



## Upcoming Events

### July 2016

Ramadan  
June 6–July 5

Independence Day  
July 4

FEW National Training Conference  
July 11–14; Dallas, TX

LULAC Annual National Conference  
July 12–16; Washington, DC

25th Anniversary of the Americans with  
Disabilities Act  
July 26

## ORM

### Steps Toward Resolution

[Alternative Dispute Resolution](#) can help with resolving conflict. To file a discrimination or harassment complaint, you must contact the [Office of Resolution Management](#) at (toll free) 888-737-3361 within 45 calendar days of the date of the alleged discriminatory incident.

## Message from the DAS

On June 12, many of us awakened to the shocking news of one of the most horrific hate crimes in American history. The Orlando nightclub killings came just days before the first anniversary of another incomprehensible act of hatred and violence in a Charleston church. While we are still learning all of the facts, it appears that intolerance and bigotry were factors in both cases. The result is an assault on our common humanity.

As human beings, we all are inextricably linked to the victims of Orlando and Charleston. They are our sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, neighbors and colleagues, civilians and Veterans whose promising lives were ended because of who they were.



*Georgia Coffey*

We all as VA employees are affected by acts of hate and bigotry. They can have a profound impact on our job performance and ultimately on the quality of care delivered to our Veterans. Members of the Diversity and Inclusion in VA Council bear a special responsibility to speak out about these issues and educate those in our organizations who may not understand the value of diversity in our workforce, the importance of inclusion in our workplace, and the unequivocal commitment we must all have to civil rights in VA and in our society.

In the spirit of Protestant Pastor Martin Niemöller's famous declaration decrying the Holocaust I offer the following: First they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew. Then they came for the Blacks but I did not speak out because I was not Black. Then they came for the LGBT community, and I did not speak out because I was not Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender. Then they came for me, and there was no one left to speak for me.

It is now the twenty-first century and the time has come for all of us to speak out. Bigotry, racism, and intolerance for those who differ from us have no place in America. Such acts of hate belie who we are as a people and undermine the fundamental values upon which our Nation was established. Here in VA, we have

the noble mission and high privilege of serving those who have put their lives in harm's way to protect those values. We above all must be in the vanguard of those speaking out against acts that threaten the values and principles fought for by our Veterans. We must do so for our Nation's diverse Veterans, for our colleagues, and indeed for our collective humanity. I ask each of you to join me in speaking out now against hate and bigotry. Sir Edmund Burke is often attributed as having said, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." Please join the Diversity and Inclusion in VA Council, and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, as we take action to promote diversity and inclusion in VA. ~Georgia Coffey

WAYS I CARE  
VALUES I LIVE BY



## Secretary's Honor Award for I CARE

Recognizing Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect and Excellence within VA.

*Please submit your nominations now for individual employees who exemplify VA core values!*

To find out more information on how to nominate an employee, please visit: <http://www.va.gov/icare>

INTEGRITY

COMMITMENT

ADVOCACY

RESPECT

EXCELLENCE



VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

WAYS I CARE  
VALUES I LIVE BY



## Secretary's Honor Award for I CARE

Recognizing Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect and Excellence within VA.

*Please nominate teams now who collaboratively exemplify VA core values!*

To find out more information on how to nominate a team, please visit: <http://www.va.gov/icare>

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## Training

**Federally Employed Women (FEW) 47th Annual NTP** will be held July 11-14, 2016, at the Hilton Anatole in Dallas, Texas. The event will offer over 140 workshops on leadership, project management, career planning, interpersonal communications, finance, writing, human resources, equal employment opportunity, special emphasis programs, reasonable accommodation, and courses that address the Executive Core Qualifications required for the Senior Executive Service. Employees who plan to attend the FEW NTP must follow appropriate conference attendance approval procedures established for their respective organizations. Costs associated with attending must be authorized by each employee's organization. Attendees must pre-register through the [FEW Web site](#) and through [ACES](#). For additional information, contact [Ms. Mercedes N. Kirkland-Doyle](#), VA's National Federal Women's Program Manager, ODI. Additional conference information including registration costs, course descriptions, and schedules is available [online](#).



follow appropriate conference attendance approval procedures established for their respective organizations. Costs associated with attending must be authorized by each employee's organization. Attendees must pre-register through the [LULAC Web site](#) and through [ACES](#). To [register for the VA Forum](#) or for additional information, contact [Ms. Aurelia Waters](#), VA's National Hispanic Employment Program Manager, ODI. Additional conference information including registration costs, course descriptions, and schedules is available [online](#).

**Barrier Analysis Training** will be offered on Thursday, August 18, 2016, from 1 to 4 pm. The course covers all aspects of the barrier analysis process under Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Management Directive 715 to include analysis and interpretation of workforce statistics, trigger identification, barrier analysis investigation, preparing action plans, and following up on the action plan. This training will allow the participants to work through the majority of the process using VA specific workforce statistics. Attendees must register through the VA Talent Management System. For more information, contact [Ms. Ryan Pugh](#).



**League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) 87th Annual National Convention and Exposition** will be held July 12-16, 2016, at the Washington Hilton in Washington, DC.

This year's convention theme is "Latinos at the Seat of Power." The event will offer workshops and plenary sessions on situational leadership, conflict management, Veterans services, and strategies that will allow government employees to enrich their leadership skills and develop the qualifications required for entry to the Senior Executive Service. VA's Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) will conduct an Agency Forum on July 12, 2016, from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. The forum is a no-cost diversity training opportunity designed to provide VA Special Emphasis Program Managers and VA employees with information on professional development, VA's Hispanic workforce demographics, leadership, VA Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity policy updates, and ODI workforce initiatives. Employees who plan to attend the LULAC Convention and/or VA Forum must

**12th Annual African American Federal Executive Association (AAFEA) Professional Development Workshop** will be held

September 12-14, 2016, at the College Park Marriott Hotel and Conference Center in Maryland. Employees desiring to attend the AAFEA Leadership Workshop and Banquet should follow appropriate conference attendance approval procedures established for their respective organizations, and are also required to pre-register through [ACES](#). Costs associated with attending must be authorized by each employee's organization; no centralized funding is available to pay for employee registration or travel to this event. For the intranet link address, or for additional information, contact [Ms. Tynnetta Lee](#), VA's National African American Employment Program Manager, ODI. Additional conference information including registration costs, course descriptions, and schedules are available [online](#).



## Field Note

### Hire An Intern!

VA's Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) is currently accepting applications for facilities/offices VA-wide who want to hire a summer intern through the Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP). Requests will be approved on a first come, first served basis. These WRP candidates are all college students in good standing or recent graduates. VA is strongly committed to the employment of individuals with disabilities, including Veterans and individuals with targeted disabilities. To identify an intern, register on the [WRP Web site](#). Provision of WRP interns under this Program is subject to funding availability. For more additional information and to confirm funding, contact [Aurelia Waters](#), VA WRP Program Manager, ODI.



## Commemorate

### Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act

VA joins the Nation in observing the 26th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on July 26. From the [2015 Presidential Proclamation](#): *Twenty-five years ago, the ADA reaffirmed the idea that in America, all people are entitled to participate fully in our economy and democracy. A law deeply rooted in the principles of our Nation's founding, this landmark civil rights legislation recognized that all Americans have something to contribute to our country's story and deserve every chance to achieve their full potential. For a quarter-century, our Nation has fought to realize this law's enormous promise, and with hard work, we have helped expand what is possible so more of our friends, colleagues, and family members can live full and independent lives.*

*The product of tremendous effort, struggle, and sacrifice, the passage of the ADA was a victory won by countless Americans who refused to accept the world as it was and—against great odds—organized a grassroots movement to enshrine the principle of equality into law. One of the most comprehensive civil rights bills in the history of our country, the ADA promises fairness, opportunity, and complete participation in all aspects of American life for individuals with disabilities. It secures each person's right to independence, and it enables our society and our economy to benefit from the talents and contributions of all Americans by clearing obstacles to employment, transportation, public services, telecommunications, and public accommodations.*

*Today, as we celebrate this important anniversary and honor all those whose courage and dedication have driven our Nation's progress, we recognize that our work to uphold the spirit and the letter of this law is not yet finished. In communities throughout our country, barriers that limit our neighbors' potential have been torn down, but too many continue to encounter discrimination and structural inequalities that prohibit them from pursuing their dreams. Young people with disabilities continue to experience bullying in schools. Americans with disabilities who want to and can work are too often denied the dignity of a job. And many working Americans with disabilities still live below the poverty line... We have led by example within the Federal Government, and I am proud that there are now more Americans with disabilities working in Federal service than at any time in the past three decades... Disability touches all of us. More than 50 million Americans have a disability, and living up to the principles of the ADA is an obligation we all share. Every person deserves equal access, equal opportunity, and equal respect, and we each must do our part to ensure our Nation's promise is within the reach of all Americans. As we reflect on 25 years of progress, let us reaffirm the inherent dignity and worth of every individual, and together, redouble our efforts to build a society where all things are possible for all people.*

For more information on VA's Individuals with Disabilities Employment Program, visit VA's [Individuals with Disabilities Program Web page](#).

## SOAR Update

### VA and FIU Sign MOU

VA established a college student outreach program called the Student Outreach and Retention (SOAR) Initiative. This initiative focuses on providing information to students and recent graduates on Federal employment, VA careers, VA internships, and mentoring. The goal of the program is to establish a pipeline to careers in VA and to provide real-time job, internship, and career information to SOAR participants.

ODI is pleased to announce a major milestone in the progress to increase the recruitment outreach to diverse students. On June 9, 2016, VA and the Florida International University (FIU) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). ODI's Outreach and Retention Director, Ms. Karen M. Basnight, represented VA for the MOU signing with FIU's President, Dr. Mark B. Rosenberg. [Continued on page 6.](#)



*Dr. Mark B. Rosenberg, FIU President, Signs the MOU*

## VA Lauds AAGEN Graduates

### Two VA Employees Successfully Complete SES Development Program

VA is honored to celebrate two of its very own who successfully completed the Asian American Government Executives Network (AAGEN) Senior Executive Service (SES) Development Program. Dr. Murielle Beene, Chief Nursing Informatics Officer (CNIO) for VA, and Ms. Gita Uppal, Director, Strategy and Outreach at the San Francisco VA Health Care System, both graduated from the 2015-2016 session of the AAGEN SES Development Program in March 2016.

Dr. Murielle Beene has 12 years of critical care nursing experience and 16 years of Nursing Informatics experience in various leadership roles in both private and public healthcare organizations. In her current role as the CNIO for VA, she serves as a major transformational leader in nursing and provides strategic and operational leadership in the selection, deployment, re-engineering, evaluation and optimization of Electronic Health Records.



*Dr. Murielle-Beene*

Dr. Beene also serves as a Senior Informatics Executive and principal advisor to the Chief Nursing Officer and Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health in Informatics and Analytics. In this role, Dr. Beene provides visionary leadership and communicates complex trends to influence change and to improve the impact of Informatics on the systems of care. Dr. Beene also establishes the strategic direction that supports efficiency and effectiveness with the primary goal of advancing clinicians' evidence-based practice through Informatics.

Dr. Beene entered the AAGEN SES Development Program with the goal, "to make a difference in the Federal sector and be an example of what the possibilities are" for others to grow in their career and achieve success. Through the program, she was able to reinforce this goal as well as develop recognition of what leadership qualities are really critical for a Senior Executive.

A pivotal moment for Dr. Beene during the program was the realization of the importance of uniqueness, diversity, and educating others about the benefits of an inclusive work environment. She felt that the program addressed the most important parts of preparation for an SES candidacy as well as directing participants' focus from textbook leadership

qualities to those that really make a difference in the workplace.

Dr. Beene described the AAGEN SES Development Program as "life-changing." She expressed that the most beneficial aspect was the "candid and inter-reflective dialogues" that occurred amongst the program participants. Dr. Beene wrapped up her decision to participate in the program, driven by her desire to become an SES, in this statement: "I just want to be the change I want to see and put it into action. The goal is to work toward a world where expectations are not set by the stereotypes that hold us back, but by our personal passion, talents and interests."

As a result of Dr. Beene's completion of the AAGEN SES Development Program, she is currently in a SES candidate process.

Ms. Gita Uppal currently serves as the Director, Strategy and Outreach at the San Francisco VA Health Care System. Prior to this position, Ms. Gita Uppal served as the Director, Policy Analysis within the Office of the Assistant Deputy Secretary for Health for Policy and Planning at the VA Central Office. In this position, she was responsible for providing guidance on matters related to health policy and legislative initiatives. Her areas of responsibility included leading efforts related to assessing the implications of the Affordable Care Act on VA and Veterans.

Ms. Uppal has a wide array of professional experience including managing cooperative relationships on defense environmental issues, formulating policy and managing congressionally mandated programs for the military health system. Serving in various geographic locations and capacities, Ms. Uppal has worked within the United Nations in Rome and Albania, as well as in the United States Senate.

The AAGEN SES Development Program helped Ms. Uppal to further refine her career goals as well as expanded her knowledge on the SES application process. She felt that the program provided her a broader perspective due to the variety of classmates from various Government agencies.

Ms. Uppal expressed that an aspect of the program she particularly valued was discussing overarching issues that are predominant across the Federal government, and learning how each participant could play a more proactive role in addressing them. She summed up her experience with the AAGEN SES Development Program stating, "The entire program was an incredible experience and I am so appreciative to have had the opportunity to be selected for the program!"

The VA congratulates Dr. Murielle Beene and Ms. Gita Uppal on this distinguished achievement. Read more about the AAGEN SES Development Program on the [next page](#).

## SOAR Update

Continued from Page 4

The VA/FIU MOU charters a framework for VA and FIU to participate in outreach activities for students, increasing diversity outreach and recruitment to diverse students for internships, fellowships, jobs, and other training and development activities.

FIU is a public university located in Miami Dade County, Florida, with a diverse student population of 55,000. It is ranked first in the Nation in the number of bachelor's and master's degrees awarded to Hispanics and is considered a Hispanic Serving Institution by the Department of Education with a 65.9 percent Hispanic student population. Moreover, FIU offers a plethora of health professions degree programs to its students, which will greatly benefit VA in providing talented applicants for a vast number of VA job vacancies in health occupations. On June 6, 2016, the University opened its doors to a new District of Columbia office that will serve as ODI's central location to manage the activities of the MOU. This new office will operate as a central hub for FIU DC alumni and student interns. FIU plans to later turn this office space into a campus that will offer collegiate course to students.

This MOU was established in an effort to assist in addressing the less than expected participation of Hispanic men and women within the VA workforce as compared to the Relevant Civilian Labor Force, which is derived from 2010 U.S. Census data. This partnership stands to positively impact practices in hiring, advancement, and retention, as well as ensure full participation of Hispanic employees by implementing plans to eliminate adverse data trends at all levels of the Department. Additionally, by increasing the diversity of the workforce, VA hopes to improve the cultural competency of healthcare workers to enhance the health of the community, to include the Hispanic community and Hispanic Veterans. [Continued on the next page.](#)

## AAGEN SES Development Program

### Candidates Gain Skills to Compete for SES

The Asian American Government Executives Network (AAGEN) Senior Executive Service (SES) Development Program is a program designed to help employees who have demonstrated they are ready for the SES to reach the finish line by participation in a program that helps them develop their Executive Core Qualifications, improve their public speaking abilities and refine their leadership and managerial skills. This program has a proven track record, with 15 fellows (out of 80) from the program having advanced to SES leadership positions since its inception in 2012.

Annually, the AAGEN SES Development Program consists of 24 candidates, four of whom are selected from outside the Federal Government, and is run in partnership with the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, the Office of Personnel Management, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Although the selected candidates are expected to commit time to the program, it is offered at no tuition to them or their respective organizations. Successful candidates must obtain permission from their organization to participate as well as cover any time spent on the program and travel-related costs. The training is conducted in the Washington, DC metropolitan area; however, the one-on-one mentoring session with an SES mentor is scheduled by the candidate and their assigned mentor and may vary by location.

The program offers executive development courses, coaching in mock interviews, individual mentoring, and career counseling for candidates to gain the skills to effectively compete for SES positions and prepare an SES application. Each participant is assigned an SES or a Flag officer mentor who will provide guidance throughout the program, as well as networking opportunities with current SES leaders in AAGEN.

VA employees with sights on the SES level are encouraged to apply for AAGEN's SES Development Program. Please keep in mind that applicants must be at the GS-15 equivalent level or higher and have at least one year of supervisory experience. While the emphasis of this training is for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, the training is open to all applicants. However, applicants must be a regular member of AAGEN at program selection and for the duration of the program period.

Applications for the next cycle will be accepted from October 2016 to December 2016. The next class will commence in April 2017 and the program will continue until March 2018. For more information on the AAGEN SES Development Program, visit the [AAGEN Web site](#).

## AAPI Program Update

### VA and FAPAC Update MOU

On May 31, 2016, VA and the Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC) signed an updated Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The VA/FAPAC MOU provides a framework for VA and FAPAC in developing initiatives to enhance VA's ability to recruit and retain highly skilled Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) men and women, as well as, provides opportunities to prepare AAPI employees to become future VA leaders. Through the MOU, VA and FAPAC will be able to increase the awareness and visibility of the VA FAPAC Chapter throughout VA as an employee support group, professional development organization, community resource, and networking mechanism.

Under the objectives of the MOU, VA and FAPAC will be able to coordinate and facilitate activities that benefit both entities. Both organizations will monitor the progress in the areas of recruitment, accessions, training, career development, promotion, and retention of qualified AAPIs in both VA's workforce and FAPAC's programs as part of the MOU. The focused goals of the MOU aim to promote and achieve improvement of outreach initiatives for AAPIs in management and other senior level positions through substantive training, mentorship programs, technical career field internship programs, leadership development programs, and the Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program.

FAPAC hosts various career fairs at college campuses, an annual National Leadership Training Program, Congressional Seminars, and the Career Development Mentoring Program for High Performers as part of its services to membership and Federal Government agencies. In addition, FAPAC sponsors annual Civilian Awards and Military Meritorious Service Awards. Nominations for these awards can be made by various sources, including Federal employees.

The VA Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) oversees the VA/FAPAC MOU and all actions identified in the MOU. ODI houses the VA AAPI Employment Program that is designed to create plans to address potential and validated discriminatory and inequitable practices in hiring, advancement, and retention, as well as ensure full participation of AAPIs by implementing plans to eliminate adverse data trends at all levels of the Agency.

The continued partnership between VA and FAPAC through this MOU fosters a mutually supportive relationship that benefits all VA employees, not only AAPI employees, who seek to benefit from programs offered through this agreement. Visit VA's [AAPI Employment Program Web page](#) for more information.



*From L to R: Georgia Coffey, DAS for ODI; Bridget Souza, President, VA FAPAC Chapter; Grace Spence, President, National FAPAC, and Peter Nguyen, Vice President of Operations, National FAPAC*

## SOAR Update

### [Continued from Previous Page](#)

The VA/FIU MOU fosters a mutually supportive partnership between VA and FIU which benefits not only FIU affiliates, but VA components that are working toward enhancing their departments by hiring exceptional employment prospects. Some of the activities highlighted in the MOU include, but are not limited to promoting career development programs, internships, seminars, mentorship, and shadowing experiences. For more information on this and other SOAR MOU, visit [ODI's SOAR Web page](#).



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