

Upcoming Events

December 2019

World AIDS Day

December 1

International Day of Persons with Disabilities

December 3

Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

December 7

Human Rights Week

December 8-14

Human Rights Day

December 10

Bill of Rights Day

December 15

Hanukkah (Feast of Lights/Dedication)

December 22-30

Yule/Christmas

December 25

Kwanzaa

December 26–January 1

ORM

Steps Toward Conflict Resolution

Callers can REACH to the Office of Resolution Management (ORM) using the new number, 1-888-566-3982 (TDD: 1-888-626-9008), and speak with a specialist regarding [Equal Employment Opportunity Complaint Processing](#), [Alternative Dispute Resolution](#), and the [Harassment Prevention Program](#). REACH to ORM is available from 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m. in all time zones. To file a discrimination or harassment complaint, you must contact [ORM](#) within 45 calendar days of the date of the alleged discriminatory incident.



Commemorate

Human Rights Day, Human Rights Week, and Bill of Rights Day

VA joins the Nation in commemorating Human Rights Day on December 10, Human Rights Week from December 8-14, and Bill of Rights Day on December 15. From the [2018 Presidential Proclamation](#): *On Bill of Rights Day, we recognize the key role of the Bill of Rights in protecting our individual liberties and limiting the power of government. The Founding Fathers understood the real threat government can pose to the rights of the people. James Madison, who introduced the Bill of Rights in the Congress, stated that the “essence of Government is power; and power, lodged as it must be, in human hands, will ever be liable to abuse.” That is why those first 10 Amendments to the Constitution, among others, protected the right to speak freely, the right to freely worship, the right to keep and bear arms, the right to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures, and the right to due process of law. As a part of the Constitution, the supreme law of the land, the Bill of Rights has protected our rights effectively against the abuse of government power for 227 years.*

The Bill of Rights has served as a model for other countries in helping them develop their own safeguards for fundamental human rights. Seventy years ago, on December 10, 1948, as the world was emerging from the catastrophic destruction of World War II, the Bill of Rights inspired the United Nations General Assembly to adopt the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. [Continued on page 4.](#)

Policy Alert

Religious Exercise and Expression

VA is committed to maintaining a diverse workforce and inclusive work environment and to protecting First Amendment freedoms. As our Nation becomes increasingly diverse, so do the religious affiliations and belief systems of its citizens. VA must be mindful and respectful of the diverse belief systems and the First Amendment rights of all its employees, Veterans, stakeholders, and others in the conduct of VA business. Visit [ODI's Religion Policy web page](#) for more information.

Eighth Annual Secretary's D&I Excellence and ADR Excellence Awards

Call for Nominations

The nomination period will soon open for the Eighth Annual Secretary's Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Excellence Awards and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Excellence Awards! These awards provide VA the opportunity to recognize the outstanding work of individuals and teams in the areas of D&I and ADR. Nominations are due by January 31, 2020. For more information on the D&I Awards, visit the [Office of Diversity and Inclusion website](#). For more information on the ADR Awards, visit the [Office of Resolution Management website](#).

Workforce Recruitment Program

Database of Candidates Available Beginning December 16

The Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) is a recruitment and referral program that connects federal and private sector employers nationwide with highly motivated college students with disabilities, including Veterans, who are eager to demonstrate their abilities in the workplace. The WRP maintains the largest database of Schedule A candidates for hiring into the Federal Government and is recognized by the Office of Personnel Management as a model strategy for the recruitment and hiring of individuals with disabilities and top candidates may be selected quickly. Administrations and Staff Offices are encouraged to access the [WRP database](#) the week of December 16 to find qualified candidates to support your specific hiring needs.

VA Demographics Report

State of VA Workforce in FY 2019

The overall diversity of VA's workforce increased since the end of fiscal year (FY) 2018. This increase is measured by the diversity index. The Diversity Index is a single measure of workforce diversity that measures the convergence of VA's aggregate workforce distribution by race, ethnicity, and gender to the Civilian Labor Force (CLF) or Relevant Civilian Labor Force (RCLF). The CLF consists of all U.S. citizens 16 years of age and over, excluding those in the Armed Forces, who are employed or unemployed and seeking employment in all U.S. occupations. The CLF does not include Puerto Rico or other U.S. territories. The RCLF consists of all U.S. citizens 16 years of age and over, excluding those in the Armed Forces, who are employed in or unemployed and seeking employment in VA specific occupations. When the organization has a presence in Puerto Rico, that population is included.

The RCLF-based diversity index increased by 4.59 percentage points (from 84.98 percent in FY 2018 to 89.57 percent in FY 2019) and the CLF-based diversity index increased by 4.65 percentage points (from 87.96 percent in FY 2018 to 92.61 percent in FY 2019).

This increase in overall diversity can be further explained by breaking out the demographic characteristics of VA's workforce. During the period from FY 2018 to FY 2019, VA's workforce increased by approximately 13,000 permanent and temporary employees (excluding medical residents and Manila residents, and only examining those employees in pay status). The representation of Black, Hispanic, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander women, and Asian and Two or More Races men and women increased.

Also, when we compare the demographic characteristics of VA's workforce against the RCLF, the representation of White men and Hispanic men and women are lower than expected (excluding men of two or more races). At the end of FY 2019, White men representation was 69 percent of RCLF, Hispanic men was 36 percent, and Hispanic women was 63 percent of RCLF. For more information on VA demographics, contact [Ms. Ryan Pugh](#), Acting Director, Workforce Analysis, ODI.

Now Online: VA's FY 2018 Management Directive 715, Affirmative Action Plan

Report Focuses on VA's EEO Program

Every year, each federal agency must submit to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) a Management Directive 715 (MD-715) report and an Affirmative Action Plan for the Recruitment, Hiring, Advancement, and Retention of Persons with Disabilities. MD-715 is a blueprint for establishing and maintaining an effective EEO program. The Affirmative Action Plan is derived from the MD-715 report but focuses solely on people with disabilities. VA's Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 MD-715 Report and Affirmative Action Plan are available on [ODI's reports archive webpage](#). For more information, contact [Ms. Ryan Pugh](#), Acting Director, Workforce Analysis, ODI.

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

VESO

VETERAN EMPLOYMENT SERVICES OFFICE

FACT SHEET

The **Veteran Employment Services Office (VESO)** provides employment readiness assistance and outreach to transitioning service members and Veterans, while advocating use of special hiring authorities, employment programs, and Veteran retention strategies to help VA become the employer of choice for Veterans.

- Provides federal employment readiness assistance to Veterans and transitioning service members to enhance federal employment opportunities, primarily at VA
- Promotes federal employment, and advancement opportunities for qualified disabled Veterans by providing employment-readiness assistance to enhance federal employment opportunities, primarily at VA
- Promotes DoD's Operation Warfighter program by matching qualified wounded, ill and injured service members with internships in VA
- Increases awareness of federal employment, and advancement opportunities for Veterans and transitioning service members, primarily utilizing virtual tools
- Develops and implements retention strategies to support Veteran retention Department-wide

VA for Vets Website: VESO's VA for Vets website, www.vaforvets.va.gov, offers employment and training resources that help Veterans launch or advance their civilian careers at VA. The site includes:



- *Employment Information (Spotlight VA vacancies)*
- *Federal Hiring process information*
- *Virtual Training Webinars & Videos*
- *Deployment checklist for VA's National Guard and Reserve employees*
- *A link to the DoD's eBenefits site at www.ebenefits.va.gov*
- *Information on Internship opportunities to enhance job skills*
- *Links to national career fairs that focus on hiring Veterans*



For more information: vesovets@va.gov [Facebook@veso.vaforvets](https://www.facebook.com/veso.vaforvets)

About VA's Veteran Workforce

- V** • Of VA's more than 365,000 employees, about one-third, or over 120,000, are Veterans.
- E** • In fiscal 2016, VA hired more than 18,000 Veterans.
- S** • Of all federal government agencies, VA is the second largest employer of Veterans
- O** • VA provides employment opportunities to more than 34,000 women Veterans.



Commemorate

[Continued from Page 1](#)

Similar to the Bill of Rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights enumerates many basic rights that are essential to preserving the dignity and liberty of all people. Today, the United States continues to respect the sovereign right of each country to chart its own social, economic, and cultural advancement. We also, however, recognize the universal truth that those countries that strive to honor and defend human rights are more likely to achieve long-term, sustainable prosperity and peace.

During Human Rights Day, Bill of Rights Day, and Human Rights Week, we vow to fiercely protect the eternal flame of liberty. Since there will always be a temptation for government to abuse its power, we reaffirm our commitment to defend the Bill of Rights and uphold the Constitution. We also remember all those around the world whose God-given rights have been violated and disregarded by authoritarian regimes, and we express our desire for the rule of law and liberty to one day triumph over all forms of oppression.

International Day of Persons with Disabilities

Since its inception in 1945, the United Nations (UN) has outlined and reiterated its commitment to calling for the creation of inclusive, accessible and sustainable societies and communities, most notably with the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Over time, the UN has honed its focus on promoting the well-being and welfare of people living with disabilities, and in 1992 called for an international day of celebration for people living with disabilities to be held on December 3 each year. This International Day of People with Disabilities (IDPWD) is a special time to celebrate the achievements and contributions plus increase public awareness, understanding and acceptance of people with disabilities. IDPWD also symbolizes the following actions we should embrace every day, in order to create diverse and accepting communities:

- Understand and learn from the highly valued experiences of people living with a disability;
- Recognize and value the diversity of our global community, and cherish the role we all play; and
- Seek and create a future where a person is not characterized by their disabilities, but by their abilities.

The 2019 IDPWD theme is “The Future Is Accessible.” This theme addresses the idea that we must all work towards a future where barriers no longer exist: buildings are safely accessible, beaches are enjoyed with accessible ramps, employment is truly dignified without the fear of discrimination, and great learners fostered via accessible classrooms.

Working towards an accessible future is everyone’s responsibility. Together, we can create a world that demands people are not excluded because of any type of impairment. We cannot be silent bystanders and must call out barriers wherever we identify them, and work towards overcoming them. (*Parts of this article taken from the [International Day of People with Disabilities website](#).)* For more information on VA’s Individuals with Disabilities Program, visit the [ODI website](#).

VA Reaches Students Exploring VA Careers

SOAR Establishes Pipeline for Students and Graduates

VA employees with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) [Student Outreach and Recruitment Program \(SOAR\)](#) and the Office of Resolution Management (ORM) participated in a School of Public Health Career Expo with the University of Maryland School of Public Health on November 6, 2019. Ms. Sehar Minhas, ODI, and Ms. Gayle Brown, ORM, (at right) provided participants with information about VA, the Department’s various internship programs, and VA positions related to public health.

The School of Public Health Career Expo drew students from many different backgrounds, including both undergraduate and graduate students obtaining their master’s and/or PhD degrees. Numerous students approached the Department’s table and showed interest in working for VA. For questions, contact [Sehar Minhas](#), SOAR Program Manager, ODI.



Office of Human Resources & Administration/Operations, Security, and Preparedness
Office of Diversity and Inclusion | Office of Resolution Management
Alternative Dispute Resolution | Resolution Support Center | Harassment Prevention Program
Office of Accountability and Whistleblower Protection | VHA Diversity & Inclusion Community of Practice
VA on Facebook | VA on YouTube | VA Jobs | VA Pulse Reasonable Accommodation Community of Practice

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