



Message from the DAS

On January 21, we solemnly witnessed the second inauguration of the first Black President of the greatest nation on earth.

Many of us, through eyes clouded with tears of pride, witnessed a moment that signified the maturation of a nation and the affirmation of the ideals upon which it was founded.

Through some sense of cosmic poetic justice, the second inauguration of Barack Obama coincided with the celebration of Martin Luther King's 84th birthday and the 150th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation. All three of these men, each in his own way, embodied the evolving social conscience of a nation and the advancement of civil rights in America.

Among those clouded eyes on the National Mall were those of a group of African American men who also, in the most dramatic way, advanced human rights by their brave and selfless acts protecting this country: the remaining Tuskegee Airmen. Eighty-seven of these proud patriots came to Washington to witness the swearing in of our President, the youngest of whom was 89 years old.

In one of our finer acts, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) sent two dozen wheelchairs provided by the Washington and Baltimore VA Medical Centers (VAMCs) to support these legendary heroes. I want to thank our Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) staff and the leadership of the Washington and Baltimore VAMCs, including Fernando Rivera, VISN 5 Director, for playing a part in making it possible for the Tuskegee Airmen to witness the culmination of their heroic contributions first hand.

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Commemorate

National African American History Month

VA joins the Nation in commemorating National African American History Month during the month of February. This year's national theme is: "At the Crossroads of Freedom and Equality: The Emancipation Proclamation and the March on Washington."

The Emancipation Proclamation led to the 13th Amendment, which made slavery illegal everywhere in the United States. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. gave his famous "I have a dream" speech. For African Americans and our Nation, this event led the way to political, social, and economic equality. [Continued on page 4.](#)

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Bookmarks:

[Association for Women in Science](#)

<http://www.awis.org>

[Association of Latino Professionals in Finance and Accounting](#)

<http://www.alpfa.org>

[HOSA-Future Health Professionals](#)

<http://www.hosa.org>

[National Association of Black Accountants, Inc.](#)

<http://www.nabainc.org>

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

Message from the DAS

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These are truly moving acts and inspirational times. Let us continue our work in the areas of diversity and inclusion to ensure that our Nation experiences many more such stirring occasions in the future!

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



Georgia Coffey

Field Notes

Hispanic Employment Program Managers National Teleconference February 25

The next Hispanic Employment Program Managers (HEPM) teleconference will be held Monday, February 25, from 3 to 4:15 p.m. (EST). If you are in Washington, DC, you may attend the session in the ODI conference room (1575 I Street, room 200) or, if off-site, you may dial-in on the VANTS line at 1 (800) 767-1750 (access code 70087). February's teleconference will feature Mr. Dexter Brooks, Director of Federal Sector Programs within the Office of Federal Operations, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Mr. Brooks is a member of the Senior Executive Service and will be discussing how EEOC's Management Directive 715 can help VA attract, develop, and retain a top-quality, highly qualified workforce to ensure quality service to our Nation's Veterans and their families. For more information, contact Arlene Gonzalez, National HEPM, ODI, at Arlene.Gonzalez2@va.gov.

2013 WRP Underway

Have you considered hiring a student intern? The Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) for College Students with Disabilities is an excellent recruitment and referral program coordinated annually by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy and the U.S. Department of Defense.

WRP connects Federal employers with highly motivated postsecondary students eager to prove their abilities in the workplace through summer or permanent jobs. 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. Interns are responsible for their own transportation, employment relocation, and housing expenses.

As part of VA's continuing efforts to meet the Secretary's three percent goal for hiring individuals with targeted disabilities, ODI has established a centralized fund to minimize funding barriers that may prevent full utilization of the WRP during Fiscal Year 2013.

Organizations interested in hiring a WRP student or recent graduate intern using their own funding can visit the WRP secure Web site at <http://www.wrp.gov> and request a password to access the intern database, to identify and hire a student or recent graduate intern. For recordkeeping purposes, please advise ODI of any WRP hires.

To request funding reimbursement assistance, please submit your application to ODI no later than Friday, March 15, 2013. Detailed instructions are available on VA's Disability Program Web site at <http://www.diversity.va.gov/programs/pwd.aspx#WRP>. The best candidates are hired quickly and usually go to the first agency to contact them.

If you have any questions regarding the general WRP or WRP centralized fund, please contact Aurelia Waters, WRP Coordinator, ODI, at (202) 461-4124 or Aurelia.Waters@va.gov.



Training

VSSC Online Training

ODI announces the availability of training on the Veterans Health Administration's Support Service Center (VSSC) Human Resources (HR) Reporting Tools. VA uses VSSC to store HR data for all of VA in an easy to use reporting format. This interactive training is designed to alert a wide range of managers, HR, equal employment opportunity (EEO) and diversity specialists to VSSC's HR query applications. All managers have a duty to ensure there is equal opportunity in the workplace with regard to hiring, promotions, and other terms and conditions of employment. This training provides guidance on how to properly use the applications to conduct various workforce analyses, identify triggers, and define and distinguish between Relevant Civilian Labor Force and Civilian Labor Force. Training classes will be offered on the following dates from 10 am to noon (EST):

- Wednesday, February 20, 2013 (https://www.tms.va.gov/learning/user/deeplink_redirect.jsp?linkId=REGISTRATION&scheduleID=2569348)
- Wednesday, April 17, 2013 (https://www.tms.va.gov/learning/user/deeplink_redirect.jsp?linkId=REGISTRATION&scheduleID=2569352)
- Wednesday, June 19, 2013 (https://www.tms.va.gov/learning/user/deeplink_redirect.jsp?linkId=REGISTRATION&scheduleID=2569353)
- Wednesday, August 21, 2013 (https://www.tms.va.gov/learning/user/deeplink_redirect.jsp?linkId=REGISTRATION&scheduleID=2569354)
- Wednesday, September 18, 2013 (https://www.tms.va.gov/learning/user/deeplink_redirect.jsp?linkId=REGISTRATION&scheduleID=2569357)

Each session will be conducted via Live Meeting. You can register using the relevant link above. Once you click on the link, you will need to sign into the VA Talent Management System (TMS) and click confirm. Spaces are available on first-come, first-serve basis. If none of these dates work for you, you can use TMS to request additional dates. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Ryan Pugh at Ryan.Pugh2@va.gov or (202) 461-4155 or David Williams at David.E.Williams@va.gov or (202) 491-5579.

Diversity News: An Online Training Resource

The January/February 2013 edition of *Diversity News* focuses on MyCareer@VA and features an interview with Dr. Carrie Tuning with the VA Learning University. *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 VA 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 (February 12, 10 am to noon) provides 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 of the Rehabilitation Act. 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 VA are Section 508 conformant. The Programming with Section 508 in Mind webinar (February 12, 2 to 4 pm) allows participants to gain more insight into coding for accessibility from a programming perspective. Learn more about the W3C specification for Accessible Rich Internet Applications. Both trainings are captioned. For more information, contact Vicki Leon, Section 508 Program Office, at Vicki.Leon@va.gov.

Pathways to Federal Employment Webinar, February 13, 4 to 5 pm

Hosted by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management and the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy, this session will highlight specific things students with disabilities can do when applying for Federal jobs. A Program Analyst (and former Federal intern with a disability) at the U.S. Office of Personnel Management will break down the steps to apply for Federal jobs (including Pathways positions) and provide you with an excellent foundation to consider a rewarding career in the Federal Government. Closed Captioning will be available. RSVP at http://opm.adobeconnect.com/pathwaysswd/event/event_info.html.

Commemorate

Continued from page 1.

Within VA's workforce, 23.45 percent (74,798 employees) are Black. Also, VA employs 100,158 Veterans, of which 30.81 percent (30,858 employees) are Black. However, Black men still have a lower than expected participation rate at the GS 11–15 and SES pay levels and Black women have a low participation rate at the GS 10, 12–15, and SES pay levels. VA will continue to market and encourage application of employees who are Black or are from other groups with low participation rates in career development and leadership programs.

All managers and supervisors are encouraged to support attendance at events and activities that recognize and honor the contributions of African Americans. VA's goal is to create a diverse, inclusive, and high-performing workforce that reflects the communities we serve and the diversity of our Nation. We can do so by ensuring that barriers to employment and promotion are identified and addressed. We are committed to sustaining a work environment that enables all our employees to realize their full potential in service to our Nation's heroes—our Veterans. A list of standard activities and events that facilities typically plan and present can be found on ODI's Web site at <http://www.diversity.va.gov/calendar/bhm.aspx>. For additional information on VA's African American Employment Program, contact your local equal employment opportunity manager or Tinisha Agramonte, ODI, at Tinisha.Agramonte@va.gov.

The VA Central Office kick-off Black History Month Program will be Thursday, February 7, 2013. This program will be hosted by Barbara Ward, Director, and Center for Minority Veterans. The guest speaker will be Donna Brazile, CEO and Political Analyst, Brazile & Associates. VACO's second Black History Month Program will be February 21, 2013. This program will focus on recognizing the accomplishments and contributions of African American Veterans and will be hosted by Honorable Will Gunn, General Counsel. The guest speakers will be Dr. Betty Moseley Brown, Associate Director, Center for Women Veterans, and Earl Newsome, Deputy Director, Center for Minority Veterans. VACO's third Black History Month Program will be February 28, 2013. This program will involve Oprah Winfrey taking her audience on an interactive historical journey from the periods of Slavery, Harlem Renaissance, and Civil Rights to introduce them to leaders that understood our quest for freedom, integration, and equality. All three programs will be held at noon in the G.V. Sonny Montgomery Conference Center, room 230.

Policy Alert

Handbook Subject: Limitations on Overtime Duty, Weekend Duty, and Alternative Work Schedules for Nurses

VA Handbook 501 I, Part II, Chapter 3 and Part III, Chapters 2 & 3, has been revised to implement the provisions of Public Law 111-163. Significant changes include:

- Replaces the 36/40 alternate work schedule for registered nurses with the 72/80 alternate work schedule;
- Clarifies that nurses on 72/80 work schedules who are not scheduled to work on a holiday or the day designated as a holiday are not entitled to an in-lieu of holiday;
- Adds a minimum charge for annual and sick leave for nurses on this schedule of one-quarter hour (15 minutes);
- Eliminates outdated annual "Certification of Compliance with Provisions of Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Personnel Enhancement Act of 2004" reporting requirement. However, facilities must still maintain a policy that prevents nurses from providing direct patient care (other than nurses providing emergency care) from working in excess of 12 consecutive hours or 60 hours in any 7-day period;
- Requires nurses officially ordered or approved hours of service in excess of 40 hours in an administrative week, or in excess of 8 consecutive hours, shall receive overtime pay for each additional hour of service;
- Establishes limitations on overtime duty, weekend duty, and alternative work schedules for nurses; and
- Modifies the leave charge for nurses on the Baylor Plan. Instead of being charged 1.667 hours for each hour taken, nurses on the Baylor Plan will be charged leave on an hourly basis.

VA Disability Program Updates

First Quarter Targeted Disability Data

On October 11, 2012, Secretary Shinseki signed a memorandum establishing a fiscal year 2013 goal that three percent of new hires will be people with targeted disabilities. This goal is included in the diversity and inclusion performance element for Senior Executives. The targeted disabilities are blindness, deafness, partial paralysis, total paralysis, missing extremities, dwarfism, psychiatric disabilities, severe intellectual disabilities, and epilepsy.

The first quarter data shows that of total VA hires to permanent and temporary positions, 300, or 2.77 percent were individuals with targeted disabilities. The National Cemetery Administration (NCA) led with 24.59 percent, the Veterans Benefits Administration's (VBA's) total was 4.03, the Veterans Health Administration's (VHA's) total was 2.52 percent, and VA Central Office's (VACO's) was 2.55 percent (data is from the VHA VISN Support Service Center). If you have any questions regarding the data, please contact your Administration's EEO Office.

As of December 31, 2012, the on board permanent and temporary ratio for employees with targeted disabilities in VA was 1.88 percent. The on board ratio in NCA was 2.72 percent, VBA's was 2.34 percent, VHA's was 1.86 percent, and VACO's was 1.51 percent. Every Administration and VACO had an increase.

Congratulations to the MSNs, Areas, and VISNs that met the Secretary's three percent hiring goal:

In NCA, MSN 1 (Philadelphia) an awesome 50 percent of new hires were individuals with targeted disabilities, MSN 2 (Atlanta) had 38.10 percent of new hires, and MSN 3 (Denver) had 21.43 percent of new hires.

In VBA, Area 1 (Eastern) had 3.83 percent, Area 2 (Southern) had 3.41 percent, Area 3 (Central) had 4.62 percent and Area 4 (Western) had 4.29 percent new hires with targeted disabilities.

In VHA, of the VISNs that met the goal, VISN 2 had 3.77 percent, VISN 8 had 3.00 percent, VISN 12 had 4.59 percent, VISN 17 had 3.25 percent, VISN 18 had 4.67 percent, and VISN 19 had 3.55 percent.

Per the Rehabilitation Act, we should be striving to place individuals with disabilities into positions with advancement potential. This is in addition to our obligation to provide prompt accommodations when requested and justified. Please be aware that having a higher ratio of people with targeted disabilities in wage grade positions than the ratio for your total workforce is an undesirable situation. Employees with disabilities who qualify for higher grade should be encouraged to apply for these positions competitively or non-competitively. Both Schedule A (Title 5) and Title 38 positions allow for non-competitive appointments if it is not a position designated for a merit promotion.

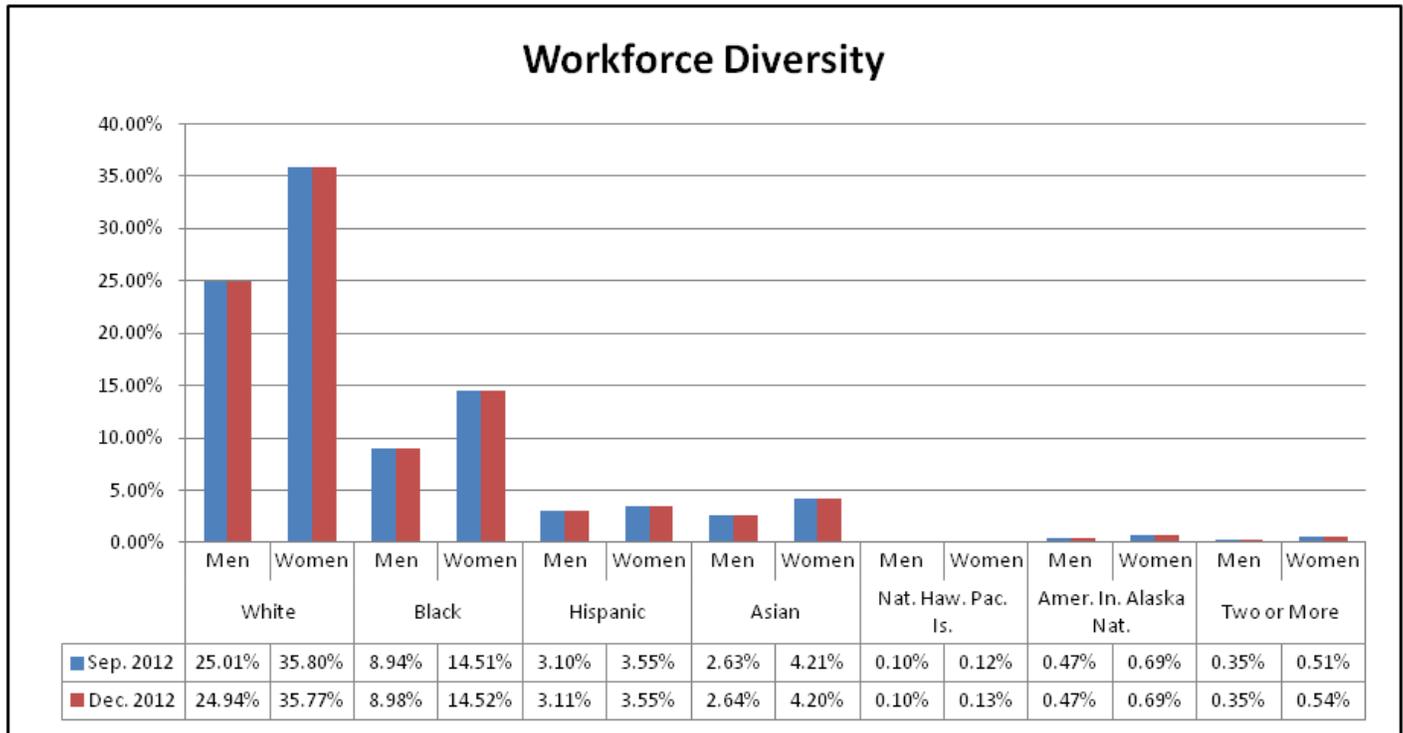
All VA human resources (HR) staff should be aware that anyone hired under Schedule A must complete the SF 256 and self-identify a specific disability. They are not permitted to check the "no disability" box. (Please see the instructions on the back of the SF 256.) Thus, it is to the facility's advantage to hire people via Schedule A when possible. HR staff who welcome and encourage Schedule A applications via email and keep a file of likely candidates can fill positions quickly when there is a good match. This reduces the facility's processing average for filling jobs (a win-win). Schedule A information is available online at <http://www.diversity.va.gov/programs/pwd.aspx>.

Training in the hiring authorities and in VA's Reasonable Accommodation procedures is available via Videoconference or in person if your facility has the funding for travel. Contact ODI at odi@va.gov.

VA Demographics Report

Demographic Report for the Department of Veterans Affairs, December 2012

VA's workforce diversity remains relatively steady through December 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 percentage increase of 0.04 percent. Since the start of the fiscal year, the representation of White men decreased by 0.07 percentage points. Further, representation of White women decreased by 0.03 percentage points and Asian women decreased slightly during this time period by 0.01 percentage points.



Comparing the demographic characteristics of VA's workforce against Relevant Civilian Labor Force (RCLF)*, the representation of White and women and Hispanic women are lower than expected. White women representation is currently at 75 percent of RCLF while Hispanic women are at 82 percent of RCLF. The representation of White men is lower than expected too, but is not considered to be significant. They are currently at 99.6 percent of their 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 0.36 percentage point increase in the RCLF-based diversity index and a 0.27 percentage point increase in the CLF-based diversity index.

	Sep. 2012	Dec. 2012	Change
Using RCLF	96.33%	96.69%	0.36%
Using CLF	85.75%	86.02%	0.27%

For more information, contact David E. Williams, Director of Workforce Analysis, ODI, at David.E.Williams@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 collected on the demographics of citizens in each job type.

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Visit our Web site
<http://www.diversity.va.gov>
for staff e-mail addresses.

OTHER USEFUL LINKS

HR&A
<http://www.va.gov/ofcadmin>

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

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.

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:

- ▶ National African American History Month and other 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 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>

February
African American History Month

National Wear Red Day
February 1

EOP's STEM Diversity Career Expo
February 6; Los Angeles, CA
<http://www.eop.com>

Annual National Association for Bilingual Education Conference
February 7-9; Lake Buena Vista, FL
<http://www.nabe.org>

Carnival
February 9-12

Lunar New Year
February 10

League of United Latin American Citizens National Legislative Conference and Awards Gala
February 13-14; Washington, DC
<http://www.lulac.org>

United States Hispanic Leadership Institute National Conference
February 14-17; Chicago, IL
<http://www.ushli.org>

Brotherhood/Sisterhood Week
February 17-23

Washington's Birthday (Presidents Day)
February 18

Annual International Technology and Persons with Disabilities Conference
February 25-March 2; San Diego, CA
<http://www.csun.edu/cod/conference/index.php#info>

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities' International Conference
February 27-March 1; San Antonio, TX
<http://www.hacu.net>