



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR HUMAN RESOURCES AND ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON DC 20420

OCT 28 2016

Ms. Doua Thor
Executive Director of the
White House Initiative on
Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders
Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Ms. Thor:

Enclosed is a copy of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (WHIAAPI) end-year fiscal year (FY) 2016 Accomplishments Report.

The enclosed report illustrates VA's progress and accomplishments regarding our stated objectives under VA's High Priority Performance Goals, WHIAAPI Cross-Cutting Goals, and Agency-Specific Goals, as outlined in our FY 2016-2017 Agency Action Plan, that are pertinent to increasing the Asian Americans Pacific Islander (AAPI) community's participation in and access to VA programs.

VA will continue to support Executive Order 13515 by working to improve the quality of life and opportunities for AAPI through increased access to, and participation in, VA programs in which they may be underserved.

Questions regarding this submission should be directed to Ms. Karen Basnight, Director, Outreach and Retention, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, at (202) 461-4104 or Karen.Basnight@va.gov.

Sincerely,

for Pamela S. Mitchell, PDAS
Meghan Flanz
Acting

Enclosure

Dept. of Veterans Affairs White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders
End-Year Fiscal Year 2016 Accomplishment Report

Capacity Building

Goal 1. Increase access to VA resources such as small and disadvantaged business development counseling and small business loans to ensure Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) have needed information on available VA resources.

- In FY 2016, the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) participated in five (5) outreach events focused on the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Veteran Owned Small Business community. The events included exhibits, verification information, outreach, procurement ready information and how to do business with the VA. In addition, VA OSDBU partnered with the Center for Minority Veterans (CMV) for an AAPI focused small business development engagement activity in Orlando, FL.
- The VA Grant and Per Diem (GPD) program provides transitional housing and supportive services to homeless Veterans. In FY 2016, there have been 301 AAPI Veterans that entered GPD transitional housing. During this period, 222 Veterans exited the program and moved to permanent housing.
- The Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program provides supportive services to very low-income Veteran families in or transitioning to permanent housing. In FY 2016, the SSVF program served 748 AAPI Veterans, some of whom were served through the SSVF grantees program in Hawaii and Guam.
- The Honolulu Regional Office (RO) conducted VBA Benefit Workshops on each of the neighbor Islands in the State of Hawaii, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. During these workshops, VBA staff provided overviews of all benefits, to include Specially Adapted Housing, Native American Direct Home Loans, and the Special Adaptation Grant.

Goal 2. Promote AAPI presence on VA and other Federal Advisory Councils which promote the goals of Executive Order 13515, Increasing Participation of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Federal Programs.

- VA's Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) oversees the VA Diversity Council (VADC), which serves as an internal forum to address diversity and inclusion matters impacting the Department. The Council provides independent recommendations to VA leadership on policies, programs, and initiatives relating to workforce diversity and organizational inclusion. It also serves as a communication link between the workforce, subcomponent VA organizations, VA leadership, and a VA clearinghouse for diversity and inclusion training, resources, and best practices. The President of VA's Chapter of the Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC) has also served as a nonvoting member of the VADC since 2010, and has briefed the Council on the FAPAC National Leadership Training Program and VA Central Office AAPI Heritage Month.
- VBA Waco RO Director and other representatives are actively building community capacity, which extensively involves stakeholders who share ownership in the processes of development, feedback, and decision-making. The RO has established Community Veterans Engagement Boards in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex area, El Paso, Texas and, in the future, the area surrounding Temple, Texas.

Goal 4. Establish a VA work group to address issues and concerns related to the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (WHIAAPI).

- VA ODI staff revitalized the VA AAPI Work Group. This group is designed to monitor and assess the implementation of VA's WHIAAPIs Action Plan and it consists of representatives from offices within VA administrations and VA Central Office that contribute to the plan and report.

Language Access

Goal 1. Increase access to VA programs by providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services.

- In FY 2016, VHA Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Employment Office (EEO/AEO) staff finalized the VA booklet entitled "Translation of Frequently Asked Questions in your Native Language" that includes questions in 14 different languages

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including Chinese, Korean, Pilipino, Thai, and Vietnamese. The booklet will be distributed electronically to all VHA facilities in FY 2017.

- In FY 2016, the VHA EEO/AEO continued monitoring the effectiveness of VHA's language assistance programs to ensure written documents for applicants, clients, and the public are available in regularly encountered languages as needed. VHA offices will continue to monitor the need for written material requirements for the AAPI community to insure our products are culturally and linguistically appropriate.
- In FY 2016, EEO/AEO continued to monitor VHA facilities use of contract medical interpreters for Veterans and their family members. This practice continues to reduce the need for "in-language services," that is, interpretation by VHA employees.
- In FY 2016, VA Administrations worked with the Office of Resolution Management to consolidate each Administration's Limited English Proficiency Plan into a Department-wide plan. The final draft is currently being reviewed and will be disseminated to the workforce in FY 2017.

Workforce Diversity

Goal 1. Foster the recruitment, career development and advancement of AAPIs in the VA workforce.

- As part of a Memorandum of Understanding, VA ODI staff partnered with the Asian American Government Executives Network and African American Federal Executives Association to host a Professional Development Workshop which consisted of presentations on Executive Core Qualifications and Life as a Senior Executive Service (SES) employee. The workshop was designed to promote diversity in its SES candidate pool while providing individuals of diverse backgrounds with information on resources and opportunities to increase their ability to reach their full potential.
- VA ODI staff participated in the WHIAAPI AAPI Community Leaders Briefing, which provided an opportunity for community leaders to hear from White House and Senior Administration Officials and discuss issues important to the AAPI community. Additionally, VA ODI staff participated in WHIAAPI Regional Network meetings.

Agency-Specific

Goal 1. Increase awareness and access to health services for AAPI Veterans in rural areas.

- In FY 2016 VA Pacific Islands Healthcare System (VAPIHCS) staff completed 4,997 rural health delivery encounters, such as telehealth, as of August 2016, and are projected to complete an additional 600 encounters by September 30, 2016.
- In FY 2016, VAPIHCS worked closely with the VA Veterans Transportation Program to manage all travel resources and increase access to care for VAPIHCS Veterans.
 - \$757,368 was spent on Veteran air beneficiary travel and \$248,520 on lodging expenses for Guam (including the Northern Mariana Islands) as of July 31, 2016.
 - \$1,782,251 was spent on Veteran air beneficiary travel and \$1,176,540 on lodging expenses for American Samoa as of July 31, 2016.
 - The Office of Rural Health (ORH) also provided funding to VAPIHCS to support air travel for necessary medical appointments for Veterans between the Hawaiian Neighbor Islands and Pacific Insular Islands to Oahu. VAPIHCS reported serving over 3,000 Veterans, Veteran Non-Medical Attendants and Veteran Caregivers with this funding.
- In FY 2016, through funding provided by ORH, VAPIHCS supported a Rural Health Extension Team that provided 265 Veteran patient encounters in more remote areas of East/West American Samoa, as well as, 650 Veteran patient encounters in more remote areas of North/South Guam.