



Message from the DAS

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Bookmarks:

American Women Veterans
<http://americanwomenveterans.org>
Blinded American Veterans Foundation
<http://www.bavf.org>
The Society of Hispanic Veterans
<http://hispanicveterans.org>
Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 12097
<http://www.vfwpost12097.org>

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

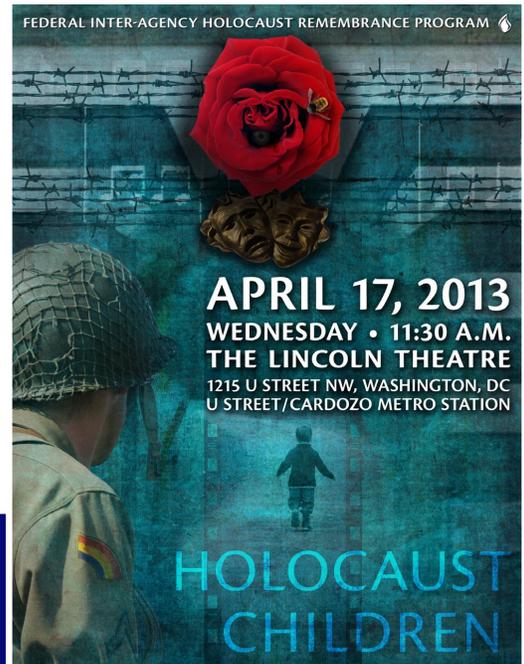
Happy spring, VA! It is a busy time of year for us here at ODI. Our fiscal year (FY) 2013 initiatives are just getting ramped up and my staff and I are fully engaged in ensuring that these programs are a success!

I am proud to report that with your commitment VA currently leads all of Federal government in the number of interns recruited from the Workforce Recruitment Program for College Students with Disabilities. Through VA's centralized fund, administered by ODI, we are projected to reimburse salary costs for approximately 52 of your WRP interns.

We continue to administer VA's National Diversity Internship Program (NDIP) centralized fund, as part of VA's efforts to cultivate a diverse workforce. The Department-wide centralized fund, which was established by the Office of Human Resources and Administration and is administered by ODI, supports increased participation in the NDIP. The funding was made available to each Administration and all Staff Offices in VA Central Office. ODI is pleased to report that all of the available centralized slots were filled.

I am also happy to report that VA has officially adopted a Hispanic Employment, Retention and Outreach Strategic Plan for FY 2013–2016. Hispanic representation in the VA permanent workforce has historically been less than expected when compared to the civilian labor force rate of Hispanic representation. This new plan presents strategies VA will use to address this issue. Read more about that on [page 8](#).

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Commemorate

Days of Remembrance

The first Federal Inter-Agency Holocaust Remembrance Program was held in 1994 to commemorate the Days of Remembrance, an annual, national civic commemoration of the Holocaust. The purpose of the annual program—authorized through Public Law 96-388, which Congress passed on October 7, 1980, as part of honoring the Days of Remembrance—is to educate Federal employees, students, and the general public about the Holocaust.

Sponsored by 30 Federal agencies including the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Annual Federal Inter-Agency Holocaust Remembrance Program will be held on Wednesday, April 17, 2013, at the Lincoln Theatre in Washington, D.C. at 11:30 am. The theme for this year's program is, "Holocaust Children." The program will be moderated by Dr. Peter Black, Senior Historian and Director of the Division of the Senior Historian at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. [Continued on page 5.](#)

Message from the DAS

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This April we commemorate the Holocaust Days of Remembrance, as well as National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, National Equal Pay Day on April 9, Pan American Day on April 14, and Pan American Week April 14–20. Read about these observances on [page 1](#). ~Georgia Coffey, VA Deputy Assistant Secretary for Diversity and Inclusion



Field Notes

Executive Leader's Guide

VA's Office of Resolution Management (ORM) recently updated the Executive Leader's Guide, available at <http://www.va.gov/ORM/docs/ExecLeaderGuide.pdf>, to reinforce knowledge of the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) complaint process, complaint prevention, and the early resolution of workplace disputes. VA senior leaders are expected to promptly address allegations of discrimination and retaliation and engage in early conflict management and alternative dispute resolution. This guide will help them do this and also assist in complying with senior leaders' critical performance element on EEO laws and regulations. It also includes new procedures for conducting training when discrimination is found and information on ORM's Dispute Resolution Advisory Workgroup, the division responsible for processing executive-level EEO complaints and workplace conflicts.

Hispanic Employment Program Managers National Teleconference April 15

The next Hispanic Employment Program Managers (HEPM) teleconference will be held Monday, April 15, from 3 to 4:15 p.m. (EST). Participants may dial in to this teleconference at 1-800-767-1750 (access code 70087). April's teleconference will feature Senior Executive Service member Veronica Villalobos, Director, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Office of Personnel Management. In this capacity, Ms. Villalobos manages OPM's government-wide diversity effort to develop, drive, and monitor strategies and initiatives designed to create a more diverse and inclusive Federal workforce. Ms. Villalobos will be speaking on "Managing Diversity and Inclusion as an HEPM" and will be discussing recommendations from the Hispanic Council on Federal Employment as well as successful diversity practices used in government and the private sector. For more information, contact Arlene Gonzalez, National HEPM, ODI, at Arlene.Gonzalez2@va.gov.

VALU Goes Mobile

Are you away from your computer and need to learn about training? The VALU Portal is now available on your mobile device. The mobile site allows you to access learning resources, the course catalog, and even identify your TMS administrator on-the-go. Visit <http://www.valu.va.gov>.

Get the Most Out of Your Career Planning with MyCareer@VA!

Discussing your professional goals with your manager is a key element of building a successful career. MyCareer@VA has tip sheets for employees and supervisors to help guide these conversations. After you have used the tip sheets, be sure to check out the other career planning tools on MyCareer@VA at <http://www.mycareeratva.va.gov>.

Employee Tip Sheet: http://www.mycareeratva.va.gov/CareerPlan/Documents/Tips%20for%20talking%20to%20Supervisor.pdf?utm_source=VALU%2BMarch%2BNewsletter&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=Tips%2Bfor%2Btalking%2Bto%2BSupervisors

Supervisor Tip Sheet: http://www.mycareeratva.va.gov/Supervisors/Documents/Tips%20for%20talking%20to%20Employee.pdf?utm_source=VALU%2BMarch%2BNewsletter&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=Tips%2Bfor%2Btalking%2Bto%2BEmployees

Training

Learn about Workforce Planning Webinars

The Workforce Planning & Analysis (WPA) team invites you to participate in a workforce planning (WFP) webinar series. Through these webinars, the WPA team provides an overview of WFP, shares best practices from across VA, and informs employees about the WFP tools, resources, and training available to them.



Tom Barritt from the Office of Human Resources Management kicked off the webinar series on February 14. He discussed VA's Mission Critical Occupations, which make up more than 39 percent of VA's staff.

On March 21, Johnathan Reiker presented on the National Cemetery Administration's (NCA's) Resource Management Tool he developed. This tool allows NCA to ensure staffing levels at cemeteries across VA, make budget or investment decisions, and project costs for contracting out work, seasonal labor and purchasing supplies.

If you're interested in attending future workforce planning webinars or joining the VA Workforce Planning Community of Practice, contact Matt Deaton, WPA team, at (202) 632-6964 or Matt.Deaton@va.gov.

Workforce Planning Training: Available on TMS

Are you looking for professional development opportunities? If so, check out the following convenient web-based courses on Talent Management System (TMS). These four courses will help you understand the key components of Workforce Planning at a time when workforce planners and HR professionals are needed to help VA support its organizational mission:

1. VA Corporate Workforce Planning (VA 2692966): understand important activities in the WFP process and the resources that are available to support workforce planning efforts across VA (https://www.tms.va.gov/learning/user/deeplink_redirect.jsp?linkId=ITEM_DETAILS&componentID=2692966&componentTypeID=VA&revisionDate=1326119340000).
2. Workforce Planning Data (VA 2692967): learn about the types of data that inform workforce planning and where you can find sources of workforce planning data (https://www.tms.va.gov/learning/user/deeplink_redirect.jsp?linkId=ITEM_DETAILS&componentID=2692967&componentTypeID=VA&revisionDate=1326120300000).
3. Workforce Maps Data and Analysis (VA 2692970): familiarize yourself with the Workforce Maps tool to identify gaps and risks in workforce supply (https://www.tms.va.gov/learning/user/deeplink_redirect.jsp?linkId=ITEM_DETAILS&componentID=2692970&componentTypeID=VA&revisionDate=13261260000).
4. Risk Evaluator Data and Analysis (VA 2692971): review and analyze sample Risk Evaluator reports to learn how you can recognize risks that can affect the VA workforce (https://www.tms.va.gov/learning/user/deeplink_redirect.jsp?linkId=ITEM_DETAILS&componentID=2692971&componentTypeID=VA&revisionDate=1326121680000).

To enroll, select the links above and log-in via TMS. For more information on these courses, contact Dr. Perry Alter at (202) 536-9972 or at Perry.Alter@va.gov or Matt Deaton at (202) 632-6964 or Matt.Deaton@va.gov. Stay tuned for additional course announcements this year. [Continued on page 6.](#)

Policy Alerts

VA Handbook 5021

A change has been made to VA Handbook 5021, Part VI, Paragraph 18 in regards to the separation of medical and dental residents appointed under 38 U.S.C. 7406. The change modifies and provides clarification regarding the appropriate procedures for the separation of certain residents. The change will be incorporated into the electronic version of VA Handbook 5021 in the near future.

On-Boarding and Off-Boarding Procedures

Part I of VA Handbook 5005 is under revision to institute standardized on-boarding and off-boarding procedures in VA. The anticipated revision explains both processes and identifies associated responsibilities under each procedure. The estimated effective date of this policy change is 06/30/13, or the issue date of the revised VA policy, whichever occurs later.

Changes to Veterans' Preference

On August 29, 2008, the Hubbard Act was enacted as Public Law 110-317. The Hubbard Act amended the eligibility categories for Veterans' preference purposes by adding subparagraph (H) to 5 U.S.C. 2108(3). Subparagraph (H) establishes a new Veterans' preference eligibility category for Veterans released or discharged from a period of active duty from the armed forces, after August 29, 2008, by reason of a "sole survivorship discharge." The Hubbard Act defines a "sole survivorship discharge" as the separation of a member from the armed forces, at the request of the member, pursuant to Department of Defense policy permitting the early separation of a member who is the only surviving child in a family in which the father or mother or one or more siblings (1) served in the armed forces and (2) was killed, died as a result of wounds, accident, or disease, is in a captured or missing in action status, or is permanently 100 percent disabled or hospitalized on a continuing basis (and is not employed gainfully because of the disability or hospitalization) where (3) the death, status, or disability did not result from the intentional misconduct or willful neglect of the parent or sibling and was not incurred during a period of unauthorized absence.

Under the new sole survivorship preference, the individual (1) does not receive Veterans' preference points as other preference eligibles do when the "rule of 3" is applied; (2) is entitled to be listed ahead of non-preference eligibles with the same score on an examination, or listed ahead of non-preference eligibles in the same quality category when agencies are using category rating; (3) is entitled to receive the same pass over rights as other preference eligibles; and (4) is entitled to credit experience in the armed forces to meet the qualification requirements for Federal jobs.

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) will be implementing changes to its guides that list the various forms of Veterans' preference to indicate that the sole survivorship designation should be "Sole Survivorship Preference" or "SSP."

On June 15, 2012, OPM issued a Memorandum for Chief Human Capital Officers on the Veterans Opportunity to Work to Hire Heroes Act of 2011, available at <http://www.chcoc.gov/transmittals/TransmittalDetails.aspx?TransmittalID=4881>. Since issuing this memorandum, OPM has received inquiries as to what type of documentation is needed to establish 10-point preference for Disabled Veterans who have yet to be released or discharged from the armed forces. For these purposes, agencies can accept any documentation described in sections B or C of page 2 of the Standard Form (SF) 15, Application for 10-Point Veteran Preference. This form contains the types of documentation needed to establish 10-point disability preference and is available at http://www.opm.gov/forms/pdf_fill/sf15.pdf.

OPM plans to issue various guidance on the above topics through regulation, Delegated Examining Operations Handbook, a revised SF 15, and Veterans' preference data elements codes changes.

VA HR Offices may direct questions to the Title 5 Staffing Policy Team via e-mail at vatitle5staffingpoli@va.gov.

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Commemorate

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Guest speakers will include Ela Stein-Weissberger, a Czech-Jewish Holocaust survivor of Theresienstadt Concentration Camp; Inge Auerbacher, a German-Jewish Holocaust survivor of Theresienstadt Concentration Camp; and Jimmy Gentry, a member of the 42nd Rainbow Division of the US Seventh Army which liberated the Dachau concentration camp along with the 45th Division and the 20th Armored Division. VA employees are encouraged to attend with supervisory approval. Visit <http://holocaustremembrance.org> for more information.

National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month

VA joins the Nation in observing National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month this April. From the 2012 Presidential Proclamation on National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/04/02/presidential-proclamation-national-sexual-assault-awareness-and-preventi>):

Though we have come far in the fight to reduce sexual violence, the prevalence of sexual assault remains an affront to our national conscience that we cannot ignore. This month, we stand with survivors of sexual assault, join together to break the silence, and recommit to ending this devastating crime.

Rape and sexual assault inflict profound suffering upon millions of Americans every year. Nearly one in five women has been raped, and still more have endured other forms of sexual violence or abuse. Tragically, these crimes take their greatest toll on young people; women between the ages of 16 and 24 are at greatest risk of rape and sexual assault, and many victims, male and female, first experience abuse during childhood. The trauma of sexual violence leaves scars that may never fully heal. Many survivors experience depression, fear, and suicidal feelings in the months and years following an assault, and some face health problems that last a lifetime.

It is up to all of us to ensure victims of sexual violence are not left to face these trials alone. Too often, survivors suffer in silence, fearing retribution, lack of support, or that the criminal justice system will fail to bring the perpetrator to justice. We must do more to raise awareness about the realities of sexual assault; confront and change insensitive attitudes wherever they persist; enhance training and education in the criminal justice system; and expand access to critical health, legal, and protection services for survivors. As we fight sexual assault in our communities, so must we combat this crime within our Armed Forces. The Department of Defense provides additional resources for service members and military families at 1-877-995-5247 and at: www.SafeHelpline.org.

All of us share a responsibility to those in need. By standing with survivors of rape and sexual assault and helping them secure the support and services they deserve, we do right by the ideals of compassion and service at the heart of the American character. For additional information and resources, visit: www.WhiteHouse.gov/1is2many.

During National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, we rededicate ourselves to breaking the cycle of violence that threatens lives, erodes communities, and weakens our country. As we reflect on the progress we have made and the distance we have yet to go, let us recommit to empowering survivors and fighting for a safer future for every American.

VA is committed to maintaining a workplace environment free from discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment. For information on dealing with workplace violence, visit <http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/worklife/reference-materials/workplaceviolence.pdf>. [Continued on page 9.](#)

More Training

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Section 508 Webinars

The VA Section 508 Program Office is currently offering a General Section 508 webinar. The webinar will be offered twice on April 30, from 10 am to noon and from 2 to 4 pm, and will be captioned. Each webinar has its own TMS number for self-certification; details will be given at the end of the webinar. The webinar 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 of the Rehabilitation Act. VA employees attending the webinar will also learn 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.

If you supervise, procure, develop or administer policy relating to the following you should attend:

- Produce documents;
- Produce brochures;
- Develop web pages;
- Develop web-based applications;
- Develop software;
- 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.

For more information, contact Vicki Leon, Office of Information Technology, Section 508 Program Office, at Vicki.Leon@va.gov.

VA 508 Compliance, FireEyes Lunch and Learn Sessions

The VA Section 508 Program Office will offer VA FireEyes lunch and learn training sessions in April and May.

The VA Section 508 Program Office partnered with Deque Systems to roll out the enterprise Section 508 compliance testing application suite throughout all of VA's web content sites. FireEyes is an unprecedented, next-generation web

accessibility tool that ensures both static and dynamic content within a web portfolio are 508 compliant.

Section 508 applies to both disabled VA employees and disabled persons in the general public who use VA services. These groups are all stakeholders in the implementation of the Section 508 technical requirements, and if the Program Office deploys applications and web content that are non-compliant, a formal 508 complaint can be filed against the agency. Through FireEyes and other uses of technology, VA ensures that all the information that it uses and supplies is readily accessible to all people despite any physical limitations they may have.

VA program managers, application developers or web content providers should send invite requests to section508@va.gov to sign up for FireEyes for one of the lunch and learn training sessions to be held April 9, April 23, May 7, and May 21. Each session begins at 2 p.m. EST.

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, 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)

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, Management and Program Analyst, ODI, at Ryan.Pugh2@va.gov. [Continued on page 11.](#)

Employees with Disabilities

High Separation Rates Reported

VA components and facilities are doing well at recruiting and hiring people who have targeted disabilities, but VA still needs to improve retention of these employees if the Department is to meet the two percent on board goal. In fiscal year (FY) 2012, VA hired 700 individuals with targeted disabilities into permanent positions. During the same year, 556 permanent employees with targeted disabilities separated from the Department. The majority (459) of the separations were voluntary and 17 percent (97) were involuntary. Of the total separations, 60 percent were employees with psychiatric disabilities and most of these were Veterans. The other two groups with high separation rates were employees with partial paralysis and those with epilepsy.

When employees voluntarily separate, it is usually because they are retiring or transferring to a different job. VA needs to improve its retention efforts in order to reduce the separation rate. It is VA's responsibility, according to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, to ensure that the Department has provided reasonable accommodations and promotion opportunities to employees who have disabilities. Before terminating an employee with a disability, accommodation should be considered; the form for disability retirement even asks if the agency provided accommodation.

Many accommodations, such as flexible hours, are free. Computer/Electronic equipment is available from the U.S. Department of Defense at no cost to VA. If equipment or services must be procured by VA, ODI can reimburse the cost through the Centralized Fund. The VA Disability Program Manager is available to provide training on the accommodation process. For more information, visit <http://www.diversity.va.gov/programs/pwd.aspx>.

VA is working to identify ways to promote qualified individuals with disabilities. Career ladder positions are an obvious option. The Medical Center in Battle Creek, Michigan, moved qualified employees from the 5/7/9 ladder to the 9/11/12 ladder. Training opportunities might also be helpful with ensuring that individuals with disabilities qualify for these types of promotion opportunities. If your facility has an approach that you have found to be successful, ODI would like to publicize it. Please contact us at odi@va.gov.

Based on EEO findings and anecdotal information, some supervisors might not understand VA's legal obligation to provide reasonable accommodations and promotion opportunities to employees with disabilities. Being a "model employer" means VA supports all employees, including those with targeted disabilities. Please help to spread the word.

CareerPower

Empowering Employees to Achieve Superior Results



CareerPower is designed to help you gain a deeper understanding of your interests, skills and behaviors to develop a personalized career plan. It is a new online course from the VA Learning University's (VALU) career development program, MyCareer@VA, that guides you through the fundamentals of professional development, including self-reflection, career interest identification and goal setting. Through CareerPower, you will determine a direction for your career and create a plan for how to make your goals a reality. By making this information and guidance available to VA employees, CareerPower helps level the playing field for career progression and cultivates an inclusive workforce, empowering employees to achieve their best. CareerPower is recommended for employees at GS levels 5–12 or equivalent wage grade levels, and is targeted to employees in non-medical positions. The program is primarily online and self-paced, so you can complete the five interactive lessons on a schedule that works best for you. Upon completion, you will receive credit via VALU's Talent Management System. It's never been easier to take charge of your professional development at VA. Sign up at http://mycareeratva.va.gov/Resources/Pages/careerpower.aspx?utm_source=Diversity+At+Work&utm_medium=Newsletter&utm_campaign=CareerPower by April 15. For more information, email VAMyCareer@VA.gov.

A Plan for Hispanics

VA Releases New Hispanic Employment, Retention and Outreach Strategic Plan

As of February 2013, Hispanic representation in the VA permanent workforce was 6.74 percent, which falls below the 2010 civilian labor force rate of Hispanic representation of 10.8 percent (this rate includes Puerto Rico). In keeping with Federal mandates and in an effort to address on-going Hispanic under-representation in the VA workforce, ODI has led an effort to develop a VA strategic plan which will (1) integrate VA collective human capital actions aimed at improving the representation of Hispanics in the VA workforce and (2) foster and expand intra- and inter-agency dialog, cooperation and collaboration in planning, conducting, monitoring and reporting on Hispanic employment, outreach and retention. This plan—the Department of Veterans Affairs Fiscal Year (FY) 2013–2016 Hispanic Employment, Retention and Outreach (HERO) Strategic Plan—was released in February 2013.

The Plan serves as an operational framework to promote VA as a model equal opportunity employer for Hispanics. It incorporates recommendations from the Office of Personnel Management's Hispanic Council on Federal Employment, as well as goals and objectives outlined in VA's Federal Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Reports and Plans and Federal workforce Executive Orders (EO). It also aligns with the goals and objectives of the VA FY 2012–2016 Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan.

The three overarching goals of the HERO Plan are:

- 1) Build a diverse, high-performing workforce that is reflective of all segments of society, including the Hispanic community and Hispanic Veterans.
- 2) Cultivate a work environment that is inclusive of Hispanics, as evidenced by increased retention, career development, and advancement of Hispanics in the VA workforce, in keeping with merit principles.
- 3) Facilitate outstanding, culturally competent public service and Hispanic stakeholder relations through effective leadership and accountability.

The Plan promotes strategic actions and initiatives that will enhance recruitment outreach, career development, advancement opportunities, and inclusive practices to ensure equal employment opportunities exist for the Hispanic community. VA will realize the goals and objectives contained in the Plan by strategically collaborating with key VA stakeholders and by integrating and embedding EEO and diversity and inclusion goals into day-to-day processes, across all business lines, and at all levels. VA will also continue partnering with Hispanic Serving Institutions, providing technical assistance, guidance, and information on Federal employment processes and opportunities, as well as internships and fellowships. These efforts will be significantly expanded during FY 2013 through FY 2016 as part of an aggressive effort to ensure the recruitment and employment of Hispanics.

Read the HERO plan at <http://www.diversity.va.gov/programs/hispanic.aspx>. For more information, contact Arlene Gonzalez, National Hispanic Employment Program Manager, ODI, at (202) 461-4041.

Department of Veterans Affairs
Hispanic Employment, Retention
and Outreach Strategic Plan
FY2013–2016



Veteran Employment

Special Hiring Authorities for Veterans

Special Hiring Authorities for Veterans are just that...designed for Veterans. Knowing about these authorities and identifying your eligibility will enhance your job search. These special authorities represent a few of many appointing authorities that agencies can use entirely at their discretion. Veterans are not entitled to appointment under any of these authorities. Check the vacancy announcements, which should clearly state "Who May Apply." [Continued on page 10.](#)

Commemorate

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National Equal Pay Day

April 9 marks National Equal Pay Day. It is VA policy that discrimination based on gender will not be tolerated. This applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including recruitment, hiring, promotions, transfers, reassignments, training, career development, benefits, and separation. From the 2012 Presidential Proclamation on National Equal Pay Day (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/04/17/presidential-proclamation-national-equal-pay-day-2012>):

Working women power America's economy and sustain our middle class. For millions of families across our country, women's wages mean food on the table, decent medical care, and timely mortgage payments. Yet, in 2010—47 years after President John F. Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act of 1963—women who worked full-time earned only 77 percent of what their male counterparts did. The pay gap was even greater for African American and Latina women, with African American women earning 64 cents and Latina women earning 56 cents for every dollar earned by a Caucasian man. National Equal Pay Day represents the date in the current year through which women must work to match what men earned in the previous year, reminding us that we must keep striving for an America where everyone gets an equal day's pay for an equal day's work.

At a time when families across our country are struggling to make ends meet, ensuring a fair wage for all parents is more important than ever. Women are breadwinners in a growing number of families, and women's earnings play an increasingly important role in families' incomes. For them, fair pay is even more than a basic right—it is an economic necessity.

Working women are at the heart of an America built to last. Equal pay will strengthen our families, grow our economy, and enable the best ideas and boldest innovations to flourish—regardless of the innovator's gender. On National Equal Pay Day, let us resolve to become a Nation that values the contributions of our daughters as much as those of our sons, denies them no opportunity, and sets no limits on their dreams.

Pan American Day and Pan American Week

Finally, VA joins the Nation in commemorating Pan American Day on April 14 and Pan American Week April 14–20. From the 2012 Presidential Proclamation on Pan American Day and Pan American Week (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/04/09/presidential-proclamation-pan-american-day-and-pan-american-week-2012>):

In April of 1890, delegates from countries throughout the Americas gathered in Washington, D.C., united in the belief that cooperation would lead to a more peaceful, secure, and prosperous hemisphere. Demonstrating remarkable foresight and a commitment to progress, they came together to forge a community of nations that would one day become the Organization of American States—a body dedicated to the pursuit of democracy and economic opportunity for all our people. During Pan American Day and Pan American Week, we celebrate this legacy of international partnership and renew the bonds of friendship and shared responsibility that join us in common purpose.

The United States is proud to be part of the inter-American community. From the shores of Canada to the cliffs of Cape Horn, our hopes are bound together—to create greater social and economic opportunity for all, to ensure safety for our citizens, to build strong and accountable democratic institutions, to secure a clean energy future. Our Nation remains committed to working together with partners across our hemisphere to achieve these goals.

During Pan American Day and Pan American Week, we celebrate our shared heritage, reflect on the gains we have made, and recommit to advancing the common prosperity and security of all our people.

Veteran Employment

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Veterans' Recruitment Appointment (VRA)

Veterans' Recruitment Appointment (VRA) is an excepted authority that allows agencies, to appoint eligible Veterans without competition. If you:

- are in receipt of a campaign badge for service during a war or in a campaign or expedition; OR
- are a Disabled Veteran, OR
- are in receipt of an Armed forces Service Medal for participation in a military operation, OR
- are a recently separated Veteran (within the last 3 years), AND
- separated under honorable conditions (this means an honorable or general discharge), you are VRA eligible.

You can be appointed under this authority at any grade level up to GS-11/target 13. This is an excepted service appointment. After successfully completing two years, you will be converted to the competitive service. Veterans' preference applies when using the VRA authority.

Agencies can also use VRA to fill temporary (not to exceed one year) or term (more than one year but not to exceed four years) positions. If you are employed in a temporary or term position under VRA, you will not be converted to the competitive service after two years.

There is no limit to the number of times you can apply under VRA.

You must provide acceptable documentation of your preference or appointment eligibility. The member 4 copy of your DD214, "Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty," is preferable. If claiming 10 point preference, you will need to submit a Standard Form (SF-15 [152 KB]), "Application for 10-point Veterans' Preference."

30% or More Disabled Veteran

30% or More Disabled Veteran allows any Veteran with a 30% or more service-connected disability to be non-competitively appointed.

You are eligible if you:

- retired from active military service with a service-connected disability rating of 30% or more; OR
- you have a rating by the Department of Veterans Affairs showing a compensable service-connected disability of 30% or more.

This authority can be used to make permanent, temporary (not to exceed one year) or term (more than one year, but not more than four) appointments in the competitive service. There is no grade level restriction.

When using this authority to appoint on a permanent basis, you are first placed on a time limited appointment of at least 60 days and then converted to a permanent appointment at management's discretion. When the authority is used for temporary or term appointments, you will not be converted to a permanent appointment.

You must provide acceptable documentation of your preference or appointment eligibility. The member 4 copy of your DD214, "Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty," is preferable. If claiming 10 point preference, you will need to submit a Standard Form (SF-15 [152 KB]), "Application for 10-point Veterans' Preference."

Schedule A Appointing Authority

Though not specifically for Veterans, the Schedule A authority for people with disabilities, 5 CFR 213.3102(u), is an excepted authority that agencies can use to appoint eligible Veterans who have a severe physical, psychological, or intellectual disability. [Continued on page 13.](#)

More Training

Continued from page 6.

FAPAC Conference

The Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC) will hold its 28th National Leadership Training Conference on May 6–10, 2013, in Long Beach, California. This conference qualifies as training in compliance with 5 U.S.C. Chapter 41 and is open to all Federal employees. Workshops will cover various topics such as Women and Leadership, Healthcare, and Diversity and Inclusion. ODI will present a no-cost VA Agency Forum on Monday, May 6, 2013, from 8:30 am to noon, designed to provide VA employees and Veterans with information on VA goals and objectives as they pertain to the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI); VA's AAPI workforce demographics; health issues impacting the AAPI community; career development and advancement initiatives; and Veteran employment initiatives. Employees in the local commuting area are encouraged to attend the Forum, with supervisory approval. All attendees must follow appropriate conference attendance approval procedures established for their respective organizations. Costs associated with attending the main conference must be authorized by your organization. Additional information such as registration costs, course descriptions, and schedules, are available at <http://www.fapac.org>. To register for the VA Forum, visit https://www.tms.va.gov/learning/user/deeplinkre_direct.jsp?linkId=SCHEMULATED_OFFERING_DETAILS&scheduleID=2584898. Prior to registering, you must receive appropriate approvals including travel approval from your organization. For additional information, contact Andy Gonzalez, AAPI Program Manager, ODI, at (202) 299-4320 or Andy.Gonzalez@va.gov.



LULAC Conference

The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) will hold its 84th Annual National Training Conference June 17–22, 2013, in Las Vegas, Nevada. This conference qualifies as training in compliance with 5 U.S.C Chapter 41 and is open to all Federal employees. Annually, the LULAC Conference hosts the LULAC Federal Training Institute (FTI), an intensive and structured career development program for government and public sector employees. In addition, there will be seminars and workshops which will feature expert panelists to discuss many key issues affecting the Latino community, including education, health care, and civil rights. There will also be an Expo and Career Fair that will feature a multitude of private and government agencies. Supervisory approval



should be obtained in order to attend the training. Employees and managers are encouraged to review conference and training information when deciding to participate, such as course descriptions, registration, associated costs, and schedules at <http://lulac.org/convention>.

Job Analysis and Assessment Questionnaire Development Training Sessions

The USA Staffing Program Office is currently offering monthly training sessions on Job Analysis and Assessment Questionnaire Development. Registration is now open for the Job Analysis Training (ID # 3831349) and Assessment Questionnaire (ID # 3831465) in the Talent Management System. The training is intended to educate (or refresh!) HR specialists, liaisons, or professionals, on best practices in conducting job analyses and developing assessment questionnaires. Whether hiring via Merit Promotion, Delegated Examining Unit, or other authorities, a job analysis is always necessary to support a valid and legally defensible selection process. Understanding the job analysis process is imperative to succeed as an HR Specialist.

Specifically, this training will cover:

- How to Conduct a Job Analysis
- How to Complete the Job Analysis Forms (0938a-c)
- Overview and Use of Assessment Questionnaires
- Importing and Scoring Assessment Questionnaires in USA Staffing

Training sessions will be held via LiveMeeting/Webinar and will focus on Job Analysis and Assessment Development separately so that HR Specialists may attend one or the other, or both depending on their needs. HR professionals who fill vacancies, assist in job analyses, job announcements, use USA Staffing, or have other duties related to staffing are strongly encouraged to attend this training. Please note that this training will NOT focus on how to use USA Staffing; participants should have already completed USA Staffing Basic User Training and be familiar with uploading and creating a job announcement in the USA Staffing system. Email vausastaffing@va.gov for more information.

Books24x7

VA employees, did you know that you can freely access a wealth of online books through VA's Talent Management System (TMS)? Log into TMS and then type in "Books 24x7" in the search window. To get started using this resource, try typing in key words such as "diversity and inclusion."



More Policy Alerts

[Continued from page 4.](#)

OPM Revision of Schedule A, 5 CFR 213.3102(u) Appointing Authority Regulation

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has made an official revision of its regulation for Schedule A, 5 CFR 213.3102(u) hiring of persons with intellectual disabilities, severe physical disabilities, and psychiatric disabilities. OPM published this revised Title 5 regulation in the February 22, 2013, Federal Register available at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-02-22/pdf/2013-04095.pdf>. The revision does not require issuance of VA policy. Thus, when the regulation takes effect on March 25, 2013, all HR offices are to follow its new provisions starting that day.

The final regulation: (1) eliminates the current requirement that applicants with disabilities provide certification of job readiness in order to receive a Schedule A “(u)” appointment; (2) substitutes the updated “intellectual disability” term for “mental retardation”; and (3) clarifies what service as a (u) appointee counts towards noncompetitive conversion to the competitive service.

OPM states that eliminating the requirement for applicant job readiness certifications “will speed the hiring process for agencies by removing an unnecessary burden on applicants with disabilities.” The regulation retains the requirement that an applicant provide proof of a qualifying disability issued by a licensed medical professional, a licensed vocational rehabilitation specialist, or a Federal, state, District of Columbia, or U.S. territorial disability benefits agency.

The final regulation updated terminology by replacing “mental retardation” with “intellectual disability” “to use similar, less stigmatizing terminology here without changing the underlying scope of coverage of the regulation.”

Lastly, the regulation provides criteria for appropriately choosing to make an appointment permanent, time-limited, or temporary, and further notes that a facility may noncompetitively convert a “(u)” appointee to the competitive service after 2 years of satisfactory service on either a permanent or time-limited appointment, while service on a temporary appointment will not count towards the 2-year requirement.

The revisions are consistent with Executive Order 13548, dated July 26, 2010, on Increasing Federal Employment of Individuals With Disabilities, and should facilitate Schedule A hiring of Veterans and others with disabilities.

Interim Procedures—Preference to Veterans in Making Hybrid Title 38 Appointments

VA policy concerning Veterans’ preference under title 38 is set forth in VA Handbook 5005, Part II, Chapter 3, Section A, Paragraph 3a. Until further notice, when making appointments to any hybrid title 38 occupations identified in 38 U.S.C § 7401 (3) or approved for hybrid status by the Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration, under the authority of 38 U.S.C. § 7401(3) or 7405, applicants must be referred in accordance with the provisions of 5 CFR 302.304(b)(5).

If announced, hybrid title 38 vacancies must be posted through USA Staffing. Especially for positions above the full performance level, the vacancy announcement should clearly state the duties and responsibilities of the assignment, and any specialized skills needed. Prior to posting a vacancy announcement, a comprehensive job analysis must be completed to address the clinical competencies and specific experience needed for the position to identify the highest quality candidates.

When vacancies for hybrid title 38 vacancies are announced, all applicants must first be evaluated for the basic requirements as specified in the appropriate VA Qualification Standard. In addition, for positions above the full performance level of the occupation, this includes meeting the specialized experience requirement for the announced assignment and grade.

For guidance regarding the posting of vacancies and the handling of applications for full/hybrid title 38 positions refer to Human Resources Management Letter No. 05-12-04, Accepting Applications from Noncompetitive and Excepted Service Eligibles. [Continued on the next page.](#)

Veteran Employment

[Continued from page 10.](#)

To be eligible, you must:

- Show proof of your disability. Documentation may be from any licensed medical professional (e.g., a physician or other medical professional certified by a State, the District of Columbia, or a U.S. Territory to practice medicine), a licensed vocational rehabilitation specialist (i.e., State or private), or any Federal or State agency, or agency of the District of Columbia or a U.S. territory that issues or provides disability benefits;
- Your medical documentation should distinguish between disabilities that are temporary, or transient, versus disabilities, which are chronic, permanent, on-going, or unresolved with no end in sight.
- Have a certification of job readiness. Certification of job readiness (i.e., that you are likely to perform the duties of the job you wish to perform despite the presence of your disability) may be from any licensed medical professional (e.g., a physician or other medical professional certified by a State, the District of Columbia, or a U.S. Territory to practice medicine), a licensed vocational rehabilitation specialist (i.e., State or private), or any Federal or State agency, or agency of the District of Columbia or a U.S. territory that issues or provides disability benefits.

The above documentation may be combined in one letter or you can provide it in separate letters. Agencies can use this authority, at their discretion, to appoint you at any grade level and for any job (time-limited or permanent) for which you qualify. Veterans' preference applies when agencies hire individuals under this authority. After two years of satisfactory service, the agency may convert you, without competition, to the competitive service. There is no limit to the number of times you can apply under this authority.

You must provide acceptable documentation of your preference or appointment eligibility. The member 4 copy of your DD214, "Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty," is preferable. If you are claiming 10 point preference as a Disabled Veteran, you will need to submit a Standard Form (SF-15)[152 KB], "Application for 10-point Veterans' Preference."

More Policy Alerts

[Continued from the previous page.](#)

Once all eligible and qualified applicants have been determined, they should be referred to the selecting official/hiring manager in the following order:

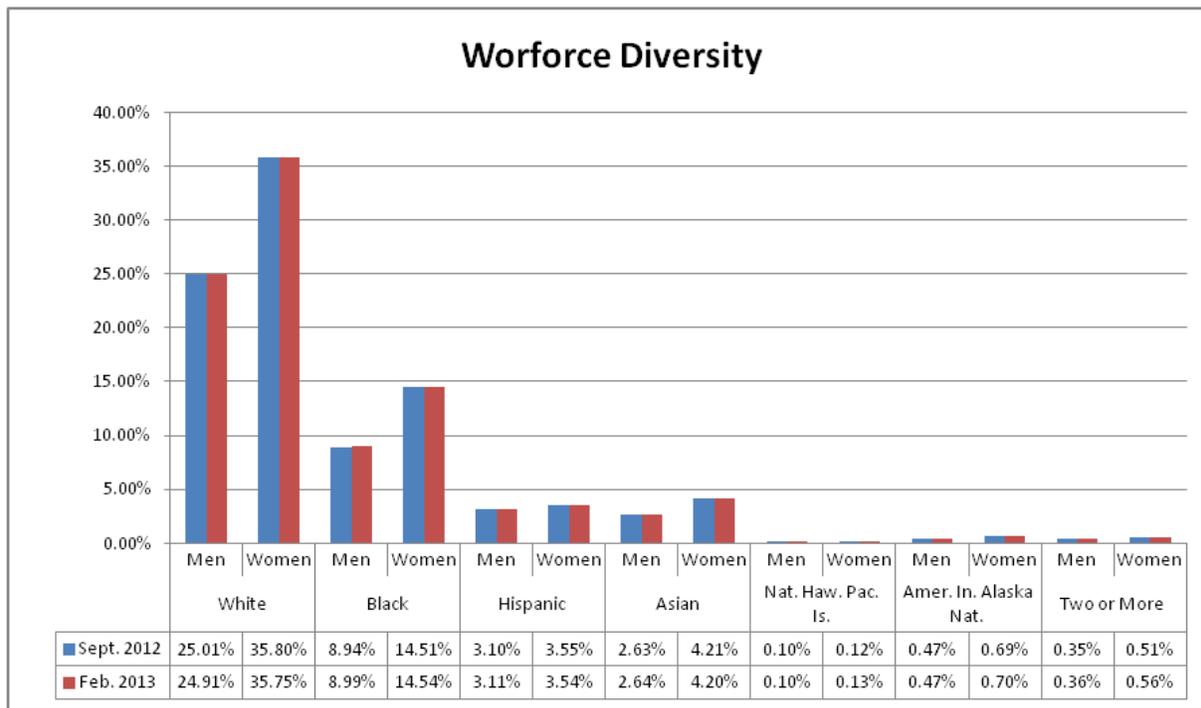
- (1) Disabled Veterans who have a service-connected disability of 10 percent or more (5 U.S.C. § 2108(2)).
- (2) Preference eligibles under 5 u.s.c. § 2108(3)(C) through (G), other than those above (i.e., Disabled Veteran; unmarried widow or widower of a Veteran who served on active duty in wartime or other designated service period; spouse of a service-connected Disabled Veteran not qualified for civil service employment; eligible mother of a Veteran who lost his/her life in wartime or other designated service period; eligible mother of a service-connected permanently and totally Disabled Veteran).
- (3) Preference eligibles under 5 U.S.C. § 2108(3)(A) and (B) (i.e., Veterans who served on active duty in wartime or other designated service period).
- (4) Other Veterans (5 U.S.C. § 2108(1)).
- (5) All other non-preference candidates (this category of applicants is not ranked).

Qualified preference eligibles and other Veteran applicants are an important source of candidates and must receive full consideration when making hiring decisions. Whether or not the vacancy was announced, when qualified preference eligible Veterans are referred for vacancies, the provisions of VA Handbook 5005, Part I, Appendix B, paragraph 13 must be followed and documented if a preference eligible Veteran is not selected. Recruitment case files must be retained and available as proof that preference eligibles and other Veterans have been afforded the opportunity to apply for any appropriate title 38 vacancy for which facilities conduct external recruitment. In addition, the procedures outlined in VA Handbook 5005, Part II, Chapter 2, Section C, paragraph 6f and 5 CFR 332.406 and 339.306(b) must be used to request OPM approval to pass over a preference eligible with a compensable service-connected disability of 30 percent or more.

VA Demographics Report

Demographic Report for the Department of Veterans Affairs, February 2013

VA's workforce diversity remains relatively steady through February 2013. Although the VA workforce increased by an estimate 4.6 thousand employees, 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 Relevant Civilian Labor Force (RCLF)*, the representation of White women and Hispanic women are lower than expected. White women representation is currently at 75 percent of RCLF while Hispanic women are at 81 percent of RCLF. The representation of White men is lower than expected too, but is not considered to be significant. They are currently at 99.4 percent of their RCLF.

Diversity Index

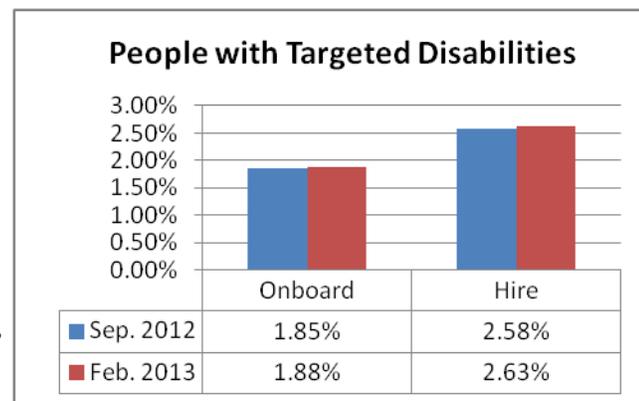
The Diversity Index is a single measure of workforce diversity that measures the convergence of VA's aggregate workforce distribution by race, ethnicity, and gender to the Civilian Labor Force (CLF)**. Since September 2012, there has been 0.34 percentage point increase in the RCLF-based diversity index and a 0.51 percentage point increase in the CLF-based diversity index.

	Sep.2012	Feb. 2013	Change
Using RCLF	96.33%	96.67%	0.34%
Using CLF	85.75%	86.26%	0.51%

People with Targeted Disabilities

The proportion of people with targeted disabilities in VA's workforce has remained steady at 1.88 percent (a 0.03 percent increase since the beginning of the fiscal year) for the past three months.

The hiring of people with targeted disabilities also increased since the start of the fiscal year. Among all hires, people with targeted disabilities represent 2.63 percent, 0.37 percent below the Secretary's three percent hiring goal for this group.



Contact ODI's Workforce Analysis Team at 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 collected on the demographics of citizens in each job type.

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).

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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:

- ▶ 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 video program co-produced by ODI and the VA Central Office Broadcast Center for you. The March/April 2013 edition focuses on how VA supervisors can leverage MyCareer@VA. *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>.

April 2013 Calendar

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

National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month

Federal Inter-Agency Holocaust Remembrance Program
April 17; Washington, DC

Yom Ha-Shoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day)
April 7-8

National Volunteer Week
April 21-27

The Deaf & Hard of Hearing in Government 2013 National Training Conference
April 8-10
<http://www.dhhig.org/ntc2013workshops>

Administrative Professionals Day
April 24

National Equal Pay Day
April 9

Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day
April 25

Pan American Day
April 14

Health Disparities Research at the Intersection of Race, Ethnicity, and Disability: A National Conference
April 25-26; Washington, DC
<http://www.ohsu.edu>

Pan American Week
April 14-20

Gathering of Nations Powwow
April 25-27; Albuquerque, NM
<http://www.gatheringofnations.com>

18th Annual National Capitol Forum on Hispanic Higher Education
April 15-16; Washington, DC
<http://www.hacu.net>

National Hispanic Medical Association 17th Annual Conference
April 25-28; Washington, DC
<http://www.nhmamd.org/index.php/events/17th-annual-conference>

Society for Human Resource Management Talent Management Conference & Exposition
April 15-17; Las Vegas, NV
<http://www.shrm.org/Conferences/TalentManagement/Pages/default.aspx>

2013 Pacific Rim International Conference on Disability & Diversity
April 29-30; Honolulu, HI
<http://www.pacrim.hawaii.edu>