Commemorate
Women’s Equality Day

On August 26, 2017, VA joins the Nation in commemorating the anniversary of the passing of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, securing women’s right to vote. The Women’s Equality Day theme is “Celebrating Women’s Right to Vote.” VA managers and supervisors are encouraged to support events and activities that recognize women and their many contributions to American society. The VA Central Office (VACO) Women’s Equality Day event will be held on Thursday, August 24, 2017, in the G.V. “Sonny” Montgomery Veterans Conference Center, room 230, at noon. For more information, contact Ms. Mercedes Kirkland-Doyle, VA’s National Federal Women’s Program Manager. (Continued on the next page.)
Commemorate
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From the 2016 Presidential Proclamation: Nearly one century ago, with boundless courage and relentless commitment, dedicated women who had marched, advocated, and organized for the right to cast a vote finally saw their efforts rewarded on August 26, 1920, when the 19th Amendment was certified and the right to vote was secured. In the decades that followed, that precious right has bolstered generations of women and empowered them to stand up, speak out, and steer the country they love in a more equal direction. Today, as we celebrate the anniversary of this hard-won achievement and pay tribute to the trailblazers and suffragists who moved us closer to a more just and prosperous future, we resolve to protect this constitutional right and pledge to continue fighting for equality for women and girls.

At every level of society, women are leaders at the forefront of progress. Serving as judges and Members of Congress, setting world records in sports, founding groundbreaking companies, and fighting on the front lines of combat, women continue to tear down barriers and shatter glass ceilings -- just as they have done since the founding of our Nation. Yet such progress is not inevitable, and we must keep moving forward on our journey toward equality...Underrepresented in management positions, underfunded as entrepreneurs, under-encouraged in STEM fields, and confronted with higher levels of unemployment, women and girls of color still face very real challenges, significant opportunity gaps, and structural barriers...In the many decades since suffragists organized and mobilized, countless advocates and leaders have picked up the mantle and moved our Nation and our world forward. Today, young women in America grow up knowing an historic truth -- that not only can they cast a vote, but they can also run for office and help shape the very democracy that once left them out. For these women, and for generations of women to come, we must keep building a more equal America -- whether through the stories we tell about our Nation’s history or the faces we display on our country’s currency. On Women’s Equality Day, as we recognize the accomplishments that so many women fought so hard to achieve, we rededicate ourselves to tackling the challenges that remain and expanding opportunity for women and girls everywhere.

For more information on VA’s Federal Women’s Program, visit VA’s Federal Women’s Program webpage.

Policy Alerts

Secretary's EEO Policy
The Secretary’s Annual Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), Diversity and Inclusion, No FEAR, and Whistleblower Rights and Protection Policy Statement is now posted on the ODI website and provides clarifying language on social media harassment, added a separate section on VA’s Harassment Prevention Program, provided clarifying language on the filing of an EEO complaint through the Office of Resolution Management regarding parental status, provided clarifying language regarding comfort animals in the workplace, and added a section on limited English proficiency.

New Authority to Take Adverse Actions and Supervisors Who Have Committed a PPP
Human Resources Management Letters (HRML) Nos. 05-17-05 and 05-17-06, provide guidance regarding a new authority by which the Agency may take an adverse action against Title 5 and Full-time Hybrid Title 38 covered employees. Additional guidance regarding the discipline process for Title 5 and Full-time Hybrid Title 38 covered supervisors who have been determined to have committed a Prohibited Personnel Action under 38 U.S.C. 731 is also included. HRML 05-17-05 is applicable to non-bargaining unit Title 5 and Full-time Hybrid Title 38 covered employees, and HRML 05-17-06 is applicable to non-bargaining unit and bargaining unit Title 5 and Full-time Hybrid Title 38 covered employees. For more information, contact Employee Relations and Performance Management Service (051).

Guidance Regarding Time Periods for Disciplinary and Major Adverse Actions Under 38 U.S.C. 7401(1) and Supervisors Who Have Committed a PPP
HRML Nos. 05-17-07 and 05-17-08 provide guidance regarding the implementation of the time periods for disciplinary and major adverse actions with respect to employees appointed under 38 U.S.C. § 7401(1). Additional guidance regarding the discipline process for Title 38 supervisors who have been determined to have committed a Prohibited Personnel Action under 38 U.S.C. 731 is also included. HRML 05-17-07 is applicable to non-bargaining unit Title 38 employees, and HRML 05-17-08 is applicable to non-bargaining unit and bargaining unit Title 38 employees. For more information, contact Employee Relations and Performance Management Service (051). (Continued on the next page.)
VA/UMUC MOU Signing Ceremony

ODI is pleased to announce a major milestone towards expanding strategic partnerships with diverse affinity organizations, professional associations, and educational institutions to promote workforce diversity. On July 10, 2017, VA and the University of Maryland University College (UMUC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Georgia Coffey, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Diversity and Inclusion, represented VA and Javier Miyares, UMUC’s President, were representatives for the MOU signing. The MOU charters a framework to increase diversity outreach and facilitate employment, internship, and educational opportunities within VA for UMUC students, faculty, and alumni.

UMUC is a public state university offering convenient online education along with divisions in Asia and Europe and a presence on military installations in more than 20 countries and territories. UMUC is the leading provider of postsecondary educational services for active-duty military service members, Veterans, and military spouses and families. The UMUC is regionally accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and offers more than 90 degrees and certificate programs in today’s most populous fields. Currently, UMUC educates more than 80,000 students and is also a leading provider of education opportunities to students around the world, earning the university a global reputation for excellence.

The VA/UMUC MOU fosters a mutually supportive partnership between VA and UMUC that benefits both UMUC affiliates and VA components working towards enhancing their organizations by hiring exceptional employment prospects. Some of the activities highlighted in the MOU include promoting career development programs, internships, seminars, mentorship, and shadowing experiences.

Policy Alerts (Cont.)

Employee Leave Requests Due to Incarceration
HRML No. 05-17-09 provides guidance to Human Resources (HR) offices regarding leave requests from employees who are absent from duty due to incarceration. Questions concerning this HRML should be directed to Worklife and Benefits Service.

Javier Miyares, UMUC President, and Georgia Coffey, DAS for ODI, at the VA/UMUC MOU Signing

Kristin Schrader, Assistant Director, InternPLUS and Military Career Programs, UMUC; Mr. Miyares; Georgia Coffey; and Nanese Loza, Diversity and Inclusion Team Lead, ODI
Training

Barrier Analysis Training
Barrier Analysis Training covers all aspects of the barrier analysis process under Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Management Directive 715 to include analysis and interpretation of workforce statistics, trigger identification, barrier analysis investigation, preparing action plans, and following up on the action plan. This training will allow participants to work through the majority of the process using VA specific workforce statistics. Attendees must register through the VA Talent Management System. The course will be offered on the following dates from 1:00 to 4:00 pm (EST):

- Thursday, August 17, 2017
- Thursday, September 21, 2017

For more information, contact Ms. Ryan Pugh, Management Analyst, ODI.

VSSC Training
VISN Support Service Center, or VSSC, training is designed to alert a wide range of managers, human resources specialists, EEO specialists, 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 validate or begin to address potential barriers to equal employment opportunities at VA. Attendees must register through the VA Talent Management System. This interactive training will be offered on the following dates from 10 to 11:30 am (EST):

- Tuesday, August 8, 2017
- Tuesday, September 26, 2017

For more information, contact Ms. Camille Whitfield, Management Analyst, ODI.

BIG National Training Institute
Blacks in Government (BIG) 39th Annual National Training Institute (NTI) will be held August 21-24, 2017, at the Harrah’s Resort and Conference Center in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Each year, the BIG NTI draws a large number of attendees enabling it to also serve as a platform for networking and information sharing. This event is a great opportunity for federal employees to obtain leadership, equal employment opportunity, diversity and inclusion, career advancement, and management training, as well as gain useful information regarding current policies directly affecting federal employees. It will also offer free seminars and programs specifically designed to assist Veterans obtain benefits and identify other opportunities available to them. Additionally, participants will be able to visit agency exhibitor booths to gain information about employment opportunities and internships. VA employees who plan to attend are responsible for obtaining supervisory approvals. Please note that centralized funding is not available for attendance. Registration and/or travel must be funded by the employee’s benefitting program office. Following supervisory and budget approval, attendees who wish to participate in the conference must also register through the BIG Web site. For more information, contact Ms. Tynnetta Lee, VA’s National Black Employment Program Manager, ODI.

LULAC Federal Training Institute Partnership
The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) will be hosting its Fifth Annual Federal Training Institute Partnership (FTIP) in the Washington, DC metro area Wednesday, September 20, through Friday, September 22, 2017. This event is free of charge to all Federal employees regardless of grade and position as it is FTIP’s goal is to develop a diverse pool of leaders for the future. Employees who wish to attend the FTIP must pre-register. Registration will open the first week of September. More information on the registration process will be provided on the LULAC website as soon as it becomes available. Employees are responsible for securing authorization to attend from their respective managers before registering. For more information, contact Ms. Edith Perry, VA’s National Hispanic Employment Program Manager, ODI.