Commemorate
Women’s Equality Day

On August 26, 2019, VA joins the Nation in commemorating the anniversary of the adoption 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.” Here at VA, as of June 2019, women comprise over 60 percent of the total permanent workforce and continue to hold leadership positions throughout the federal agency. VA managers and supervisors are encouraged to support events and activities that recognize women and their many contributions to American society.

Women’s Equality Day marks a turning point in the history of the struggle for equity of women and women’s rights. The year 1920 represented the results of 72 years of campaigning by a huge civil rights movement for women. Prior to movements like these, even respected thinkers such as Rousseau and Kant believed that women’s inferior status in society was completely logical and reasonable; women were “beautiful” and “not fit for serious employment.” Continued on page 4.
Sign Language and CART
Supporting Deaf or Hearing-Impaired Employees

There are a number of resources available to accommodate deaf or hard of hearing employees. Two popular accommodations are Sign Language Interpreters and use of Computer Access Realtime Translation (CART). Deciding which resource is the most effective accommodation for the employee will depend on the functional limitations of the employee.

The interactive process which should occur between the Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator (RAC), the employee, and the manager when determining the most effective accommodation for the deaf or hard of hearing employee. One of the key resources available to assist supervisors and managers in determining the effective accommodation for a deaf or hard of hearing employee is the Job Accommodation Network at https://askjan.org.

A sign language interpreter is a professional who assists with communication between individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and use sign language and individuals who do not use sign language. In the United States, most sign language interpreters use American Sign Language (ASL). However, other types of interpreters such as Certified Deaf Interpreters (CDI), tactile interpreters, or Cued Speech interpreters may be needed in addition to or instead of ASL interpreters depending on the communication needs of the individuals involved.

It is typically the VA organization’s responsibility to hire and pay for interpreter services for work-related communication. To locate an interpreter, contact the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf at 703-838-0030 (703-838-0459 TTY) or use the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf’s Find Interpreter Agency/Referral Service at https://myaccount.rid.org/Public/Search/Interpreter.aspx.

CART is a process of converting speech into text through a third party. A trained CART writer or stenographer uses a keyboard or stenographic machine to transcribe spoken speech into written text, which is then transmitted onto a computer monitor or video screen for viewing. Many captioning services offer remote CART and internet captioning where the CART writer is not physically present at the event, but can listen-in through a telephone line. CART services are often used for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing during small and large group communication situations when verbatim conversation is essential to effective communication. It is typically the employer’s responsibility to hire and pay for CART services for work-related communication.

VA’s Office of Reasonable Accommodation Services works to ensure that every VA employee with a disability is provided the necessary tools, resources, and effective reasonable accommodation to enable them to provide our Nation’s Veterans with the world class benefits and services they deserve. VA employees, managers and supervisors are encouraged to join the VA Pulse RA Community of Practice. Sign up today by visiting https://www.vapulse.net/groups/reasonable-accommodation-services. For more information regarding VA’s Reasonable Accommodation Program, visit https://www.diversity.va.gov/programs/ra.aspx or contact Ms. Andréé Sutton, Chief of Reasonable Accommodation Services, at Andree.Sutton@va.gov. (Source: https://askjan.org.)
Apply today for Leadership VA (LVA) Class of 2020!!!

LVA 2020 Application Now Open!!

The LVA program is currently accepting applications through 11:59 PM ET August 8, 2019 for qualified applicants in the grades of GS 13 (minimum 52 weeks in grade) through GS 15 and Title 38 equivalents. Eligible applicants must occupy a full-time position with VA and have maintained an overall performance rating of Fully Successful or above.

LVA is the Department of Veterans Affairs' primary enterprise-wide leadership development program for high-performing, results-oriented leaders. LVA Alumni collaborate across VA to build operational partnerships, alliances and communities of practices designed to solve some of the Department's toughest problems, to facilitate modernization and to achieve strategic objectives. LVA Alumni exit the program supremely prepared to assume increased levels of responsibility, to lead operational and strategic programs and to take on critical supervisory/leadership roles using an enterprise-wide perspective necessary to meet the needs of a diverse population of Veterans, family members, survivors, employees and stakeholders.

LVA Fellows are selected based on a rigorous blind review and merit-selection application process. Applicants compete with their eligible peers within each Administration and VACO Staff Offices to form 50 to 100 person cohorts every year. Each LVA Cohort will receive over 360 hours of leadership development training from VA senior leaders and subject matter experts over an eight to ten month period, which typically begins in the Spring of the calendar year. The cohort's training includes four one-week residential sessions focusing on leadership modules, interactive workshops and assignment to an InnoVAtion project team responsible for developing actionable deliverables with the potential for VA implementation in the near-term. For more information about this prestigious leadership development program, please visit: LVA website. To apply for the 2020 cohort, please visit: LVA Application Link.

Want more information? Be sure to sign up for HLTI communications.
2019 National Minority Veterans Summit
Department to Host First Summit Focusing on Needs of Minority Veterans

The 2019 National Minority Veterans Summit will be held at the Sheraton Dallas Hotel in Texas on September 27 and 28, 2019. This will be the first-ever minority Veterans summit, and will focus on the needs and issues important to minority Veterans. Attendees will have the opportunity to hear from Veterans Affairs senior leaders, participate in breakout sessions focused on employment, mental health, entrepreneurship, and more. Plenary sessions will focus on VA care and benefits, partner organizations, and special “Voice of the Veteran” panels. There will be a pre-summit one-day training event for VA’s Minority Veteran Program Coordinators, followed by the two-day summit to consist of lectures, discussion panels, and exhibit hall, and an open forum. For more information, visit [https://whova.com/web/nmvs_201909](https://whova.com/web/nmvs_201909).

Policy Alert
Religious Symbols in VA Facilities

VA Directive 0022, Religious Symbols in VA Facilities, was recently reissued. This directive addresses policy and procedures for including religious symbols in passive displays at VA facilities and is available at [https://www.va.gov/vapubs/viewPublication.asp?Pub_ID=849&FType=2](https://www.va.gov/vapubs/viewPublication.asp?Pub_ID=849&FType=2). For more information, contact the Office of the Director, National Chaplain Center, Veterans Health Administration.

Commemorate
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Even after 1920, some minority women did not gain voting rights until the Voting Rights Act was passed in 1965.

The world has witnessed great women proving these views wrong. From civil rights activists Rosa Parks, Diane Nash, and Septima Poinsette Clark fighting for equality to scientists such as Marie Curie, American Chien-Shiung Wu, Rosalind Franklin, and Jane Goodall, the last century has shown what women achieve when given the opportunity.

Today, women’s equality has grown to mean much more than just sharing the right to the vote. Organizations such as Federally Employed Women, Girls Who Code, and Womankind Worldwide continue their commitment and dedication to continuing to advocate for equity for women and girls. They work to provide women across the globe with equal opportunities to education and employment, fighting suppression and violence towards women and against the discrimination and stereotyping which still occur in every society.

On Women’s Equality Day, we honor those courageous, relentless, and dedicated women who had marched, advocated, and organized for the right to cast a vote—that precious right has reinvigorated generations of women and galvanized them to stand up, speak out, and let their voices be heard across this great Nation.

As we celebrate the anniversary of this achievement and pay tribute to the trailblazers and suffragists, we must continue to advance on our journey towards equality and investing in our future!

For more information on VA’s Federal Women’s Program, visit [https://www.diversity.va.gov/programs/women.aspx](https://www.diversity.va.gov/programs/women.aspx) or contact Ms. Sehar Minhas, VA’s National Federal Women’s Program Manager, at Sehar.Minhas@va.gov.