



Message from the DAS

Inside:

Field Notes | Page 2
Training | Page 3
MyCareer@VA | Page 5
Policy Alerts | Page 6
Demographics | Page 7
Calendar | Page 8

Bookmark:

VA Whistleblower Rights and Protections
<http://www.diversity.va.gov/whistleblower.aspx>



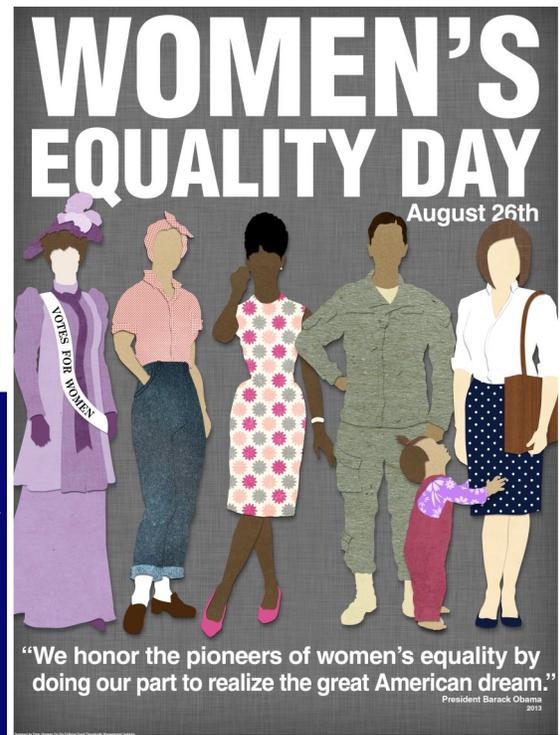
Have a dispute?
VA's Alternative Dispute Resolution program can help:
<http://www.va.gov/adr>.

Have an EEO complaint?
Contact the Office of Resolution Management at (888) 737-3361 within 45 calendar days of the alleged incident:
<http://www.va.gov/ORM/EEOcomplaint.asp>.

As we shared in the last issue of Diversity@Work, VA's Acting Secretary signed the 2014 Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), Diversity and Inclusion, No FEAR, and Whistleblower Protection Policy Statement. This document summarizes VA's EEO and diversity-related workplace policies and protections. It is important that we each understand our rights and responsibilities in the area of EEO, No FEAR, Whistleblowing, and other workplace protections. All 11 pages of this policy statement, available online at <http://www.diversity.va.gov/policy/statement.aspx>, must be provided to every VA employee and disseminated to new VA employees during the onboarding process.

VA is strongly committed to whistleblower rights. To that extent, we recently published a plan for implementing the requirements of the U.S. Office of Special Counsel's (OSC) Section 2302(c) Certification Program. OSC's program assists Federal agencies in meeting their statutory obligation to inform their workforces about the rights and remedies available to them under the prohibited personnel practices and whistleblower retaliation protection provisions of section 2302 of title 5 of the United States Code.

This plan directs all VA Administrations and Staff Offices to print and post OSC posters on whistleblowing, whistleblower retaliation, and prohibited personnel practices in a public setting at all VA facilities and at all VA personnel and EEO offices. It also directs human resources staff to provide new hires with a hard-copy of the OSC publications "Your Rights as a Federal Employee" and "Know Your Rights When Reporting Wrongs" during their employee orientation.
Continued on the next page.



Commemorate

Women's Equality Day

On August 26, 2014, we celebrate 94 years since the passing of the 19th Amendment to the United States (U.S.) Constitution, granting women the right to vote. This year's theme is "Celebrating Women's Right to Vote". In 1971, the U.S. Congress designated August 26th as Women's Equality Day. This year we celebrate 43 years of officially recognizing this day as a nation, and the President is authorized to issue an annual proclamation in commemoration.

Women's Equality Day is an opportunity to reflect on the many accomplishments of women in the past and present. Although much has improved, a need to continue the fight for equality still exists. **Continued on page 4.**

*Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute
Special Observance Poster*

DAS Message

Continued from Page 1



Georgia Coffey

Each of these publications can be found on the VA Whistleblower Rights and Protections web page at <http://www.diversity.va.gov/whistleblower.aspx>. The plan also requires supervisors to take biennial training on prohibited personnel practices and whistleblower rights and protections. That training is currently in development. We all have a responsibility for enforcing appropriate workplace behavior. It is important that all employees are encouraged to report deficiencies in care or services we provide to Veterans. This is absolutely an inclusion issue.

Finally, VA joins the Nation in commemorating Women's Equality Day on August 26. This observance commemorates the passage of the 19th Amendment, granting women the right to vote, and also calls attention to women's continuing efforts toward full equality.

While 59.34 percent of VA's permanent workforce are women, only 39.6 percent of VA's senior executives are women. Nanese Loza, VA's National Women Employment Program Manager, is currently drafting a strategic plan to increase the employment, retention and outreach of this group. Stay tuned! ~Georgia Coffey, VA Deputy Assistant Secretary for Diversity and Inclusion

Field Notes

Distinguished Contribution Award

Congratulations to Doctors Jillian Shipherd and Michael Kauth, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Program Coordinators for VA Patient Care Services, who are co-recipients of the 2014 Distinguished Contribution to Education and Training Award from the American Psychological Association's (APA's) Society for the Psychological Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Issues (Division 44). Dr. Shipherd is a clinical psychologist at the Boston VA Medical Center and Dr. Kauth is clinical psychologist at the Houston VA Medical Center. In 2012, they were appointed by VA Central Office in Washington, DC, to lead the VA's efforts to improve culturally competent treatment for sexual and gender minority veterans across the country. Since then, they have created and shared "best practice" clinical care documents; worked to develop and implement nationwide policies related to the care of LGBT patients; begun an LGBT mental health postdoctoral training program at seven VA facilities around the country; and provided professional consultation to providers from all over on specific cases, and on program development efforts, among other accomplishments. The awards ceremony was held Saturday, August 9, 2014, at 3 pm at the APA Convention in Washington DC. Congratulations again, Dr. Shipherd and Dr. Kauth!

LULAC

The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) held its 85th Annual National Convention and Exposition from July 8-12, 2014, at the New York Hilton Midtown. The convention theme was "Bridging the Gap: Expanding the Latino Agenda into New Frontiers." The convention addressed issues key to the Latino community, such as immigration reform, education, health care, and civil rights. LULAC's mission is to advance the economic condition, educational attainment, political influence, housing, health and civil rights of the Hispanic population of the United States. The LULAC Convention was attended by over 20,000 people including students, civilians, and federal employees from all government agencies. It entailed plenary sessions, award ceremonies, Veterans community workshops, Federal Agency pre-conference forums, and the LULAC Federal Training Institute (FTI). The FTI, a career development program for government and public sector employees in partnership with the Office of Personnel Management and other Federal agencies, offered workshops and plenary sessions that enabled government employees and other employees to enhance their leadership skills and develop the Executive Core Qualifications required for entry to the Senior Executive Service. Several Hispanic Employment Program Managers from VA facilities throughout the VA acted as moderators for various FTI workshops. The FTI presentations are available online at http://lulac.org/convention/fti_presentations.

Training

Hiring, Retaining and Including People with Disabilities

On July 26, 2010, President Obama issued Executive Order (E.O.) 13548 on Increasing Federal Employment of Individuals with Disabilities, to mark the historic 20th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). E.O. 13548 says that the Federal Government, as the Nation's largest employer, must become a model for the employment of individuals with disabilities. In continued support of E.O. 13548, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), in consultation with partner agencies, has developed an online course entitled, "A Roadmap to Success: Hiring, Retaining and Including People with Disabilities." This course will provide Federal employees with basic information and resources to successfully hire, retain, and advance employees with disabilities. OPM is making this course available to agencies at no cost on HR University and believes it will benefit all Federal employees. In accordance with E.O. 13548, this training should be considered required training for human resources personnel and hiring managers. A memorandum to the Chief Human Capital Officers has been issued with instructions for accessing this course (<http://chcoc.gov/transmittals/TransmittalDetails.aspx?TransmittalID=6235>). Along with launching this course, OPM Director Katherine Archuleta has posted a blog and video on OPM's website, recognizing the 24th anniversary of the ADA and the contributions of employees with disabilities to the Federal workforce (<http://www.opm.gov/blogs/Director/2014/7/21/A-Present-on-the-ADAs-Birthday> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lesvBv1xXFw&feature=youtu.be>). For questions or additional information, contact OPM's Office of Diversity and Inclusion at disabilityemployment@opm.gov.

VSSC HR Reporting & Workforce Analysis Tools

VA uses the VHA Support Service Center (VSSC) to store human resources (HR) data for all of VA in an easy to use reporting format. This interactive training on the VSSC HR Reporting Tools is designed to alert a wide range of managers and HR, equal employment opportunity, and diversity specialists to VSSC's HR query applications. 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 vs. Civilian Labor Force.

A virtual training class will be offered on Wednesday, September 25, 2014, from 11:00 am to 12:30 pm (EST). The session will be conducted via Microsoft Lync. Register at https://www.tms.va.gov/learning/user/deeplink_redirect.jsp?linkId=ITEM_DETAILS&componentID=3823179&componentTypeID=VA&revisionDate=135231360000. Sign into TMS, click on "register now", and register for the class you want. Contact Ryan Pugh at (202) 461-4155 or Ryan.Pugh2@va.gov for more information.

Barrier Analysis

This training course covers all aspects of the barrier analysis process under EEOC Management Directive 715 (MD-715) to include: analysis and interpretation of workforce statistics, trigger identification, barrier analysis investigation, action plan preparation, and action plan follow up. Each VA facility has to identify barriers and create action plans on eliminating those identified barriers. This training is intended for employees who work with the MD-715 report and for all managers. A virtual class will be offered on Thursday, August 21, 2014, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. (EST). The session will be conducted via Microsoft Lync. Register at https://www.tms.va.gov/learning/user/deeplink_redirect.jsp?linkId=ITEM_DETAILS&componentID=3844925&componentTypeID=VA&revisionDate=136810680000. Sign into TMS, click on "register now", and register for the class you want. Contact Ryan Pugh, ODI, at (202) 461-4155 or Ryan.Pugh2@va.gov for more information.

Microbehaviors

The meaning of our messages is frequently delivered through subtle micro messages. These subtle, often subconscious signals, also known as microbehaviors, represent the core of the messages we send, and can either demonstrate inclusion or exclusion. Participants will develop heightened awareness with respect to their own potential undetected biases as well as specific techniques for managing them and countering the inequities they see and experience in the workplace. This Office of Personnel Management (OPM) session was held August 11, 2014. For more information, email DiversityandInclusion@opm.gov.

Continued on the next page.

Training

Continued from Previous Page

Diversity News



The July/August 2014 edition features David Williams, Director of Workforce Analysis in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, with a report on the end of fiscal year 2013 workforce data in VA focusing on workforce representation and promotion rates by race, ethnicity, and gender. To view current and past episodes, visit <http://www.diversity.va.gov/products/dn.aspx>.

Section 508

Section 508 is a federal law that requires that all Electronic and Information Technology (EIT) procured, developed, used or maintained by the federal government be accessible to and usable by people with disabilities. The Section 508 Program Office offers classes on what Section 508 is, creating accessible documents, testing EIT for Section 508 conformance, using assistive technology, scripting legacy applications to make them accessible, and creating accessible web and software applications. The Office offers live classes that are instructor-led (offered remotely via Microsoft Lync) and has self-paced tutorials that can be taken anytime. All training is free, and available to anyone (employee or contractor) with a VA e-mail address. All classes are available for self-enrollment through TMS. For questions or to request a reasonable accommodation, contact (202) 461-0508 or section508@va.gov.

Commemorate

Continued from Page 1

In late 2013, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) published a report of its women's workgroup, which identified obstacles to equal employment opportunity for women in the Federal workplace and provided recommendations to address them. This report identified six major obstacles including: 1) Inflexible workplace policies create challenges for women in the Federal workforce who possess caregiver obligations; 2) Senior level and management positions are difficult for women to obtain; 3) Women are underrepresented in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields across the Federal workforce; 4) Women and men do not earn the same average salary in the Federal Government; 5) Unconscious gender biases and stereotypical perceptions about women continue to play a significant role in employment decisions throughout the Federal sector; and 6) There is a perception that agencies lack commitment to achieving equal opportunities for women in the Federal workplace (EEOC, 2013). To review the full report, visit http://www.eeoc.gov/federal/reports/women_workgroup_report.cfm.

On Tuesday, August 26, 2014, the Department of Veterans Affairs VA's Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) will sponsor the VA Central Office (VACO) Women's Equality Day observance program in the G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery Veterans Conference Center, Room 230, at noon. Dr. Betty Moseley-Brown, Associate Director, Center for Women Veterans, will serve as the senior host. The featured keynote speaker will be The Honorable Gina S. Farrisee, Assistant Secretary, Office of Human Resources and Administration. For more information, contact Tynnetta Lee, Special Emphasis Program Manager, ODI, at (202) 461-7968 or Tynnetta.Lee@va.gov.

ODI continually strives to identify and address any impediments to equal employment opportunity for all groups, including women. As part of a strategy to ensure VA has and maintains a culturally competent workforce, ODI has partnered with the VA Learning University (VALU) to ensure employees are aware of and utilizing the MyCareer@VA portal to connect them with resources for career planning and identifying opportunities for career progression. Through both ODI and VALU initiatives, VA will continue to have and maintain a competent, diverse, and high-performing workforce to better meet the needs of our Veterans and their families. Reference: *Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Women's Workgroup Summary. Retrieved March 17, 2014 from: http://www.eeoc.gov/federal/reports/women_workgroup_report.cfm.*

MyCareer@VA

A Success Story

Stephen Clabough has his sights set on becoming a hospital director at the Department of Veterans Affairs. It's an ambitious goal, but when he shares his plan you can't help but think that he'll succeed.

After six years in the Marine Corps, Clabough came to VA as a Presidential Management Fellow, seeking another avenue to continue the service to his country that he began as a Marine. VA was the "only agency I applied for," he recalls.

It was during his first assignment, as a special assistant to the Director of the Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center, that he began to map out his future at the Department.

One evening after work, Clabough found himself wondering what else was out there. Searching the web, he made his way to MyCareer@VA, accounting for just one of more than 1.5 million visits the site has seen in less than three years.

MyCareer@VA (<http://go.usa.gov/XBzd>), an initiative led by the VA Learning University (<http://www.valu.va.gov>), is an effort to transform career development at the Nation's second-largest Federal agency. The program offers data-driven tools and online resources so that anyone with access to the internet has the opportunity to develop their careers at VA.

Clabough, whose stint as a special assistant was coming to a close when he found the MyCareer@VA program, gravitated toward the My Career Mapping Tool (<http://go.usa.gov/XBzF>). He typed in his current position and watched as related jobs began to populate on the screen. The path he expected to see—which would take him from his current position of special assistant to executive assistant to assistant director, and so on and so forth—was there among the options. But there were other choices as well.

He honed in on a sequence that moved through acquisitions. Clabough was intrigued by the contract-focused positions, which would make use of his legal experience. He learned that a job in acquisitions could not only lead him toward his ultimate goal, but that the field would round out the fiscal skills he'd need to lead a VA facility.

With MyCareer@VA, every employee is empowered—as Clabough was—to reach for a goal. Providing opportunities to grow is a priority for VA and part of a larger plan to develop and retain talented individuals who can lead the organization through challenging years ahead.

MyCareer@VA is at the center of VA's strategic commitment to career development. The program is built on helping people find the job that fits them and makes the most of what they like to do and the things they do best.

This concept of "job fit" is more than a nice sentiment. Research shows that employees who use their strengths on the job are six times more likely to be engaged (<http://tinyurl.com/qjcsmxl>). In turn, engagement is critical to reducing turnover and increasing employee productivity. In other words: career development not only benefits the individual, it benefits VA as a whole and the 8.5 million Veterans and family members served by the Department.

Just a few years in, the program is making an impact. MyCareer@VA was highlighted by Gina Farrisee, VA's Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration, as one of the reasons for VA's recent ascent in the Best Places to Work in the Federal Government rankings for 2013.

As Clabough discovered, a single action can be the start of a powerful plan. MyCareer@VA users take more than 10,000 such actions each month, from creating resumes to searching for jobs to taking online career development training courses. In the last six months alone, participants dedicated more than 27,000 hours to developing their careers. **Continued on the next page.**

Policy Alerts

Section 2302(c) Certification from the U.S. Office of Special Counsel

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is strongly committed to whistleblower rights. To that extent, VA has a plan for implementing the requirements of the U.S. Office of Special Counsel's (OSC) Section 2302(c) Certification Program.

OSC's Section 2302(c) Certification Program assists Federal agencies in meeting their statutory obligation to inform their workforces about the rights and remedies available to them under the prohibited personnel practices and whistleblower retaliation protection provisions of section 2302 of title 5 of the United States Code.

In order to implement the requirements of OSC's Section 2302(c) Certification Plan, all VA Administrations and Staff Offices are directed to:

- a. Print and post OSC posters on whistleblowing, whistleblower retaliation, and prohibited personnel practices in a public setting at all VA facilities and at all VA personnel and EEO offices. A copy of these posters can be found at <http://www.diversity.va.gov/whistleblower.aspx>;
- b. Direct human resources staff to provide new hires with a hard-copy of the following OSC publications during their employee orientation: "Your Rights as a Federal Employee" and "Know Your Rights When Reporting Wrongs." A copy of these publications can be found at <http://www.diversity.va.gov/whistleblower.aspx>; and
- c. Require supervisors to take biennial training on prohibited personnel practices and whistleblower rights and protections. This training is currently being developed by VA's Office of Human Resources and Administration (OHRA) and OSC. Once the training has been developed and published, OHRA will notify all Administrations and Staff Offices.

Should you have any questions, contact Georgia Coffey, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Diversity and Inclusion, at (202) 461 - 4131 or by email at odi@va.gov.

Guidance Regarding the Provision of Health Care for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Veterans

The Undersecretary for Health released an Information Letter that provides guidance for medical and administrative staff in providing high quality health care to lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) Veterans and in creating an environment and culture that is informed, welcoming, and empowering for the LGBT Veterans and families whom we serve. This Veterans Health Administration Information Letter is available online at http://www.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=3013.

Due to differing health care needs, guidance on care for transgender Veterans can be found in VHA Directive 2013-003: Providing Health Care for Transgender and Intersex Veterans. That Directive is online at http://www.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=2863.

MyCareer@VA

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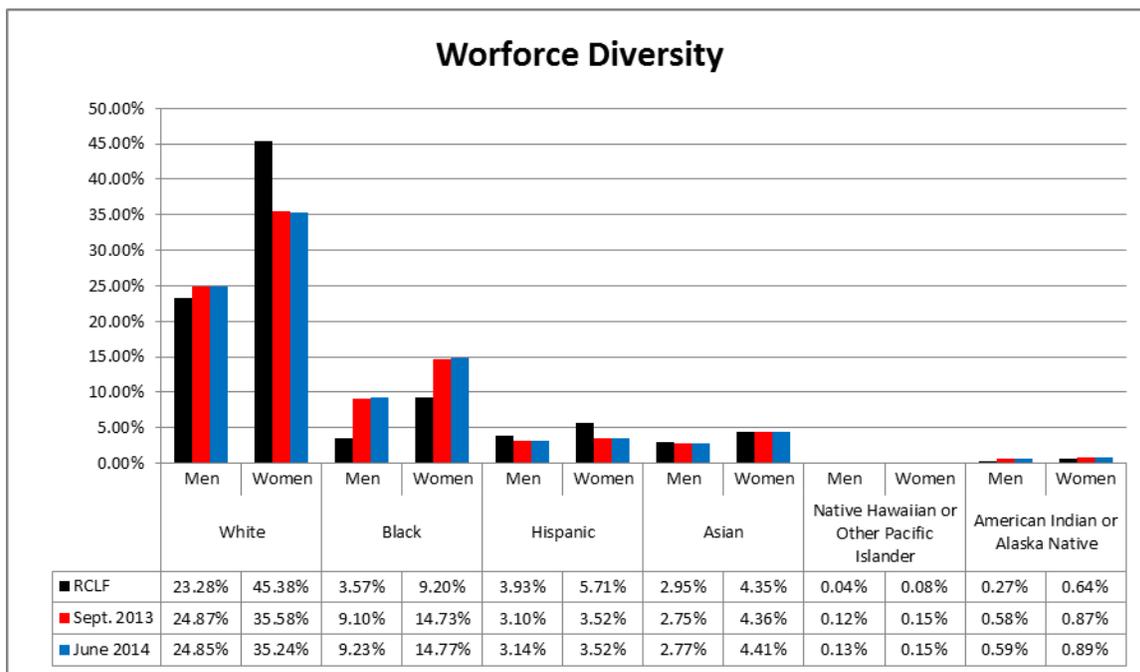
This fall, VA employees and job seekers will have an even more powerful way to plan and achieve their career goals as MyCareer@VA launches an enhanced website with expanded tools and resources, as well as the ability to create "to dos" and track progress.

For those in need of further motivation to focus on their careers, Clabough has advice: "You have to find something you truly believe in...it's about having your big picture, about what you value and what you want." For Clabough, the big picture is to continue serving his country. It's with this mindset that he approaches his work and, one day at a time, puts his plan in motion.

VA Demographics Report

Demographic Report for the Department of Veterans Affairs, June 2014

VA's workforce diversity remains relatively steady through June 2014. Although the VA workforce increased by 6,860 employees since the beginning of the fiscal year, the changes in representation for all groups in VA's permanent and temporary workforce were negligible.



Comparing the demographic characteristics of VA's workforce against the Relevant Civilian Labor Force (RCLF)*, the representation of White women, Hispanic men and women, and Asian men are lower than expected. White women representation is currently at 78 percent of RCLF, Hispanic men are at 81 percent, Hispanic women are at 62 percent, and Asian men are at 94 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)** or RCLF. Since September 2013, the RCLF-based diversity index increased by 0.51 percentage points and the CLF-based diversity index increased by 0.56 percentage points.

	Sep. 2013	Jun. 2014	Change
Using RCLF	87.01%	87.52%	0.51%
Using CLF	86.09%	86.65%	0.56%

Individuals with Targeted Disabilities

The proportion of individuals with targeted disabilities in VA's workforce has increased by 0.10 percentage point since the beginning of the fiscal year. We continue to exceed the Secretary's 2 percent onboard goal.

Individuals with Targeted Disabilities



The hiring of individuals with targeted disabilities also increased since the start of the fiscal year. Among all hires, individuals with targeted disabilities represent 3.55 percent, 0.55 percentage point above the Secretary's 3 percent hiring goal. Let's keep up the good work, VA!

For more information, contact ODI's Workforce Analysis Team at odi@va.gov.

*Relevant Civilian Labor Force (RCLF) reflects all U.S. Citizens 16 years of age or over, excluding those in Armed Forces, who are employed in or actively seeking employment in VA specific occupations. This is based on the 2010 Census and does include Puerto Rico. The RCLF seen here is based on the end of FY13.

**Civilian Labor Force (CLF) consists of all U.S. Citizens 16 years of age or over, excluding those in Armed Forces, who are employed or seeking employment. The CLF contains all occupations and is an accurate comparative basis for Federal Government-wide comparison, the largest employer in the U.S. with all occupations represented. This is based on the 2010 Census which is shown to be a higher benchmark compared with the 2000 Census. The CLF does not include Puerto Rico.

Diversity@Work is published by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA's) Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI), a program office within the Office of Human Resources and Administration (HR&A). To subscribe or unsubscribe, e-mail odi@va.gov.

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

GOT NEWS?

We want to hear from you! E-mail us at odi@va.gov.

OTHER USEFUL LINKS

MyCareer@VA
<http://www.mycareeratva.va.gov>

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

Office of Human Resources Management
<http://www.va.gov/ohrm>

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

Resolution Support Center
<http://www.va.gov/ORM/RSC.asp>
1-888-566-3982

VA Whistleblower Rights and Protections
<http://www.diversity.va.gov/whistleblower.asp>

VHA Diversity and Inclusion Community of Practice
David.Rabb@va.gov

VA on Facebook
<http://www.facebook.com/veteransaffairs>

VA on YouTube
<https://www.youtube.com/user/DeptVetAffairs>

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:

- ▶ Women's Equality Day 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

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 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 video co-produced by ODI and the VA Central Office Broadcast Center for you. *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>.

August 2014 Calendar

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

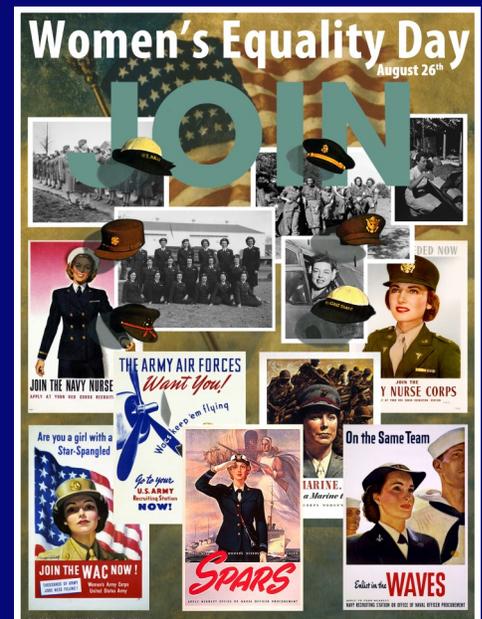
Office of Personnel Management
Training: Microbehaviors
August 11, 1-3 pm

V-J Day
August 14

Hispanic Council on Federal Employment Meeting
August 21; Washington, DC
<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2014/02/12/2014-02989/hispanic-council-on-federal-employment>

VA Office of Diversity and Inclusion
Training: Barrier Analysis
August 21, 1-4 pm

Women's Equality Day
August 26



Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute
Special Observance Poster (2013)