

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Department of Veterans Affairs Hispanic Employment, Retention & Outreach Strategic Plan FY 2013 - 2016

Office of Diversity and Inclusion
Hispanic Employment Program



VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

***Department of Veterans Affairs
Hispanic Employment, Retention &
Outreach Strategic Plan
FY 2013 - 2016***

Office of Diversity and Inclusion
Hispanic Employment Program

Veterans Affairs (VA) is committed to ensuring equal employment opportunity in the hiring, promotion and retention of its workforce. This Plan provides a framework for the coordination and implementation of employment, outreach and retention actions necessary to achieve diversity in the VA. VA's diversity is its strength in ensuring the continuous improvement and delivery of services to our Veterans.



Table of Contents

Executive Summary..... 6

Introduction..... 8

State of Federal and VA Hispanic Workforce..... 8

Goals.....10

Goal 1: Build a diverse, high-performing workforce that is reflective of all segments of society, including the Hispanic community and Hispanic Veterans. 10

Goal 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..... 13

Goal 3: Facilitate outstanding, culturally competent public service and Hispanic stakeholder relations through effective leadership and accountability..... 15



Executive Summary

This Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Hispanic Employment, Retention and Outreach Strategic Plan (Plan) outlines strategies developed to address low participation rates and identify and address any barriers to the full inclusion of Hispanics in the VA workforce. At the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2011, Hispanics comprised 6.68 percent of the total VA workforce. Their participation rate at VA is well below their representation rate of 14.8 percent in the 2010 Civilian Labor Force (CLF)¹ and it is also below the FY 2011 participation rate for Hispanics in the permanent Federal workforce, which remained constant at 8.0 percent.

Within the permanent VA workforce, Hispanics have a lower than expected participation rate at the Executive/Senior Level and Mid-Level Officials and Managers. Hispanic men have a lower than expected participation rate at the GS 11–15 and Title 38 equivalent pay levels. Hispanic women have a participation rate that is lower than expected at the GS 12–15 and Title 38 equivalent pay levels.

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 Plans² and Federal workforce Executive Orders (EO)³. It is also aligned with the goals and objectives of the VA FY 2012–2016 Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan, which has three overarching goals:

(1) A Diverse Workforce, (2) An Inclusive Workplace, and (3) Outstanding Public Service.

The three overarching goals of this Plan are:

- ★ Build a diverse, high-performing workforce that is reflective of all segments of society, including the Hispanic community and Hispanic Veterans.
- ★ 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.
- ★ Facilitate outstanding, culturally competent public service and Hispanic stakeholder relations through effective leadership and accountability.

¹The CLF is defined as people in America 16 years of age and over, except those in the armed forces, who are employed or are unemployed and seeking work. The 2010 CLF was used as the benchmark because it is the most recent data available. However, the Management Directive 715 (MD 715) report uses the 2000 CLF, as per EEOC guidance.

²Relevant Federal EEO Reports and Plans include:

- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission MD 715
- VA Hispanic Employment Plan, as required by Executive Order (EO) 13171
- Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Plan

³Relevant Federal workforce Executive Orders include:

- EO 13171, Hispanic Employment in the Federal Government, issued October 2000, which mandates that Executive Departments and Agencies shall establish and maintain a program for the recruitment and career development of Hispanics in Federal employment,
- EO 13555, White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, an order which calls for expanding educational opportunities and improving educational outcomes for Hispanics and Latinos of all ages, and to help ensure that all Hispanics receive an education that properly prepares them for college and productive careers, and
- EO 13583, Establishing a Coordinated Government-Wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in the Federal Workforce, which requires that Executive Departments and Agencies have plans in place which contain comprehensive strategies for the identification and removal of barriers to equal employment opportunity that might exist in recruitment, hiring, promotion, retention, professional development and training policies and practices. This Order also requires that Chief Human Capital Officers collaborate with the Directors of Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity and Inclusion in the enhancement of employment and promotion opportunities within the agency, consistent with law and merit system principles.



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 objective contained in the Plan by strategically collaborating with key VA stakeholders, 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.

As part of the Plan, VA is improving its methods for disseminating information about Federal employment by launching two new initiatives in FY 2013: The Student Outreach and Retention (SOAR) Program and the Community Outreach and Communications Initiative (COCI). These initiatives will bring VA in direct contact with Hispanic college students (traditional, non-traditional and Veteran), Hispanic professional and Veterans organizations, Hispanic Serving Educational Institutions, Hispanic faith-based and community organizations, and other Hispanic affinity organizations in order to market VA as an Employer of Choice. SOAR will also leverage the VA Volunteer Program to bring Hispanic students, age 14 and above, to VA facilities for mentoring and job training opportunities. COCI will maximize the use of technology and social media to reach the Hispanic community.

To optimize recruitment outreach activities and ensure equal opportunities exist in our hiring practices, VA will also establish an applicant data flow system to assess and identify any recruitment barriers that may impact our ability to hire diverse candidates, including Hispanics. Another national undertaking, the Sharing Successful Practices Initiative (SSPI), will create VA facility partnerships or teams aimed at sharing best diversity practices in order to facilitate successful achievement of diversity mission goals.

VA has also laid the groundwork for our first national Hispanic Work Group, which will be established under the auspices of the VA Diversity Council by the end of FY 2012. It will include representatives from Human Resources, the Veterans Employment Service, the Center for Minority Veterans, and other key stakeholders to assist with the innovation, development, implementation and evaluation of strategies for Hispanic employment, outreach and retention.

VA will also continue to professionally develop and train its cadre of Hispanic Employment Program Managers. It will also explore the possibility of issuing job announcements that seek candidates who can speak Spanish to help VA serve Veterans' family members.

VA recognizes that it will take a collective effort to achieve meaningful, measurable outcomes and senior leaders, along with managers and supervisors, will be critical to our overall success. Accordingly, VA will provide cultural competency training to supervisors and managers to increase their awareness of any discrimination, whether intentional or not, to ensure that all candidates receive full and fair consideration for employment. VA will also hold senior managers accountable for successful implementation of the strategies in this plan: increased outreach to the Hispanic community, increased career development and retention rates of Hispanics on the VA workforce, and improved equal employment opportunity by identifying and addressing barriers which may affect the employment, training, promotion, and retention of Hispanics in the VA workforce.

Introduction

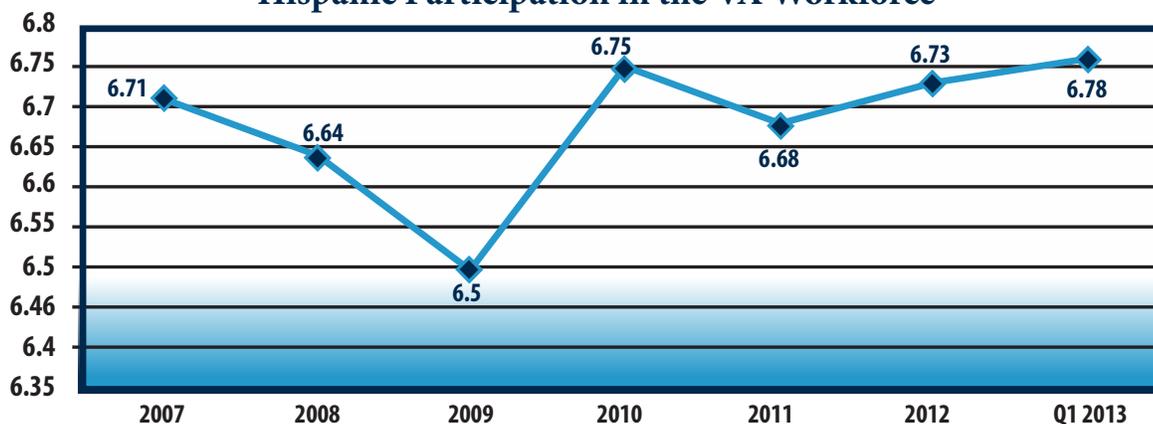
In March 2012, VA issued the FY 2012-2016 Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan. This plan was developed in response to Federal workforce Executive Orders (EO) 13583, Establishing a Coordinated Government-Wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in the Workforce, which directed agencies to develop diversity and inclusion strategic plans focusing on workforce diversity, workplace inclusion and agency accountability and leadership.

The goals and objectives of the VA FY 2013-2016 Hispanic Employment, Retention and Outreach Strategic Plan are aligned with the goals and objectives of the VA FY 2012-2016 Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan, as well as Federal Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Reports and Plans, and Federal workforce Executive Orders.

State of Federal and VA Hispanic Workforce

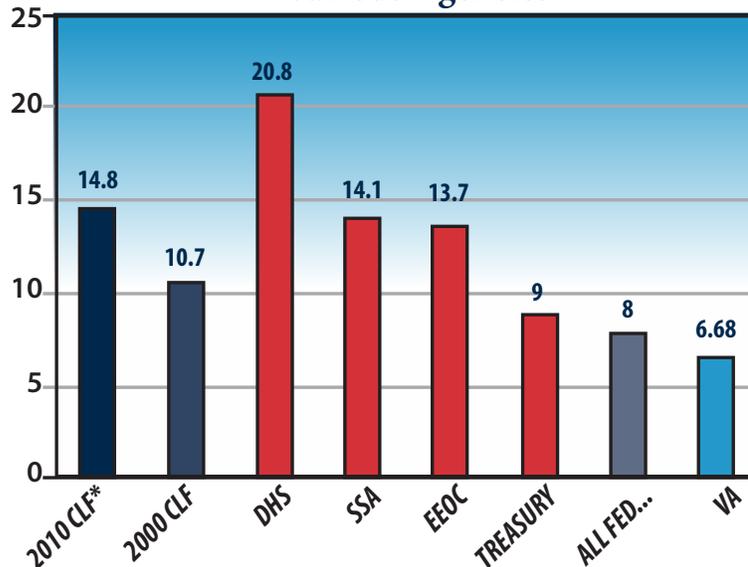
According to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) Tenth Annual Report on Hispanic Employment in the Federal Government, Hispanics were 14.8 percent of the national civilian labor force in FY 2010 and 8.0 percent of the permanent Federal workforce. The FY 2012 workforce participation rate for Hispanics in VA was 6.73 percent. Hispanic males had a net change of 1.93 percent and Hispanic females had a net change of 2.60 percent in FY2012, compared to a net change of 2.78 percent for the permanent VA workforce.

Hispanic Participation in the VA Workforce



Hispanic rates of participation in the VA workforce fall below the 2000 National Civilian Labor Force (CLF) rates of participation, and fall significantly below the 2010 National CLF. The next chart shows FY 2011 rates of Hispanic workforce participation for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Social Security Administration, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Department of Treasury, All Federal Agencies and VA compared against the 2000 and 2010 CLF. DHS is the only Federal agency with a rate of Hispanic workforce participation (20.8%) which exceeds the 2010 Civilian Labor Force rate of Hispanic representation (14.8%).

**FY 2011 Hispanic Representation Total Workforce
Various Agencies**



NOTE: In its Tenth Annual Report on Hispanic Employment in the Federal Government, OPM reported to the President that Hispanics make up 14.8% of the civilian labor force (CLF).

According to the 2010 Census⁴, “there were 50.5 million Hispanics in the United States, comprising 16 percent of the total population. Between 2000 and 2010, the Hispanic population grew by 43 percent – rising from 35.3 million in 2000, when this group made up 13 percent of the total population.” In spite of this growth rate, the FY 2012 participation rate for Hispanic men in the VA workforce (3.10%) falls below the 2000 National CLF rate of participation for Hispanic males (6.2%), and the FY 2012 participation rate for Hispanic women in the VA workforce (3.55%) falls below the 2000 National CLF rate of participation for Hispanic females (4.5%).

Within the permanent VA workforce, Hispanics have a lower than expected participation rate at the Executive/ Senior Level and Mid-Level Officials and Managers. Hispanic men have a lower than expected participation rate at the GS 11 – 15 and Title 38 equivalent pay levels. Hispanic women have a participation rate that is lower than expected at the GS 12 –15 and Title 38 equivalent pay levels.

It is clear that targeted, tactical efforts must continue to be made to address the consistent low employment/ participation rates of Hispanics in the VA workforce.

⁴Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, U.S. Census Bureau, Overview of Race and Hispanic Origin: 2010.

The plan that follows guides the Department's human capital management, ensures adherence to Executive mandates, facilitates outstanding service to our Nation's Veterans and ensures agency accountability, sustainability and leadership in improving the representation and full inclusion of Hispanics in the VA workforce. This plan is a living document subject to budget and other exigencies.

Goals:

- ★ Build a diverse, high-performing workforce that is reflective of all segments of society, including the Hispanic community and Hispanic Veterans.
- ★ 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.
- ★ Facilitate outstanding, culturally competent public service and Hispanic stakeholder relations through effective leadership and accountability.

Goal 1: Build a diverse, high-performing workforce that is reflective of all segments of society, including the Hispanic community and Hispanic Veterans.

Objective 1A: Improve Hispanic representation in VA's workforce

Strategies:

- ★ Collaborate with Office of Human Resources Management to ensure human capital and workforce succession plans that contain strategies that address VA's low Hispanic participation rates. The plans will identify VA mission critical occupations that have low Hispanic participation rates, to inform and guide recruitment outreach efforts.

Measure: Relevant workforce and succession plans issued in FY 2013 will contain Hispanic-specific employment strategies.

- ★ Student Outreach and Retention Program (SOAR). Program goal is to establish a pipeline for students/ graduates to careers in VA. Locations for SOAR will be targeted in cities that have high concentrations of Hispanics. This program will:
 - Deploy VA senior officials, managers, hiring officials and technical experts as Ambassadors to Hispanic Serving Institutions where SOAR is established.
 - Utilize VA Ambassadors to market VA as an employer of choice, to share information on VA Careers, to serve as guest instructors and to mentor and assist with drop-out prevention.
 - Establish SOAR in Hispanic Serving Educational Institutions offering degrees related to VA mission critical occupations.
 - Utilize VA for VETS mobile units on college campuses to attract and service Veteran students. Units will provide information on VA benefits, mental health counseling, social services, etc., to augment employment and career information provided by SOAR.
 - Provide real-time job, internship and career information to SOAR participants. Market Pathways, the National Diversity Intern Program (NDIP), VA Innovation Intern Program, and other VA intern programs/fellowships through SOAR to increase the pool of potential applicants for VA employment opportunities.





Measure: SOAR will be implemented in 3 universities beginning Q4, FY 2013, budget permitting. Additional university partnerships will be implemented by Q4, FY 2014.

★ Community Outreach and Communications Initiative (COCI). This initiative will establish a multi-media, national corporate communication and outreach marketing campaign to ensure the Hispanic community receives real-time information about VA Hiring Events, VA job vacancies, webinars, SES candidate programs, SES job opportunities, press releases and any other employment-related communications. Internal partnerships between the Office of Human Resources, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the Veterans Employment Service, Public Affairs and others will be established to deploy this initiative. This initiative will:

- Brand VA as an employer of choice to the Hispanic community.
- Maximize virtual modalities to disseminate career and employment related communications to the Hispanic community, including Hispanic Serving Institutions, Hispanic professional organizations, Hispanic faith-based and community organizations, Veterans Service Organizations, and other affinity groups. All modalities utilized will be Section 508 compliant.
- Leverage already established student databases utilized by Hispanic serving educational institutions and Hispanic affinity groups in order to expand VA outreach capacity.
- Create a student/job seeker database to provide career and employment related information to students and individuals who are seeking employment. “Live” registration sessions will be conducted at affinity conferences and hiring events for the purpose of adding individuals to this outreach database.
- Utilize Social Media to reach out to the global Hispanic community. FACEBOOK pages for Hispanic Veterans and for the Hispanic Employment Program will be established and utilized to engage and conduct recruitment outreach to Hispanics. Other digital and social networking modalities, such as Twitter, You Tube and LinkedIn, will also be explored. Information on VA internships will be shared on these venues.

Measure: COCI will be implemented by Q4, FY 2013, budget permitting.

- ★ Establish a corporate recruitment outreach committee that will strategically coordinate VA’s presence at events targeted to diverse communities, including the Hispanic community.
 - VA will continue to work with affinity groups such as the League of United Latin American Citizens, National IMAGE Inc., the U.S Hispanic Leadership Institute, the National Organization for Mexican American Rights, and others to market VA as a model employer and to deliver employment and career information to affinity constituents and the general public.
 - VA representatives will attend affinity conferences and career fairs to distribute, and where appropriate, train on Federal employment processes, veterans benefits and veterans memorial services/benefits information.
 - VA representatives will continue to work with non-profit and recruitment/outreach organizations, such as HACU, HSHPS, etc.) to ensure Hispanic student participation in VA intern programs.

Measure: An Coordinating committee will be established by Q4, FY 2013. VA will participate in a minimum of four national/local job fairs or events targeting outreach to Hispanics, to include national conferences held by the League of United Latin American Citizens, National IMAGE, the American GI Forum, the United States Hispanic Leadership Institute, and others.

- ★ Assess the need to add bilingual qualifications standards to positions in areas with high Hispanic populations to ensure VA is providing effective services to Veterans' family members whose preferred language is Spanish (i.e., medical interpreters).

Measure: Bilingual qualification standard added to positions having a bona fide language requirement by Q4, FY 2014.

Objective 1B: Identify and eliminate barriers to Hispanic employment at all levels and in all occupations.

Strategies:

- ★ Conduct more extensive barrier analysis and develop corrective strategies, as appropriate, in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's (EEOC) Management Directive 715 (MD 715), by pay grades, major occupations, separations, promotions, hiring actions, and career and leadership development.

Measure: Monitoring of corrective strategies will occur on an annual basis as part of MD715 reporting.

- ★ In partnership with OPM, establish an applicant flow system to monitor and report applicant data by race, ethnicity, and gender (REG).

Measure: Applicant flow data system will be monitored and reported on, systems permitting, by Q1 FY 2014.

- ★ Implement the VA Diversity Index to raise awareness of low Hispanic workforce participation rates. Brief VA senior leadership on an on-going basis on participation rates of Hispanics in the VA workforce.

Measure: VA Hispanic Representation Index will be reported as part of the Diversity Index in Monthly Performance Review (MPR) briefings beginning Q2, FY 2013.



Goal 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.

Objective 2A: Leverage the talents of the VA Hispanic workforce and empower diverse perspectives throughout the organization through career/leadership development

Strategies:

- ★ Establish a mechanism to monitor and report participation, by REG, in VA's leadership and career development programs.

Measure: Monitor participation and completion rates of Hispanics in leadership and career development programs beginning Q1, FY 2014.

- ★ Strengthen VA's Special Emphasis Hispanic Employment Programs through education and training events.

- Host an Annual HEP National Training Summit so that Hispanic Employment Program Managers (HEPM) and other officials responsible for outreach and retention may receive information updates about policies, procedures, best practices, and new initiatives.

Measure: A summit will be hosted annually, budget permitting.

- HEPM Virtual Forums. These forums will provide more frequent training and professional development for the VA HEPMs nationwide. Real-time programmatic policy and regulatory guidance will be provided, as well as information on progress on strategic plan goals and objectives, best practices, etc. Partner with the National Council of HEPMs, OPM, EEOC and other federal agencies in the delivery of these forums.

Measure: Forums will be conducted to provide field-specific programmatic information to HEPMs, by Q2 FY 2013.

- "Profiles in Leadership Excellence." Will establish sessions to showcase VA Senior Executive Service members and other distinguished officials throughout the Federal government. Dialogue will focus on public service, career management and leadership.

Measure: Will be hosted on a quarterly basis beginning Q2, FY 2014.

- ★ Promote "MyCareer @VA" (career mapping system) at all diversity training forums and incorporate this information into appropriate on-line and classroom Special Emphasis Program (SEP) and HEP training modules. Coaching and career guidance will also continue to be provided to newly hired Veterans via the Veterans Employment Services Office (VESO).

Measure: Information on "MyCareer@VA" will be incorporated into all Agency employee forums offered at affinity conferences, effective Q2, FY 2013. A mechanism for VESO to provide newly hired veterans on-going coaching and career guidance via "MyCareer@VA" will be established by Q4, FY 2013.

- ★ Establish a mechanism to monitor and report data on employee participation, by REG, in inter-office/inter-agency details and rotation assignments, including those covered by the Intergovernmental Personnel Act Mobility Program.

Measure: Data collection and reporting mechanism will be established Q4, FY 2013. Participation data will be reported to senior leadership beginning Q1, FY 2014.

Objective 2B: Cultivate a collaborative and inclusive organizational culture which promotes the retention of Hispanics

Strategies:

- ★ “Sharing Successful Practices Initiative (SSPI).” Create facility partnerships/teams to facilitate information-sharing on diversity challenges and best practices in addressing those challenges. VA field facilities having successful employment, outreach and retention practices will be teamed with a facility which is challenged in these areas. Maximized use of technology in information-sharing will occur, as will the utilization of staff visits, so that all facilities may be successful in meeting VA’s established diversity goals.

Measure: A pilot partnership will be established by Q4, FY 2013.

- ★ Utilize the VA Inclusion Index to measure organizational inclusion for Hispanics.

Measure: Monitor and report Inclusion Index data beginning Q2, FY 2013.

- ★ Leverage VA’s National Center for Organization Development to augment HR/ODI review of VA’s All Employee Survey and Voice of VA Survey data. Assess social climate for Hispanics in the VA workforce and design new questions, if needed, budget permitting.

Measure: Review annual employee survey results and develop appropriate action plans, beginning Q3, FY 2013.

- ★ Develop mentoring programs and on-boarding orientations for NDIP and WRP Interns.

Measure: Implement intern mentoring and orientation programs by Q4, FY 2013.

- ★ Conduct Technical Assistance Reviews (TAR) to capture and share best practices in Hispanic employment, outreach and retention. Offices such as Human Resources/Office of Resolution Management and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion will create strategic partnerships to leverage resources where key issues/equal employment opportunity concerns need to be addressed.

Measure: A minimum of 6 TARs will be conducted each fiscal year, during which best practices will be captured and shared.

- ★ Review HEP policy and HEPM roles and responsibilities, on national, regional and local levels, to ensure alignment with new strategic efforts outlined in this plan. Assess whether it will be more programmatically advantageous to have HEPMs report to a senior diversity official or agency head.

Measure: HEP Policies, roles and responsibilities will be reviewed by Q4, FY 2013.



Goal 3: Facilitate outstanding, culturally competent public service and Hispanic stakeholder relations through effective leadership and accountability.

Objective 3A: Strengthen relations with Hispanic stakeholders, to include Hispanic affinity groups, Hispanic professional organizations, and Hispanic Serving Educational Institutions

Strategies:

- ★ Establish partnerships and affiliations with Hispanic Serving Institutions (universities and high schools), Hispanic stakeholders, Hispanic professional organizations, Hispanic faith-based and community organizations, and other Hispanic affinity groups to:
 - Promote career opportunities and internships with VA.
 - Market VA as an employer of choice to the Hispanic community, and
 - Promote public service with VA.

Measure: Partnership agreements will be established as appropriate.

- ★ Support Hispanic affinity groups' and Veterans and professional organizations' national training conferences, university/college career and job fairs, and expositions by the conduct of workshops and exhibits aimed at providing VA career and employment information to students, Veterans and the Hispanic community at large.

Measure: VA will participate in a minimum of four national conferences, budget permitting.

Objective 3b: Equip VA leaders with the knowledge and skills to effectively lead a diverse workforce

Strategies:

- ★ Update cultural competence training to include information about the Hispanic culture and barriers that may impede full participation of Hispanics in VA's workforce. Provide cultural competence training to SES, managers and supervisors.

Measure: Cultural Competence Training modules will be updated by Q4, FY 2013. Track cultural competence completion rates for SES, managers and supervisors on a quarterly basis beginning Q4, FY 2013.



Objective 3C: Institutionalize shared accountability for an organizational culture of diversity and inclusion

Strategies:

- ★ Establish a National Hispanic Work Group, under the auspices of the VA Diversity Council, to support attainment of strategies in the FY 2013-2016 Hispanic Employment, Outreach and Retention Strategic Plan, and to make recommendations on the revision/update of strategies as needed.

Measure: A national Hispanic Work Group will be established by Q4, FY 2013.

- ★ Issue Annual Performance Report for progress made in the implementation of the FY 2013-2016 VA Hispanic Employment, Outreach and Retention Strategic Plan.

Measure: The first annual performance report will be issued in conjunction with the VA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan Annual Report.

- ★ Monitor and report SES performance on meeting the D&I critical performance element in all SES performance plans.

Measure: Implement and review quarterly progress reports to determine SES performance outcomes, Q4, FY 2013.

- ★ Review and update VA Directive 5975 (EEO and Diversity Management) to ensure adequate guidance is provided to support attainment of the Department's goals and objectives for diversity and inclusion.

Measure: VA Directive 5975 will be reviewed and updated as needed by Q4, FY 2013.

Applicable Authorities and Statutes (not all inclusive)

Laws identified in the VA FY 2012-2016 Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan apply as do merit system principles in 5 USC, Section 2301.

Reference Documents include:

- Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCO) Council Action Plan to Increase Hispanic Federal Employment, 2012
- 1997 OPM Memo issued to Heads of Executive Departments and Independent Agencies, otherwise known as the Nine-Point Plan
- OPM Hispanic Council on Federal Employment 12 Month Action Plan 2012
- VA 2012-2016 Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan
- EEOC Management Directive 715
- OPM Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Plan





Office of Diversity and Inclusion

Hispanic Employment Program

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