



## Message from the DAS

### Inside:

**Field Notes** | [Page 2](#)  
**Training** | [Page 2](#)  
**WRP** | [Page 5](#)  
**VACO Notes** | [Page 5](#)  
**Accommodation Myths** | [Page 6](#)  
**Policy Alerts** | [Page 7](#)  
**Demographics Report** | [Page 8](#)  
**Calendar** | [Page 9](#)

### Bookmarks:

**National Image Inc.**  
<http://www.national-image.org>  
**Italian American War Veterans of the United States**  
<http://www.itamvets.org>  
**National Amputation Foundation, Inc.**  
<http://www.nationalamputation.org>  
**Polish Legion of American Veterans**  
<http://www.plav.org>

**Do you have an EEO complaint? Contact the Office of Resolution Management at (888) 737-3361 within 45 days of alleged incident.**

The holidays are nearly upon us and we look forward to celebrating the many festive traditions of the season. In addition to our many cultural and religious observances, this time of year also commemorates many other important historical observances in the diversity and inclusion arena, such as: Rosa Parks Day and World AIDS Day, both on December 1; International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 3; National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day on December 7; Human Rights Day on December 10 and Human Rights Week December 10–17; and Bill of Rights Day on December 15. Read more about some of these observances below.



Georgia Coffey

With the holidays come the expectations of holiday décor around our VA workplaces. While we encourage all to enjoy this festive time, we would like to remind our *Diversity@Work* readers of VA Directive 0022, Religious Symbols in Holiday Displays in VA Facilities. We want to ensure that we are sensitive and respectful to all our diverse customs and that all our employees feel included during this special time. To this end, this directive ensures that holiday displays in public areas of VA facilities do not favor one religious faith group over another and do not appear to be an official endorsement of religion. This will also ensure that displays are made with knowledge of and sensitivity to our Nation's diverse religious traditions. VA recognizes the cultural and spiritual significance of religious symbols in holiday celebrations and many symbols may be included in a holiday display in a public area of a VA facility if the display does not favor one religion over another and conveys a primarily secular message. By placing diverse holiday symbols together in the public places of its facilities, VA gives no preference to one holiday above another. Secular messages such as "Happy Holidays" or "Seasons Greetings" are festive and appropriate ways of celebrating the season without favoring or excluding any of our diverse employees. Please note that this policy does not govern displays for religious services in VA chapels or in employees' workspaces that are not generally accessible to the public. To read the complete directive, visit VA Publications Web page on the VA intranet.

Workforce diversity and inclusion are critical components of a 21st century VA. Creating and sustaining a diverse, inclusive, and productive workforce rests with all employees at all levels within the organization. We wish you the happiest and warmest of holidays from our ODI family to yours! See you in 2013! ~Georgia Coffey, VA Deputy Assistant Secretary for Diversity and Inclusion

## Commemorate

### Human Rights Day and Human Rights Week

VA joins the Nation in commemorating Human Rights Day on December 10 and Human Rights Week December 10–17. With the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 1948, the United Nations General Assembly affirmed the eternal truths that all people have the right to liberty, equality, and justice under the law. On Human Rights Day and during Human Rights Week, we celebrate our fundamental freedoms and renew our commitment to upholding and advancing human dignity.

The human race reflects a myriad of vibrant cultures and unique identities, yet we are united by the innate liberties that are our common birthright. The rights to assemble peacefully, to speak and worship as we please, and to determine our own destinies know no borders. All people should live free from the threat of extrajudicial killing, torture, oppression, and discrimination, regardless of gender, race, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, or physical or mental disability.

Dictators seek to constrain these liberties through repressive laws and blunt force, but hope cannot be imprisoned and aspirations cannot be killed. **Continued on page 4.**

# Field Notes

## **Hispanic Employment Program Managers National Teleconference December 17**

The next Hispanic Employment Program Managers (HEPM) teleconference will be held Monday, December 17, from 3 to 4:15 p.m. (EST). If you are in Washington, DC, you may attend the session in person in the ODI Conference Room (1575 I Street NW, Suite 200) or you may participate via teleconference: 1 (800) 767-1750 (access code 70087). This month's teleconference will feature Mr. Sunny Li, a training consultant, who works within the field of industrial psychology with a special interest for leadership, diversity, and inclusion. Prior to joining the consulting industry, Mr. Li was a Marine infantry officer who served in three combat tours in the Middle East as a platoon commander, executive officer, and personal security detail commander. He is also a Purple Heart recipient from combat wounds while participating in operations in Fallujah, Iraq as a platoon commander. Mr. Li is currently working with ODI to create a state of the art virtual learning experience for VA managers and supervisors to help enable VA to become a more diverse and inclusive organization. Supervisory approval to attend this meeting is required. For more information, contact Arlene Gonzalez at [Arlene.Gonzalez2@va.gov](mailto:Arlene.Gonzalez2@va.gov).

## **2012 Leadership VA Alumni Association (LVAA) Annual Awards**

You are invited to submit nominations for the highly coveted 2012 LVAA Annual Awards. Nomination packages must be received by December 14, 2012. The categories are:

**Honorary Leadership Award:** Since 1993, LVAA has presented the Honorary Leadership Award to exceptional VA employees. This award recognizes individuals who have demonstrated extraordinary achievement in management and leadership throughout their careers. One award is given to an employee at the GS-13 through 15 including wage grade or equivalent Title 38 employees. A second award is given to an employee who is a member of the Senior Executive Service. The recipients are selected by a panel of the Board of Directors.

**Team Spirit Award:** In 2005 the LVAA Board of Directors established the Team Spirit Award to recognize the core value of teamwork. The award's focus is to recognize to a group of people whose ability to work together as a team to achieve outstanding program results. Previously established awards recognized individual achievement but failed to recognize the value of collaborative efforts and the value of synergy to the mission of the agency.

**Academic Scholarship Award:** In 2006, the LVAA presented the Academic Scholarship Award. Eligibility for the award is limited to Department employees at the GS-12 level and below, including wage grade and equivalent Title 38 employees. The \$2,000 award is given to the recipients' college or university to be used for tuition.

**Exemplary Service Award:** Since 1998, the LVAA has presented its Exemplary Service Award to employees demonstrating exceptional potential for increased leadership and managerial responsibilities through their performance while carrying out the VA's mission. Eligibility for the award is limited to Department employees at the GS-12 level and below, including wage grade and equivalent Title 38 employees. This award is given to deserving VA employees, one for an employee in the grade GS-1 through GS-8 and another for an employee in the grade GS-9 through GS-12.

All of the awards have been up-loaded to the Leadership Development Portal (LDP) at: <http://www.leaders4va.com/community/lva-home/lva-graduates/lvaa-awards>. Users will need to register for an LDP account in order to submit applications. Please upload your documents to the LDP or e-mail all documents to [Emma.Metcalf2@va.gov](mailto:Emma.Metcalf2@va.gov). **Continued on page 4.**

# Training

## **Introducing VSSC Training Online Registration**

ODI introduces the VHA Support Service Center (VSSC) Human Resources Reporting Tools training online registration. This interactive training is designed to alert a wide range of managers, human resource (HR) and equal employment opportunity specialists to VSSC's HR query applications. All managers have a duty to promote and ensure there is equal opportunity in the workplace with regard to who gets hired, who gets promoted, and how people are treated. This training provides guidance on how to properly use the applications to conduct various workforce analyses, analyze the workforce data, and define and distinguish between Relevant Civilian Labor Force vs. Civilian Labor Force. The next training classes, conducted via Live Meeting, will be offered on Wednesday, February 20, 2013, from 10 am to noon (EST). You can register by visiting [https://www.tms.va.gov/learning/user/deeplink\\_redirect.jsp?linkId=REGISTRATION&scheduleID=2569348](https://www.tms.va.gov/learning/user/deeplink_redirect.jsp?linkId=REGISTRATION&scheduleID=2569348). Spaces are available on first-come, first-serve basis. For questions or concerns, contact Ryan Pugh at [Ryan.Pugh2@va.gov](mailto:Ryan.Pugh2@va.gov) or (202) 461-4155 or David Williams at [David.E.Williams@va.gov](mailto:David.E.Williams@va.gov) or (202) 491-5579. **Continued on the next page.**

# Training (cont.)

## VA and Rural Veterans

Did you know about 3.4 million Veterans (about 41% of total) enrolled in the VA Health Care System live in rural or highly rural areas of the country? Men and women Veterans from geographically rural areas make up a disproportionate share of service members and comprise about 39% of the enrolled Veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan; many of who are returning to their rural communities. In order to better serve rural Veterans, the VA created the Office of Rural Health in 2007. Did you know this? If not, act now to view the Rural Health on demand events in MyVeHU Campus at <http://www.myvehucampus.com>. Sign in and search for "rural health." Continuing Education Units are available. For more information, contact the MyVeHU Campus Support Team at [support@myvehucampus.com](mailto:support@myvehucampus.com).

### IHR Connect! Broadcast Now Available

The IHR Connect! video broadcast and power point are a blended e-learning strategy to meet diverse learning needs! Six IHR Connect! videos are available on the Office of Human Resources Management intranet Web site:

- HRIS eOPF and PAID Updates
- HR Line of Business
- G.E.A.R.
- Veterans hiring
- Schedule A
- Student hiring

For more information, contact the IHR Connect! Team at [vahrconnect@va.gov](mailto:vahrconnect@va.gov).

### Learn to Better Connect with Veterans

Whether you have served or not, it may be difficult to fully comprehend our Veterans' sacrifices. Hear about their unique experiences to learn how you can improve your service to them in the new Connecting with Veterans course. Following the highly successful Military Cultural Awareness course, Connecting with Veterans is the latest addition to the Veterans Advocacy and Awareness suite of e-Learning courses.

This highly interactive and engaging course provides the opportunity to discover, through their own personal and diverse stories, what Veterans experienced as Servicemembers during the different military eras. You learn how those experiences may influence what they need from VA and from you. The course gives you the concrete tips and best practices for translating that understanding into outstanding service to Veterans and their families, no matter your job title.

The Connecting with Veterans course is available on TMS: [https://www.tms.va.gov/plateau/user/deeplink\\_redirect.jsp?linkId=ITEM\\_DETAILS&componentID=2084024&componentTypeID=VA&revisionDate=131956500000](https://www.tms.va.gov/plateau/user/deeplink_redirect.jsp?linkId=ITEM_DETAILS&componentID=2084024&componentTypeID=VA&revisionDate=131956500000).

For more information contact VALU at [VALU.Training@va.gov](mailto:VALU.Training@va.gov), or go to <http://www.valu.va.gov/Home/CareerPlanning> to find out more about the suite of Veterans Advocacy and Awareness courses.

### Diversity News: An Online Training Resource

The November/December 2012 edition of *Diversity News* features an interview with Rosa Franco, VA Deputy Assistant Secretary for Resolution Management.

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



### Section 508 Webinars

The Section 508 Program Office currently has two webinars: General Section 508 and Programming with Section 508 in Mind. The webinars have their own TMS number for self-certification. Details for self-certification will be given at the end of the webinars. General Section 508 should be a prerequisite before taking Programming with Section 508 in Mind.

The General Section 508 webinar (December 6, 10 am to noon, and December 11, 2 to 4 pm) will provide an overview of the law and its application to Electronic Information Technology (EIT) including the technical, functional, and documentation/support standards surrounding conformance to Section 508. VA employees attending the training session will learn more about VA's Section 508 Program Office and how it works to ensure that EIT products developed, procured, maintained, or used by the VA are Section 508 conformant.

If you develop any of the following, 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.

The Programming with Section 508 in Mind webinar (December 6, 2 to 4 pm, and December 11, 10 am to noon) will allow you to gain more insight into coding for accessibility from a programming perspective. This informative session will prepare you to:

- Define common accessibility issues;
- Define accessibility issues with dynamic content;
- Include the new W3C Accessible Rich Internet Applications specification in developing accessible dynamic content; and
- Identify tools available to validate your Web sites and applications.

Training is captioned. For more information, contact Vicki Leon at [Vicki.Leon@va.gov](mailto:Vicki.Leon@va.gov).

# Commemorate

[Continued from page 1.](#)

We are reminded of this when demonstrators brave bullets and batons to sound the call for reform, when young women dare to go to school despite prohibitions, and when same sex couples refuse to be told whom to love. The past year saw extraordinary change in the Middle East and North Africa as square by square, town by town, country by country, people rose up to demand their human rights. Around the world, we witnessed significant progress in consolidating democracy and expanding freedoms, often facilitated by critical assistance from the international community.

In the 64 years since the global community came together in support of human dignity and adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, our futures have grown increasingly interconnected. We have a stake not only in the stability of nations, but also in the welfare of individuals. On this anniversary, we recognize human rights as universal, and we stand with all those who reach for the dream of a free, just, and equal world (taken from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/12/09/presidential-proclamation-human-rights-day-and-human-rights-week-2011>).

## Bill of Rights Day

VA also joins the Nation in commemorating Bill of Rights Day on December 15. On December 15, 1791, the United States adopted the Bill of Rights, enshrining in our Constitution the protection of our inalienable freedoms, from the right to speak our minds and worship as we please to the guarantee of equal justice under the law. Throughout our country's history, generations have risen to uphold the principles outlined in our Bill of Rights and advance equality for all Americans.

The liberties we enjoy today are possible only because of these brave patriots, from the service members who have defended our freedom to the citizens who have braved billy clubs and fire hoses in the hope of extending America's promise across lines of color and creed. On Bill of Rights Day, we celebrate this proud legacy and resolve to pass to our children an America worthy of our Founders' vision (taken from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/12/08/presidential-proclamation-bill-rights-day-2011>).

# Field Notes

[Continued from page 2.](#)

## Aleda E. Lutz VAMC Celebrates NHHM

The Aleda E. Lutz VA Medical Center (VAMC) celebrated National Hispanic Heritage Month (NHHM) on October 11, 2012. Ricardo Davila, the guest speaker, presented information on the VA for Vets—Your Gateway to VA Careers program. Penny Holland, RN Associate Director for Patient Services, also participated in the program by reading the 2012 Presidential Proclamation for NHHM. Veterans Health Administration staff members Messrs. Adam Gonzalez and Anthony Gonzalez served on the Honor Guard sponsored by the Saginaw American GI Forum. The program, hosted by the Aleda E. Lutz VAMC Hispanic Employment Program Committee, was reported to be a resounding success!

## Best Practice from Canandaigua

While conducting pre-employment paperwork, Canandaigua VA Medical Center's (VAMC's) human resources staff gives new employees the hard copy version of the SF256, and asks them to complete it. When the Canandaigua VAMC conducts their new employee orientation several days later, they really focus on the importance of properly completing the form, stressing the confidentiality of it, that VA is very interested in hiring persons with disabilities, and VA's reasonable accommodation process. New employees are informed that they will be sent the hyperlink to the online SF256 in an email message within a day or two, and, if they were not comfortable revealing disabilities the first time they completed it, to please consider updating the form through this secure, online format. Several employees have approached staff afterward to make appointments to discuss reasonable accommodations and their disabilities. Canandaigua VAMC was able to achieve 1.98 percent targeted disabilities this year, in large part due to self-reporting. (Submitted by Kathryn Cosgrove, Equal Employment Opportunity Manager.)



L to R: Robert E. Stricker, Anthony Stricker, Fred S. Medel, Anthony Medel, Anthony B. Gonzalez, Frank Ornelas, John M. Lopez, and Mike Guzman

# 2013 WRP Set to Kick Off

## Consider an Intern!

ODI is excited to announce the start of the Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) for fiscal year (FY) 2013. WRP provides Federal job opportunities for college students and recent graduates with disabilities, some of whom are Veterans, and is coordinated annually by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy and the U.S. Department of Defense. The WRP is an excellent recruitment and workforce succession tool that can be used to identify qualified candidates to fill temporary or permanent staffing needs in a variety of occupations. Annually, trained recruiters from WRP's Federal agency partners conduct personal interviews with more than 2,000 students with disabilities at college and university campuses across the nation and develop a database listing the qualifications of each student. Student applications are evaluated and those who receive a score indicating their employment readiness are referred for employment. In FY 2012, six recruiters from VA participated in this process. A list of prescreened applicants will be available beginning Wednesday, December 5, 2012.

The best candidates are hired quickly; they usually go to the first agency to contact them. ODI suggests that each facility appoint someone to become familiar with the WRP, which is hosted at <https://wrp.gov>. Users will need to establish a free account, preferably before December 5. If a student appears to be a perfect candidate, but has accepted an internship at another agency, ODI suggests keeping in touch with the student to offer him or her a permanent position after graduation. If your office is interested in "first dibs" at these candidates next year, you may arrange for your staff to conduct the screening interviews for the 2014 batch of candidates.

VA has established a goal to employ at least 40 college students and recent graduates with disabilities as summer interns through the WRP. Additionally, we have set a goal to convert to permanent status at least 20 percent of those who are ready for full-time employment. Last year, VA had 27 WRP interns, and two were converted to permanent employment. To encourage greater participation with the WRP, we are pleased to announce that the Office of Human Resources and Administration, as a part of the Human Capital Investment Plan for FY 2013, has established a centralized fund that will be used to reimburse salary costs for an average of 35 WRP students. The goal of the fund is to minimize funding barriers that may prevent full utilization of the WRP.

ODI will administer the centralized fund and will approve reimbursement funding on a first-come, first-served basis; however, priority consideration will be given to offices that have advised, on the "Funding Reimbursement Request" form, that they are actively recruiting and may have an identified position that can be used to convert an intern to a permanent position once the internship ends. To improve your chances of receiving centralized funds for an intern, it is recommended that you promptly request access to the WRP site and identify qualified candidates. Detailed instructions are available on VA's Disability Program Web site at <http://www.diversity.va.gov/programs/pwd.aspx#WRP>.

## VACO Notes

### Hispanic Stakeholders Meeting

On October 26, 2012, ODI hosted a meeting with Sylvia Chavez-Metoyer, CEO/President of National IMAGE, Inc., and other IMAGE representatives from California and Washington, DC. National Image, Inc. is a 501(3)(c) nonprofit advocacy organization established in 1971. Its mission is to empower Hispanics through leadership development by advocating for Employment, Education, and Civil Rights. This meeting is in keeping with the VA FY13-16 Strategic Plan for Hispanic Employment, Outreach, and Retention, Goal 3: "to facilitate outstanding, culturally competent public service and Hispanic stakeholder relations through effective leadership and accountability." National IMAGE, Inc. shared information about its FY13 National Convention which will be held in Baltimore, Maryland, in September 2013 along with sharing its intent to assist Veterans seeking employment. ODI has committed to ensuring effective partnering between VA and National IMAGE, Inc. in the conduct of local and national initiatives. For more information about the Hispanic Employment Program (HEP), contact Arlene Gonzalez, National HEP Manager, at [Arlene.Gonzalez2@va.gov](mailto:Arlene.Gonzalez2@va.gov) or (202) 461-4041.



Front (L to R): Emelinda Maya, Veronica Vasquez, Sylvia Chavez Metoyer, and Elsa Loperena.

Back (L to R): Lorenzo Maya, Andrew Loperena, Arlene Gonzalez, Kenneth Metoyer, and Robert Falkenstein, Jr.

# Disability Accommodations Myths

## Clarification for Some Common Misconceptions

There are some misconceptions floating around VA regarding the requirement to provide accommodations for employees with disabilities. This article will address a few of them.

1. *Accommodations are only for employees injured on the job.* Not true. It does not matter where an employee is injured; if the injury affected a major life function and will last more than a few days, the employee should be given an accommodation if it will help the employee return to work sooner or perform the duties of the job.
2. *Decisions on accommodations can be reviewed annually.* True, especially for the instances where the physician has said that s/he will re-evaluate the employee's condition in "X" months. For all other accommodations, management can ask an employee if the accommodation is still needed and effective only (a) as long as management asks this question of everyone who has an accommodation, and (b) no new medical documentation is requested. The goal should be to ensure that the accommodation is effective, not to persuade the employee to let the accommodation stop.
3. *A new supervisor can re-visit the accommodation decision.* Not true if the VA process was followed, the employee is in the same position and has the same duties and functional restrictions. Then the accommodation stays in place, regardless of whether there is a change in supervisors. If the VA procedures were not followed when granting the original request, the employee's functional restrictions have changed, the employee's duties have changed, there is a reduction in staff, or an increase in work assignments for all staff in the employee's position, then the decision may be revisited.
4. *The applicant must explain what accommodations are needed before the hiring decision is made.* Not exactly. Per the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC): "Employers may ask about an applicant's ability to perform specific job functions. For example, an employer may state the physical requirements of a job (such as the ability to lift a certain amount of weight, or the ability to climb ladders), and ask if an applicant can satisfy these requirements." Please note that if the hiring official is going to ask the applicant how s/he will perform the duties of the job, that question needs to be asked of every applicant who is interviewed. The hiring official may not ask about the nature or severity of the disability. (<http://www.eeoc.gov/policy/docs/preemp.html>)
5. *When Occupational Health says a candidate can't do the job, accommodations don't have to be considered.* Not true, except in situations where the threat of harm is imminent or highly probable, not just remote or possible, and the threat of harm is substantial and cannot be reduced to an acceptable level by providing reasonable accommodation. In all other situations, the Local Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator (LRAC), human resources, and the hiring official should determine whether an effective accommodation can be provided so that the candidate can be hired. (Note: Reassignment is not a suitable accommodation for an applicant.)
6. *The supervisor does not have to talk to the employee who requested an accommodation.* Not true. In fact, if the supervisor does not talk to the employee, and that leads to an equal employment opportunity complaint, the lack of discussion will make it harder for VA to defend our actions. The employee must be kept informed at every step of the process.
7. *The facility director should have final say on all accommodation decisions.* Not recommended. When an accommodation is denied, the employee has the right to request reconsideration. If the facility director made the original decision to deny, then the request for reconsideration must go outside of the facility. The EEOC recommends that accommodation decisions be made at the lowest level possible.
8. *Anyone can submit a request to the Department of Defense's Computer/Electronics Accommodation Program (CAP).* No longer true. CAP will only accept requests from LRACs and their alternates. CAP has a list of the LRACs and alternates, and usually compares the request against the list.
9. *If a facility's policy restricts telecommuting to two days a week, an administrative employee cannot ask for additional days of telework as an accommodation.* Not true. EEOC has instructed agencies that the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, which requires agencies to provide accommodations, trumps any agency policy.
10. *When an employee requests an accommodation for a disability, it triggers the need for a fitness for duty exam.* Not true; to do so would be perceived as retaliation in many cases. Facilities can require a fitness for duty exam only when the employee has been observed to be behaving in a way that would pose an immediate, substantial safety threat to themselves or others, or when the employee can no longer perform the essential functions of the job and his/her functional limitations would prevent the employee from performing the essential functions of any potential reassignment position. [Continued on the next page.](#)

# Policy Alerts

## **Executive Order 5396 for Title 38 Employees**

VA Handbook 5011, Part III, Chapter 3, paragraph 5c(5), has been revised to provide that Executive Order 5396 applies only to service-connected disabilities.

This handbook contains mandatory procedures on hours of duty and leave. This revision removes the provision that annual leave, sick leave or leave without pay must be granted for medical treatment of disabled Veteran employees under Executive Order 5396 for disabilities that are not service-connected.

For more information about this policy alert or the policy communication schedule/timeline please visit the Office of Human Resources Management intranet Web site.

## **Employee Recognition and Awards**

A change has been made to VA Handbook 5017. Part IV Appendix A has been changed to include the Secretary's Annual Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Excellence Award to Part IV, Appendix A, and the list of internal and external honor awards has been reorganized.

## **Employee/Management Relations**

A change has been made to VA Directive and Handbook 5021. The significant changes include the establishment of due process and appeal rights for part-time and intermittent registered nurses who are serving or who have completed a probationary period. This policy also revises matters excluded from the agency grievance procedure.

## **Speed of Hiring Monthly Reporting Requirement**

VA's speed of hiring goal for fiscal year (FY) 2012 was to fill 70 percent of vacant positions within 60 days. The speed of hiring goal will increase to 80 percent of positions filled within 60 days in FY13, and to 85 percent in FY14. The human resources (HR) community should be aware of a new reporting requirement. HR Officers and their staff must follow new required actions in identifying and reducing outlier hiring actions that take 90 or more days to fill a recruitment request. Beginning in November 2012, HR offices that exceed the 60 day goal by more than 30 days will have to report the reasons as to why they are not meeting the goal.

# Disability Accommodations Myths

[Continued from the previous page.](#)

11. *The accommodation process is completed once the equipment is ordered.* Not true. VA's policy and procedures allow 30 calendar days for the accommodation process. It is not completed until the equipment is installed and working properly, and, if necessary, the employee is trained in the use of the equipment. Note: The time waiting for medical documentation (VA Form 0857e) is not included in the 30 day time frame.

12. *Information technology security issues override any employee's request for accommodation.* Not usually true. If there is a security concern, the information security officer (ISO) at the next level should be contacted for guidance. If necessary, the CIO's office or the VA Disability Program Manager can be contacted.

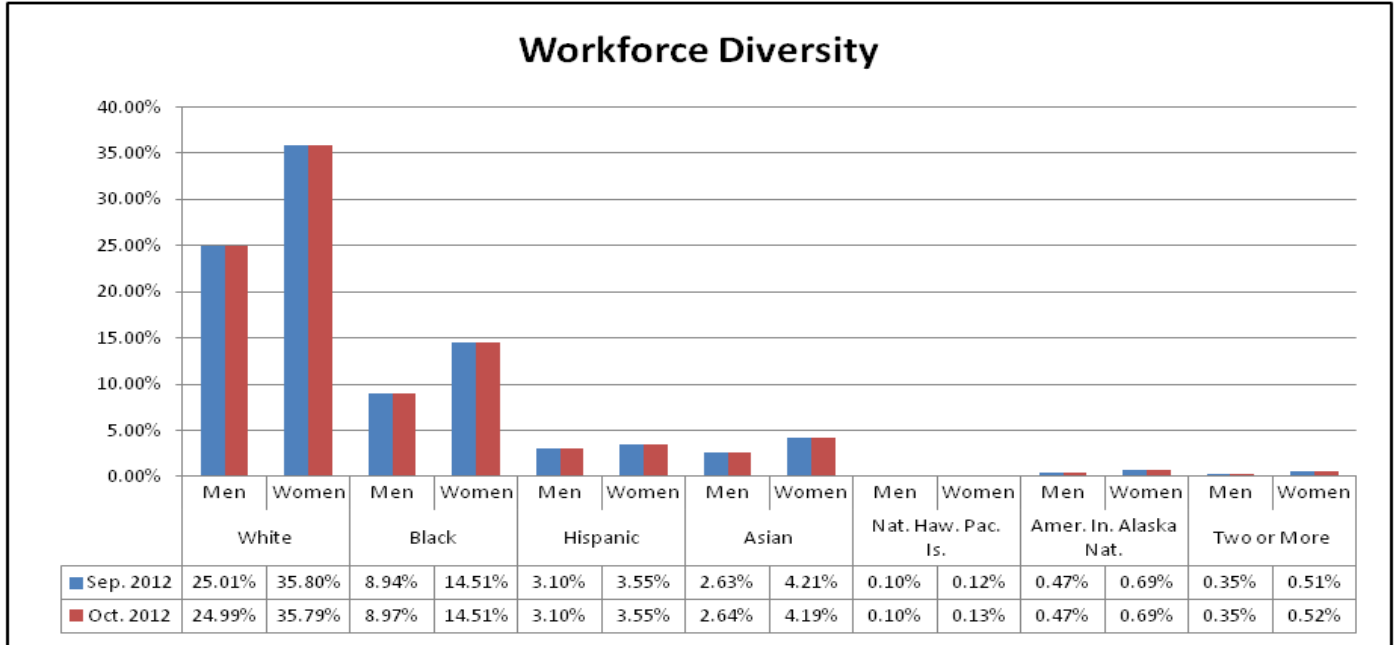
13. *Managers at the facility level have complete authority to deny a request for accommodation.* True, but with two caveats: (1) Only the Secretary, VA, can deny a request based on cost. (2) The Local Counsel or the VA Disability Program Manager must be consulted before denying a request for any other reason.

14. *The facility can use letters or memorandums to communicate the process or denial to the employee.* Not true. To do so can create liability for VA if inappropriate language is used. All facilities and offices must use the VA Forms that are provided on the Web site at: <http://www.diversity.va.gov/programs/pwd.aspx#library-ra>.

# VA Demographics Report

Demographic Report for the Department of Veterans Affairs, October 2012

VA's workforce diversity remains relatively steady through October 2012. Representation for all groups in VA's permanent and temporary workforce increased or stayed the same since the start of the fiscal year except for White men and women and Asian women. Black men saw the largest increase of 0.03 percent. The representation of White men and Asian women decreased by 0.02 percentage points since the start of the fiscal year. Further, representation of White women decreased slightly during this time period by 0.01 percentage point.



Comparing the demographic characteristics of VA's workforce against Relevant Civilian Labor Force (RCLF)\*, the representation of White women and Hispanic women are lower than expected. White women representation is currently at 74 percent of RCLF while Hispanic women are at 81 percent of RCLF.

## Diversity Index

The Diversity Index is a single measure of workforce diversity that measures the convergence of VA's aggregate workforce distribution by race, ethnicity, and gender to the Civilian Labor Force (CLF)\*\*. Since September 2012, there has been a 0.13 percentage point increase in the RCLF-based diversity index and a 0.09 percentage point increase in the CLF-based diversity index.

	Sep. 2012	Oct. 2012	Change
Using RCLF	96.33%	96.46%	0.13%
Using CLF	85.75%	85.84%	0.09%

## People with Targeted Disabilities

The proportion of people with targeted disabilities in VA's workforce has increased by 0.02 percentage points since the beginning of the fiscal year.

The hiring of people with targeted disabilities also increased since the start of the fiscal year. Among all hires, people with targeted disabilities represents 2.82 percent, 0.18 percentage points lower than the Secretary's 3 percent hiring goal.



Contact ODI's Workforce Analysis Team at [odi@va.gov](mailto:odi@va.gov).

\*Relevant Civilian Labor Force (RCLF) reflects all the people in America 16 years of age or over, employed in or actively seeking work in VA specific occupations.

\*\*Civilian Labor Force (CLF) is defined as people in America 16 years of age or over, except those in the armed forces, who are employed, or, are unemployed and seeking work. It is derived from census data collected on the demographics of citizens in each job type.



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for staff e-mail addresses.

## OTHER USEFUL LINKS

HR&A  
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VA's Office of Human Resources Management  
<http://www.va.gov/ohrm>

VA's Office of Resolution Management  
<http://www.va.gov/orm>

Veterans Health Administration's Diversity and Inclusion Community of Practice  
[Michael.Youngblood@va.gov](mailto: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](mailto:odi@va.gov).

# D&I Online

The mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs' diversity and inclusion program is to develop and implement a comprehensive, integrated, and strategic focus on diversity and inclusion as key components of the Department's human resources strategies. Here's a sampling of online tools available at <http://www.diversity.va.gov> that can help leverage diversity and build inclusion:

- ▶ Observance resources.
- ▶ Training resources, guides, and reports.
- ▶ Links to professional and community organizations.
- ▶ Best practices for diversity management.



# D&I 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](mailto:odi@va.gov) with the words SUBSCRIBE NEWSLINK in the subject line. Find a sample of *NewsLink* at <http://www.diversity.va.gov/products/newslink.aspx>.

# D&I 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 <http://www.diversity.va.gov/products/dn.aspx>.

# Calendar

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

## December

Universal Human Rights Month

Rosa Parks Day  
December 1

World AIDS Day  
December 1

International Day of Persons with Disabilities  
December 3

National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day  
December 7

Hanukkah (Feast of Lights/Dedication)  
December 8–16

Human Rights Day  
December 10

Human Rights Week  
December 10–17

Bill of Rights Day  
December 15

Christmas  
December 25

Kwanzaa  
December 26–January 1

New Year's Eve  
December 31

