Commemorate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

VA joins the Nation in commemorating the birth of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on Monday, January 21, 2019.

This day is observed each year on the third Monday of January as a federal holiday to celebrate the life and achievements of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., an iconic civil rights leader. Dr. King is most well-known for his nonviolent advancement of civil rights.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Day holiday is not only for celebration and remembrance, education and tribute, but it is meant to be a day of service. The annual theme, “A Day On, Not A Day Off!” encourages Americans to gather together for action. Across America on this holiday, individuals perform services wherever help is needed including in hospitals, shelters, and prisons, to name a few locations. In addition, it is a day to promote equal rights for all Americans while encouraging them to volunteer their time in remembrance of this iconic civil rights leader.

Please join the VA Central Office (VACO) Blacks In Government (BIG) Chapter as VACO observes the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on January 17, 2019 in the G.V. “Sonny” Montgomery Veterans Conference Center, Room 230, from noon to 1 pm. For more information about this event, contact Mr. Dwayne Mitchell, President, BIG VA Headquarters Chapter at Dwayne.Mitchell@va.gov; Ms. Renae Allen, Program and Planning Chair, BIG VA Headquarters Chapter, at Renae.Allen@va.gov; or Ms. Tynnetta Lee, VA’s National Black Employment Program Manager, at Tynnetta.Lee@va.gov.

A Nexus between Schedule A, WRP, and the SPPC
By Aurelia Waters and Lisa McManamay, Diversity and Inclusion in VA Council (DIVAC) Disability Advisory Committee

If you were asked to name your local Selective Placement Program Coordinator (SPPC), could you? Do you know their name, location, extension, and who they serve? To first answer the question, it’s important to know what role the SPPC plays in VA. The SPPC plays a major role to help management recruit, hire, and promote people with disabilities. The SPPC is usually located in Human Resources (HR), however, they may hold a different position. This individual is trained to properly process job applications under the Schedule A Hiring Authority and other special hiring authorities, and well versed in the application of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The SPPC establishes contacts with external recruitment sources to reach out to individuals with disabilities and develop recruitment strategies for increasing the hiring of people with disabilities and targeted disabilities.

Consistent with the President’s Hiring Reform initiative, the SPPC ensures job announcements are clear, understandable, and explain in plain language the required qualifications and the duties of the job. This is essential to any successful recruiting effort, as the job announcement itself can be a barrier to any applicant, including applicants with disabilities who are interested in Federal employment. In addition to being clear and understandable, every job announcement must communicate the agency’s intent to make reasonable accommodations available for qualified job applicants and employees with disabilities. The SPPC works closely with managers in determining the essential duties of the position, identifying architectural barriers, and coordinating needed modifications that allow people with disabilities to perform the essential functions of the job. SPPCs work with public and private organizations involved in the placement of applicants with disabilities to provide information about their agency program and job opportunities to facilitate the placement of applicants with disabilities in their agency.

An excellent example is the SPPCs vital role is their vast knowledge of the VA Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) and the Schedule A Hiring Authority. WRP is an internship and candidate referral program that connects federal sector employers nationwide with highly motivated college students and recent graduates with disabilities. Subject to available funding, VA can offer interns opportunities up to 10-12 weeks, which may be extended in certain circumstances if budget and management of the organization supports it. The SPPC utilizes the WRP database and referral program to recruit temporary interns. The WRP database can be found at [https://wrp.gov](https://wrp.gov).

The Schedule A Hiring Authority, under 5 CFR, 213.3102 (u) is a special hiring authority that is a critical and efficient tool for hiring individuals with physical, psychiatric, and intellectual disabilities. The SPPC uses the Schedule A Hiring Authority to appoint interns and people with disabilities and targeted disabilities non-competitively. Applicants hired under the Schedule A Hiring Authority may be converted to a career or career-conditional appointment after completing two years of satisfactory service in a non-temporary appointment.

As you can see, the SPPC is key in the success of an agency’s Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), Diversity, and Inclusion Program, specifically in the Program for Individuals with Disabilities. Their role is critical to increasing recruitment efforts, hiring, promoting, and retaining people with disabilities and targeted disabilities. Thus, it is highly beneficial to get to know your local SPPC. Oversight and policy regarding the Schedule A Hiring Authority is provided by VA’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI).

If you are interested in becoming an SPPC and would like additional information, please contact your local Chief of HR or EEO Program Manager. If you are interested in SPPC training or want more information on the SPPC Program, please contact one of the following VA disability representatives:

- Ms. Aurora Quiroz McKinney, MPS-HRM, EEO Program Manager, Workforce Management and Consulting, Veterans Health Administration, at (202) 461-6524 or Aurora.Quiroz-Mckinney@va.gov.
- Mr. Roberto Rojo, Team Leader, VA Office of Resolution Management, Veterans Benefits Administration EEO Liaison Office, at (202) 632-7615 or Roberto.Rojo@va.gov.

For help with talent acquisition through the WRP, you may contact your HR department or SPPC, or contact Ms. Aurelia Waters, Human Resources Enterprise Center, at [vawrp@va.gov](mailto:vawrp@va.gov).

VA Presidential Management Fellows Program

Seeking to Place 2019 Finalists

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has recently announced to VA an exceptionally qualified group of 2019 Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Finalists representing a range of academic disciplines and geographic locations to be placed within the eligibility period of 12 months. The Human Resources Enterprise Center (HREC) is seeking your help in this effort. If your office has a need for top talent and an interest in hiring a PMF, or if you have a colleague or friend who may be interested, please reach out to the HREC and they would be happy to assist you.

The PMF participants are top graduates from master’s degree programs, law school and doctoral programs throughout the country. Candidates often have extensive prior experience in the areas of public administration, public policy, technology, and financial management. The PMF program is a two-year, government-wide program operated by OPM and is focused on developing a cadre of future government leaders. PMFs are appointed at the GS-9, 11 or 12 levels (or equivalent), based on qualifications and agency need.

To hire a PMF you must have an available FTE slot and a classified position description for GS-9, GS-11, or GS-12 positions. A career ladder position may be offered up to GS-13. Supervisors must fulfill the following PMF program responsibilities during the two year program:

- Develop an Individual Development Plan (IDP) with the PMF that addresses the target position, developmental requirements, and recommended activities.
- Consult with the PMF’s mentor and PMF coordinator.
- Provide at least 80 hours of formal interactive training during each fiscal year of the two year of the fellowship.
- Provide each PMF with at least one four to six-month rotational assignment outside of the hiring office.
- Provide a reasonable amount of time during work hours for other PMF activities, as appropriate.

The employing organization must:

- Reimburse the OPM PMF Program Office the placement fee of $7,000 for costs associated with the recruitment, selection, placement, orientation, and graduation of Fellows within 30 days of acceptance of a PMF appointment.
- Cover all training costs and related travel costs.
- Cover normal salary and benefits costs associated with an employee.

Please consider this opportunity and share it among the hiring managers in your organization. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Ms. Lynn Peters at (202) 632-7322 or Lynn.Peters@va.gov.

Civilian & Uniformed Services Award Nominations

FAPAC Seeking Nominations for 2019 Awards

The Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC) is accepting nominations for the 2019 Civilian Awards, Uniformed Services Awards, and Distinguished Public Service Scholarship. The awards will be presented during the annual National Leadership Training Program in May 2019 in celebration of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month. The submission deadline for all three awards is Friday, February 15, 2019, at 8 p.m. (ET). Visit the FAPAC Awards website at https://fapac.org for full details/eligibility or contact awards@fapac.org with specific questions.

The Civilian Awards recognize individuals who have made significant contributions to the advancement of AAPI communities and promote diversity and inclusion among the Federal and DC government workforces. The Uniformed Services Awards recognize and honor members of the armed forces, Public Health Service commissioned corps, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration commissioned corps. The Distinguished Public Service Scholarship is awarded to students who are interested in public service, exhibit academic excellence, and demonstrate a continuous effort to foster diversity and inclusion in AAPI communities. The 2019 scholarship will be named in honor of the late Congressman Dalip Singh Saund, the first Asian American elected to Congress.

For more information, contact Ms. Tynnetta Lee, VA’s National Asian American and Pacific Islander Employment Program Manager, at Tynnetta.Lee@va.gov.
VA Hosts Its First White House Initiative on HBCUs Interagency Meeting
By Mr. Harvey Johnson, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Resolution Management and Acting Executive Director for Diversity and Inclusion

Coming off the heels of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Week in September 2018, VA hosted its first White House Initiative (WHI) on HBCUs Interagency Working Group (IWG) meeting on October 31, 2018, coordinated by Ms. Tynnetta Lee, VA’s National Black Employment Program Manager and WHI-HBCUs IWG member, Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

Welcoming remarks were provided by VA’s very own Ms. Jacqueline Hayes-Byrd, Acting Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration; Mr. Harvey Johnson, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Resolution Management, Acting Executive Director for Diversity and Inclusion, and VA’s Liaison to the WHI-HBCUs; and Mr. Johnathan Holifield, Executive Director, WHI-HBCUs, Department of Education (DoEd). Also in attendance were VA’s partners from the Office of Acquisition Academy, Veterans Health Administration/Office of Academic Affiliation, and over 20 Federal agencies. The discussions revolved around best practices for DoEd’s annual HBCU Week Conference and Mapping Clusters that were introduced by VA’s Acquisition Academy to synchronize areas of common interest among our Federal agency partners. The Mapping Clusters goal is to facilitate larger impact programs and initiatives to implement Executive Order 13779. Photographs from this special edition meeting are available online at https://www.flickr.com/photos/departmentofed/albums/72157697188091920.

To become more engaged, please visit VA’s National Black Employment Program web page at https://www.diversity.va.gov/programs/aa.aspx. For more information on the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities and a list of HBCUs, please visit the DoEd webpage at https://sites.ed.gov/whhbcu.

Chinese-American World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act
Act Awards Congressional Gold Medal Collectively to Chinese-American Veterans

On Thursday, December 20, 2018, the President signed into law S. 1050, the “Chinese-American World War II Veteran Congressional Gold Medal Act,” which provides for the award of a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the Chinese-American Veterans of World War II, in recognition of their dedicated service during World War II. Chinese Americans served the United States in every conflict since the Civil War, and distinguished themselves in World War II, serving in every theater of war and every branch of service, earning citations for their heroism and honorable service, including the Medal of Honor. Read the entire Act online at https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/1050/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Chinese-American%22%5D%7D&r=1&s=1.