Commemorate
National American Indian Heritage Month

VA joins the Nation in commemorating National American Indian Heritage Month this November. This year’s theme is “Sovereignty, Trust and Resilience.” American Indian Heritage Month is a time to recognize the rich and diverse cultures, traditions, and histories of Native people and to celebrate their important contributions to the Nation. This observance is also an opportunity to learn about various tribes, to raise awareness about the unique challenges Native people have faced both historically and present-day, and the ways in which tribal citizens have worked to conquer these challenges (http://www.ncai.org/events/2012/11/01/native-american-heritage-month).

Formed in 2002, the Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE) is the first National non-profit organization representing American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) Federal, Tribal, State, and local government employees. SAIGE provides a forum on the issues, challenges, and opportunities of AI/ANs in the government workforce (including Tribal governments) and works to foster a professional network among AI/AN government employees. SAIGE is proud to host an outstanding week-long annual National Training Program focused on professional development, leadership and topics that are integral to the highly complex relationship known as the Federal Indian Trust Responsibility. (Continued on page 3.)
Policy Reminder

Guidance on Religious Exercise and Expression

During this holiday season and throughout the year, all VA employees are expected to be mindful of the Department’s Policy Guidance on Religious Exercise and Expression in VA Facilities and Property Under the Charge and Control of VA. At all times, the government must ensure that it does not act in a manner that would lead a reasonable observer to conclude that it is sponsoring, endorsing or inhibiting religion generally or favoring or disfavoring a particular religion. The government must also ensure that it does not require or pressure its employees or others to participate in religious activities or to refrain from participation in such activities. Please read the associated FAQs at the link above for more information. We all have a responsibility to be respectful and to ensure that our workplaces are harassment-free zones.

Training

VA Virtual Aspiring Leaders Program (vALP) Application Window Opening Soon

Do you know someone with the desire, determination, and drive to lead others? If so, the Virtual Aspiring Leaders Program (vALP) can help make their goal a reality. vALP is an enterprise-wide program that prepares a new cadre of leaders to meet the challenges of a 21st century VA. The program is conducted entirely online over the course of five months. Participants learn fundamental concepts of leadership dynamics, including the roles of a leader, influences that can affect leadership, and principles of ethical leadership.

The Healthcare Leadership Talent Institute (HLTI) will launch two cohorts, comprised of 200 selected VA professionals, in February 2019. The Application window will open on November 6, 2018 and will close on December 6, 2018. HLTI needs your help to promote this valuable developmental opportunity to Emerging and Team Leaders to apply for the program. Candidates MUST meet the requirements listed below:

• Have at least one year of tenure at VA as of January 1, 2019
• Be a grade GS-09 thru GS-13 and Title 38 and Wage Grade equivalents (including Title 38 Hybrids)
• Be committed to complete this five-month cohort-based program
• Be endorsed by their VA supervisors
• Devote three to five hours of time per week on vALP learning activities and coursework, with approximately two of those hours completed during regular business hours.
• Applicants will contact their local vALP POC in their local Staff Office or Facility for applications.

Please contact Mitchell Scott, National Program Manager, or Richard Bruce, Program Support Specialist, at vacovalp@va.gov for questions related to vALP or for the Share Point site to find your local vALP POC.

November eLearning (Skillsoft) Webinars

VA has various licenses in place with Skillsoft, so our employees can have access to a wide range of on-line training and educational resources, including books, audio books, and videos.

Interested in developing your personal or professional life? This November, learn more about online training and educational resources, offered by Skillsoft and available to all VA employees, including the following featured eLearning Skillsoft webinars:

• Exploring Customer Service using Skillsoft Content
• Skillsoft Books and Courses, What’s in It For Me?
• Preparing and Updating Federal Acquisition Certification using Skillsoft Courseware
• “The Customer Service Survival Kit” Book Discussion

VA’s Human Resources Enterprise Center recommends “The Customer Service Survival Kit” as the Book of the Month for those VA employees interested in furthering their Customer Service skills. This book is available to read via the Talent Management System (TMS). You can access Skillsoft courseware, books, and other resources via several links including Skillsoft Pulse and 24x7 Learning. You can also access and download books directly (outside of the TMS) via https://valo.skillport.com. For more information, contact Mr. Terik Hartz, of the Human Resources Enterprise Center, OHRA, at Terik.Hartz@va.gov.
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As part of this program, SAIGE offers special training sessions for Veterans, Youth, and in Federal Indian Law. Additionally, cultural events are presented by local native people. For more information, visit https://saige.org.

Veterans Affairs Central Office will present a lunch and learn via Skype in recognition of National American Indian Heritage Month on Thursday, November 29, 2019 from noon to 1 pm. Ms. Fredericka Joseph, Chair, Board of Directors, SAIGE, will be this year’s presenter. The discussion will revolve around challenges AI/ANs face in the workplace, services provided by SAIGE, and programs that support Veterans. For more information, contact Ms. Tynnetta Lee, VA’s National AI/AN Employment Program Manager, Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI), at Tynnetta.Lee@va.gov or (202) 461-7968 or Ms. Sehar Minhas, ODI, at Sehar.Minhas@va.gov or (202) 461-4036. Also visit VA’s AI/AN Employment Program Web page.

Workforce Recruitment Program
Best Practice Intern Program Assists Employers in Identifying Talent

Are you a VA hiring manager looking for new talent for the new year? Here’s why you should use the Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) to find your next intern.

The WRP offers employers:
- Access to over 2,000 job candidates from over 300 colleges and universities
- Ability to search for candidates based on predetermined job requirements
- Flexibility in hiring for summer internships or for permanent staffing needs
- Ability to identify self-reported Veterans and Schedule A eligible candidates
- Opportunity to evaluate summer interns for permanent staffing needs

The WRP is a government-wide program co-managed by the Department of Defense and the Department of Labor. The goal of the program is to increase the representation of individuals with disabilities in the Federal workforce. The WRP maintains a list of over 2,000 qualified candidates from across the country. The WRP is the largest list of Schedule A candidates in Government. Additionally, WRP continues to serve as a best practice recruitment program throughout the Federal Government and is recognized by the Office of Personnel Management as a model strategy regarding the recruitment and hiring of individuals with disabilities.

The WRP is not only for summer hires; the database remains open year-round and a new group of candidates is populated on the website each December. To gain access to candidates, go to https://www.wrp.gov and select the “Employer Registration” link. Note, only Federal government employees are granted access to the website.

VA’s Human Resource Enterprise Center (HREC) staff is ready to help you find new talent to help VA create a pipeline of educated, qualified employees with disabilities positioned to deliver excellent services to our Veterans and their families. HREC also provides webinars on the use of the WRP website for HR Selective Placement Program Coordinators and other interested VA employees. Other VA intern programs administered and managed by HREC include the National Diversity Internship Program and Pathways Programs.

For questions or help with talent acquisition, please send an e-mail to VA Workforce Recruitment Program at vawrp@va.gov or contact Ms. Aurelia Waters, VA’s WRP Manager, HREC, Office of Human Resources & Administration, at (202) 461-4124 or Aurelia.Waters@va.gov.