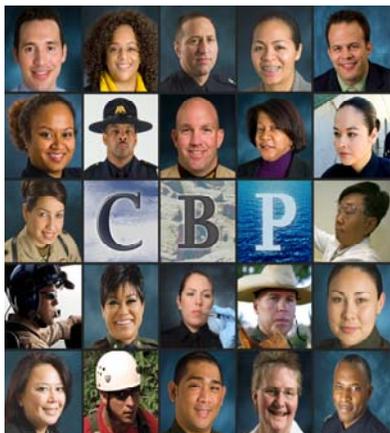


# DCR News

Office of Diversity and Civil Rights (DCR) Quarterly e-Newsletter

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## Providing Reasonable Accommodations for Individuals With Disabilities

CBP is committed to providing reasonable accommodation for its employees and applicants for employment in order to ensure that qualified individuals with disabilities enjoy full access to equal employment opportunity, unless a particular accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the operation of CBP's programs. To demonstrate this commitment, on May 4, 2012, Acting Commissioner David Aguilar signed CBP Directive Number 51713-007A on [Reasonable Accommodation for Applicants and Employees with Disabilities](#). The Directive outlines CBP's general process for providing individuals with disabilities with the adjustments or alterations needed to complete the application process, perform job duties, or enjoy benefits and privileges of employment.

This is how the process works. When an employee with a disability needs an accommodation, he or she makes a request either orally or in writing to his or her immediate supervisor, another supervisor or manager in his/her chain of command, or to a DCR staff member. All requests for reasonable accommodations must be communicated to the servicing DCR Officer. Upon receipt, the DCR Officer is trained to facilitate an interactive discussion between employee and supervisor, or designated management official, to determine how the employee's disability impacts his or her ability to perform job functions or access benefits or privileges of employment, and what accommodations may be effective under the individual circumstances.

If a medical assessment is required, it is reviewed to determine whether the information submitted is sufficient to establish the existence of a disability under the law. In all instances, the accommodation provided must be

reasonable and effective; however, it does not have to be the employee's preferred choice.

If the only accommodation that can be provided is a reassignment to an alternate position, the employee will be asked to submit a resume so that a job search can be performed by the Office of Human Resources (HRM) to identify vacant funded positions for which the employee qualifies within his or her medical restrictions. If an accommodation cannot be granted, management will deny the request. However, if the employee disagrees with the decision, she or he may file an appeal with the Executive Director, DCR. In addition, an employee may file a discrimination complaint.

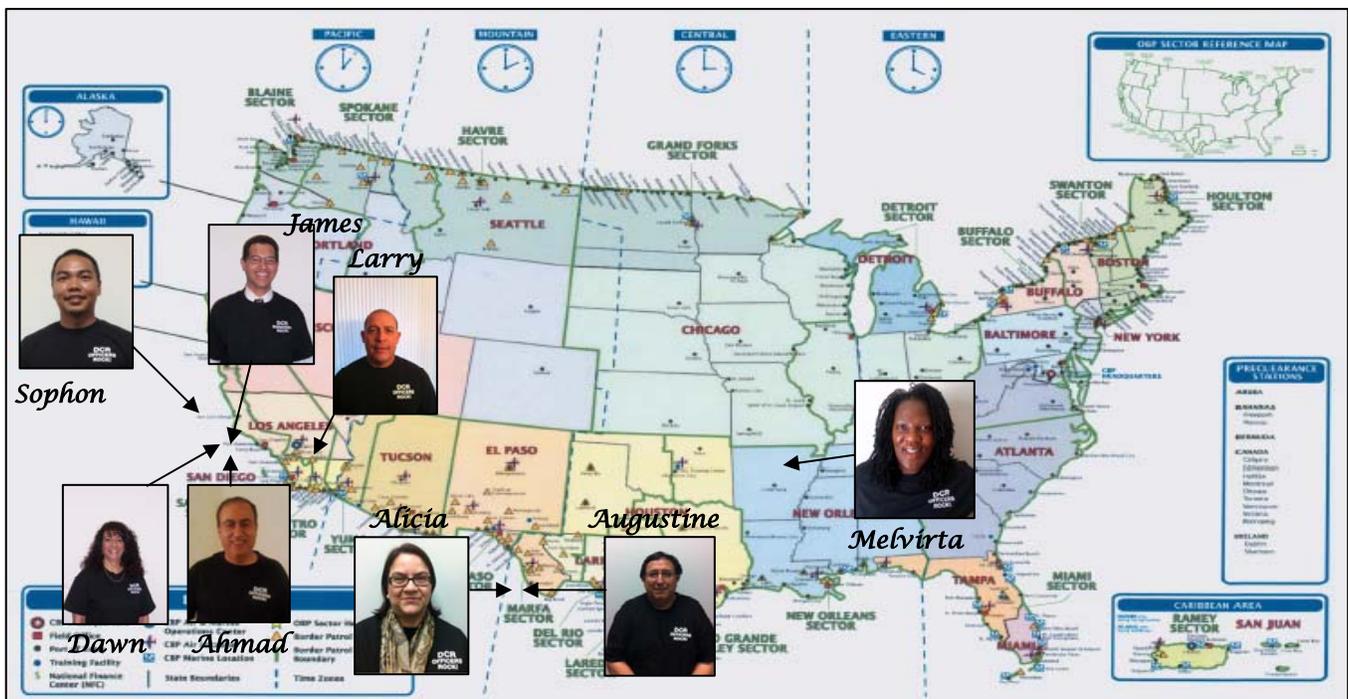
For additional information, please contact your [local DCR Officer](#) or visit the DCR webpage [How to Request Reasonable Accommodation](#).

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## Spotlight on DCR Field Team

The field Diversity and Civil Rights (DCR) Officers are strategically located throughout the country to provide more effective servicing to the local Field Offices, Sectors, Office of Air Marine locations, and other mission support offices. We would like to spotlight one of the three teams in the field in an effort to allow CBP employees an opportunity to get to know some of the field DCR staff. One team is led by James Lucero, Assistant Director, Field Operations. Mr. Lucero chose to spotlight his team and explained, “I am so fortunate to have such a talented, educated and diverse group of individuals on my team. Each member of the team is passionate about the work they do, and the team draws on the strengths of each other to constantly improve the services we provide and the manner in which we provide them.” The members of his team come from different backgrounds, cultures, religions, and even countries; many possess graduate degrees in various disciplines, and some are certified mediators. Lucero added, “They are the ones who are on the ground trying to lead the efforts to plan diversity and inclusion events, educate the workforce, remain neutral, and resolve issues quickly to return the focus back on the CBP mission!”



The members of Mr. Lucero’s team are:

- Dawn Balanky-Dawson is a DCR Officer located in San Diego, California, and joined CBP in February 2009. Prior to CBP, Ms. Balanky-Dawson worked for the California Department of Rehabilitation as a Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor.
- Augustine Bill is a DCR Officer located in Laredo, Texas, and joined CBP in April 2006. Before joining CBP, Mr. Bill held positions as an EEO Manager, EEO Specialist/Team Leader, and EEO Specialist for various Department of the Army locations and Headquarters.
- Alicia Davila is a DCR Officer located in Laredo, Texas, and joined DCR in 2004. Ms. Davila joined CBP (then U.S. Customs Service) in 1985 and served as Customs Inspector and Import Specialist, and she served as a collateral duty EEO Counselor prior to joining DCR.

- James Lucero is an Assistant Director, Field Operations, is located in San Diego, California, and joined CBP in February 2010. Prior to joining CBP, Mr. Lucero held positions as a Senior Equal Employment Specialist, Training Officer, Human Resources Specialist, and Program Analyst with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).
- Melvirta Marshall is a DCR Officer located in Atlanta, Georgia, and joined CBP in 2007. Before joining CBP, Ms. Marshall served as a Supervisory Revenue Officer with the U.S. Department of the Treasury. In addition to being a DCR Officer, Ms. Marshall served as an Investigator of formal EEO complaints.
- Sophon Shadraconis is a DCR Specialist located in Long Beach, California, and joined CBP in July 2012. Prior to joining CBP, Mr. Shadraconis served as a visiting graduate professor, a Company Commander and Training Department Head in the US Navy Reserve, and a Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge.
- Larry White is a DCR Officer located in Tucson, Arizona, and joined DCR in 1999. Mr. White joined CBP (then U.S. Customs Service) in 1995 and served as a Customs Inspector prior to joining DCR. Mr. White worked in the oil and gas industry prior to joining CBP.
- Ahmad Zadah is a DCR Officer located in Chula Vista, California, and joined CBP in July 2005. Before joining CBP Mr. Zadah held positions as an EEO Specialist and Project Manager with the U.S. Department of Energy, and he served as a collateral duty EEO Counselor and EEO Committee member prior to joining CBP.

For a complete list of DCR Officers and the areas they service, please go to the CBPnet and click on the “Office of Diversity and Civil Rights” on the left side, or follow this link <http://cbpnet/xp/cbpnet/oc/eoo/>.

## Profile of the New York DCR Office



The Office of Diversity and Civil Rights (DCR) in New York is staffed by DCR Officer Lenard Angevine, DCR Specialist Sheila Ferrufino, and DCR Specialist Geoffrey Stephens. The DCR Office is located at One Penn Plaza, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York City. The area of responsibility is Southern New York and Northern New Jersey, which includes the New York Field Office Headquarters in New York City, John F. Kennedy International Airport in Jamaica, New York, and the New York/Newark Port of Entry located in Newark, New Jersey. Personnel in the local areas assigned to various U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Headquarter Offices are also part of the servicing workforce. This totals over 2,600 CBP personnel.

In support of CBP’s diversity and inclusion mission to recruit, retain, and develop a diverse, high-performing workforce that draws from all segments of society and values fairness, diversity and inclusion, the DCR New York Field Office engages in diversity and inclusion program planning and community outreach. The Diversity and Inclusion Program Committees (DIPC) have an important role in promoting inclusion, engagement of employees, and support of career development. There are three DIPC’s in New York, which are comprised of 17 CBP employees, both uniformed and non-uniformed. Their participation in recruitment events, such as Big East College Fair, Women for Hire, and Harlem Week as well as guest lectures by the DCR Officer at Pace University, Manhattan, New York and Monroe College, New Rochelle, New York, support the effort to seek out qualified and diverse applicants for employment with CBP.

During the past fiscal year, DIPC activities included celebration of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Month, Jewish Heritage Month, Veterans Appreciation Day, and Family Heritage Month. DCR community outreach activities for individuals with disabilities included participation in practice interviews at Abilities Incorporated, a national organization for persons with disabilities and participation in a career fair held at Fort Hamilton in Brooklyn, New York, to recruit military veterans with disabilities. The work of the New York DCR Office also includes delivering EEO counseling services and facilitating the processing of religious and disability accommodation requests.

The success in promoting workforce diversity and inclusion in New York is not attributed to just one office, but rather several CBP entities located at the New York Field Headquarters at One Penn Plaza including the Office of Field Operations – New York Field Office, the Office of Human Resources Management, and the Office of Public Affairs.

## **DCR and OIT’s Section 508 Team Continue Commitment to Making CBP More Accessible by Renewing Their Partnership!**

The Office of Diversity and Civil Rights (DCR) and the Office of Information Technology (OIT) Section 508 team are renewing their commitment to making CBP more accessible. DCR and the Section 508 team began their partnership in FY 2010 to bring awareness to CBP employees regarding Section 508 standards and their role in ensuring compliance. Further, the group found there was a fertile opportunity for both offices to educate their staff on the expectations for addressing and reporting on the status of Reasonable Accommodations.

DCR and the Section 508 Team collaborated to address both issues and produced *Diversity and Inclusion Program Partnership Possibilities Regarding Section 508 Compliance and Awareness*, an issue paper that laid out the goals of the partnership and tasks to achieve the goals. During the past two years, DCR staff was trained on the basics of 508 compliance; both offices wrote articles about reasonable accommodation and Section 508 that were published on OIT’s website, DCR’s Newsletter, and Manager’s E-Tips; new Directions for Completion (DFC) for reasonable accommodations included a section for requests for assistive technology; and weekly formal and informal meetings between DCR and

the Section 508 team were held to coordinate and track task completion.

Despite this progress, the Section 508 team and DCR felt that more could be done to bring greater awareness to Section 508 issues and the reasonable accommodation process. Thus, the teams decided to renew their partnership and create new goals and tasks for completion during FY 2013 through FY 2014. The *Section 508 Collaboration Plan for FY 2013 through FY 2014* is designed to invigorate ongoing efforts between the two offices and to bring greater awareness to CBP’s Section 508 compliance issues and the reasonable accommodation process throughout CBP.

The Collaboration Plan sets forth the following goals:

- Explore additional training avenues;
- Create a 508 Accessibility Compliance Self Inspection Program;
- Create standard operating procedures for addressing and reporting on requests for reasonable accommodation as it relates to Section 508 accommodations;
- Research and evaluate efficient and cost effective methods of captioning diversity and inclusion programs; and
- Increase OIT Section 508 Team involvement in Diversity and Inclusion Month observances.

COMING SOON



**Operation  
No One  
Left  
Behind**

 U.S. Customs and  
Border Protection | Office of Diversity and Civil Rights

For suggestions, ideas and questions about the e-Newsletter please send a message to [EEOSuggestionBox@cbp.dhs.gov](mailto:EEOSuggestionBox@cbp.dhs.gov).