100 student interns from diverse postsecondary educational institutions. Read more about the HACU Award on [page 6](#).

On the topic of awards, the Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration will assist the Secretary in presenting the Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Awards and Alternative Dispute Resolution Excellence Awards at a formal ceremony to be held in conjunction with the Office of Resolution Management on October 21 in the G. V. "Sonny" Montgomery Veterans Conference Center, VA Central Office. Please mark your calendars and join us in recognizing our champions of diversity in VA, or check out the live broadcast on the VA Knowledge Network. Thank you as always for your continued commitment to diversity and inclusion in VA! ~*Georgia Coffey, VA Deputy Assistant Secretary for Diversity and Inclusion*

Diversity and Inclusion Training

In 2008 with the creation of VA's first Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan, diversity and inclusion training was added to ODI's functions. ODI's Training and Communications team is instrumental in educating employees and managers on diversity and inclusion matters to foster competency in maintaining a fair, high-performance, and healthy work environment. This team works to support VA executives in their efforts to provide more opportunities for full employee engagement in VA's mission.

ODI's Training and Communications team provided diversity and inclusion training to several VA organizations. Dr. John Fuller, Chief Diversity Consultant in ODI, and Ms. Lisa Red, Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Director of Diversity, hosted a pre-conference training session at the 2011 National VHA Equal Employment Opportunity Conference in Dallas, Texas. This learning opportunity provided over 140 VA EEO professionals with knowledge and interactive learning experiences to enhance their understanding of their obligations and related responsibility to implement strategies in pursuit of the goals and objectives outlined in VA's Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan. Presenters addressed challenges that EEO professionals face in leading and managing a model EEO program for a diverse workforce to include cultural and external and internal factors affecting employees. Participants engaged in active discussion, case study review, analysis, and report out of strategies and developed a deeper awareness of selected elements of the VA Diversity and Inclusion strategic plan.

Dr. Fuller and Mr. James Blockwood, ODI's Chief of Training and Development, had the opportunity to conduct six training sessions at VA's 2011 Human Resources (HR) Conference in Orlando, Florida. Over 180 participants gained knowledge and understanding to enhance their cultural competence in attracting, leading, and retaining a cross-generational workforce. Facilitated discussions, group exercises, and self-assessments provided HR consultants with an overview of the challenges and opportunities associated with advising VA managers on how to lead and inspire diverse workforces.

Dr. Fuller and Mr. Blockwood made a series of general diversity and inclusion presentations to all Office of Acquisitions and Logistics facilities including Denver, Colorado; Frederick, Maryland (to include the Acquisitions Academy); Eatontown, New Jersey; Austin, Texas; and at VA Central Office. The major objective of this training was to provide employees, managers, and supervisors with an enhanced respect and appreciation of the similarities and differences among individuals in their workplaces (creating and maintaining respect and civility) and an understanding of fundamental cross-generational perspectives in the workplace. This is the first VA organization to have all its employees, managers, and supervisors trained at this foundational level. [**Continued on the following page.**]

Field Notes



VALU MILITARY CULTURAL AWARENESS COURSE

VA Learning University (VALU) invites VA employees to head back to school and participate in selected course offerings. One of these is the award-winning “Military Cultural Awareness” course which establishes a foundation of knowledge and understanding of the military and how it affects our work at VA. With over 5,000 courses available on <www.tms.va.gov>, VALU is all about helping VA employees transform their potential into performance. For more information, contact VALU at 1-888-566-3982 from 8:30 am to 5:30 pm EST or email <valu.training@va.gov>.

SECTION 508 TRAINING COMING OCTOBER 4

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 2–4 p.m. EST, Tuesday, October 4, 2011, at VA Central Office in Conference Room 730. 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.

2011 NATIONAL HBCU WEEK

VA joined the Nation in observing Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Week September 18–24, 2011. The 2011 National HBCU Week Conference was held in Washington, DC on September 19 and 20. This year’s theme was “HBCUs: Engaging the World Anew.” For more information, visit <<http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/list/whhbcu/edlite-confwshop.html>> or contact Trina Faison, VA’s National African American Employment Program Manager, ODI, at <Trina.Faison@va.gov> or (202) 461-4044.

D&I Training (cont. from previous page)

The training partnership formed between ODI, the Office of Resolution Management, and the Office of Acquisitions and Logistics is being touted by ODI as a best practice for the rest of VA. This relationship has created a baseline for learning on which diversity, inclusion, and respect can grow.

Dr. Fuller also served a guest lecturer for the Rural Health Professions Institute (RHPI) at East Tennessee State University for a series of six presentations on cultural diversity and competency considerations for health care. The instruction included awareness of VHA patient-centered philosophy, considerations in relation to cultural diversity and cultural competency affecting health care, and insights into the aspects of cultural competency lifetime learning process. RHPI has an established partnership with VHA for education and support of VA rural health locations and facilities. The instructional series provided valuable cultural competency awareness for medical health professionals to include 36 community-based outpatient clinics. RHPI has invited Dr. Fuller for the next series of conferences and presentations in fiscal year 2012.

If you are interested in any of the training topics described above or if you are considering customized diversity and inclusion training for your organization, contact ODI’s Training and Communications team to meet your training needs. For more information, visit <www.diversity.va.gov/about/tnc.aspx>.

VACO Notes

CBO DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION EVENT

The Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration, Chief Business Office (CBO) VA Central Office staff will hold their Second Annual Diversity and Inclusion event on October 20, 2011. This year's theme is Generational Diversity—exploring the primary and secondary characteristics that unite us and show our uniqueness. Age is one example of a primary characteristic of diversity (those innate things we can't change about ourselves). Military experience and communication style are both examples of secondary characteristics which we can change and adapt to during our lifetimes. The event will spotlight four generations: Traditionalists (also known as the Silent, G.I., or the Greatest Generation), Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials (also known as Generation Y). Participants will learn about the experiences of each generation and how those experiences shaped each generation's culture and affected the secondary characteristics inherited by a generation. Look for more information on this event shortly and for future articles on the event's outcome. Contact Vickie Nitschke at <Vickie.Nitschke@va.gov> to RSVP or for more information.

FAREWELL!

ODI wishes Durodgio Peterson, management and program analyst on ODI's Outreach and Retention team, a fond farewell! He has accepted a new position with VA's Office of Human Resources Management, Strategic Communication and Outreach. Mr. Peterson joined ODI in 2008 as an intern under the Workforce Recruitment Program. In his new role, he will serve as a HR Recruiter working on the HR Recruitment and Marketing team. Mr. Peterson will be missed and his contributions to ODI, the National Diversity Internship Program, and VA's Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender Program will not be forgotten! For questions regarding Mr. Peterson's programs, contact Tinisha Agramonte, Director of Outreach and Retention in ODI, at <Tinisha.Agramonte@va.gov>. For a complete list of contact information for ODI's various programs, visit the ODI Web site at <www.diversity.va.gov/about/contact.aspx>.

WELCOME, NEW ODI EMPLOYEE!

Joe Frazier is a Presidential Management Fellow working in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion as the National Selective Placement Officer (NSPC) and assisting with the management of the Reasonable Accommodation program at VA. As NSPC, Joe aids employees and applicants who apply for positions at VA using Schedule A authority. Joe also assists Christy Compton the National Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator with the management of the Centralized Fund, by providing information to managers in the field with concerns related to providing accommodation to disabled employees.

Before coming to VA, Joe was a National Urban Fellow working as the program manager tasked to open a Federally Qualified Health Clinic in Brooklyn, NY. Joe is a former enlisted U. S. Marine and U.S. Army Officer. While serving as an Army Inspector General, Joe earned a facilitator's certification in the U.S. Army's diversity program, Consideration of Others. Joe holds a Master Degree in Public Administration, Master of Business Administration, and is a graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College.

DIVERSITY NEWS: AN ONLINE TRAINING RESOURCE

Diversity News is a 15-minute video program produced monthly by ODI with the support of the VA Central Office (VACO) Broadcasting Center. The program is part of VA's continuing effort to foster equity, a diverse workforce, and an inclusive work environment.

Boasting a wealth of knowledge, ODI's library of broadcasts can serve to educate the VA community on workforce diversity and inclusion issues and to share best practices in effective diversity management. Some of the most recent episodes include a report on the end of fiscal year 2010 VA workforce data focusing on competencies required of diversity professionals (July 2011); the effect of diversity management on organizational performance (August 2011); and conflicts at work in ways that promote personal and organizational productivity (September 2011).

Diversity News is available both on the internal VA Knowledge Network and on ODI's Web site. To view current and past episodes, visit <www.diversity.va.gov/products/dn.aspx>.



OHRM Bulletin

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is pleased to announce the availability of a shared register for Budget Analyst position, entry-levels (GS-5/7/9) and the IT Specialist position, (GS-9). These registers are part of OPM's ongoing hiring reform initiative, to support Federal agencies as they streamline hiring practices and implement innovative assessment tools. OPM has used competitive examining procedures to establish the two shared registers, covering Budget Analyst, 0560, and Information Technology Specialist, 2210, positions. These registers incorporate:

- Streamlined job opportunity announcements (JOAs)
- Category rating procedures
- Online, unproctored assessment tools
- OPM maintenance—includes referring high quality candidates, responding to applicant inquiries, removing unavailable candidates, etc.
- Referral of names from these registers at no cost

Human Resources Officers (HROs) may request certificates from the Budget Analyst register immediately. The IT Specialist register will be available at a later date; requests may be submitted in advance and will be filled upon availability. Requests for certificates from either register should be submitted to OPM, <OPMRegisters@opm.gov>, by September 30, 2011.

To participate, HROs must:

- Verify through job analysis that the critical competencies assessed for the shared register are appropriate for their position(s). HROs are responsible for maintaining the job analysis documentation including the completed Competencies Verification form and copy of Request for Certificate of Eligibles form sent to OPM as part of the case file.
- Ensure that separate, duplicative agency examining (delegated examining) is not conducted for the same position, grade, and location if referral is requested from the central register.
- Submit the attached forms to <OPMRegisters@opm.gov> to request a certificate of eligibles.
- Return the certificates in thirty days (30) in order for timely audit of certificates.
- Follow all competitive legal and regulatory requirements.

Note: Requesting a certificate from this register does not restrict the use of a noncompetitive appointment.

For more information, contact Recruitment and Placement Policy Service (059) at <StaffingPolicy059/VACO@va.gov>.

VA Physician Job Satisfaction

VA physicians who spend at least 20 percent of their time in research activities are more likely to have greater job satisfaction and report more favorable job characteristics, according to an article published July 27 in the August issue of *Academic Medicine*. The study, "Job Characteristics and Job Satisfaction among Physicians Involved with Research in the Veterans Health Administration," also shows higher job satisfaction among physicians conducting research in VA facilities located on the same campus or within walking distance of an affiliated medical school.

"Research and continuous learning are vital to improving the health and health care of Veterans," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "As this study shows, the outcome is not only in terms of scientific innovation and development on behalf of Veterans, but also in terms of the professional fulfillment our physicians experience."

Study authors David C. Mohr, Ph.D., and James F. Burgess Jr., Ph.D., of the VA Boston Health Care System, based their findings on data from the 2008 VA All Employee Survey, which included a question about research involvement. VA physicians with at least 20 percent research involvement provided higher ratings with regard to new skill development opportunities, work and family balance, feedback from supervisors, and job autonomy. Responses came from 7,734 full-time physicians at 135 VA medical centers nationwide. [**Continued on page 7.**]

VA Earns Recognition for Workforce Diversity

VA has been selected by the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) to receive the Outstanding HACU Public Partner Award in recognition of the Department's efforts to bring Hispanics into its workforce. The award will be presented at HACU's 25th Annual Conference this October in San Antonio, Texas.

"This award demonstrates VA's commitment to a diverse workforce," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "These young people are given a unique opportunity to learn about the Department of Veterans Affairs and Federal Government through the HACU internships. Many will return to VA as fulltime employees."

The program's objective is to provide professional work experience that will enable Hispanic students to make more informed career choices and supplements their academic study with practical experience. VA's Veterans Health Administration alone has averaged 58 interns every summer for the last five years and has partnered with HACU since 1998.

"Veterans Affairs has been an active and long-term partner in HACU's National Internship Program," said HACU President and CEO Antonio Flores. "By its active participation, VA has increased its opportunities to hire well-qualified Latino graduates, thereby diversifying its workforce. At the same time, the internship has raised awareness of young Hispanics about employment opportunities in public service generally, and the VA in particular."

Nancy Carrillo, a 21-year-old psychology major at the University of Texas at El Paso, is interning at VA's Readjustment Counseling Service in Washington, D.C. "I'm very interested in counseling as a career, especially counseling Veterans," she said. "I appreciate the sacrifice they've made for our country. Counseling and helping them reintegrate into civilian life is my way of thanking them."

Ivan Jimenez, 23, is majoring in architecture and environmental design at the University of Houston. This summer he's interning in the Facilities Management Office at the VA Medical Center in New Orleans. "This is fun, and I'm learning a lot," Jimenez said. "Right now I'm helping them design the new fitness center here. I get to go to meetings with the architects and consultants."

The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities is a national association of nonprofit higher education institutions. Established in 1986, the association represents more than 350 colleges and universities in the United States and Puerto Rico. The HACU National Internship Program has become the Nation's largest Hispanic college internship program. HACU represents Hispanic-Serving Institutions where Hispanic Americans constitute as least 25 percent of the total enrollment at either the undergraduate or graduate level. *Parts of this article taken from <www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/>.*

**"I am so glad to be applying what I have learned from coursework here each and every day...This is truly where I want to be."
~Jamaall D. Green, Safety Specialist, HACU Intern**

VA Ranked Best Place to Launch Federal Career

VA was ranked the "Best Place to Launch a Career in the Federal Government" in a recent report by the Partnership for Public Service based on 2010 data.

"This ranking is a reflection of three major factors: VA's unique and compelling mission serving Veterans and their families, our unprecedented investment in our employees, and our strong commitment to diversity, including generational diversity," said Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration John U. Sepúlveda.

Sepúlveda said VA is serving Veterans through new initiatives enacted by Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. One of these initiatives is active recruiting and hiring of Veterans, including those returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. VA currently employs 100,000 Vets, approximately 30 percent of the total workforce with a goal of 40 percent. Another initiative is substantial investment in developing and training employees to better serve Veterans. Training includes teaching managers and supervisors effective strategies for recruiting and managing a diverse and multi-generational workforce. In the past year, VA has also expanded its use of internships and reinvented its mentoring programs and new-employee orientation.

In addition, VA has implemented initiatives to improve workplace collaboration and communication across organizational levels and greatly expanded its use of alternative dispute resolution. *Article taken from <www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/>.*

Job Satisfaction (cont. from page 5)

VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. Robert A. Petzel added, “With physician job satisfaction vital to both workforce retention and better patient outcomes, the study holds important implications for maintaining a high performance health system.”

Dr. Petzel, along with VA Chief Academic Affiliations Officer Dr. Malcolm Cox, VA Chief Research and Development Officer Dr. Joel Kupersmith, and VA Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Health Dr. Robert L. Jesse, co-authored a related commentary to the study, “Building Human Capital: Discovery, Learning and Professional Satisfaction,” also published in the August issue of Academic Medicine. To read the article and commentary, go to <http://journals.lww.com/academicmedicine>. To learn about VA Research visit www.research.va.gov. Article taken from www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/.

VA Launches Childcare Pilot

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced the launch of free, drop-in childcare service centers at three VA medical centers to an audience of more than 700 participants attending the Fifth National Summit on Women Veterans’ Issues July 15–17 at the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill.

“We know that many Veterans, particularly women Veterans, are the primary care takers of young children,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “We want these Veterans to have the opportunity to access the high-quality health care that VA offers, and we believe that these childcare centers will make it easier for Veteran caregivers to visit VA.”

The pilot centers are part of VA’s continuing effort to improve access to health care for eligible Veterans, particularly the growing number of women Veterans. Congress established this childcare initiative as part of the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 which was signed by the President in May 2010. The three sites and childcare details include:

- Northport, NY: 30 child capacity, 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., ages 6 weeks to 12 years
- Tacoma, WA: Varying capacity, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., ages 6 weeks to 10 years
- Buffalo, NY: 6 to 10 child capacity, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., ages 6 weeks to 12 years

All the pilot childcare centers will be operated onsite by licensed childcare providers. Drop-in services are offered free to Veterans who are eligible for VA care and visiting a facility for an appointment.

In a survey, VA found that nearly a third of Veterans were interested in childcare services and more than 10 percent had to cancel or reschedule VA appointments due to lack of childcare.

This pilot program will benefit both men and women Veterans. Development of the pilot program was facilitated by the Women Veterans Health Strategic Health Care Group, which strives to make positive changes in the provision of care for all women Veterans.

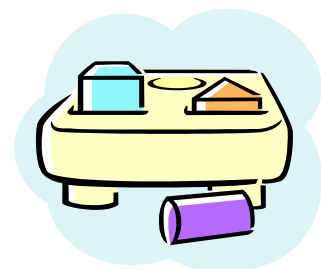
“While the number of women Veterans continues to grow, they use VA for health care proportionately less than male Veterans,” said Patricia Hayes, Chief Consultant of the VA’s Women Veterans Health Strategic Health Care Group. “We hope that by offering safe, secure childcare while the Veteran attends a doctor’s appointment or therapy session, we will enable more women Veterans to take advantage of the VA benefits to which they are entitled.”

Women Veterans are one of the fastest growing segments of the Veteran population. Of the 22.7 million living Veterans, more than 1.8 million are women. They comprise nearly 8 percent of the total Veteran population and 6 percent of all Veterans who use VA health care services.

VA estimates women Veterans will constitute 10 percent of the Veteran population by 2020 and 9.5 percent of VA patients.

For more information about VA programs and services for women Veterans, please visit:

www.va.gov/womenvet and www.publichealth.va.gov/womenshealth. Article taken from www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/.



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.

13-Sep Ft. Hood, TX Military.com	22-Sep Patrick AFB, FL Military.com	29-Sep Beaufort, SC CivilianJobs.com	12-Oct Waldolf, MD JobZone Online.com	20-Oct Atlanta, GA recruitmilitary.com
15-Sep Elizabeth City, KY- JobZone Online.com	22-Sep Cincinnati, OH recruitmilitary.com	29-Sep Denver, CO recruitmilitary.com	13-Oct Ft. Dix, NJ CivilianJobs.com	20-Oct Kansas City, KS recruitmilitary.com
15-Sep Foxborough recruitmilitary.com	22-Sep New York, NY recruitmilitary.com	5-Oct Ft. Bragg, NC Military.com	13-Oct Chicago, IL recruitmilitary.com	21-Oct Columbus, GA JobZone Online.com
15-Sep Ft. Polk, LA CivilianJobs.com	23-Sep Tampa, FL Military.com	6-Oct Raleigh, NC Military.com	13-Oct Phoenix, AZ recruitmilitary.com	26-Oct Andrews AFB, MD mwejobs.maryland.gov
16-Sep Springfield, VA corporatgray.com	23-Sep King George, VA JobZone Online.com	6-Oct Ft. Benning, GA CivilianJobs.com	18-Oct Huntsville, AL Military.com	27-Oct Ft. Bragg, NC CivilianJobs.com
21-Sep Ft. Sam Houston, TX Hiring Heroes: Ty Redmond 703-696-6239	27-Sep Washington, DC moaa.org/careerfair	6-Oct Pittsburgh, PA recruitmilitary.com	19-Oct Birmingham, AL JobZone Online.com	27-Oct Jacksonville, FL recruitmilitary.com
	28-Sep Ft. Stewart, GA CivilianJobs.com	6-Oct Los Angeles, CA 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>.

Commemorate! (cont. from page 1)

Reflecting the rich cultural diversity of the American people, Hispanic Americans have shaped and strengthened our country. As members of the Armed Forces, brave Hispanic men and women have fought and died to defend the United States in every war since the American Revolution, many serving before becoming American citizens. Hispanics have contributed to all aspects of our national life, from the Supreme Court and halls of Congress to police officers, first responders, teachers and mentors who protect our neighborhoods and guide young people. Several famous firsts for Hispanic Americans: In 2009, Judge Sonia Sotomayor became the first Supreme Court Justice of the United States; U.S. Army General Richard E. Cavazos became the Army's first Hispanic four-star general in 1982; in 1991, Ellen Ochoa became the first female Hispanic astronaut; and, in 1975, Rita Moreno became the first Hispanic American (and the second person ever) to have won an Oscar, a Grammy, a Tony, and an Emmy award.

During the months of September and October, we pause to celebrate the vast contributions these more than 48 million individuals have made to our Nation—from its inception to its latest chapters. We are also proud of our Hispanic leaders and employees in VA. We will continue to enhance our recruitment outreach and retention efforts to ensure there are no barriers to the full participation in the VA workforce of this important segment of our society.

Federal agencies, including VA, are striving to recruit qualified Hispanics to apply for our vacant positions. VA's employment of Hispanics increased from 6.50 percent at the end of fiscal year (FY) 2009 to 6.75 percent at the end of FY 2010. Hispanic men have a lower than expected participation rate at the GS 12–14 pay levels and Hispanic women have a low participation rate at the GS 12–SES pay levels. Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month is not enough. Human resources and equal employment staff stand ready to work with VA's hiring officials to ensure that barriers to employment and promotion are identified and addressed. For additional information on VA's Hispanic Employment Program, contact Andy Gonzalez at <Andy.Gonzalez@va.gov>.

The VA Central Office Hispanic Heritage Month Committee will be hosting a cultural fair on Thursday, October 13, 2011,

at noon in the G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery's Conference Center, room 230. For more information, contact Tiffany Lewis at 202-461-7911 or <Tiffany.Lewis@va.gov>.

NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

Join the Nation in the observance of Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM) this October. Some form of this observance has been recognized nationally, under various names and styles, since 1945, when Congress enacted Public Law 176, designating the first week in October for a disability observance. The purpose of this observance is to heighten public awareness about the skills and talents of workers with disabilities.

The theme for DEAM 2011 is "Profit by Investing in Workers with Disabilities." It promotes the valuable contributions people with disabilities make to America's workplaces and economy. This observance honors the contributions of workers with disabilities and serves as a reminder that they represent a highly skilled talent pool that can contribute to the mission of any organization.

Facilities can celebrate by seeking qualified applicants from VA's own Veterans Employment Coordination Service,

Disabled Veterans of America, Paralyzed Veterans of America, and other organizations serving people with disabilities.

It has been over 21 years since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act which covers Federal agencies in its Title I on employment, and 38 years since the passage of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which requires

Federal agencies to hire people with disabilities and provide reasonable accommodation. [**Continued on the next page.**]



Commemorate (cont. from previous page)

However, people with targeted disabilities are still a very small part of the Federal work force. This group is estimated to have a 70 percent unemployment rate. According to a Government Accountability Office report, the most significant barrier keeping people with disabilities from the workplace is attitudinal bias against this group and low expectations for people with disabilities—a focus on disabilities rather than abilities. Another significant barrier is a lack of knowledge regarding applicable policies and procedures. The key to improving employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities is to eliminate bias and negative attitudes through education and sharing best practices, such as non-competitive appointment of people with targeted disabilities. DEAM is an opportunity for each facility to do this.

In celebration of DEAM, we invite employees to update their disability status through the Standard Form 256 (SF-256), Self-Identification of Disability. This form offers federal employees the opportunity to report a disability. The completed forms are protected by the Privacy Act and are shredded once the data is entered into the VA database. There are two databases; the one with names can be accessed by only a few people. The other one does not connect the name with the disability. The information helps VA allocate resources to the Centralized Fund that reimburses VA offices for the cost of disability accommodations.

FAST FACT:
VA ranks first among non-Defense agencies in the hiring of Disabled Veterans.

Everyone is encouraged to participate in DEAM. Information on VA's Disability Program initiatives can be found on the VA's disability Web page at www.diversity.va.gov/programs/pwd.aspx. Regardless of how we celebrate, we all need to play an important part in fostering a more inclusive America, one where every person is recognized for his or her abilities every day of every month. Celebrate Disability Employment Awareness Month—hire a qualified person with a targeted disability.

The 2011 VACO National Disability Employment Awareness Month Committee will host this year's kick-off observance on Thursday, October 6, 2011, at noon in the G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery's Conference Center, room 230. Chris Finn, Head Coach of the U.S. National Power Soccer Team, will be the guest speaker. Power soccer is a fast-paced sport designed for people with disabilities using power wheelchairs, similar to outdoor soccer. On October 13, 2007, Chris led the team to win the first ever World Cup in Tokyo, Japan. For more information, contact Tiffany Lewis at 202-461-7911 or Tiffany.Lewis@va.gov.

Union Agreement Allows Non-Competitive Appointments

There has been some confusion on the subject of hiring and promoting persons with targeted disabilities and other Schedule A applicants when a position has been identified as a competitive vacancy. According to the "Master Agreement between the Department of Veterans Affairs and the American Federation of Government Employees," Article 23, sections 6 and 7, Schedule A applicants can be considered for a competitive position and hired without announcing the position, providing they meet all the eligibility requirements for the vacancy. These individuals can also be considered and hired after the position has been announced.

Although competitive vacancies are typically announced within a facility, this is not required if the hiring official has reviewed and will hire an applicant with a disability, especially a candidate with a targeted disability. In this situation, the vacancy does not need to be advertised internally or externally. Further, Schedule A applicants can also be considered for promotion and reinstatement under Article 23 providing all other requirements for promotion are met by the applicant.

When there is a conflict between the local collective bargaining agreement and VA policy, federal law supersedes both and should be used as the final authority to resolve policy issues dealing with the hiring of persons with disabilities and other Schedule A candidates. Understanding this principle will help VA facilities meet the Secretary's two percent goal for hires of individuals with targeted disabilities. For more information on VA's Disability Program, visit www.diversity.va.gov/programs/pwd.aspx.

Telework as Accommodation

Fall and winter are approaching, and with Disability Employment Awareness Month in October, it is only appropriate to discuss the use of telework as a reasonable accommodation during inclement weather for an employee with a disability. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (Title 42 CFR § 12101), telework may be used as a reasonable accommodation for employees with disabilities. In this type of telework, the basic objective remains the same: To perform and maintain agency functions from an alternate location. For most teleworkers, working at home is a convenience. For an employee with a disability that is adversely affected by inclement weather, telework during inclement weather is more than a convenience; it is a vital solution/accommodation.

Inclement weather can cause serious hardship for employees with many different kinds of disabilities. Some issues are readily apparent, such as snow causing wheelchairs to be painful and difficult—if not impossible—to use. But many more adverse effects are not so obvious—such as those to employees with respiratory or circulatory problems, those who use canes or walkers, those who have symptoms that are aggravated by extreme cold, to name only a few. During inclement weather, it does not serve the Administration or the employee if the employee is in the office, but they are unable to be productive because the commute was so strenuous.

Telework can improve performance and productivity by reducing the physical strain caused by commuting. Commuting during inclement weather can cause excessive fatigue, pain, and stress, all of which adversely affects the employee's ability to perform job functions. By teleworking, the employee will be able to conserve energy and use it to complete job tasks and better serve the Department. In some cases, requests for annual and sick leave could possibly be reduced.

If you have a disability, you are encouraged to consider if your job is suitable for telework. To determine suitability, employees with disabilities should ask themselves: Does my job contain the kind of work that I can perform at an alternate worksite? Am I able to be productive when working from home? Even if an employee is normally required to be at the office to interact with clients, there may be work that can be done from home on days when the weather is severe. When considering telework as a reasonable accommodation during inclement weather, it is not necessary to be as strict in evaluating position suitability if this is expected to be an occasional situation.

For an employee with a disability to telework during inclement weather the process is to first determine position suitability. If the job is suitable for telework, or will permit occasional telework, the employee must make a formal request for accommodation (VA Form 0857a). With this request, the employee needs to include VA Form 0740a, Telework Proposal, and VA Form 0740b, Telework Self-Certification Safety Checklist Work-at-Home. The employee must also complete telework training available via the Learning Management System. Once the request is approved, the Telework Agreement must be in writing. If telework will only be during inclement weather, the agreement should define the type of weather that will trigger the telework.

Please remember, before any request for reasonable accommodation is denied, the National Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator in ODI or the Office of General/Regional Counsel in the facility's geographic area MUST be consulted. Additional guidance and policy from the Office of Personnel Management (41 CFR § 102-74.590) is available at www.telework.gov/Guidance_and_Legislation/Telework_Legislation/index.aspx. The basis for any success—including a reasonable accommodation of telework during inclement weather—is ongoing and effective communication.

For more information on VA's Disability Program, visit www.diversity.va.gov/programs/pwd.aspx.



HR's Role in VA's Disability Program

At VA's 2011 HR Conference, Christy Compton, VA's Disability Program Manager (DPM) presented a plenary session on "HR's Role in VA's Disability Program," which covered the new requirements from the Office of Personnel Management as well as barriers to hiring and retaining individuals with targeted disabilities in VA. She also presented two workshops; one was on the Schedule A appointment authority for non-competitive hiring of people with disabilities, and the other was on "Reasonable Accommodation." Schedule A can be used for any Title 5 position; an application can be given to the hiring official and if the official wishes to hire the individual, HR can process the hire without announcing the vacancy. Reasonable accommodation for applicants and employees with disabilities is required by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. Both topics need more exposure in VA as we reach for Secretary Shinseki's two percent hiring goal to improve our employment and retention of individuals with severe disabilities. For more information on training in these areas, visit <www.diversity.va.gov/programs/pwd.aspx>.

Homeless Veterans Supported Employment

By Sharon Crowder

In the spring of 2010, the CO Operations Office of Therapeutic and Supported Employment Services (TSES), in collaboration with the CO Homeless Program Office, began planning for the roll out and implementation of the Homeless Veterans Supported Employment (HVSE) program at all VHA facilities, as part of the Secretary's five year plan to end homelessness among Veterans. This service is designed to provide supported employment services to Veterans who are receiving services from VHA Homeless programs with an objective of individualized job development and job supports for homeless Veterans to assist them in gaining and maintaining competitive employment.

With the support of the office of the Under Secretary for Health, the central feature of the Homeless Veterans Supported Employment program was the initial decision that the vocational services should be provided by Veterans who were themselves currently or formerly homeless and who had significant disabilities. The hiring mechanism utilized was the excepted service Schedule A non-competitive hiring authority for hiring people with disabilities. National Position Descriptions were developed for GS 5, 7 or 9 Vocational Rehabilitation Specialists, classified and disseminated to the field Compensated Work Therapy programs.

Throughout the process the VA Disability Program, Division of Outreach and Retention, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Department of Veterans Affairs was instrumental in providing guidance as to how to proceed with a large scale hiring initiative using Schedule A as well as the November 9, 2009 Executive Order regarding the hiring of Veterans in the Federal Government. Education was provided to TSES and Human Resources field staff on the Schedule A hiring authority, and as questions arose, they received immediate responses as well as advocacy when necessary.

Appropriate Veteran candidates for these Vocational Rehabilitation Specialists (VRSs) were identified by VA Homeless Program Managers and Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) Managers and uniform documents were disseminated to the field, including a Schedule A certification document, crediting and interview documents, appointment letters and training plans. Numerous trainings were provided to CWT and Homeless Managers through multiple conference calls and Human Resources staff at local VA facilities were invited to participate. Human Resources staff members were trained through the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Candidate names were provided to Human Resources for hiring.

In January of 2011 hiring of the 400 VRS positions began and proceeded at a rapid pace. As questions or potential roadblocks arose additional training and guidance was provided both to the CWT and Homeless Program managers and to the station Human Resources staff. As of July 15, 2011, 333 VRSs have been hired as VA employees through the Schedule A hiring authority. These new hires are now providing employment support to Veterans who have experienced homelessness as an integral component of VA's initiative to end Homelessness among Veterans. The combination of education and guidance, ongoing support, and the decision to hire Veterans with disabilities to serve other Veterans has resulted in a significant accomplishment in the hiring of Veterans with disabilities.

Compliance Corner

WORKPLACE HARASSMENT

At VA, the most frequent EEO claim filed by employees is a hostile work environment/harassment. Exactly what constitutes a hostile work environment under Federal discrimination laws? For harassment to be considered discriminatory, it must be severe or pervasive. The following factors are considered in determining whether a work environment is hostile: (1) whether the conduct in question is verbal or physical, or both; (2) whether the conduct was repeated, and if so, how frequently; (3) whether the conduct was hostile or patently offensive; (4) whether the alleged harasser was a supervisor or a coworker; (5) whether more than one person joined in the harassment; and (6) whether the harassment was directed at more than one individual.

The conduct in question is evaluated from the standpoint of a reasonable person, taking into account the particular context in which it occurred. Conduct that is not severe or pervasive enough to create an objectively hostile or abusive environment—an environment that a reasonable person would find hostile or abusive—will not be found to be discriminatory under Federal discrimination laws.

Under Federal law, harassment consists of personal slurs or other denigrating or insulting verbal or physical conduct relating to an individual's membership in one or more protected classes such as gender, race, national origin, religion, disability, etc. Harassment consists of conduct which is not job-related, which is hostile or abusive, which is inappropriate in the work environment, and is unnecessary to the proper functioning of a work unit. Examples of harassment include epithets; slurs; negative stereotyping; gestures or other actions which are threatening, intimidating or hostile; physical abuse; racial or ethnic jokes; and written or graphic material that is posted or circulated in the workplace.

Harassment does NOT consist of dissatisfaction with a supervisor in connection with job-related matters, job-related events that an employee finds objectionable, normal stress associated with work, or the belief that job-related events are "harassing" in nature because they are motivated by discriminatory intent or bias.

In a recent decision, an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) administrative judge found that VA created a hostile work environment, based on an employee's race and gender, when his supervisor referred to him and his coworkers as "the Three Stooges." She wrote, "While the term is not on its face a racially derogatory term and standing alone would be insufficient to establish a hostile work environment, in the context of [the supervisor's] comment, she said it to the only three African-American employees in the pharmacy, she never labeled any other employees with this name, and she made the comment on the heels of several fact-finding sessions with the complainant—any reasonable person in complainant's situation would have found it racially offensive."

The EEOC administrative judge further found that the employee was harassed when: his supervisor singled him out and yelled at him, and broke a pen in a threatening manner when he tried to talk to her; he received an unsuccessful performance rating; and he was detailed to a clerical position with nothing to do, denied overtime, and issued a proposed termination.

At the hearing, the supervisor could not recall the alleged name calling, but other witnesses testified they heard her refer to the complainant and his coworkers as "the Three Stooges." The other incidents alleged by the employee were witnessed by his coworkers. The EEOC administrative judge concluded that the supervisor did not substantiate her testimony that she did not single out the complainant regarding his work performance. She further determined that other employees who experienced the same performance issues as the complainant were neither counseled nor disciplined. ~Maxanne R. Witkin, Director, VA's Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication





ODI on the Internet

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.va.gov that can help leverage diversity and build inclusion:

- ▶ Hispanic Heritage Month, Disability Employment Awareness Month, and other special observance resources.
- ▶ Training resources, guides, and reports.
- ▶ Links to professional and community organizations.

DIVERSITY@WORK

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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

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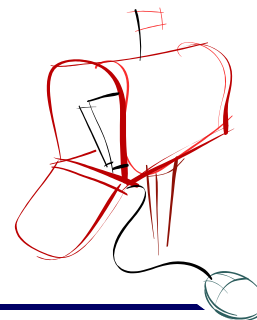
VHA Office of Diversity & Inclusion Community of Practice
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GOT NEWS?

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.

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.va.gov/products/newslink.aspx.



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.va.gov/products/dn.aspx.

From the 2011 Diversity Calendar

www.diversity.va.gov/calendar/default.aspx

SEPTEMBER

National Hispanic Heritage Month
September 15–October 15

OCTOBER

National Disability Employment Awareness Month
Polish-American Heritage Month
Italian-American Heritage Month
German-American Heritage Month
National Work and Family Month

DeafNation Expo

October 8; Pleasanton, CA
October 15; Portland, OR
<http://deafnation.com/deafnationexpo>

VA Central Office (VACO) Hispanic Heritage Month Cultural Fair

October 13, noon; Washington, DC
G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery
Veterans Conference Center, Room 230

Federal Asian Pacific American Council One Day Leadership/Career Advancement Training Seminar

October 14; Washington, DC
www.cvent.com/d/qcqx9

Disability Mentoring Day

October 19
www.aapd.com/DMD

VACO VHA Chief Business Office's Second Annual Diversity and Inclusion Event
October 20

Conflict Resolution Day
October 20

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs' Second Annual Alternative Dispute Resolution Excellence and Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Awards Ceremony
October 21, 1 pm; Washington, DC
VACO G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery
Veterans Conference Center, Room 230
(Live Broadcast on the VA Knowledge Network)

Society for Human Resource Management Diversity & Inclusion Conference & Exposition
October 24–26; Washington, DC
www.shrm.org/Conferences/Diversity/Pages/default.aspx

Out & Equal Workplace Advocates Workplace Summit
October 25–28; Dallas, TX
<http://outandequal.org>
<http://chcoc.gov/transmittals/TransmittalDetails.aspx?TransmittalID=4304>

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities 25th Annual Conference
October 29–31; San Antonio, TX
www.hacu.net