MESSAGE FROM THE
CHIEF HUMAN CAPITAL OFFICER

We are pleased to present the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report for Fiscal Year (FY) 2015. This Report presents the accomplishments and progress made by VA toward the goals and objectives contained in the VA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan for FY 2012 - 2016. The Plan was developed pursuant to President Obama’s Executive Order 13583, “Establishing a Coordinated Government-wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in the Federal Workforce.”

The Office of Human Resources and Administration’s (HRA) Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) has the primary responsibility for leading the Department’s diversity and inclusion program in collaboration with the VA Administrations and Staff Offices. HRA/ODI administers the Diversity and Inclusion in VA Council (DIVAC) which comprises representatives from all major VA organizations. ODI partnered with the DIVAC to develop information for this Report.

In November 2014, Secretary Bob McDonald launched a major new initiative called MyVA to transform the VA culture and provide Veterans with “a seamless, integrated and responsive customer service experience.” A strategic priority under MyVA is to improve the employee experience within VA. Under this umbrella objective, VA established a new Anti-Harassment Office to proactively address alleged harassment in the workplace, and created a new employee engagement service to promote engagement and inclusion at all levels. VA also implemented Whistleblower Rights and Protection training for all managers and supervisors which resulted in VA receiving certification from the Office of Special Counsel for its Whistleblower Protection Program.

As you will read in the following pages, VA has made considerable progress in the area of diversity and inclusion in FY 2015. VA continues to increase its aggregate workforce diversity as evident by its innovative Diversity Index and leads cabinet level agencies in the hiring of individuals with targeted disabilities. These and other accomplishments reflected in the report are a testament to VA’s commitment to diversity and inclusion. We thank our partners and stakeholders for their invaluable contributions to promoting diversity and inclusion in VA.
MESSAGE FROM THE
CHIEF DIVERSITY OFFICER

As we continue our journey under our new MyVA roadmap, we are proud to report our progress in making VA “a place people want to serve.” A key enabler in achieving this goal is putting our people first so they can deliver the best services to our Nation’s Veterans. We in ODI understand the critical role that diversity and inclusion play in engaging and empowering our human resources to achieve VA’s noble mission. It is with this context in mind that we are happy to share VA’s Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Annual Report for FY 2015. The accomplishments and initiatives reflected in this Report represent the collaborative efforts of VA’s three Administrations – the Veterans Health Administration, the Veterans Benefits Administration, and the National Cemetery Administration – and VA’s Staff Offices and stakeholders. Together, we have advanced VA’s status as a leader in diversity and inclusion in the Federal sector.

When VA issued its first D&I Annual Report in 2009, we focused our attention on workforce diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, gender and other demographic characteristics. Today, we still highlight our progress in the area of representational diversity, but we have expanded our focus to address the crucial and often overlooked area of workplace inclusion and its corollary - employee engagement. As Federal Government looks increasingly inward to issues of engagement and employee development, it is important to understand that before we can engage, we must first include. To this end, VA’s ODI has led the effort to cultivate a safe and inclusive workplace that leverages its workforce diversity and empowers all contributors.

This past year, VA has cemented its role as a change agent in the area of diversity and inclusion. VA’s ODI led the implementation of the Federal Government’s first Diversity & Inclusion in Government (DIG) Council. The Council consists of executives from all Cabinet-level departments and serves as a forum for addressing high level diversity and inclusion issues impacting all of government. VA has also been an active participant on the Office of Personnel Management’s (OPM) Chief Human Capital Officer Council, and major contributor to the Veterans Employment Council, and Hispanic Council on Federal Employment.

This Annual Report presents VA’s accomplishments and challenges in meeting the three strategic goals of our FY 2012 -2016 Diversity & Inclusion Strategic Plan: Workforce Diversity, Workplace Inclusion, and Outstanding Public Service & Stakeholder relations. We thank all of our partners and stakeholders for their invaluable contributions to this Report.
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# Table of Contents

Executive Summary .................................................................................................................................................................. 1  

Historical Perspective ............................................................................................................................................................ 7  

Strategic Alignment ................................................................................................................................................................ 9  

Organizational Overview .................................................................................................................................................... 11  

Goal 1: “Build a diverse, high-performing, workforce that reflects all segments of society.” ................ 17  
  VA Diversity Index ............................................................................................................................................................ 17  
  Workforce Representation .................................................................................................................................................. 20  
  Applicant Flow Data ........................................................................................................................................................... 23  
  Leadership ........................................................................................................................................................................... 26  
  Veterans ................................................................................................................................................................................ 28  
  Individuals with Targeted Disabilities ............................................................................................................................. 29  
  FY 2015 Organizational Accomplishments .................................................................................................................... 31  
    Office of the Secretary ................................................................................................................................................ 31  
    VA Diversity Council ................................................................................................................................................... 32  
    Administrations ............................................................................................................................................................ 32  
    Assistant Secretaries .................................................................................................................................................. 36  

Goal 2: “Cultivate a flexible, collaborative, and inclusive work environment that leverages diversity and empowers all contributors.” ...................................................................................................................... 40  
  Workplace Flexibility .......................................................................................................................................................... 43  
  Flexibility: The Employee’s Perspective ......................................................................................................................... 45  
  Employee Engagement ...................................................................................................................................................... 47  
  Human Capital Assessment and Accountability Framework ......................................................................................... 49  
  Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities .................................................................................................... 51  
  EEO Complaints ................................................................................................................................................................. 54  
  Alternative Dispute Resolution ....................................................................................................................................... 56  
  Promotions ........................................................................................................................................................................... 57  
  Separations ............................................................................................................................................................................ 60  
  Elimination of Barriers: MyCareer@VA Program ............................................................................................................. 62  
  FY 2015 Organizational Accomplishments .................................................................................................................... 64  
    Office of the Secretary ................................................................................................................................................ 64  
    VA Diversity Council ................................................................................................................................................... 65  
    Administrations ............................................................................................................................................................ 65  
    Assistant Secretaries .................................................................................................................................................. 67
Goal 3: “Facilitate outstanding, culturally competent public service and stakeholder relations through effective leadership and accountability.” ................................................................. 71

Public Service and Citizen Feedback .................................................................................................................. 71
FY 2015 Organizational Accomplishments .......................................................................................................... 73
Office of the Secretary ......................................................................................................................................... 73

VA Diversity Council ........................................................................................................................................... 74
Administrations ...................................................................................................................................................... 74
Assistant Secretaries ............................................................................................................................................. 76

FY 2016 Planned Initiatives ................................................................................................................................... 80
Office of the Secretary .......................................................................................................................................... 80
Administrations .................................................................................................................................................... 81
Assistant Secretaries ........................................................................................................................................... 85
References .............................................................................................................................................................. 91

References ............................................................................................................................................................ 92
Appendices ............................................................................................................................................................ 93

VA Diversity & Inclusion Strategic Plan for FY 2012-2016 ............................................................................. 94
VA EEO, Diversity & Inclusion, No FEAR, and Whistleblower Protection Policy Statement ......................................... 120
No FEAR Report ............................................................................................................................................... 134
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Diversity Index Trend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>VA Workforce vs. CLF and RCLF (FY 2014 - FY 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Net Change by Race, Ethnicity, and Gender (FY 2014 - FY 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>VA Hires vs. CLF and RCLF (FY 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Workforce Trend (FY 2011 - FY 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Applicant Flow Data (FY 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Applicant Flow Data: Underrepresented Groups (FY 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>SES Onboard Trend (FY 2011 - FY 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Women Net Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>SES Onboard vs. Benchmarks (FY 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Veterans (FY 2014 - FY 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Individuals with Disabilities Onboard (FY 2014 - FY 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Hires of Individuals with Disabilities (FY 2014 - FY 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>New IQ Index Trends (FY 2010 - FY 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>VA’s IQ Component Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Telework Participation by Total Workforce (FY 2014 - FY 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Positions Suitable for Telework (FY 2014 - FY 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Telework Participation of Eligible Positions (FY 2014 - FY 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Results of Survey Item 73 (FY 2011 - FY 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Results of Survey Item 73 (FY 2011 - FY 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Satisfaction with Alternative Work Schedules (FY 2011 - FY 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Employee Engagement Index (FY 2011 - FY 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Employee Engagement Index Subfactors (FY 2011 - FY 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>HCAAF Factors (FY 2011 - FY 2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Results-Oriented Performance Culture Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Number of Centrally Funded RA (FY 2010 - 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Reasonable Accommodations Reimbursements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Complaint Activity Trend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>EEO Complaints by Basis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>EEO Complaint by Issue Trend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>ADR in the EEO Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>ADR Outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>GS/GM Promotions (FY 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Title 38 Promotion (FY 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Wage and Canteen Promotions (FY 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Voluntary Separations (FY 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Involuntary Separations (FY 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>ACSI Scores by Federal Agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>ACSI Score: Public and Private Sector Comparison</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Diversity and Inclusion
Annual Report
Fiscal Year 2015

Human Resources and Administration | Office of Diversity and Inclusion

http://www.diversity.va.gov
Executive Summary

In his Executive Order 13583, titled “Establishing a Coordinated Government-wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in the Federal Workforce,” President Obama reminded us that “Our Nation derives its strength from the diversity of its population… “ and challenged federal agencies to “draw on the talents of all parts of our society.” With that in mind, VA updated its inaugural Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan to adapt to the changing realities of a global community and create robust goals, objectives, and strategies to achieve a 21st century workforce. In this fifth consecutive Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report, we present the progress made and the measurable outcomes of our collaborative efforts toward meeting the goals of the VA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan for FY 2012 - 2016. We start with a summary of our accomplishments this past year and measures of progress in the area of diversity and inclusion as of September 30, 2014.

Looking at Our Accomplishments...

VA made considerable progress in achieving its milestones and targets in its fourth and final year under the Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan for FY 2012 - 2016. Accomplishments are presented below in alignment with our three overarching goals: workforce diversity; workplace inclusion, and outstanding public service and stakeholder relations.

Goal 1: “Build a diverse, high-performing workforce that reflects all segments of society.”

- VA’s Diversity Index increased for the 7th consecutive year, indicating an increase in VA’s aggregate workforce diversity by race, ethnicity, and gender as compared with the Relevant Civilian Labor Force (RCLF).
- VA exceeded the Secretary’s 3 percent hiring goal for individuals with targeted disabilities (IWTD) and the Secretary’s 2 percent onboard goal for IWTD, giving VA the highest representation of IWTD among cabinet level agencies.
- Secretary McDonald reaffirmed VA’s commitment to the rights and protections enshrined in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation (No FEAR) Act, the Whistleblower Protection Act, and related Federal laws that protect our employees in his annual Policy Statement dated April 20, 2015.
- VA’s ODI led the creation of Federal Government’s first Diversity and Inclusion in Government Council, launched in May 2015 to address broad, high level diversity and inclusion matters impacting all of government.
• ODI administered VA’s Centralized Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) and sponsored 19 interns with disabilities, converting seven interns to career conditional FTEs. VA ranks second among cabinet level agencies in WRP conversions and number of WRP recruiters.
• ODI administered the National Diversity Internship Program (NDIP) and sponsored 135 diverse interns from minority serving institutions in VA internships to build a pipeline for workforce diversity.
• ODI conducted six national outreach events in partnership with diverse affinity organizations to perform targeted recruitment outreach to build a diverse and inclusive workforce.
• ODI prepared and timely submitted numerous Federally mandated EEO and diversity plans and reports on behalf of VA, including the Annual EEO Plan and Program Status Report required by EEOC Management Directive 715; the Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program Plan and Report required by the Office of Personnel Management; and the Agency Performance Report on Actions to Assist Minority Serving Institutions (including Historically Black Colleges and Universities, American Indian and Alaska Native Education, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders serving institutions).

Goal 2: “Cultivate a flexible, collaborative and inclusive work environment that leverages diversity and empowers all contributors.”

• VA’s Inclusion Index (Inclusion Quotient), a measure of organizational inclusiveness based on Federal Employee Survey results, remained at 53 percent for the second year.
• VA’s informal EEO complaint resolution rate remained steady at 53 percent from FY 2014 to FY 2015.
• The Office of Human Resources and Administration (HRA) incorporated EEO and diversity and inclusion strategic imperatives in its Strategic Planning process.
• VA established the Office of Accountability Review to ensure and track accountability for misconduct and lack of oversight by senior leaders.
• VA’s Office of Resolution Management (ORM) stood up an Anti-Harassment Office in December 2014 and issued draft policy and procedures to proactively address workplace harassment.
• ODI issued the first VA Guidance on Religious Expression and Exercise in VA Facilities and Property under VA’s Control.
• The Deputy Assistant Secretary for ODI served as an advisor to the Corporate Employee Development Board, Training Leadership Council, and the SES Candidate Development Program to ensure diversity and inclusion principles in leadership development programs.
• The Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for ORM served as an advisor on the Performance Review Board to ensure fairness and accountability in the SES performance appraisal process.
• ORM conducted 296 hours of training for 393 individuals related to 33 findings of discrimination.
• ORM awarded a contract to conduct Conflict Management and Mediation training. Over the course of twelve months, twenty-two 3-day training sessions will be delivered to promote skills and competency in managing conflict and resolving workplace disputes and EEO complaints.
• In addition to the Conflict Management and Mediation training, ORM trained 590 employees in ADR Awareness, Basic Mediation Skills, and Communication Skills. ORM provided quarterly briefings to new employees and supervisors in VA Central Office on ADR and EEO.
• ORM conducted 10 Conflict Assessments in FY 2015, to explore workplace conflict, and to provide a picture of the organization that helped leadership respond more effectively to workplace issues.
• In partnership with the VA Learning University (VALU), ODI expanded its MyCareer@VA Day program to promote career development for individuals experiencing career bottlenecks, including groups with less than expected representation in jobs above the GS 9 grade level.
• VA funded over 400 reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities at a cost of $376,606 through its Centralized Reasonable Accommodations Fund, administered by ODI.
• ODI and the Office of General Counsel conducted monthly training events for managers, supervisors, and practitioners on the reasonable accommodation process.
• ODI managed and upgraded its VA-wide reasonable accommodations tracking system for increased quality assurance and compliant processing of requests.
• ODI delivered 205 elective, virtual or face-to-face, learning events at VA facilities nationwide to over 8,134 VA employees addressing the following topics: bullying; generations; processing reasonable accommodation requests; barrier analysis; Special Emphasis Program Manager (SEPM) responsibilities; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) awareness; organizational inclusion; diversity and inclusion for new employees and new supervisors, unconscious bias/implicit association; and cultural competency.
• ODI conducted monthly and quarterly conference calls to SEPMs and EEO Managers across VA, providing training, information and tools to enable them to successfully accomplish their goals.
• ODI administered six technical assistance reviews of VA facilities to ensure compliance with mandated EEO, diversity and inclusion requirements.
• ODI piloted and obtained approval to launch the World Café initiative, a facilitated group discussion and action planning program on race relations.
**Goal 3: “Facilitate outstanding, culturally competent public service and stakeholder relations through effective leadership and accountability.”**

- VA expanded partnerships/Memoranda of Understanding with diverse stakeholders including National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, African American Federal Executive Association (AAFEA), Asian American Government Executives Network (AAGEN), Blacks in Government, and Federally Employed Women to promote targeted outreach.
- VA expanded the Secretary’s annual EEO, Diversity, No FEAR, and Whistleblower Protection Policy Statement to reflect new legal protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity/transgender status, and include biennial Whistleblower Rights and Protection training requirement for all managers and supervisors.
- VA achieved Office of Special Counsel certification for its Whistleblower Rights and Protection Program.
- VA received Honorable Mention at the 2014 MarCom Awards - an international creative competition for individuals and companies involved in the concept, writing and design of print, visual, audio and web materials and programs in part due to VALU and ODI’s collaboration.
- VALU and ODI developed the framework for the design and development of a new Web-based course on implicit bias and implicit association.
- At the request of the Mayor of Jersey City, New Jersey, ODI provided the city's first LGBT awareness training for city employees on April 16, 2015.
- VA continued to experience high compliance with its mandatory biennial training programs: Prevention of Workplace Harassment/No FEAR training (96% completion rate), EEO, Diversity, and Conflict Management Training for Managers and Supervisors (93% target audience completion rate); Whistleblower Rights and Protection and Prohibited Personnel Practices Training (93% target audience completion rate).
- VA published 12 issues of the Diversity and Inclusion newsletter, six editions of NewsLink and six editions of Diversity News videos in FY 2015.
- ODI administered the Secretary of Veterans Affairs Annual Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Awards Program to recognize achievements in three categories of the VA workforce.
- ORM administered the Secretary’s ADR Excellence Awards program to recognize achievement in ADR programs and principles.
- ODI administered four quarterly VA Diversity Council meetings and presented at numerous EEO/diversity stakeholder meetings (Advisory Committee of Minority
Veterans, Hispanic Council on Federal Employment, NAACP, DIG, FHCE, AAFAEA, AAGEN, and others).

The Road Ahead...

In FY 2015 and beyond, VA will focus on building upon current initiatives and adding new strategies in furtherance of its goal outlined in the VA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan for FY 2012 - 2016. The following includes a selection of planned initiatives:

- VA has developed the background, overview, scope, and design details for the development of a new Web-based course on implicit bias and implicit association. The production task is contingent on funding availability for VALU’s contracting process for FY 2016.
- Refine anti-harassment program: (1) enhance anti-harassment coordinator (AHC) network, (2) expand case management system, and (3) launch training for employees, supervisors, managers, union officials, and AHCs.
- Continue marketing MyCareer@VA to additional facilities and external stakeholders, focusing on exploring career opportunities and career mapping strategies to facilitate employment and career advancement for all groups.
- Continue to track VA-wide disciplinary actions taken against Responsible Management Officials in findings of discrimination and report as appropriate in MD 715 Part G.
- Continue implementation of training evaluation instrument and metrics.
- Integrate the new USA Staffing Applicant Flow System into VA Human Resources Information System.
- Update VSSC database system to track participation in VA leadership development programs by race, ethnicity, and gender (REG) in VA’s TMS.
- Update VSSC to ensure field facilities can fully meet the requirements of MD-715 to conduct a thorough barrier analysis (Part I Form is currently not editable).
- Increase the number of Conflict Assessments conducted to provide insight that may improve workplaces and reduce disputes and complaints.
- Revise the management and implementation of ODI’s Web site.
- Continue to streamline the Final Agency Decision process.
- Reprogram the Relevant Civilian Labor Force computation in VA’s VSSC database system to align with EEOC guidance.
- Implement intern tracking system in NDIP and WRP to accurately track conversions of student interns to career positions with VA.
- Design and initiate SEPM training for all VBA EEO managers.
- Expand and strengthen partnerships/MOUs with diverse stakeholders including the Federal Asian Pacific American Council, League of Latin American Citizens, and other external affinity groups.
• Establish and promote employee engagement through development of a core group of VA employees who will train others on the New IQ and identified behaviors that can be learned, practiced and developed into habits of inclusiveness resulting in improved inclusive intelligence within VA.

• Conduct technical and quality review of the refresh projects on mandatory EEO, D&I, Reasonable Accommodation, Conflict Resolution Training, and whistleblower rights and protection; conduct technical and quality review of the refresh project on harassment prevention, NoFEAR, and whistleblower protection for all employees. Plan the deployment for early FY 2017.

• Design, obtain funding, implement, and report on World Café events to initiate race-relations dialogs at the VBA Records Management Center in St. Louis MO in late January 2016, preceded by a pilot test in VACO on December 8, 2015.

• Develop and publish the VA D&I Strategic Plan 2016-2020 and integrate goals into the VA Strategic Plan and HR&A Strategic Plan.

• Manage administration of VA Diversity Council and proposed name change and charter revision.

• Establish a Diversity and Inclusion Competency Model.

• Plan and implement Whistleblower protection campaign to obtain Office of Special Counsel certification in 2018.
Historical Perspective

Since the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, the quest for social justice has been long and circuitous. In the public sector, EEO had its statutory roots in the Civil Rights Act (CRA) of 1964, the landmark legislation of the Great Society. In 1969, President Nixon issued Executive Order 11478, which banned discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, handicap, or age, and required Federal agencies to establish affirmative employment programs to foster EEO for minorities and women. That order led to the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, which amended the CRA to extend coverage of the act to Federal employees.

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has had advisory authority for these affirmative employment functions in the Federal sector since 1978, including the responsibility to review and approve annual Federal agency equal opportunity plans. EEOC implemented the Federal affirmative employment program requirements through a series of management directives requiring agencies to determine underrepresentation of minorities and women in various employment categories, and to submit plans for addressing such underrepresentation.

Since that time, the field of EEO and affirmative action has changed dramatically. In the 1980s, the concept of EEO expanded into “respecting differences” and eventually was transformed by the groundbreaking work of Dr. R. Roosevelt Thomas, who introduced the concept of “diversity management” in his book, “Beyond Race and Gender; Unleashing the Power of Your Work Force by Managing Diversity.” Born largely in the private sector, the field of diversity management evolved from a legal imperative to an increasingly compelling business case for diversity.

In 2003, the EEOC published Management Directive (MD) 715 to succeed and supplant previous directives on affirmative employment. The new directive required all Federal agencies to perform annual self-assessments against six “essential elements” to create a “model EEO program” and to perform extensive demographic analyses of their workforces to identify disparities and develop plans to eliminate identified barriers to equal opportunity. MD 715 is also unique in that it does not focus on minorities; it requires agencies to focus on any group that has a low participation rate. Thus, the focus is data-driven instead of reacting to historic patterns.

Over time, the concept of EEO moved from a reactive, exclusively legalistic model to a more proactive, business-driven paradigm. The millennium also ushered in a new framework for diversity. The focus was now shifting from diversity to inclusion, a rapidly emerging trend also born in the private sector. This sea change occurred quietly as companies found themselves vigorously competing for diverse workforce talent in a globalized economy. They soon realized that it was not enough to simply recruit a diverse workforce, but they must also retain and leverage that diverse workforce to advance their mission. Organizations began looking internally at the organizational culture and any institutional processes that negatively impacted employees’ ability to fully participate and contribute to the goals of the organization. This required examining systemic barriers in all aspects of the organization—including cultural norms, business practices, communications, leadership development, training and education, management accountability, and work life. Organizational inclusion became the means to
actualize the enormous potential of workforce diversity. The concept of inclusion galvanized the field of diversity management by stressing inclusion of all employees, not just legally-protected classes.

In VA, the EEO and affirmative employment functions operated in a decentralized structure until 1997. That year, Congress mandated that VA’s EEO complaints management function be centralized at headquarters. Affirmative employment operations continued to be decentralized to the field facilities, while EEO policy and planning functions remained at headquarters. In 2001, VA asked the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) to review the Department’s diversity and EEO policies, organizational structure, and staffing. The purpose of requesting the review was to obtain recommendations for improvements to VA’s diversity program that would contribute to the attraction and retention of a high-quality workforce, to the support of the Department’s strategic mission, and to the delivery of outstanding and cost-effective services to VA’s internal and external customers. The Academy made more than a dozen recommendations for improvement, including the recommendation that VA’s diversity management strategy concentrate on three paramount goals: a harmonious and productive work environment, a diverse workforce, and outstanding service to all Veterans.

In 2008, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of Diversity Management and EEO led the development of VA’s first Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan. To comport with this new direction, the Office of Diversity Management and EEO was restructured and renamed the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI), to reflect the emerging need to complement the focus on workforce diversity with a focus on organizational inclusion (that is, leveraging diversity). Through this focus on both diversity and inclusion, VA can create the facilitating conditions to enable all employees to contribute their fullest to VA’s mission of providing optimum service to Veterans and their families.

In 2009, VA issued its inaugural Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan for FY 2009 - 2013. As recommended by NAPA, the plan focuses on three primary goals: a diverse, results-oriented, high-performing workforce; a flexible and inclusive work environment; and outstanding customer service and stakeholder relations.

In 2011, President Obama signed Executive Order 13583 which called for all agencies to generate a diversity and inclusion strategic plan and to “establish a system for reporting regularly on agencies’ progress.” The U.S. Office of Personnel Management was charged with the responsibility for leading the development of a Government-wide Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan, modeled largely after VA’s Plan. In 2012, VA produced a new Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan incorporating all requirements set forth by the Executive Order. This Annual Report on Diversity and Inclusion chronicles the Department’s progress toward meeting the goals outlined in the VA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan for FY 2012 – 2016.

In 2013, VA ODI led two interagency work groups that created the framework for the new Diversity in Government Council (DIG). The Council was launched in May 2015. The Council consists of senior level representation from all Cabinet level departments and provides a forum for addressing government-wide strategic diversity and inclusion issues.

This year, VA is in the process of updating its Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan for FY 2016 and beyond.
Strategic Alignment

The mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is to fulfill President Abraham Lincoln’s promise “to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan” by serving and honoring the men and women who are America’s Veterans. The VA FY 2014–2020 Strategic Plan is the cornerstone of the Department’s transformation effort. That plan identifies three strategic goals, with ten strategic objectives, and 50 supporting Performance Goals. In addition, VA has adopted four Agency Priority Goals for 2016-2017. They are:

- Improve the Veteran Experience
- Improve VA’s Employee Experience
- Improve Access to Health Care
- Improve Dependency Claims Processing.

The Office of Human Resources and Administration (HRA) is responsible for leading VA’s human capital management program and driving the employee experience goal. In FY 2014, HRA issued its Strategic Plan for FY 2014-2020 outlining three strategic goals. The VA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan is aligned with HRA Strategic Goal 1: Drive VA transformation through strategic human capital engagement, development, and talent acquisition; and Agency Priority Goal 2: Improve VA’s Employee Experience.

VA is undergoing a radical transformation to improve our relationship with our Veterans. This relationship is the cornerstone for all that VA does. This connection begins the moment a person joins the military and lasts through final honors. VA is the bridge that helps Veterans transition to civilian life, and we continue to support them through other key life events, such as learning a trade or getting a degree. The foundation of that relationship is built on trust and respect and it must be built to last a lifetime.

Veteran and employee relationships are inextricably linked. We cannot improve service to Veterans without improving how VA develops, supports and empowers employees to provide the world-class service we intend to deliver. HRA is developing training and tools that will help employees at every level to become effective, efficient and culturally competent. This is an essential piece of VA’s transformation and drive to improve performance.

In the final analysis, our success as a public service agency will be gauged by how effectively and equitably we deliver our services. To accomplish this, we must have a workforce that reflects the needs of our clients – our Veterans and the American public at large. It is our vision that through the goals, objectives, and strategies contained in our Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan, we will build a diverse workforce and cultivate an inclusive workplace that is empowered and prepared to provide excellent service to our Veterans, their families, and all our stakeholders, in the spirit of “MyVA.”
The VA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan reflects the aims of MyVA initiative. It is also aligned with VA’s Strategic Objective 3.1, “Make VA a Place People want to Serve,” and the supporting performance goals of improving two groundbreaking metrics developed by ODI to measure workforce diversity and organizational inclusion: VA’s Diversity Index and Inclusion Index.

VA’s Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan for FY 2012–2016 was developed with this underlying mission in mind: “to build a diverse workforce and cultivate an inclusive workplace to deliver the best services to our Nation’s Veterans, their families, and beneficiaries.”

The vision described in the Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan is that VA is a leader in creating and sustaining a high-performing workforce by leveraging diversity and empowering all employees to achieve superior results in service to our Veterans.

The values identified in the Plan reflect VA’s ICARE Values: Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence.

The Plan contains three over-arching goals:

1. Build a diverse, high-performing workforce that reflects all segments of society.
2. Cultivate a flexible, collaborative, and inclusive work environment that leverages diversity and empowers all contributors.
3. Facilitate outstanding, culturally competent public service and stakeholder relations through effective leadership and accountability.

This Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report measures the progress made against those aligned goals and objectives.
Organizational Overview

Responsibility for creating a diverse workforce and an inclusive workplace rests with all VA employees at all levels of the organization. The following describes the missions of VA’s major organizations and sub-components as they relate to diversity and inclusion.

Office of the Secretary

The Office of the Secretary (OSVA) oversees the Department in its mission to provide health, education, disability, funerary, and financial benefits earned by Veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs has the responsibility of demonstrating commitment to equality of opportunity and access to programs for all employees and applicants for employment, and communicating this commitment throughout the Department, as detailed in VA Directive 5975 “Diversity Management and Equal Employment Opportunity.” The Secretary is also responsible for making diversity and EEO an integral part of VA’s strategic mission; issuing to all VA employees an annual policy statement prohibiting discrimination and affirming the value of diversity and EEO; ensuring the enforcement of EEO and diversity program requirements; annually certifying that VA is in full compliance with Federal laws, regulations, and Executive orders; and ensuring findings of discrimination from EEOC (and other adjudicatory bodies) are tracked and fully implemented. There are six subsidiary offices that report directly to the Office of the Secretary front office: Center for Minority Veterans; Center for Women Veterans; Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships; Office of Survivors Assistance; Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication; Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization; and the Advisory Committee Management Office. These organizations serve as a resource while identifying barriers to benefits and services for Veterans and their families.

The Deputy Secretary for Veterans Affairs (DEPSECVA) serves as the second in command and Chief Operating Officer for the Department. The DEPSECVA directs the policy and operations of the Department and provides broad direction to the Department’s Staff Offices, ensuring coordinated action and conformance with the Secretary’s directives. The DEPSECVA carries out responsibilities and functions specifically delegated by the SECVA including: overseeing the activities of the Executive Director of the Office of Acquisition, Logistics and Construction (OALC); and managing the implementation of VA’s Veteran Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014.

The Chief of Staff of Veterans Affairs (COSVA) synchronizes and coordinates SECVA policy guidance and direction with VA’s Administrations, Staff Offices and key officials. COSVA oversees OSVA staff, including several senior advisors and special assistants to ensure effective and efficient support to the SECVA and DEPSECVA and the Department as appropriate. COSVA participates in the Department’s governance process.

The Center for Minority Veterans (CMV) serves as the principal advisor to the Secretary on issues related to minority Veterans, identifies barriers to benefits and healthcare access for minority Veterans, promotes awareness of minority Veteran-related issues, develops strategies for improving the participation in existing VA benefits and programs, and provides support for
the Secretary’s Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans. The CMV also serves as an advocate for minority Veterans, conducts outreach activities to promote the awareness and utilization of VA benefits and services, and evaluates the overall effectiveness of the provision of VA benefits and services.

The Center for Women Veterans (CWV) is responsible for ensuring that women Veterans are treated fairly and equitably in the Department’s programs and policies, and that barriers are identified and mitigated. Today, there are over 2.0 million living women Veterans, representing 9.4 percent of the Veterans population. Women comprise one of the fastest-growing segments of the total U.S. Veterans population; it is estimated that by 2020, they will make up more than 10.5 percent of that population. Our women Veterans hail from all walks of life, and represent diverse national origins, races, religions, ages, and abilities.

The Office of General Counsel (OGC) provides legal advice and counsel to all OGC components with respect to diversity and inclusion issues. OGC also undertakes internal initiatives to enhance diversity and inclusion within the OGC workforce.

The Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships (CFBNP) develops partnerships with, provide relevant information to, and expand participation of faith-based, nonprofit, and community/neighborhood organizations in VA programs in order to better serve the needs of Veterans, their families, Survivors, caregivers and other beneficiaries.

The Office of Survivors Assistance (OSA) serves as a resource regarding all benefits and services furnished by VA to survivors and dependents of deceased Veterans members of the Armed Forces. The Office serves as principal advisor to the Secretary on all matters related to the policies, programs, legislative issues, and other initiatives affecting survivors and dependents. OSA also serves as an advocate for survivors, conducts targeted outreach activities to promote the awareness of VA benefits and services for survivors, and explores and implements innovative opportunities to reach survivors who are eligible but not receiving benefits. OSA partners with internal and external partners to enhance the knowledge and awareness of survivor benefits and other issues surrounding the survivor community. OSA conducts outreach activities internally and externally, participates in panels and trainings, and provides information to survivors.

The Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication (OEDCA) issues final agency decisions and orders on the merits of EEO complaints and on any relief that may be available, and reports cases involving a finding of intentional discrimination or retaliation against employees to the VA Secretary or Deputy Secretary. Complainants who are dissatisfied with a final agency decision or order may either appeal to the EEOC (or in some cases the Merit Systems Protection Board) or file a civil action in an appropriate United States District Court.

The Office of Small & Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) advocates for the maximum practicable participation of small, disadvantaged, Veteran-owned, women-owned, and empowerment zone businesses in contracts awarded by the VA and in subcontracts, which are awarded by VA’s prime contractors.

The Advisory Committee Management Office (ACMO) provides administrative and management support to the Department’s 26 Federal Advisory Committees. VA’s advisory committees solicit advice and recommendations from outside experts and the public concerning programs for which the Department is responsible for by law. The office establishes clear goals, standards, and uniform procedures for Advisory Committee activities and ensures that all VA Advisory Committees comply with the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act and other
Federal laws, regulations and the VA Advisory Committee meetings are open to the public as appropriate and announced in the Federal Register.

**VA Diversity Council**

The VA Diversity Council (VADC) serves as an independent executive level body that provides advice and recommendations to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on areas related to diversity and inclusion. The Council is comprised of representatives from each of the Department’s major organizations, staff offices, and stakeholders. It serves as a communications link between the workforce and leadership and as a forum to share best practices, consider new initiatives, monitor progress, leverage resources, and provide accountability in the area of organizational diversity and inclusion. The VADC also ensures that diversity and inclusion considerations are integrated throughout VA’s strategic planning efforts, business practices, and organizational components.

**Administrations**

*The Veterans Health Administration (VHA)* mission is to provide exceptional health care to America’s Veterans. VHA’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion advances diversity, cultural competency, and inclusion within VHA, serves as a proponent and resource to fully leverage the diversity of thoughts, knowledge, skills and experiences in the workforce to develop innovative processes and solutions within our healthcare system. The office coordinates diversity and inclusion efforts across VHA by aligning essential business strategies and programs for optimal performance, and provides guidance to senior-level executives. The VHA Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Subcommittee of the National Leadership Council’s Workforce Committee strategically aligns programs, strategies, and initiatives to achieve the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and VHA diversity and inclusion goals.

*The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)* provides benefits and services to Veterans and their families in a responsive, timely, and compassionate manner in recognition of their service to our nation. Those benefits and services include compensation, pension, education, loan guarantee, vocational rehabilitation and employment, insurance, and fiduciary services. In order to carry out this mission effectively, VBA is committed to the implementation of equal and affirmative employment policies and objectives that support recruiting, retaining, and advancing highly skilled individuals, who will enhance the quality, productivity, and diversity of its workforce.

*The National Cemetery Administration (NCA)* honors Veterans and their families with final resting places in national shrines and with lasting tributes that commemorate their service and sacrifice to our Nation. NCA provides burial space for Veterans and their eligible family members, maintains national cemeteries as national shrines, marks Veterans’ graves with a Government-furnished headstone, marker or medallion, provides Presidential Memorial Certificates in recognition of Veterans’ service to a grateful nation, and administers grants for establishing or expanding state and tribal government Veterans cemeteries. NCA has the responsibility to manifest sustained progress towards a diverse workforce which is attuned with the American population.
Assistant Secretaries

The Office of Management (OM) is responsible for directing the Department’s budgetary, financial, capital asset management, and business oversight functions as well as corporate analysis and evaluation. OM has two primary roles — operational, in support of the Department’s Administrations and Staff Offices so they can accomplish their missions; and stewardship, to ensure for the Secretary VA’s compliance with laws, policies, and directions from external organizations such as OMB, Treasury, GSA, GAO and Congress. OM is under the direction of Assistant Secretary for Management who serves as the Department’s Chief Financial Officer, Performance Improvement Officer, Energy Executive, Environmental Executive, and Real Property Executive. OM comprises the following five major organizational elements that report to the Assistant Secretary for Management: Office of Budget (OB); Office of Finance (OF); Office of Asset Enterprise Management (OAEM); Office of Business Oversight (OBO); Office of Corporate Analysis and Evaluation (CAE).

The Office of Information and Technology (OIT), through Chief Information Officer, is the principal advisor to the Secretary on all matters relating to the management of VA’s information and technology (IT). OIT provides strategic and technical direction, guidance, and policy to ensure that the Department of Veterans Affairs’ IT resources are acquired and managed in a manner that abides by Federal laws and regulations. OIT delivers available, adaptable, secure, and cost-effective technology to VA and acts as a steward for most of VA’s IT assets and resources. OIT strives to provide innovative tools that enable excellent customer service. OIT works with its customers in the Veterans Health Administration, Veterans Benefits Administration, and the National Cemetery Administration to develop and maintain products and systems that serve our Veterans and further VA advancements.

The Office of Policy and Planning (OPP) serves as the principal advisor to VA leaders on all matters of policy and organizational strategy. OPP serves Veterans by providing VA decision makers with the advice, counsel, and support necessary to fulfill the VA mission and to maximize Veteran satisfaction. Specifically, OPP develops and reviews Departmental policy, analyzes Veteran trends and statistics, evaluates and oversees VA transformation initiatives, guides VA’s strategic planning, and supports the Secretary’s vision to transform VA into a high-performing 21st century organization. OPP maintains six business lines (integrative functions) across VA: Data Governance and Analysis; Policy; Corporate Analysis and Evaluation; Enterprise Program Management; Interagency Collaboration and Integration; VA Center for Innovation.

The Office of Operations, Security, and Preparedness (OSP) coordinates the Department’s emergency management, preparedness, security, and law enforcement activities to ensure the Department can continue to perform VA’s Mission Essential Functions under all circumstances across the spectrum of threats.

The Office of Human Resources and Administration (HRA) is responsible for providing VA-wide guidance for such programs as human resources management, diversity and inclusion, discrimination complaint resolution, labor-management relations, training, and general administrative support (primarily services to VA Central Office). The Assistant Secretary serves as the Department’s Designated Agency Safety and Health Official and is responsible for administering the Occupational Safety and Health and Workers’ Compensation programs. The Assistant Secretary also serves as the Department’s Chief Human Capital Officer and EEO
Director, advising and assisting the Secretary in carrying out VA’s responsibilities for selecting, developing, training, and managing a high quality workforce in accordance with merit systems principles and EEO laws and regulations. The Assistant Secretary serves as the Department’s Dispute Resolution Specialist under the Administrative Dispute Resolution Act. Under the auspices of HRA, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) is responsible for leading the effort to foster a diverse workforce and inclusive work environment through policy development, workforce analysis, outreach, retention, and education strategies. The Office of Resolution Management (ORM) is responsible for managing the EEO complaint and alternative dispute resolution (ADR) programs in VA. The Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) is responsible for leading VA’s human capital management strategy and policies.

The Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs (OPIA) serves as the Department’s liaison in all intergovernmental affairs matters and is the primary point of contact with Federal, state, local, American Indian, and Native Alaskan Government officials. In international affairs, OPIA coordinates with other Federal agencies in developing programs and subject matter exchanges for representatives of foreign governments concerning Veteran issues.

The Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (OCLA) has the primary role to advocate for pro-Veteran legislation which supports our diverse Veteran population. OCLA accomplishes this through the legislative proposal process and through numerous engagements with Congress, as well as providing information briefings, responding to letters and requests for information, and testifying at hearings. OCLA is also the primary advisor to the Secretary on congressional issues and acts as the primary liaison between Congress and the Department.

OCLA has the overall responsibility for coordinating Departmental relations and activities with Congress. OCLA is the focal point for the Department’s interactions with Congress and the management and coordination of congressional affairs. OCLA manages congressional hearings, briefings, and site visits, and ensures Congress receives pertinent and timely information about VA programs and policies and items of congressional interest. In addition, OCLA provides support and assistance with respect to specific legislative issues and develops and manages the Department’s annual legislative program. OCLA also provides administrative support to the Department’s 24 advisory committees, which provide the Secretary with important feedback on VA’s programs and services.

The Board of Veterans’ Appeals (BVA) is responsible for making decisions on behalf of the Secretary when claims for Veterans’ Benefits are presented for appellate review. BVA’s mission is to conduct hearings and issue timely, understandable, and quality decisions for Veterans and other appellants in compliance with the requirements of law (38 United States Code Section 7101(a)). The Board’s responsibilities relative to diversity and inclusion parallel those for VA as a whole: to actively foster a diverse workplace and an inclusive work environment that ensures equal opportunity and respect for an inclusive value system to best serve our Nation’s Veterans.

Office of Inspector General (OIG) provides executive leadership and sets strategic direction for a nationwide staff of auditors, investigators, inspectors, and support personnel who conduct independent oversight reviews and investigations in VA. OIG oversight is designed to improve the economy, effectiveness and efficiency of programs, and to prevent and to detect criminal activity, waste, abuse, and fraud.
The Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construction (OALC) is a multifunctional organization responsible for directing the acquisition, logistics, construction, and leasing functions within VA. OALC provides direct operational support to the Department’s administrations and staff offices through its three major organizational components: Office of Acquisition and Logistics, Office of Acquisition Operations, and Office of Construction and Facilities Management.

The Office of Acquisition and Logistics (OAL) is committed to leading a multitalented diverse Federal workforce while upholding a work environment with standards of conduct that are fair, free of discrimination, and free of barriers for all employees. OAL monitors and ensures full participation in meeting VA’s requirements for mandatory EEO training.

The Office of Acquisition Operations (OAO) provides comprehensive operational and strategic acquisition support for VA’s highly complex acquisition requirements. OAO extends its diversity and inclusion responsibilities to workforce related issues such as recruitment and staffing, professional development opportunities, resource and workload management, promotions and recognition, and community outreach.

The Office of Construction and Facilities Management (CFM) is responsible for the planning, design, and construction of all major construction projects greater than $10 million. In addition, CFM acquires real property for use by VA elements through the purchase of land and buildings, as well as long-term lease acquisitions. Through the construction and real property programs, CFM delivers to Veterans, high quality buildings, additions, large scale renovations, and structural enhancements.
Goal 1: “Build a diverse, high-performing, workforce that reflects all segments of society.”

The Federal Government is facing major challenges as well as opportunities in the 21st century. Globalization and the advancement of technology have led to the erosion of national boundaries, leading to greater competition for human capital and even greater urgency for government to reflect the diverse constituencies it serves. Federal agencies must be positioned to recruit, hire, promote, and retain a more diverse workforce so that the diversity can be leveraged to improve services to the public.

VA Diversity Index

In FY 2010, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, a program office within the Office of Human Resources and Administration, set out to develop an innovative and efficient metric to reframe the concept of organizational diversity. In 2011, VA introduced the concept of the Diversity Index to the Federal Government.

The Diversity Index is a single measure of workforce diversity based on the convergence of an organization’s aggregate workforce representation by race, ethnicity, and gender (REG) with the Civilian Labor Force (CLF)\(^1\) or the Relevant Civilian Labor Force (RCLF)\(^2\). At the national level, the benchmark for VA is the CLF.

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\(^1\) CLF consists of all people 16 years of age or over, excluding those in the Armed Forces, who are employed or seeking employment. The CLF contains all occupations and is an accurate comparative basis for Federal Government wide comparison, the largest employer in the U.S. with all occupations represented. Although VA tracks hiring of Individuals with Targeted Disabilities, there is no CLF or RCLF for this group.

\(^2\) RCLF reflects all people 16 years of age or older, excluding those in the Armed Forces, who are employed in or actively seeking employment in a specific occupation – the occupations representative of the VA workforce. The RCLF compares the applicants seeking specific VA occupations such as Doctors, Nurses, Human Resources, Veterans Benefits Claims Examiners, etc...
Applying the computation model to the VA dataset, we noticed an increasing trend. This is consistent with the traditional analytical approach; that is, diversity in VA’s workforce has been increasing over time.

At the end of FY 2015, the Diversity Index score for VA is 90.96 percent of the CLF, and for the first time exceeded the 90 percent threshold with the 2010 Census Data. (The scores shown in Figure 1 are adjusted for the Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander data separation which occurred in FY 2009.)

The Diversity Index is essentially the mean ratio of the normalized workforce composition by REG to its corresponding normalized CLF baseline, with maximum value of 100 percent. The rate is capped at 100 percent to avoid skewing the data due to the over-representation of any group. The intent is to focus on underrepresentation. The computational model for calculating the Diversity Index is provided below.

Let $P_i$ = the normalize value of the REG group in the Workforce, and let $X_i$ = the normalized value of REG group in the CLF (or RCLF). The Diversity Index equals:

$$\sum_{i=1}^{n} \min\left(\frac{P_i}{X_i}, 1.0\right) \quad \text{with} \quad n - M$$

Where $M$ equals the number of instances where $P_i$ is 0 and $X_i$ is 0. Currently the distinct number (n) of REG groups is 14.
For the REG group one of four possibilities exists:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value in REG group in workforce = 0</th>
<th>Remove REG from computation model; increment M by 1</th>
<th>Keep REG group in computation model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| Value in REG group in workforce > 0 | Keep REG group in computation model | Keep REG group in computation model |

The value of M is incremented only when the value of the REG group in the workforce and the value in its corresponding benchmark, the CLF or RCLF, are both zeroes. That is, when the representation of the specific group in the workforce and the CLF equal zero, the group is removed from the computational model to minimize the skewing effects of mathematical mean construct.

We fully acknowledge the limitations of our methodology; primarily it excludes disability, age, religion, and a host of non-statutory dimensions of diversity. While we continue to examine efficient, effective, and defensible ways to measure these other important dimensions, we remain confident that this method serves as a valid and significant first step in establishing an effective tool for internal analysis and inter-agency comparisons. The Diversity Index represents a significant first step in establishing a common benchmark for measuring demographic diversity as commonly defined in the Federal Government.
Workforce Representation

While VA consistently defines diversity in the broadest context including the diversity of thought and perspective, we measure diversity by evaluating the demographic composition of our workforce relative to the RCLF and CLF.

As provided in Figure 2, the demographic representation of VA’s workforce is higher for all groups except for White women, Hispanic men and women, and Asian men when compared to the 2010 RCLF. Since FY 2014, the proportions of Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, American Indian/Alaska Natives, and Two or More races in the VA workforce increased. The proportion of White men and women decreased in FY 2015.

Figure 2: VA Workforce vs. CLF and RCLF (FY 2014 - FY 2015)
(Permanent and Temporary)

Comparing the workforce changes of each demographic group to overall workforce can further highlight trends in participation rates. While VA’s workforce had a net change of 4.31 percent from FY 2014 to FY 2015, White men and women experienced slower growth rates as shown in Figure 3. The representation of Black men and women, Hispanic men and women, Asian men and women, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander men and women, and American Indian men and women grew at a faster rate than the VA average rate of 4.31 percent.
Workforce demographic distribution is affected by hires as well as separations. Hires of White men, Black men and women, Asian men and women, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander men and women, American Indian/Alaska Native men and women, and Two or More Races men were above the RCLF availability. However, the hires of White women, and Hispanic men and women, and Two or More Races women were less than the RCLF; Hispanic women were hired at 64 percent of their availability according to the RCLF, the lowest among all groups, White women were hired at 74 percent of their RCLF availability, the second lowest, Hispanic men were 79 percent of RCLF, and Two or More Races women were 97 of RCLF (see Figure 4).
Since 2010, the number of employees in virtually all historically underrepresented groups, with the exception of the two or more races group, has generally increased along with the total

Data Source: VSSC Human Resources (Onboard by Race, ethnicity, and gender). Report received December 21, 2015. Exclude Manilla citizens and medical residents. Include permanent and temporary employees in full time, part time, and intermittent and pay status.
workforce. Figure 5 provides the demographic composition of the workforce over the past five years. The decrease in the population of the two or more races is attributed to a correction which properly aligns with EEOC and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) business rules accounting for each race and ethnicity group.

Figure 5: Workforce Trend (FY 2011 - FY 2015)
(Permanent and Temporary)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>78,636</td>
<td>24.95%</td>
<td>80,824</td>
<td>25.01%</td>
<td>83,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>113,543</td>
<td>36.03%</td>
<td>115,678</td>
<td>35.80%</td>
<td>119,585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>27,858</td>
<td>8.84%</td>
<td>28,905</td>
<td>8.94%</td>
<td>30,572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>45,571</td>
<td>14.46%</td>
<td>46,893</td>
<td>14.51%</td>
<td>49,496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>9,835</td>
<td>3.12%</td>
<td>10,032</td>
<td>3.10%</td>
<td>10,428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>11,218</td>
<td>3.56%</td>
<td>11,463</td>
<td>3.55%</td>
<td>11,836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>8,159</td>
<td>2.59%</td>
<td>8,513</td>
<td>2.63%</td>
<td>9,236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>13,155</td>
<td>4.17%</td>
<td>13,592</td>
<td>4.21%</td>
<td>14,644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>0.09%</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>0.10%</td>
<td>401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>0.12%</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>0.12%</td>
<td>489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaska Native</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>1,460</td>
<td>0.46%</td>
<td>1,518</td>
<td>0.47%</td>
<td>1,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>2,156</td>
<td>0.68%</td>
<td>2,231</td>
<td>0.69%</td>
<td>2,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>1,134</td>
<td>0.36%</td>
<td>1,115</td>
<td>0.35%</td>
<td>389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>1,730</td>
<td>0.55%</td>
<td>1,663</td>
<td>0.51%</td>
<td>583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>127,372</td>
<td>40.42%</td>
<td>131,232</td>
<td>40.61%</td>
<td>136,576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>187,744</td>
<td>59.58%</td>
<td>191,922</td>
<td>59.39%</td>
<td>199,543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>315,116</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>323,154</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>336,119</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: VSSC Human Resources (Onboard by Race, ethnicity, and gender). Report received December 21, 2015. Exclude Manilla citizens and medical residents. Include permanent and temporary employees in full time, part time, and intermittent and pay status.

Applicant Flow Data
Strategic outreach to all segments of the U.S. population remains the most powerful tool to increase the diversity of any workforce. Measuring the success of outreach effort requires the collection of applicant flow data, the enumeration of the REG of the applicant pool. More importantly, the movement of each REG group through the various stages of the application process allows the effective monitoring and elimination of hidden barriers to full opportunity. VA made significant strides in collecting and analyzing applicant flow data.

Since 2010, VA has been working with the Office of Personnel Management to enhance its ability to collect and analyze applicant flow data for VA vacancies advertised on USA Jobs. Applicant flow data are provided by job applicants on a voluntary basis and include information on the applicant’s demographic background as well as Veterans preference. In FY 2015, about 47 percent of job applicants volunteered demographic information.
Applicant flow data indicates that VA’s outreach efforts are reaching all segments of the population. Shown in Figure 6, all groups applied at a higher rate than their 2010 CLF availability, except for White men and women. Similarly the selection rate for all groups is higher than the CLF availability. (Due to the voluntary nature of this data, survey sampling remains an issue of consideration for the low applications of White men and women.)

**Figure 6: Applicant Flow Data (FY 2015)**
(Applied and Selected vs. 2010 CLF)

![Applicant Flow Data Chart](chart.png)

Aside from the ability to measure outreach’s return on investment, applicant flow data provide immense value in evaluating the internal progression of candidates through each stage of the recruitment process. Figure 7 illustrates the progression of groups with less than expected representation including White women, Hispanic men and women, and Asian men through each stage.
component of the application process. Overall, the selection of White women is higher than their application proportions. While Hispanic men and women numbers appear to decrease at each recruitment step, the overall selections are higher when compared to the CLF availability. The selection of Asian men remains relatively consistent with application numbers.

Figure 7: Applicant Flow Data: Underrepresented Groups (FY 2015)
(By Recruiting Component)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recruiting Component</th>
<th>White Women</th>
<th>Hispanic Men</th>
<th>Hispanic Women</th>
<th>Asian Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applied</td>
<td>22.09%</td>
<td>7.70%</td>
<td>7.43%</td>
<td>3.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualified</td>
<td>23.45%</td>
<td>7.28%</td>
<td>7.09%</td>
<td>3.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referred</td>
<td>24.66%</td>
<td>7.46%</td>
<td>6.49%</td>
<td>3.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selected</td>
<td>29.06%</td>
<td>6.49%</td>
<td>6.75%</td>
<td>3.02%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: Office of Diversity and Inclusion.
Leadership

Studies have shown that workforce diversity is a key component for high performance. Accordingly, in order to have a high performing organization in an increasingly globalized society, diversity in leadership ranks is essential. To that end, we examine diversity at the senior leadership levels to identify barriers to equal opportunity in addition to looking at overall diversity.

The Senior Executive Service (SES) is the Federal Government’s cadre of senior leadership. Since 2010, diversity has increased in the SES ranks at VA. As shown in Figure 8, the representations of White women, Hispanic men, Asian men and women, and American Indian/Alaska Native men and women increased.

Figure 8: SES Onboard Trend (FY 2011 - FY 2015)
(Permanent and Temporary, Exclude Title 38 Equivalents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>54.04%</td>
<td>53.89%</td>
<td>50.14%</td>
<td>47.35%</td>
<td>48.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>27.58%</td>
<td>28.42%</td>
<td>32.31%</td>
<td>32.31%</td>
<td>31.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>5.29%</td>
<td>4.83%</td>
<td>4.46%</td>
<td>5.29%</td>
<td>5.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>5.57%</td>
<td>5.09%</td>
<td>5.01%</td>
<td>5.01%</td>
<td>4.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>3.34%</td>
<td>3.49%</td>
<td>3.62%</td>
<td>4.46%</td>
<td>3.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>1.11%</td>
<td>0.80%</td>
<td>0.84%</td>
<td>1.11%</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>1.11%</td>
<td>1.07%</td>
<td>1.11%</td>
<td>1.67%</td>
<td>1.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.27%</td>
<td>1.11%</td>
<td>1.11%</td>
<td>1.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>0.28%</td>
<td>0.27%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaska Native</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>0.56%</td>
<td>0.27%</td>
<td>0.56%</td>
<td>0.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>0.28%</td>
<td>0.54%</td>
<td>0.56%</td>
<td>0.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>0.56%</td>
<td>0.80%</td>
<td>0.28%</td>
<td>0.28%</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>0.28%</td>
<td>0.27%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.28%</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>65.18%</td>
<td>64.61%</td>
<td>60.17%</td>
<td>59.61%</td>
<td>60.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>34.82%</td>
<td>35.39%</td>
<td>39.83%</td>
<td>40.38%</td>
<td>39.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: VSSC Human Resources (Onboard by Race, ethnicity, and gender). Report received December 21, 2015. Exclude Manilla citizens and medical residents. Include permanent and temporary employees in full time, part time, and intermittent and pay status.
Since President Obama’s first inauguration, the net change in women representation in the overall workforce and SES ranks have been increasing in VA, as shown in Figure 9. From FY 2010 to FY 2015, women in VA’s workforce grew at rate of 21.32 percent and 27.62 percent in SES.

Comparing the demographic makeup of VA’s SES population to the VA’s permanent workforce, the standard baseline metric, nearly all groups have lower than expected representation except for White and Hispanic men. Figure 10 depicts the demographic qualities of VA SES onboard compared to VA’s total permanent workforce in FY 2015. White women are 71 percent of benchmark. Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander men and women have the lowest SES representation at 0.00 percent. Asian women have the second lowest SES representation at 20 percent.

Data Source: VSSC Human Resources (Onboard by Race, ethnicity, and gender). Report received December 21, 2015. Exclude Manilla citizens and medical residents. Include permanent and temporary employees in full time, part time, and intermittent and pay status.
Leadership pipeline grades (GS/GM grades 13 through 15) represent another dimension of leadership diversity. Since 2010, the diversity in the leadership pipeline has improved. Women representation increased 45 percent since President Obama took office in 2009. Figure 11 provides perspectives on diversity in leadership pipeline.

Figure 11: GS/GM 13-15 Onboard Trend (FY 2010 – 2015)
(Permanent and Temporary)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>7,917</td>
<td>39.89%</td>
<td>8,422</td>
<td>39.33%</td>
<td>8,942</td>
<td>38.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>7,186</td>
<td>36.21%</td>
<td>7,794</td>
<td>36.40%</td>
<td>8,383</td>
<td>36.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>959</td>
<td>4.83%</td>
<td>1,067</td>
<td>4.98%</td>
<td>1,221</td>
<td>5.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>1,623</td>
<td>8.18%</td>
<td>1,782</td>
<td>8.32%</td>
<td>1,970</td>
<td>8.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>2.51%</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>2.43%</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>2.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>2.22%</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>2.18%</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>2.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>2.52%</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>2.51%</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>2.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>2.18%</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>2.26%</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>2.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.04%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.04%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.09%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.07%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaska Native</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>0.36%</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>0.34%</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>0.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>0.33%</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>0.34%</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>0.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>0.32%</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>0.38%</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>0.35%</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>0.42%</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>0.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>10,016</td>
<td>50.47%</td>
<td>10,708</td>
<td>50.01%</td>
<td>11,490</td>
<td>49.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>9,831</td>
<td>49.53%</td>
<td>10,704</td>
<td>49.99%</td>
<td>11,597</td>
<td>50.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>19,847</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>21,412</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>23,087</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: VSSC Human Resources (Onboard by Race, ethnicity, and gender). Report received December 21, 2015.
Exclude Manilla citizens and medical residents. Include permanent and temporary employees in full time, part time, and intermittent and pay status.

Veterans
On November 9, 2009, President Obama signed an Executive Order launching the Government-wide Veterans Employment Initiative, designed to increase the number of Veterans in the Federal workforce. The initiative stresses the importance of recruiting and training Veterans and helping them adjust to Government service as civilians. The representation of Veterans and Disabled Veterans in the VA Workforce has steadily increased.

During FY 2015, Veterans grew at a higher rate compared to the overall VA workforce; that is, 4.55 percent to 4.31 percent (see Figure 15). While almost 33 percent of VA employees were Veterans, the representation is still short of the Secretary’s FY 2017 onboard goal of 35 percent. VA currently ranks third among Federal Agencies in the employment of Veterans according to OPM³. VA’s employment of Veterans with service related disabilities increased in FY 2015, relative to FY 2014 levels. Veterans with service-related disabilities make up over 12 percent of

³ OPM's FY 2014 Employment of Veterans in the Federal Executive Branch report cited the Department of Defense as having the highest representation of Veterans (46.9 percent). The Department of Transportation ranked second with 36.4 percent.
the VA workforce. From FY 2014 to FY 2015, the representation of disabled Veterans grew nearly three times faster compared the overall workforce. VA employment of disabled Veterans currently ranks second among Federal Agencies after Department of Defense.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FY 2014</th>
<th>FY 2015</th>
<th>Net Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Employees</td>
<td>347,054</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled Veterans</td>
<td>41,939</td>
<td>12.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Veterans</td>
<td>113,432</td>
<td>32.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Men</td>
<td>82,665</td>
<td>72.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Women</td>
<td>30,767</td>
<td>27.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Male</td>
<td>47,087</td>
<td>41.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Female</td>
<td>15,815</td>
<td>13.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Male</td>
<td>24,467</td>
<td>21.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Female</td>
<td>11,367</td>
<td>10.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic Male</td>
<td>6,884</td>
<td>5.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic Female</td>
<td>1,946</td>
<td>1.72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Male</td>
<td>2,629</td>
<td>2.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Female</td>
<td>824</td>
<td>0.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Male</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>0.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Female</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>0.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaska Native Male</td>
<td>1,180</td>
<td>1.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaska Native Female</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>0.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races Male</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>0.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races Female</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>0.19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: VSSC Human Resources (Onboard by Race, ethnicity, and gender). Report received December 21, 2015. Exclude Manilla citizens and medical residents. Include permanent and temporary employees in full time, part time, and intermittent and pay status.

Individuals with Targeted Disabilities
The employment of individuals with disabilities remains a focus for the nation as well as VA. Employees with reportable disabilities make up nearly 14.34 percent of the VA FY 2015 workforce, up from FY 2014 levels of 13.81 percent. Individuals with targeted disabilities (IWTD), identified by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) for special emphasis (deafness, missing extremities, partial paralysis, total paralysis, epilepsy, severe intellectual disability, psychiatric disability, and dwarfism) were 2.16 percent of the VA workforce, higher than the 2% onboard goal.
Representation of IWTDs as a percentage of total hires in FY 2015 was 3.05 percent, surpassing the Secretary’s 3 percent hiring goal for IWTDs for the second year in a row.

VA’s proportion of IWTD has been steadily increasing since FY 2009. From FY 2014 to FY 2015, the onboard ratio for IWTD grew faster than the VA overall workforce; that is, 7.12 percent net change compared to 4.31 percent for the total workforce, as shown in Figure 14.

**Figure 14: Hires of Individuals with Disabilities (FY 2014 - FY 2015)**
(Permanent and Temporary)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number FY 2014</th>
<th>Number FY 2015</th>
<th>Percent FY 2014</th>
<th>Percent FY 2015</th>
<th>Net Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Workforce</td>
<td>347,054</td>
<td>362,010</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>4.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Disability Reported</td>
<td>289,370</td>
<td>299,344</td>
<td>83.38%</td>
<td>82.69%</td>
<td>3.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reportable Disability</td>
<td>47,921</td>
<td>51,928</td>
<td>13.81%</td>
<td>14.34%</td>
<td>8.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targeted Disability</td>
<td>7,292</td>
<td>7,811</td>
<td>2.10%</td>
<td>2.16%</td>
<td>7.12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: VSSC Employee Cube retrieved in ProClarity December 21, 2015. Exclude Manilla citizens and medical residents. Include permanent and temporary employees in full time, part time, and intermittent and pay status. "Other disability" is employees with disabilities that are not targeted disabilities. "No Disability Reported" includes those absent a disability code.
Office of the Secretary

The Office of the Secretary (OSVA), in FY 2014, created the Office of Accountability Review (OAR) to address Whistleblower related matters. OSVA is also the parent office of the Center for Minority Veterans, the Center for Women Veterans, Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, and the Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication.

The Center for Minority Veterans (CMV) collaborated with minority serving institutions and organizations to provide information on VA benefits, services, and job opportunities. During the course of the year, CMV staff served as a resource to the following minority stakeholder organizations: Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs (MCIA); The United South & Eastern Tribes (USET); Men’s Health Network (MHN); Society for American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE); Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC); Southwest Native American Veterans Association (SWNAVA); National Indian Health Board (NIHB); Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA); Department of Defense on Pacific Partnership in the Pacific Islands; HHS Region 9 Federal Regional Council, Outer Pacific (Islands) Committee; Asian Pacific American Federal Network; Asian Pacific American Heritage Organization (APAHO), Virginia Beach, VA; Filipino-American Friendship Day Committee (FAFD), Virginia Beach, VA; Pacific Islanders American Group of VA - Virginia Beach, VA; League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC); National Council of La Raza; American GI Forum; International Association of Latino Public Administration; National Association of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE); Prince George’s County Community College; Veterans Upward Bound; Prince William County Veterans Council; Veterans Association of Real Estate Professionals; National Association for Black Veterans (NABVETS); Congressional Black Caucus (CBC); Montford Point Marines; Blacks in Government (BIG); National Naval Associations; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); ROCKS Inc., and National Naval Association.

The Office of Small & Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) worked directly with the Veteran Employment Office to hire a highly diverse workgroup.

The Office of General Counsel (OGC) leveraged recruitment strategies to maximize diversity in hiring and participated in the National Diversity Intern Program. OGC also produced training focused on the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act for use within and outside of OGC. Internal learning activities included Diversity and inclusion training and specific topics including LGBT issues, historical and cultural awareness.

Office of Inspector General (OIG) hired more than 90 new employees with the goal of creating an exceptionally qualified, diverse workforce dedicated to helping VA ensure that Veterans and their families receive the care, support, and recognition they have earned through service to our country. To support the need for diversity in thought and perspective, OIG selected employees from other VA organizations and Government agencies, private business, and the military and Veteran community. These different sources add a richness and depth of perspective that contribute positively to the diversity within OIG. Bringing in new employees from different backgrounds, rather than hiring exclusively from within the Inspector General community, has helped to increase the flow of new ideas and contributions to the organization.
Throughout FY 2015, OIG made great strides in hiring women and employees of non-white ethnicities. More than 53 percent of all hires in 2015 were women or employees of non-white ethnicities. Furthermore, women and employees of non-white ethnicities were the recipients of approximately 75 percent of all promotions during FY 2015. Overall, the consistent pursuit of diversity has helped to create an OIG workforce that is comprised of 55 percent minority and female employees. Each of these measures demonstrate OIG’s commitment and realization of diversity in thought and experience that will benefit OIG’s efforts to provide appropriate oversight as required statutorily.

The Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication’s (OEDCA) in collaboration with ODI, ORM, and the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM), and the Administrations shared responsibility for responsiveness and legal compliance with EEO laws and regulations. OEDCA received 1,082 requests for decisions and closed 1,064 cases in FY 2015. OEDCA decision output increased 9.5 percent and case inventory was reduced 47 percent from FY 2014 – 253 as of Sept 30, 2014 to 136 as of Sept. 30, 2015.

**VA Diversity Council**

The VA Diversity Council (VADC) administered the Secretary’s Annual Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Awards Program to recognize individuals and teams for demonstrating excellence in promoting diversity and inclusion in VA.

**Administrations**

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) increase its use of Schedule A hiring authority to hire highly-qualified individuals with disabilities. Overall, VHA appointed 1,192 employees with disabilities using the Schedule A hiring authority equaling 3.8 percent of the total appointments at VHA during the fiscal year. In FY 2015, 197 employees appointed under Schedule A hiring authority were converted to permanent positions; and the employment of individuals with targeted disabilities increased from 2.09 percent in FY 2014 to 2.15 percent in FY 2015. The employment of Veterans with service related disabilities increased from 10.08 percent in FY 2014 to 10.65 percent in FY 2015, representing an increase of 3,274 Veterans with a service related disability in the workforce. VHA’s EEO/AEO continued the practice of sending quarterly reports to Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Directors to include resources for the employment of individuals with targeted disabilities.

In FY 2015 VHA’s workforce became more diversified. Diversity changes during the FY included workforce percentage increases for the following historically excluded groups (HEG): black females; Hispanic males and females; Asian males and females; Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander females; American Indian/ Alaska Native males and females. Increases in workforce diversity and inclusion further demonstrate VHA’s commitment to building a culturally competent workforce.

In FY 2015, VHA employed 70 National Diversity Interns (NDIP); 41 of the interns were funded by VA Central Office central fund and 29 were funded by VHA. The NDIP provides an opportunity for students to obtain work experience at various medical centers throughout the nation. The students completed a broad range of projects that included: marketing and...
communication of employment and education services; working in the Health Administration Service; exploring the impacts of wait time; and telephone access on patient aligned care teams.

The VHA Healthcare Recruitment and Market Office (HRMO) continued to advocate for activities which support the recruitment of a diverse population of applicants. FY 2015 marketing plan activities included a recruitment booth at the National Association of Asian American Professionals (NAAAP) in Dallas, TX on August 6-8, 2015. NAAAP is the premier leadership organization for Asian professionals. VHA also advertised with GoldSea Asian Media Group, delivering a total of 588,235 impressions and reaching up to 17 million U.S. Asian consumers.

The VHA EEO/AEO continued its use of the VHA EEO Quarterly Survey, a proactive tool created to assess the Medical Center EEO Programs on the six essential elements of a comprehensive EEO program as described by the EEO Commission’s MD 715.

VHA continued to deliver Unconscious Bias training to the workforce. VISN 16 developed and implemented the Unconscious Bias Workshop which was presented in a four part series which provided VISN 16 employees with the skills needed to mitigate their biases and improve the services to Veterans.

The VHA EEO/AEO began the process of sharing “Best Practices” across components. The VISN 5 EEO Office incorporated pre-mediations as a fundamental part of the process for all mediations resulting in significant increases in resolutions and settlements at the VISN. This practice was shared with other VHA EEO offices nationwide.

VHA ODI continued collaborating with OPM, and MyCareer@VA, a dedicated resource for VA employment and accessible to the public, to have the VHA Selective Placement Program Coordinators List placed on their respective web sites.

The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) had a diverse workforce totaling 21,870 employees. The representation of White men increased to 31.13 percent (6,809), White women decrease to 26.62 percent (5,821), Black men increased to 12.73 percent (2,783), Black women increased to 17.42 (3,810), Hispanic men remained at 3.02 percent (661), Hispanic women increased to 2.78 percent (697), Asian men increased to 1.57 percent (343), Asian women increased to 1.41 percent (308), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander men remained at 0.21 percent (47), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander women increased to 0.13 percent (28), American Indian/Alaska Native men increased to 1.10 percent (240), American Indian/Alaska Native women decreased to 1.39 percent (305), Two or More Races men remained at 0.21 percent (45), and Two or More Races women remained at 0.29 percent (63).

Additionally, the representation of individuals with targeted disabilities (IWTDs) expressed as a percentage of VBA’s workforce increased from 2.41 percent in FY 2014 to 2.15 percent in FY 2015. IWTDs represent 4.27 percent of VBA’s new hires in FY 2015, exceeding VA’s two percent onboard goal and three percent of hiring goal IWTDs. Employees with reportable disabilities also increased from 21.48 percent in FY 2014 to 22.73 percent in FY 2015.

In FY 2015, VBA’s Veterans on board was 54.0 percent, exceeding VA’s FY 2017 goal to have 35 percent of its workforce comprised of Veterans. Of VBA’s Veteran employees, 34.89 percent were disabled Veterans.
VBA representatives participated in a minimum of eight national or local job fairs. The New York Regional Office (RO) participated in four inner city job fairs where the majority of the attendees were Hispanic, Asian, and White females, all of which are underrepresented groups. The Waco, Texas RO participated in a job fair at Baylor University and three job fairs at Texas State University (San Marcos) which has a 45 percent minority student population that includes a large representation of Hispanic males and females.

VBA sponsored a diverse group of 24 interns through the VBA FY 2015 Summer Internship Program. The total included two Hispanic interns from the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACO) and three Black interns from The Washington Center (TWC). The total cost to sponsor the interns was $22,185 for those from HACU and $31,528 for those from TWC. VBA received funds from the NDIP central fund, managed by VA ODI, to sponsor and additional 19 interns. Two of the interns were placed at the VBA Central Office and the remaining 17 were place at the ROs. VBA’s budget did not allow VBA to sponsor the original WRP and NDIP intern goal for FY 2015.

In FY 2015, VBA ROs participated in a pilot program to transition Service members into VA positions, such as Veterans Service Representatives. The pilot is a joint effort between VA and the Department of Defense’s Warrior Training Advancement Course. Additionally, VBA participated in job fairs targeted to recruit Veterans, including multiple Hiring Our Heroes job fairs. Transition briefings were held on military bases throughout the world to inform Veterans of their VA benefits as well as employment opportunities at VA.

_The National Cemetery Administration (NCA)_ conducted the following activities in FY 2015 in alignment with VA’s Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan.

- The Interim Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs (USMA) focused on opening the lines of communication with NCA employees to foster an environment of transparency and employee engagement. As part of that effort, the Interim USMA established a central email repository where NCA employees could communicate directly with him and his staff to share their issues and concerns.
- The Interim USMA produced brief videos on a monthly basis to share special events and keep employees abreast of initiative occurring at central office and in the field; the first video was disseminated to the workforce in September 2015.
- The Interim USMA disseminated Secretary McDonald’s videos addressing Veterans, ICARE, and his expectation for excellence and the MyVA model to NCA.
- NCA’s leadership participated in the mandatory EEO, Diversity & Inclusion, and Conflict Management training with a 97.12 percent completion rate for FY 2015.
- The role of NCA’s Executive Diversity Council (EDC) continues to be instrumental in the efforts to obtain a diverse and inclusive workforce. The EDC Charter provides NCA National multicultural perspective that values people and the difference they bring to NCA’s high performance workforce; this will help develop a workforce that is reflective of the community it serves.
- NCA conducted applicant flow data analysis in FY 2015 and identified that Hispanics are applying and being hired at a higher rate than any other Historically Excluded Group (HEG).
- In the ongoing efforts to reach all segments of the diverse communities we serve, NCA senior officials, Minority Veterans Program Coordinators and other key employees
participated in over 95 outreach events to provide information on both benefits and employment opportunities.

- NCA employees completed the ICARE training with a 99.12 percent completion rate.
- NCA had a 77 percent response rate, exceeding the 60 percent national goal, in the annual All Employee Survey (AES) that measures overall employee satisfaction, specifically, job satisfaction and civility indexes.
- To educate the workforce on commemorative observances, NCA’s Special Emphasis committee coordinated its first “Soup”er Summit for Women’s History Month. Employees were encouraged to participate in this soup event to celebrate and learn about the many contributions women have made throughout the history our great Nation.
- In FY 2015, NCA continued to exceed federal sector standards for employment of Veterans and disabled Veterans. During this FY, NCA appointed 491 employees, of which, 351 were Veterans representing 71 percent of total selectees.
- NCA experienced a slight increase in Veteran workforce representation from 1,291 in FY 2014, to 1,375 in FY 2015. NCA continues to maintain the highest Veterans workforce employment ratio of any federal organization.
- NCA continues to employ a high number of Veterans with service related disabilities. Over the five-year period from FY 2011 through FY 2015, the representation of disabled Veterans in the NCA workforce increased from 22.75 percent in FY 2011 to 28.73 percent in FY 2015.
- NCA appointed 145 Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)/Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) Veterans. 57 of the appointed veterans were rated 30% or more disabled, and 1 was a Schedule A appointment. Additionally, 80 percent of executive leadership and cemetery directors are Veterans.
- The representation of individuals with targeted disabilities in the NCA workforce continues to increase. Over the past five years representation of IWTDs increased from 1.34 percent in FY 2011 to 3.03 percent in FY 2015, exceeding the federal sector’s goal of 2.67 percent. A majority of NCA’s employees with targeted disabilities are also Veterans.
- As a recruitment strategy to increase leadership diversity, NCA conducted its third annual job information webinars in three days to market NCA’s Cemetery Director Internship Program which historically has contributed to a diverse pool of qualified applicants.
- NCA continues to support VA’s strategy to end Veterans homelessness as well as President Obama’s Veterans Employment Initiative (Executive Order 13518). Fifty two Veterans were hired as part of three cohorts since 2012; 58 percent are still employed by NCA and nine have been promoted beyond their entry level grade of WG-4. NCA plans to expand the program in FY 2016 to include apprenticeships for GS-5 Cemetery Representatives, with targeted recruitment of homeless women Veterans. NCA apprentices are hired using either Schedule A, or non-competitive Veterans hiring authority 30 percent disabled, or the Veterans’ Recruitment Appointment. In FY 2015, 16 caretakers graduated from the Apprenticeship Program.
Assistant Secretaries

The Office of Management (OM) believes strives to build a diverse and inclusive workforce and facilitate outstanding public service through education and accountability. OM takes it seriously to comply with VA’s Directive 5975, Diversity Management and Equal Employment under Executive Order 1358. OM has a senior executive on VA’s Diversity Council. The senior executive participated at the quarterly Diversity Council meetings and led a team for the selection of nominees for the Secretary’s Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Awards. OM employees participated in a day of diversity training sponsored by the Minnesota Federal Executive Board Diversity Council. The event provided training in the areas of cultural awareness, career development and the recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce. OM utilized the 2015 Centralized Workforce Recruitment Program and the Veterans Employment Services Office to build a highly-skilled and diverse workforce. Om also leveraged the Pathways Internship Program to hire college students for multiple positions and has integrated this program into our overall recruitment plan. These alternative hiring programs directly linked OM managers to a highly talented hiring pool and helped create a diverse workforce from all segments of society.

The Office of Information and Technology (OIT) Diversity Management Advisory Council (DMAC) established a workgroup to monitor and assess the implementation of the WHAAPI Fiscal Year 2015 Plan. Utilizing the Schedule A Hiring Authority OIT hired on a new employee to support the DMAC.

The Office of Policy and Planning (OPP) hired a well-qualified diverse group of new employees in FY 2015 dedicated to helping VA ensure that Veterans and their beneficiaries receive the care, support, and recognition they have earned. OPP selected the new hires from a variety of sources, i.e. other VA organizations and government agencies, private sector, the military and Veteran community, and university and colleges.

The Office of Human Resources and Administration (HRA) is the parent organization of the Office of Administration, the Office of Resolution Management, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, and the Office of Labor-Management Relations.

The Office of Resolution Management (ORM) conducted numerous ADR training and awareness programs and maintained a constant complaint resolution rate of 53 percent from FY 2014 to FY 2015. One strategy for maintaining this resolution rate was conducting Conflict Management and ADR Training to all VA employees and to VA’s labor partners.

In June 2015, ORM awarded a contract to conduct Conflict Management and Mediation training. Over the course of twelve months, twenty-two 3-day training sessions will be delivered to promote skills and competency in managing conflict and resolving workplace disputes and EEO complaints. The sessions are designed to provide VA senior executives, supervisors, union officials, and employees with communication, negotiation, and problem solving capabilities to effectively address and prevent from escalating the day to day conflicts that arise in the workplace. In addition to the 3-day sessions, four 1-day sessions will be delivered with labor and management together in one setting. In FY2015, five 3-day sessions were completed and 107 employees trained, and two 1-day sessions were completed with 88 labor and management officials trained 98% of the individuals attending the training rated it as highly effective.

In addition to the Conflict Management and Mediation training, ORM trained 590 employees in ADR Awareness, Basic Mediation Skills, and Communication Skills. ORM provided quarterly
briefings to new employees and supervisors in VA Central Office on ADR and EEO. ORM trained VHA EEO Program Managers on the role of ORM, their responsibilities as EEO program managers, and settlement compliance monitoring. In FY 2015, ORM also conducted 296 hours of training for 393 individuals related to 33 findings of discrimination.

ORM continues to provide tools and resources to senior executives, managers and supervisors, and employees on the EEO complaint and ADR process. In FY 2015, ORM re-issued several publications and educational materials, such as VA’s EEO poster and brochure. ORM updated this information to reflect coverage for allegations of discrimination based on sexual orientation under Title VII and the basis of sex. ORM also updated and re-issued a training DVD on the Root Causes of Workplace Disputes as well as its Executive Leaders Guide on EEO complaints and ADR.

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) has primary responsibility for initiatives related to workforce diversity and organizational inclusion. In FY 2015, ODI accomplished the following pursuant to Goal 1 of the VA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan:

- Completed a follow-up study with expanded data set correlating VA’s Diversity and Inclusion Indices with performance using VBA performance data. Results continue to suggest positive correlation between data points.
- Championed the Secretary’s 3 percent hiring goal for individuals with targeted disabilities and the Secretary’s 2 percent onboard goal resulting in both goals being exceeded in FY 2015. Conducted six national outreach events in collaboration with our affinity group partners to build a diverse and inclusive workforce.
- Spearheaded the creation of a new cabinet level Diversity in Government Council launched in May 2015.
- Assisted the Office of General Counsel (OGC) with the development of OGC’s first Diversity and Inclusion Strategic plan.
- Developed a system component to produce MD 715 applicant flow data tables in collaboration with OPM’s USA Staffing team.
- Administered the WRP and sponsored 19 interns.
- In FY 2015, VA funded 135 interns through the NDIP.
- Launching VA’s Student Outreach and Retention (SOAR) Program initiative with Valencia College, an Hispanic-Serving Institution (HIS) in Orlando, FL. On August 25, 2015, the new partnership was inaugurated with a MOU signing ceremony hosted by Valencia College President, Dr. Sanford C. Shugart. The SOAR initiative with Valencia and other Minority Serving Institutions around the country will focus on building a diverse, inclusive, and high performing VA workforce.
- Prepared and submitted the Department’s EEO report and plans to EEOC in accordance with Management Directive 715.
- Produced and published the VA Diversity and Inclusion FY 2014 report documenting the accomplishments and outcomes of implementing the VA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan.
- Hosted MyCareer@VA training events at VA facilities, focusing on learning how to explore opportunities, find a right career path, and sharing the tool with others in their network.
• Trained over 200 EEO Directors and HR Specialists on barrier analysis; trained over 25 EEO and HR specialists on VSSC HR Applications and trigger analysis.

The Office of Labor Management Relations (LMR) has the responsibility to provide guidance and advice to Department managers and specialists seeking clarification of laws, government-wide regulations, case law and VA policy. In addition, LMR develops and facilitates labor relations training, negotiates national collective bargaining agreements, responds to national grievances, and appraises the effectiveness of VA labor-management relations programs throughout the Agency.

In FY 2015, LMR hired several Veterans from multiple appointing sources (i.e., other VA organizations). In order to retain a high-performing office, LMR offered flexible working schedules, telework and ad hoc opportunities to its employees in order to promote a positive work/life balance. LMR timely responded to all requests for accommodations, including reasonable accommodation requests as well as FMLA requests. Additionally, LMR supported special contribution and performance awards for its employees.

The Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (OCLA) hired nine new employees in FY 2015 which maintained an average FTE of 42. In building a high performance workforce, 89 percent of OCLA’s new hires were Veterans and 33 percent were women. OCLA supported the internship program by providing college students the opportunity to observe and participate in work designed to advance legislation to better support Veterans. OCLA had three interns in FY 2015.

The Board of Veterans’ Appeals (BVA) has a long standing tradition of dedicated recruiting efforts with local law schools. The benefits from said have been very advantageous and allowed us to increase the diversity of our workforce and attract upwardly mobile attorneys who are able to see themselves reflected in our senior leadership with regard to attributes such as professional experience, education, and a commitment to federal service. The Board has found great recruitment success through the Veterans Employment Service Office (VESO). Additionally, the Board’s Human Resource Liaison office is in its third year of regular attendance at the Wounded Warrior Regiment, M4Life and Job Fair at the Marine Corps Base in Quantico, VA. The totality of these efforts promote the BVA’s efforts to institutionalize a culture which fully leverages and values our commitment to an inclusive and diverse workplace and also to utilize, effectively, the wide range of talent and skills that Veterans can provide to the workplace.

The Board also utilizes a very structures mentoring program for aspiring managers and new hires to ensure that have the opportunity and means to reach their maximum potential. The program recognizes and capitalizes upon the unique training the staff requires to excel at their work. This program is known as the ‘Leadership Initiative” whose activities focus on improving leadership skills through training, mentoring, and networking. Furthermore, the Board’s Office of Knowledge and Learning Management (OKLM) has an intense training and mentoring regiment for newly hired legal staff. Each newly hired attorney is assigned an experienced attorney as a mentor who assists with training and professional development. The individualized aspect of the Board’s mentoring program allows the Board to embrace and value the contributions of all employees and pursue an inclusive vision of getting staff from diverse backgrounds to join together in the pursuit of a common goal: exceptional service to Veterans and their families.
The Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construction (OALC) actively recruited and hired qualified candidates including disable Veterans through USAJOBS, VESO, and utilizing various appointments, including Veterans Employment Opportunity Appointments (VEOA), for open positions and entry-level employees through the Veteran Affairs Acquisition Academy (VAAA) Intern and Warrior to Workforce programs. These programs support OALC succession planning goals by developing employees through mentoring, on-the-job training, and formal coursework to increase their skills. OALC utilized the Pathways recruitment process and encouraged candidates from universities and colleges that have a diverse population to apply. Once hired, new employees received hands on experience from an experienced, talented, and seasoned acquisition workforce that transfers needed acumen to develop competent and motivated employees. Of the 86 new hires, OALC hired 63 employees into mission critical contract specialist and engineering/architectural positions.

The Office of Construction and facilities management (CFM) is working with NCOD to utilize data gathered from the FY 2015 AES and the FY 2015 FEVS to develop managerial strategies to enhance satisfaction and ultimately improve employee retention. The Office of Acquisition Operations (OAO) participated in an extensive independent review, A-123 Acquisition Assessment, which included the examination of Human Capital practices and challenges. The Office of Acquisition and Logistics (OAL) actively monitored and ensured full participation in meeting VA requirements for mandatory Equal Employment Opportunity training, masterfully recruited and hired qualified candidates, trainees, and interns utilizing a variety of appointing authorities such as the Merit Promotion and Delegating Examining Unit procedures, 30 percent or more disabled Veterans, VEOA, VRA, and Schedule A appointing authorities.

The Office of Operations, Security, and Preparedness abides by all federal laws and regulations and department-wide policies. To that end, the Assistant Secretary ensures our supervisors complete Supervisory Training, when it’s offered. They also complete Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) Training and EEO, Diversity and Conflict Management training. We recruit using VA for Vets, Pathways, Workforce Recruitment Program, and Merit Promotion. He office scored higher on the VA’s All Employee Survey in the category of High-Performing Workplace (4.09 on a 5.0 scale), which measures employee perceptions of workplace performance, civility, and psychological safety. Additionally, the Assistant Secretary participated in several Vietnam memorial celebrations throughout the year.
Goal 2: “Cultivate a flexible, collaborative, and inclusive work environment that leverages diversity and empowers all contributors.”

Complementing the VA Diversity Index featured in Goal 1, we set out to develop an Inclusion Index that would focus on the enablers of diversity, such as individual empowerment and engagement. We defined inclusion as the extent to which organizations leverage its workforce diversity and empower all voices to be heard. VA’s National Center for Organization Development (NCOD) developed a Civility Index that measured civility in the workplace based on select items in VA’s All Employee Survey. Also, OPM had reported an Engagement Index based on responses to its Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS). Both metrics relied on employee surveys as the most appropriate vehicle for identifying perceptions of inclusiveness, but neither metric measured organizational inclusion as defined by the emerging literature in this area.

After several months of preliminary analysis and then determining the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey should serve as basis for a government-wide Inclusion Index, ODI assembled a team of subject matter experts including ODI, OPM, and NCOD representatives. The team reviewed NCOD’s factor analysis of the 2011 FEVS results and examined the identified factors through the lens of inclusion related content. The team relied heavily on Shore’s analysis of inclusion-related research published in the Journal of Management in 2010 (Inclusion and Diversity in Work Groups; A Review and Model for Future Research), and Nishii’s research on The Benefits of Climate for Inclusion for Diverse Groups (unpublished paper, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, 2010). The latter study identified three primary dimensions of inclusion: fairness of employment practices; integration of differences; and inclusion in decision-making. The team also identified additional dimensions of workplace inclusion referenced in the following publications: Measuring Diversity Practice and Developing Inclusion, by Kurt April and Eddie Blass; M. E Mor Barak and D. A. Cherin’s, A tool to expand organizational understanding of workforce diversity: Exploring a measure of inclusion-exclusion published by Administration in Social Work; Organizational and personal dimensions in diversity climate: Ethnic and gender differences in employee diversity perceptions, published by the Journal of Applied Behavioral Sciences; and the report from the 1998 Netter Seminar, The Netter Principles.

The 78 FEVS items were then mapped to five proposed dimensions of inclusion based on content validity. A second factor analysis was performed to identify the survey items that best reflected the proposed dimensions of inclusion. Items that cross-loaded on multiple factors were placed in a separate dimension that best reflected their inclusion-related content. Where items did not map to any one of the dimensions but appeared to reflect a defined dimension, the items were assigned to the appropriate dimension based on team consensus. Due to disparate scales associated with some of the questions, 11 FEVS items were excluded. This process ultimately yielded 20 survey items that corresponded to six final dimensions of inclusion:
These six dimensions and the associated 20 FEVS items serve as the basis for the Inclusion Index. The algorithm for the Inclusion Index is a simple mean percentage of favorable responses (agree or strongly agree on a five point Likert scale) by all respondents on the selected inclusion survey items, weighted as appropriate based on sampling data. The values of the responses were adjusted depending on whether the item was worded positively or negatively. This method provides all Federal Government with a common benchmark for measuring perceptions of workplace inclusion. Figure 15 provides the new IQ Index trend for VA as published in OPM’s FY 2015 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey Results Government wide Management Report.

Figure 15: New IQ Index Trends (FY 2010 - FY 2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>54.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>57.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>57.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>55.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>53.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>53.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: FY 2015 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey Results
Virtually all the studies we examined used employee surveys as the instrument for measuring organizational inclusion. This approach permits a more expansive interpretation of diversity, to include the extent to which organizations value diversity of thought. As such, the Inclusion Index complements the narrower parameters of diversity used in the Diversity Index. Together, these Indices cover the range of diversity from its EEO foundation to the broader concept of full inclusion.

ODI continues to examine ways to factor in other behavioral indicators of inclusion, such as attrition rates, per capital EEO complaints/workplace grievances, alternative dispute resolution usage, and others. However in the interim, this method provides Federal Government with a common benchmark for measuring perceptions of workplace inclusion. These indices represent a groundbreaking step toward simplifying the measurement of workforce diversity and workplace inclusion, and increasing awareness of these important concepts in the public sector. They are not intended to supplant existing metrics that disaggregate data; rather, they serve as efficient snapshots for leadership to quickly assess progress and lead change. VA is proud to be in the vanguard of promoting diversity and inclusion to drive greater performance in the public sector.

The development of VA’s Diversity Index and Inclusion Index sets the stage for the third prong of the paradigm: organizational performance. ODI is in the early stage of conducting a correlation study with VA performance data.

In FY 2013, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) used VA’s Inclusion Index framework as the basis in developing the Inclusion Quotient (IQ) Index with some minor differences. OPM reduced the six dimensions of inclusion down to five and re-categorized the cadre of questions to fit the new categories. OPM’s five dimensions are:

- Fair
- Open
- Cooperative
- Supportive
- Empowered

![Figure 16: VA's IQ Component Score vs. Government Average (FY 2015)](source: FY 2015 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey Results)
While this approach differs from VA, the IQ Index provides Federal average as well as the ability to do cross-agency comparison. Figure 16 provides VA’s FY 2014 IQ scores by component compared to the government average.

**Workplace Flexibility**

A flexible work environment refers to how work gets done—when one works, where one works, and how one works. Examples of workplace flexibilities include telework and alternative work schedules. The progress of realizing a truly flexible work environment in the Federal Government had been incremental until FY 2010.

The spirit of workplace flexibility began in the Federal Government with the passing of the Federal Employees Flexible and Compressed Work Schedules Act of 1982. This revolutionized the Federal workplace—employees, for the first time, have more control of their working hours than ever before. This act was the first definitive milestone for the quest for workplace flexibility in the Federal Government and paved the road for telework.

The principle of telework has existed in the Federal Government for many years under different headings including “work at home,” “flexible work,” and “telecommuting.” The official inception of telework into the legislative framework occurred in 2000 with Public Law 106-346. This law ultimately planted the inevitable seed-of-change in the Federal workplace.

The significant milestone for telework in the Federal Government occurred with the passing of the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 (the Act). The Act specified roles, responsibilities and expectations for all Federal executive agencies with regard to telework policies, employee eligibility and participation, program implementation, and reporting. The Act further established baseline expectations for the Federal telework program and agencies. In VA, the Act motivated agency-wide reassessment of telework eligibility and improved data collection.

FY 2015 marks the fourth year VA operated under the passing of the Act. Analysis of telework participation data reveals increased telework adoption rate throughout VA compared to last year. Referring to Figure 17 approximately seven percent of the VA workforce teleworked during FY 2015. VBA experienced the largest increase in telework participation. NCA experienced a marginal decrease in telework participation.
Despite the increasing trend in telework participation, VA continues to trail the Federal Government average in telework participation. VA’s low telework participation is due to VA’s mission focus requiring a significant portion of the workforce to be physically present on a daily basis in order to support critical systems, processes, and services. This is especially true for VHA, with over 85 percent of its workforce ineligible for telework, shown in Figure 18.

**Source:** FY 2015 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey Results

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**Figure 18: Positions Suitable for Telework (FY 2014 - FY 2015)**

(Permanent and Temporary)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Staff Offices</th>
<th>VBA</th>
<th>NCA</th>
<th>VHA</th>
<th>VA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Position not suitable for telework</td>
<td>FY 2014 31.91%</td>
<td>45.74%</td>
<td>76.41%</td>
<td>90.29%</td>
<td>85.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FY 2015 30.80%</td>
<td>39.30%</td>
<td>70.07%</td>
<td>88.01%</td>
<td>82.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position suitable and employee eligible for telework</td>
<td>FY 2014 15.88%</td>
<td>37.39%</td>
<td>4.83%</td>
<td>3.58%</td>
<td>6.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FY 2015 15.22%</td>
<td>30.67%</td>
<td>4.75%</td>
<td>3.10%</td>
<td>5.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position suitable and employee ineligible for telework</td>
<td>FY 2014 1.55%</td>
<td>5.51%</td>
<td>0.06%</td>
<td>0.51%</td>
<td>0.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FY 2015 1.47%</td>
<td>5.40%</td>
<td>0.16%</td>
<td>0.49%</td>
<td>0.82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data Source: ProClarity data retrieved February 5, 2016. Exclude virtual employees. Include permanent and temporary employees in full-time, part-time and intermittent and pay status*
During FY 2015 the number of employees in VBA, who telework 6 or more days per pay period, increased by more than six times the number reported in FY 2014.

Flexibility: The Employee’s Perspective
Satisfaction drives employee engagement and ultimately leads to better performance and retention. Investing in the workforce and paying attention to employee viewpoints isn’t about happiness, it is about building a more effective organization and delivering better services to our Nation’s Veterans. To better understand workplace flexibility from the employee’s perspective, we examine selected questions from the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS).

VA’s employees reported higher telework participation in FY 2015 (29,461). When asked to describe the employee’s current teleworking situation, over 10 percent of 29,461 respondents in FY 2015 indicated they participate in regular telework, up from 8.28 percent in FY 2014 (see Figure 20). A little over 10 percent of respondents indicated that they chose not to telework. The percent of respondents indicating that they cannot obtain their supervisor’s approval for telework even though the job is suitable decreased slightly from last year. The percent of employees who reported they were unable to telework because of technical issues decreased from 1.22 in FY 2-14 to 3.92 percent in FY 2015.
For a fourth year in a row, VA employees reported greater satisfaction with telework. When asked “How satisfied are you with telework?” almost 72 percent responded favorably (sum of very satisfied and satisfied), up from 66.27 percent in FY 2014 (see Figure 21).

**Figure 21: Results of Survey Item 73 (FY 2011 - FY 2015)**
(Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey)
Another measure of workplace flexibility is the availability and the opportunity to use Alternative Work Schedules (AWS). Employees are more satisfied with AWS compared to telework. Nearly 80 percent answered favorably when asked about AWS satisfaction shown in Figure 22. Employees’ satisfaction with the AWS program remained relatively the same since last year.

Figure 22: Satisfaction with Alternative Work Schedules (FY 2011 - FY 2015)
(Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Favorable Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>82.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>79.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>79.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>79.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>79.68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Employee Engagement

Increasingly, organizations are leveraging the emergent concept of employee engagement to measure the degree to which employees feel passionate about their jobs and their commitment to their organizations. An “engaged” VA employee is passionate, energetic, and dedicated to their job and organization, which leads to optimum organizational performance in serving our Nation’s Veterans.

Employee engagement is typically measured using an employee engagement survey. The Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) includes 15 items that measure the conditions likely to lead to employee engagement. OPM derived from these items the Employee Engagement Index, an overarching model comprised of three subfactors:

- Leaders Lead: Reflects the employees’ perceptions of the integrity of leadership, as well as leadership behaviors such as communication and workforce motivation.
• Supervisors: Reflects the interpersonal relationship between worker and supervisor, including trust, respect, and support. Intrinsic Work Experiences: Reflects the employees’ feelings of motivation and competency relating to their role in the workplace.

The Federal Government Employee Engagement Index score decreased 3 percentage points since FY 2011. VA’s score remains consistently below the government trend (see Figure 23).

**Figure 23: Employee Engagement Index (FY 2011 - FY 2015)**
(Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey)

When disaggregating the Engagement Index into its subfactors, we find VA’s subcomponent scores remain largely at or below the Federal average, refer to Figure 24.

**Figure 24: Employee Engagement Index Subfactors (FY 2011 - FY 2015)**
(Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leaders Lead</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Government</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supervisors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Government</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intrinsic Work Experiences</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Government</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: FY 2015 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey Results*
Having a diverse workforce is not enough to ensure optimum individual and organizational performance. For that reason, the first goal of VA’s Strategic Plan for Diversity and Inclusion aims for a “diverse, results-oriented, high-performing workforce,” the key to which—as identified in the Human Capital Assessment and Accountability Framework (HCAAF)—is a performance management system that differentiates between high and low levels of performance and links individual/team/unit performance to organizational goals and desired results effectively.

The HCAAF provides a comprehensive representation of human capital management in the Federal Government consisting of five human capital systems: Strategic Alignment, Leadership and Knowledge Management, Results-Oriented Performance Culture, Talent Management, and Accountability. The HCAAF is comprised of four indices derived from 39 items from the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey:

- Leadership and Knowledge Management
- Results-Oriented Performance Culture
- Talent Management
- Job Satisfaction

Since FY 2011, VA’s scores in all four HCAAF indices remained largely the same with marginal increases in FY 2015. The detail trend scores by HCAAF factor for VA is provided in Figure 25.

![Figure 25: HCAAF Factors (FY 2011 - FY 2014)
(Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey)](http://www.fedview.opm.gov/2015/Ranking/)

As described in the HCAAF, a results-oriented performance culture system consists of the following critical success factors that work together to create a diverse, results-oriented, high performance workforce. Diversity Management makes up one of the factors.

- Communication: The agency has a process for sharing information and ideas about the organization with all employees. This vital process includes eliciting employee feedback and involvement so that all employees play an appropriate role in planning and executing the mission.
• Performance Appraisal: The agency has a process under which performance is reviewed and evaluated.
• Awards: The organization takes actions to recognize and reward individual or team achievement that contributes to meeting organizational goals or improving the efficiency, effectiveness, and economy of the Government. Such awards include, but are not limited to: employee incentives which are based on predetermined criteria, rating-based awards, or awards based on a special act or service.

• Pay for Performance: The agency uses pay-for-performance systems, where authorized by law and regulation, to link salary levels and adjustments to an individual’s overall performance and contribution to the agency’s mission. Employees receive base salary adjustments within their assigned bands.
• Diversity Management: The agency maintains an environment characterized by inclusiveness of individual differences and responsiveness to the needs of diverse groups of employees.
• Labor/Management Relations: The organization promotes cooperation among employees, unions, and managers. This cooperation enhances effectiveness and efficiency, cuts down the number of employee-related disputes, and improves working conditions, all of which contribute to improved performance and results.

The Results-Oriented Performance Culture Index is made up of 13 survey items from the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey and encompasses diversity related measures. The resulting index score is the average of favorable responses from the selected items. Since 2011, the scores for VA have remained relatively consistent with the Federal average as shown in Figure 26.
Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities

Individuals with disabilities represent an important aspect of VA’s workforce. Aside from the legal imperative, providing reasonable accommodations (RA) for applicants and employees with disabilities is an essential strategy to promoting full inclusion in the 21st century VA. Accommodations may be needed for an individual to (1) apply for a job; (2) perform the essential functions of a job; and (3) enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment.

There is a number of possible RA that an employer may have to provide in connection with modifications to the work environment or adjustments in how and when a job is performed. These include but are not limited to:

- making existing facilities accessible;
- job restructuring;
- part-time or modified work schedules;
- acquiring or modifying equipment;
- changing tests, training materials, or policies;
- providing qualified readers or interpreters; and
- non-competitive reassignment to a vacant position.

Figure 26: Results-Oriented Performance Culture Index
(Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal Government</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey Results June 12, 2015
The Human Capital Investment Plan established a centralized fund to reimburse offices and facilities for the cost of providing accommodations to applicants and employees with disabilities. This strategy not only reduces the budgetary burden of first line supervisors and managers but also complements the existing resources provided by the Department of Defense’s Computer/Electronic Accommodation Program. Since its creation in April, 2010, the centralized fund has funded over 2,500 accommodations ranging from sign-language interpreter services to mobility scooters, among others. In FY 2015, VA provided 238 centrally funded RA (see Figure 27).

**Figure 27: Number of Centrally Funded RA (FY 2010 - 2015)**

[Figure showing bar graph with Accommodations from FY 2010 to FY 2015.]

Source: Reasonable Accommodations Compliance System

Similarly, the amount dispersed from the RA fund also increased. Shown in Figure 28, approximately $274,133 was reimbursed from the centralized fund in FY 2015. Since its inception, the centralized fund has funded more than $1.5 million. The average cost per RA has increased to over $1,000 in FY 2015.
Figure 28: Reasonable Accommodations Reimbursements

Source: Reasonable Accommodations Compliance System
EEO Complaints
Another measure of organizational inclusion focuses on EEO complaint activity. From FY 2010 through FY 2015, the number of EEO formal complaints ranged from a high of 2,397 to a low of 2,047, with an average of 2,245 informal complaints per year. From FY 2013 to FY 2015, the per capita filing rate at the informal stage increased from 1.26 to 1.43 percent (slightly higher than the government wide average of 1.10 percent); and the formal filing rate increased to 0.66 percent (still higher than the government wide average of 0.51 percent).

Figure 29: Complaint Activity Trend

The most frequently cited bases in EEO complaints in FY 2015 are reprisal, race, disability, and sex in order of frequency (see Figure 30).
From FY 2011 to FY 2015, the top three specified issues cited in EEO complaints were non-sexual harassment, promotion/non-selection, and disciplinary action in that order.
Figure 31: EEO Complaint by Issue Trend

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harassment (Non-Sexual)</td>
<td>1,019</td>
<td>1,111</td>
<td>984</td>
<td>1,078</td>
<td>1,312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion/Non-Selection</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disciplinary Action</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasonable Accommodation</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Appraisal</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time and Attendance</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Termination</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment of Duties</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay (Including Overtime)</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reassignment</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassment (Sexual)</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointment/Hire</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duty Hours</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms/Condition of Employment</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awards</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Examination</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversion to Full-time</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examination/Test</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reinstatement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: Office of Resolution Management

Alternative Dispute Resolution

The use of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) to address workplace disputes has risen dramatically in VA over the last several years. In FY 2015, the percentage of EEO informal complaints electing was 59 percent; 4 percent higher than FY 2015 and higher than VA’s target of 53 percent and 8 percent higher than the government-wide average of 51 percent. ORM’s ADR Program has had an extremely positive impact on the efficiency of VA’s EEO Program nation-wide. VA reached an important milestone in this area in FY 2011 when Department-wide policy was established to offer ADR in every EEO complaint.
The ADR offer rate represents the percentage of informal EEO complaints in which VA offers the aggrieved person an opportunity to participate in ADR versus traditional counseling. The ADR election rate represents the percentage of informal EEO complaints in which both VA and the aggrieved person agree to participate in ADR.

As shown in Figure 33, ADR is used for both EEO and non-EEO disputes with very positive results.

### Figure 32: ADR in the EEO Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contacts</td>
<td>4,329</td>
<td>4,479</td>
<td>4,221</td>
<td>4,626</td>
<td>5,052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offers[1]</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation[2]</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: Office of Resolution Management

### Figure 33: ADR Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>2,229</td>
<td>2,495</td>
<td>2,440</td>
<td>2,508</td>
<td>2,966</td>
<td>1,561</td>
<td>1,763</td>
<td>1,858</td>
<td>1,727</td>
<td>1,530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolved</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: Office of Resolution Management

### Promotions

An inclusive environment offers equal upward mobility opportunities to all qualified employees. Comparing the demographic characteristics of the overall workforce with the demographic characteristics of employees who were promoted highlights some areas of concern. The analysis presented here utilizes a moving average of onboard representation calculation. This metric is the average of the beginning onboard count and ending count of the fiscal year. This widely recognized standard in human capital planning reduces the skewing effects of data from one point in time. This technique, however, has limitations particularly for groups with low representation on board and in the RCLF, such as Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander.

Analysis of promotion data presents additional challenges for VA, as medical occupations often have an education requirement. Therefore, the ratio of promotions for Title 38 medical occupations, compared to on board ratios is significantly smaller than in the GS/GM pay plan. This caveat necessitates the separate evaluation of promotion by GS/GM, Title 38, and Wage and Canteen pay plans.
The GS/GM pay plan makes up the largest proportion of the VA FY 2015 workforce, at about 63 percent. At the same time, 80 percent of VA promotions were in the GS/GM occupations. When compared to the GS/GM average promotion rate of 13.32 percent, White AND Hispanic women, and Asian men and women have less than expected promotions (see Figure 34).

Figure 34: GS/GM Promotions (FY 2015)

Title 38 positions make up about 28 percent of VA’s workforce. Among all promotions of VA employees in FY 2015, about 11 percent occurred in the Title 38 occupations. The promotion trend for this pay plan highlights lower than expected promotion rates for White men, Black men, Hispanic men, Asian men and women, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander men, and American Indian/Alaska Native men when compared with the Title 38 average promotion rate of 4.21 percent, as shown in Figure 35.

Data Source: Nature of Action Data Cube retrieved on February 22, 2016. Include paid Title 38 permanent and temporary employees in full-time, part-time, and intermittent status. Promotion rate calculated by dividing promotions by onboard count as of October 1, 2014.
The Wage and Canteen pay plans make up about 9 percent of the VA workforce and about 9 percent of the total promotions occurred in the Wage and Canteen pay plans. Lower than expected promotion rates are apparent for Black men and women, Hispanic men, Asian men and women, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and American Indian/Native Alaska men, and individuals with targeted disabilities, compared with the Wage and Canteen average promotion rate of 9.54 percent, (see Figure 36).

**Figure 36: Wage and Canteen Promotions (FY 2015)**

![Figure 36: Wage and Canteen Promotions (FY 2015)](image)

Data Source: Nature of Action Data Cube retrieved on February 22, 2016. Include paid Wage grade permanent and temporary employees in full-time, part-time, and intermittent status. Promotion rate calculated by dividing promotions by onboard count as of October 1, 2014

Separations

An indicator of inclusion involves the analysis of the demographic characteristics of employees who leave VA, voluntarily or involuntarily. Similar to the promotion dimension, we calculate the separation rates by dividing the total separations of each demographic by the average onboard count at the beginning and at the end of the fiscal year.

Voluntary separations include employees leaving VA for another agency, retirement, death, or private sector jobs. In FY 2015, White men, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander men, American Indian/Alaska Native men, Two or More Races men and women, and individuals with targeted disabilities left VA at rates higher than the average voluntary separation rate of 9.17 percent (see Figure 37).
Additional insights can be derived from examining involuntary separation data. Involuntary separations are agency driven actions to remove an employee from the workforce. In FY 2015, the average involuntary separation rate was 1.31 percent. Black men, Two or More Races men and women, individuals with targeted disabilities, and Disabled Veterans experienced higher than average involuntary separations as illustrated in Figure 38.
Inclusive organizations routinely review policies, procedures, and processes to identify and remove visible and invisible barriers to full participation. In FY 2015, VA Learning University (VALU) and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) partnered to facilitate MyCareer@VA Day events VA Records Management Center (St. Louis), Chicago Regional Benefit Office, North Florida/South Georgia Healthcare System (Gainesville, FL), and the John D. Dingell VA Medical Center (Detroit). The MyCareer@VA Day events were in-person career development workshops designed to improve VA employees’ understanding of career development principles and resources in order to improve their engagement and career mobility. These events were designed to support President Obama’s goal of engaging a higher performing diverse Federal workforce by creating programs aimed to address career progression barriers and bottle necks experienced by individuals of diverse groups and IWTD in WG positions and at GS grades 9 and below.

The MyCareer@VA Day workshops consisted of the following events:
• Information Booth - During the first half of the day, a MyCareer@VA team member was available to answer questions regarding the MyCareer@VA Day, the MyCareer@VA program, and career development, and to encourage attendance in the computer lab and at the presentations.

• Computer Lab. Throughout the day, a MyCareer@VA team member was available to assist with navigation of the tools and resources, answer questions regarding MyCareer@VA and career development, and provide one-on-one support as employees created Career Hub accounts and familiarized themselves with the Web site.

• Introduction to MyCareer@VA for Employees - This 60-minute session introduced the tools and resources of MyCareer@VA and how to leverage MyCareer@VA to support career development. Specifically, the session identified ways MyCareer@VA can support employees as they develop and pursue a career at VA; highlighted what career development is and the importance of engaging in career development; and explored how MyCareer@VA’s hands-on tools and resources can help uncover career possibilities at VA.

• MyCareer@VA for Supervisors and Mentors - This 60-minute session introduced how to navigate the tools and resources of MyCareer@VA and how to leverage MyCareer@VA to support employees’ career development from a supervisory or mentor capacity, as well as their own personal career development. This session provided an introduction to how MyCareer@VA’s innovative tools support career development and can help supervisors and mentors empower their employees to take charge of their professional future.

• MyCareer@VA Career Development Activities Workbook - The workbook serves as a non-virtual complement to the MyCareer@VA Web site. The workbook provides detailed and guided instruction on the career development process better tailored to target the audience’s needs, and included an introduction to career development and why it is important for VA employees.

The 2015 MyCareer@VA Day events directly informed 386 VA employees about the MyCareer@VA program through the employees' participation in at least one of the MyCareer@VA Day activities. Additionally, 8,149 VA employees across all four facilities indirectly learned about MyCareer@VA as a result of information on MyCareer@VA distributed through the facility-wide marketing and communications.
Office of the Secretary

The Office of the Secretary (OSVA) is the parent office of the Center for Minority Veterans, the Center for Women Veterans, and Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication.

The Center for Minority Veterans (CMV) conducted targeted outreach throughout the year to minority stakeholder organizations. These activities provided minority Veterans and their family members information about VA benefits, services, and employment opportunities. During FY 2015, CMV staff members conducted the following targeted outreach activities:

- Participated in 91 stakeholder meetings.
- Established 27 new collaborative partnerships.
- Served on 11 VA Central Office (VACO) workgroups.
- Conducted 23 targeted outreach events outside the Washington area through collaboration with Minority Veterans Program Coordinators (MVPCs), resulting in local communities.
- Conducted 9 virtual town hall meetings with minority Veterans.

CMV utilized the Minority Veterans Program Coordinators (MVPCs) in the three VA Administrations (VHA, VBA, NCA) to increase local awareness of minority Veteran related issues and to develop strategies for increasing their participation in existing VA benefits programs for eligible Veterans. There are approximately 276 MVPCs VA wide located in each VA medical center, regional office, and national cemetery. During FY 2015, the MVPCs conducted more than 11,075 outreach activities, which contacted approximately 852,322 individuals, of which 43 percent were minority stakeholders.

The CMV provided administrative support to the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans (ACMV). The ACMV was established by the Secretary under Public Law 103-446-Sec 510, § 544. Since its creation in 1994, the ACMV has advised the Department of current and future needs of minority Veterans through its interactive role during its site visits by conducting town hall meetings to obtain and address the concerns of minority Veterans. During 2015, the ACMV conducted two meetings which included a meeting at VA Central Office, and a site visit to Seattle Washington. The Seattle site visit included tours of three VA local facilities, and a Veterans’ town hall meeting. Subsequent to the meeting, the ACMV submitted its annual report to the Department which included recommendations to enhance the provision of benefits and services to minority Veterans.

The Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication (OEDCA) work/life balance for staff attorneys has improved since promoting the increase of telework opportunities to promote and support flexible work schedules.
Office of Inspector General (OIG) strives to provide a flexible, inclusive work environment where employees can comfortably communicate thoughts, ideas, suggestions, and concerns. Several different programs continue to help foster OIG’s atmosphere of constructive communication. OIG Advisory Council helps to identify and bring to light employee issues and concerns, as well as recommendations for improvement. This program allows each employee to have their voice heard by senior management via an advisory council member. The Advisory Council has taken on many issues that have resulted in higher efficiency and improved morale. The second program OIG uses to promote communication is the Ombudsman Program. This program offers employees an informal option to resolve concerns and issues through a neutral, confidential representative. The third program OIG uses to promote employee involvement is the Employee Suggestion Program. This program gives employees the opportunity to submit a specific, original idea or new application of an old idea that will contribute to the efficiency, productivity, effectiveness, or economy of OIG policies, programs, or missions.

The Office of Small & Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) conducted several public educational and training events to increase the economic well-being of our nation’s Veterans by providing them access to procurement decision makers.

VA Diversity Council
The VA Diversity Council (VADC) was updated on the activities of the Emerging Issues in Diversity and Inclusion Committee, National Center for Organization Development (NCOD) analysis of the FY 2014 All Employee Survey (AES) scores. The AES helps management and the rank-and-file to better understand workforce perceptions of organizational strengths and opportunities for improvement (e.g. workforce satisfaction and organizational climate), as well as inform effective and data-driven action planning. The AES is administered annually by the VHA National Center for Organization Development (NCOD).

Administrations
The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) ODI continues to monitor and measure its accomplishments towards its goals outlined in the VHA National Leadership Board Workforce Committee, and the VHA D&I Subcommittee (VHA D & I SC) Strategic Plan (FY 2014 – FY 2019), which is aligned with VA’s Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan (FY 2014 – FY 2020).

The VHA D & I SC had a face-to-face meeting in FY 2015 where strategies were developed and approved by the National Leadership Council. Strategies included creating a (Respect, Education, Awareness, Collaboration, and Honesty (REACH) Video. Three definitive strategies were: 1. Disseminate a draft inclusion definition; 2. Create an Inclusion questionnaire for the VHA ODI committee members; and 3. Development of inclusion training and implementation of a multi-faceted cultural competence excellence program with a recognition component.

The Office of Health Equity (OHE) supported the Office of Research and Development effort to increase the representation of scientists of historically underrepresented protected groups participating in VA research.

The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) applicant pool for the VBA leadership development programs increased in FY 2015. The VBA leadership development program applicant pool
experienced and increase for all historically underrepresented groups. VBA cultivates leaders in the workplace and fosters a diverse and inclusive work environment through its training and educational programs as demonstrated below.

- Supervisory Management Training had a total of 289 candidates, comprised of 39 Black males, 41 Black women, 7 Hispanic men, 8 Hispanic women, 5 Asian men, 6 Asian women, 71 White men, and 112 White women.
- Advanced Management Training had a total of 17 candidates that included 2 Black men, 4 Black women, 1 Asian male, 4 White men, and 5 White women.
- The Leadership Enhancement and Development Program had a total of 35 candidates that included three Black men, three Black women, one Hispanic male, one Hispanic female, two Asian men, four Asian women, 12 White men, and 14 White women.
- The Leadership Enrichment Program had a total of 35 candidates that included 5 Black men, 1 Black female, 2 Hispanic men, one Asian female, 11 White men, and 15 White women.
- The Assistant Director Development Program had a total of 8 candidates that included 3 Black men, 1 Hispanic female, 2 White men, and 2 White women.
- The Executive Leadership Coaching Program had a total of 21 candidates that included three Black men, 4 Black females, 9 White men, and 5 White women.
- The Leadership Coaching Program had a total of 21 candidates that included three Black men, four Black women, 9 White men, and 5 White women.
- The Emerging Leaders Program (Central Area) had a total of 15 candidates that included 2 Hispanic men, 4 Black women, 2 White men, and 7 White women.

In FY 2015, VBA’s ADR participation rate was 55 percent, a decrease from 59 percent in FY 2014, and the resolution rate for informal EEO complaints was 51 percent, a decrease from 53.2 percent in FY 2014, and still exceeding the corresponding metric goals. Several ROs far exceeded VBA’s overall measures: the St Paul RO had a participation rate of 80 percent and resolution rate of 75 percent while the Houston RO had a participation rate of 83 percent and a resolution rate of 60 percent. VBA’s total cost avoidance though the use of ADR was approximately $450 thousand in FY 2015. The St Louis RO had the highest cost avoidance of approximately $180 thousand in FY 2015.

In FY 2015, VBA Local Reasonable Accommodation Coordinators (LRACs) manually recorded compliance with timelines for each RA request because the capability had not been fully automated into VA’s Reasonable Accommodation Tracking System. Based on the manual tracking, VBA LRACs processed 91 percent of the requests in accordance with established timeframes. VBA has a LRAC at each RO and Central Office to provide guidance and process reasonable accommodation requests. In addition, VBA has its own RA Coordinator who has oversight for VBA’s RA Program and LRACs.
The National Cemetery Administration (NCA) continued to coordinate and provide various training to both management and employees. Training included topics e.g., Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Reasonable Accommodations to include webcast of Talking with Lawyers, Civility, Respect, and Professionalism in the Workplace, Team building exercise, Communications and Building Trust. Managers and supervisors continue to support the Reasonable Accommodation Program. During this FY, NCA provided over 45 requests for accommodations.

Assistant Secretaries

The Office of Information and Technology (OIT) response rate to VA’s All Employee Survey increased significantly in FY 2015. OIT’s response rate was 53.4 percent (4,325 respondents) in FY 2015 versus 32.3 percent (2,754 respondents) in FY 2014. The DMAC identified the lack of clarity on the Employee Exit Survey. There now has been a lot of attention on the matter and the policy is under revision: VA Directive 5004 – Employee Entrance and Exit Survey.

The Office of Human Resources and Administration (HRA) is the parent office of the Office of Administration, the Office of Resolution Management (ORM), the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, and the Office of Labor Management Relations. In FY 2015, HRA establish the Anti-Harassment Office within ORM to proactively address allegations of harassment and hostile work environment before they become formal EEO complaints. HRA established new procedures to increase management accountability when findings of discrimination are issued.

The Office of Administration (OA) strives to handle any workplace barriers in the most expeditious manner in order improve the collaboration amongst peers. LMR leadership encourages participation in all diversity events in the VA, including Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, Black History Month, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s Birthday, Disability Employment Awareness Month, Disability Employment Mentoring Day, Hispanic History Month, Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week, National American Indian Heritage Month, Women’s Equality Day and Women’s History Month.

Additionally, LMR leadership encourages additional training outside the annual training requirements, as training and personal development leads to a more effective and efficient workforce. Finally, LMR analyzes and addresses the results of the All Employee Survey completed each year, ensuring corrective actions are in place.

The Office of Resolution Management (ORM) achieved the following in FY 2015:

- Stood up an Anti-Harassment Office in December 2014 and issued draft policy and procedures to proactively address workplace harassment.
- Revised its settlement agreement templates to better account for the Defense Finance and Accounting Service’s (DFAS) role in certain actions such as back pay and restoration of leave and secured OGC’s agreement to conduct legal sufficiency reviews of all settlements involving EEO complaints prior to execution of the agreement.
- ADR Participation Rate: This is the rate at which both parties in a dispute accept ADR in order to resolve it. In FY 2015, VA’s participation rate increased to 59 percent, up from 55 percent. The national target rate was 53 percent.
• Informal Resolution Rate: This is the percentage of EEO complaints that are resolved during the pre-complaint stage, before the complaint is formally filed. In FY 2015, VA’s resolution rate remained at 53 percent. The annual target rate is 50 percent.

• In collaboration with ODI, developed training programs for senior leaders that focus on both EEO responsibilities in the areas of retaliation, harassment, and reasonable accommodation as well as proactive conflict management skills.

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) has primary responsibility for initiatives related to workforce diversity and organizational inclusion. In FY 2015, ODI accomplished the following to promote inclusion in the VA workforce:

• Developed and validated a Diversity and Inclusion Competency Model.

• Entered into a MOU with Federally Employed Women (FEW) with the object to improve the outreach initiative for women in management and other senior level positions through substantive training.

• Held quarterly internal stakeholders meetings and HR&A held bi-monthly Human Capital Management Board meetings review and assess human resources policies impacting EEO, and D&I.

• Established advisory and consulting capabilities with internal VACO customers and external VACO customers for facilitation and training opportunities to enhance organizational effectiveness and employee engagement imperatives.

• Developed the background, overview, scope, and design details for the development of a new Web-based course on implicit bias and implicit association. Production task is contingent on funding availability for VALU’s contracting process.

• Administered six technical assistance reviews of VA facilities to ensure compliance with mandated EEO, diversity and inclusion requirements.

• Administered training evaluation program. Completed analysis of Kirkpatrick Level 1 evaluation survey responses during two quarters. Validated and implemented in Q3 the Kirkpatrick Level 3 assessment tool on TMS course DVA-017 (mandatory EEO, D&I, Reasonable Accommodation, and Conflict Resolution Training).

• Administered the Centrally Managed Reasonable Accommodations (RA) Management Program Fund, which funded over 400 accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

• Conducted training events for managers and supervisors on the reasonable accommodation process.

• Managed the reasonable accommodations tracking system VA-wide for increased quality assurance and compliant processing.

• ODI developed and submitted federally mandated EEO and workforce diversity reports to regulatory agencies.

• Deputy Assistant Secretary for Office of Diversity and Inclusion served as advisor to VA’s leadership development boards to ensure D&I goals and objectives are embedded appropriately in outreach and selection processes.

The Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (OCLA) experienced a 28.6 percent turnover rate in FY 2015 but was able to maintain a relatively stable workforce, build on proficiency and increase its overall productivity. During FY 2015, OCLA supported 79 hearings and an average
of 50 ongoing GAO analysis, conducted 782 congressional briefings, coordinated the Department’s response to 33 GAO draft reports and 35 GAO final reports, and responded to 2,984 requests for information. OCLA also provided technical assistance to 348 pieces of pending legislation. Additionally, OCLA handled over 27,853 constituent inquiries from congressional offices.

OCLA continued to emphasize its “I CARE” Awards Program to recognize those employees whose service to our Nation’s Veterans exemplify VA’s core values. “I CARE” Awards were presented to OCLA employees on a quarterly basis, and in FY 2015, OCLA bestowed 8 “I CARE” Awards. OCLA maintains a prominent position in its front office area to highlight award winners.

The Board of Veterans’ Appeals (BVA) has one of the Department’s most formalized and effective Flexiplace programs. This program serves as a valuable recruitment and retention tool and enables the Board to retain attorneys who have rather arduous commutes. The Board’s Flexiplace Plan complements President Obama’s Telework Enhancement Act of 2010.

The Board also utilizes several informal, but very effective, techniques which reward and recognize the contributions of staff members. Shadowing opportunities and developmental details are made available for several high level positions to include the Executive Assistant position in the Vice Chairman’s Office to fully leverage the diverse makeup of our workforce and promote professional development. Travel Board assignments are based, to some degree, on exceptional and sustained performance. A multitude of communication venues are utilized to facilitate sharing of knowledge; review and discuss current events; and provide a forum for recognition of diverse achievements and use of staff feedback.

Lastly, the Board continues to conduct strategic workforce planning to ensure that our workforce is mission ready and prepared for the future. Various staff components work in unison to gather and review comprehensive and inclusive information on projected hiring needs based upon workload and potential retirements; achievement of a diverse workforce; and risk areas for mission critical occupations and senior positions. This allows for a 360 degree approach to workforce and succession planning which builds a talented, diverse, and results-oriented Board.

The Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construction (OALC) worked diligently to identify issues that may become barriers to collaborative work environments. OALC strongly believes that a diverse workforce in an inclusive environment will improve individual and organizational performance and result in better value to customers/clients and other stakeholders. OALC encouraged staff participation and provided the opportunity to attend special observances and diversity events, such as African-American, Asian-Pacific American, and Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) programs. Much attention was given to meet Departmental targets, and OALC participates each year in the All Employee Survey. Senior management uses the results to promote work/life balance and diversity activities.

Steps were taken to ensure that personnel were prepared for higher levels of organizational responsibility in support of succession planning. During senior leadership absences, subordinate personnel were given the opportunity to serve in an Acting capacity, on a detail, or be
noncompetitively temporarily promoted to the role of their supervisors up to and including Senior Executive Service (SES) positions.

OALC promoted work/life flexibilities and a robust Telework program for all eligible employees. The telework program supported OAO’s commitment to maximizing a diverse group of applicants to compete for employment opportunities within VA in a flexible and inclusive environment. OALC also committed to active participation in the Civility, Respect, and Engagement in the Workplace (CREW) under the VA-wide culture change initiative with the national Center for Organization Development (NCOD) in response to employee feedback to establish a culture of respect and civility in the organization. During budgetary constraints on awards, OALC fostered non-monetary recognition awards such as certificates of appreciation and commendation letter to recognize employee contributions and support for VA values.
Goal 3: “Facilitate outstanding, culturally competent public service and stakeholder relations through effective leadership and accountability.”

Underpinning the business case for diversity and inclusion is the correlated improvements in organizational performance to deliver greater public service and customer satisfaction. Diverse teams are more creative, perform better at problem solving, and result in better decision-making than homogeneous teams. Racial diversity yields higher performance when diverse perspectives are leveraged as resources for product development. Similarly, gender diversity results in more effective group processes in people-oriented performance environments. Including people with disabilities, who may have a different viewpoint, improves the creativity and problem-solving efforts of a team. Diversity is especially important to VA because a diverse workforce helps us understand and serve the diverse populations of Veterans who we serve.

Public Service and Citizen Feedback
VA provides a unique service to the public, and in order to measure our performance, we rely on customer focused surveys. The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) provides information on citizen satisfaction with Federal Government. It is the only national, cross-industry measure of satisfaction with the quality of goods and services available in the United States.

Since 1999, the Federal Government selected ACSI to measure citizen satisfaction. More than 100 Federal agencies have used ACSI to gauge consumer satisfaction with more than 200 services and programs. The Index was founded at the University of Michigan’s Ross School of Business and the survey is produced by ACSI, LLC.

While citizen satisfaction with the services provided by the Federal Government remained constant from FY 2014 to FY 2015, VA was among a few agencies that attained an ACSI similar to or higher than private sector companies. Figure 39 provides some of the top ACSI ranking scores by Federal Agencies.
As in prior years of ACSI measurement, both federal and local government services score far below every private economic sector in user satisfaction. Durable products lead the way with an ACSI benchmark of 79—a full 15 points higher than both local and federal government (64). While government satisfaction has weakened over the past three years, the gap between it and private sector satisfaction has narrowed slightly because the latter also has declined steadily since the third quarter of 2013.
**Figure 40: ACSI Score: Public and Private Sector Comparison**

**FY 2015 Organizational Accomplishments**

**Office of the Secretary**

The Office of the Secretary (OSVA), in FY 2015, accomplished the following:

- Established the MyVA Advisory Committee. The Committee brings together skilled experts from the private, non-profit and government sectors to assist in reorienting the Department to better meet the needs of Veterans. This Committee is charged with advising the Secretary of Veterans Affairs with a focus on improving customer service, Veteran outcomes and setting the course for long-term reform and excellence.
- In November 2014, VA Secretary announced and began executing a major VA restructuring initiative, called MYVA, to provide Veterans with a “a seamless, integrated and responsive customer service experience — whether they arrive at VA digitally, by phone or in person,” The MyVA initiative reduces redundancies in its current organizational system to 5 regions.
VA Diversity Council

The VA Diversity Council (VADC) recognizes attitudes and behaviors are inextricably linked to training and employee development. In FY 2015, the VADC continues to echo its support for the Mandatory EEO, Diversity, and Conflict Management Training for Managers and Supervisors.

Administrations

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) continued executing its two year Technical Career Field (TCF) program. The TFC includes a mentorship component. The FY 2015 TCF program offered 300 full time positions including 10 EEO positions. Graduates from the 2012 class were successfully placed into EEO Manager/Specialist positions within VHA. The 2013 program included five EEO trainees who completed the first year of the program and continue to receive specific training as described in the Individual Development Plans. The 2014 program employed 10 EEO trainees, who began their training between June and November 2014.

OHE conducted a VHA-wide environmental scan focused on health equity, health disparities, and/or vulnerable Veteran populations. The purpose of the Health Equity Environmental Scan was to identify all health equity related programs, pilots, quality improvement initiatives, research protocol and/or resource materials underway at the VHA in 2015 or completed in the last year. 118 Veterans Affairs Medical Centers (VAMC) and 26 VHACO program offices participated. Additionally, 11 VISNs had network-wide projects addressing health equity, disparities, and/or vulnerable populations.

OHE remained the catalyst for VA medical centers being recognized as a “Leader in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Healthcare Equality” in the Healthcare Equality Index (HEI). The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation conducted annual surveys in 2013, 2014, and 2015. The HRC designed the HEI to allow U.S. healthcare organizations to assess the degree to which they provide LGBT patient-centered care and to identify healthcare gaps. To achieve the HEI leader status, VAMC’s documented that they publicized to their patients and visitors the VHA system-wide policy, which stipulates the requirement to provide equal visitation rights to LGBT people and prohibit LGBT patient and employment discrimination.

VMCs completed training on LGBT using materials developed within VHA and available on the Talent Management System, VA eHealth University and Training Finder Real-time Affiliated Integrated Network (TRAIN) with Continuing Medical Education (CME) accreditation. For the current year, VAMCs participated in the 2015/2016 HEI challenge to earn the HEI Leader Status awarded by the HRC Foundation. The final results are pending but preliminary results indicate that VA will likely surpass prior years’ performance.

OHE and the Employee Education System (EES) created four short videos, four 4-minute videos. Each video features providers who work in VHA discussing their own stories of bias and unconscious bias. A Knowledge Now Guide that includes background, instructions, discussion questions and additional resources accompany the videos. The tool is targeted for employees who directly interact with Veterans, and also helpful for employees who do not. The tool is flexible and can be administered as a ten-minute series over four team meetings, in existing training modules, or individually. Participants examine their bias, and through awareness and interaction improve their interpersonal communications and cultural competency with Veterans.
and colleagues. The tool is also included on the Organizational Health Tool Kit for VHA Executive leaders.

Through the VHA Train Portal, LGBT CME credits are now available. The first series of trainings focus on Transgender Veterans. This effort is the result of collaborations facilitated through the Health Equity Coalition and the OHE in advancing the VHA Health Equity Action Plan.

In FY 2015 the VHA EEO Training Institute conducted and coordinated the following training for a variety of audiences to include VHA managers, employees, and EEO professionals to improve workforce cultural competency and strengthen cultural awareness. The training topics were:

- Reach for Diversity
- Micro-Inequities
- Reasonable Accommodation Compliance System
- Special Emphases Program Advisory Committee Strategic Plan
- Understanding Hiring Authorities/Recruitment and Staffing for Veterans and People with Disabilities
- Unconscious Bias
- Limited English Proficiency
- Barrier Analysis: MD 715
- Working with Difficult People
- Cultural Humility and Cultural Competency
- Conflict Resolution
- Bullying in the Workplace
- EEO Best Practices
- Harassment/Reprisal Discrimination

The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) continues to facilitate culturally competent service to Veterans, their families, and beneficiaries. In FY 2015, the Minority Veterans Coordinator from the Sioux Falls RO met quarterly with the Sioux Falls VA American Indian Advisory Council and developed more effective outreach practices that resulted in employment opportunities for Native American Veterans.

VBA ROs utilized the services of state employment offices, the Department of Labor’s Workforce Recruitment Program, the Department of Health and Human Services, affinity groups such as Veterans Service Organizations, the Center for Minority Veterans, the Center for Women Veterans, and the Federal Asian Pacific American Council to recruit qualified Veterans. Summer interns continued to be recruited from The Washington Center, the Minority Access Incorporated, National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, National Diversity Internship Program, and other programs.

VBA supervisors and managers completed mandatory EEO, diversity, and conflict management training in compliance with the Secretary’s EEO, Diversity, Notification and federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act (No FEAR) Policy Statement issued April 20, 2015 with 98–percent compliance. Also, the following training was completed in FY 2015: supervisors
and managers at the Oakland RO completed the “Diversity and Conflict Management” course with 100-percent compliance; diversity and inclusion training was provided to all supervisors, managers, and employees within the Office of Management; the Office of Employee Engagement, Diversity and Inclusion (EEDI) conducted an eight-hour EEO class each month at the Baltimore Academy for candidates enrolled in leadership programs.

EEDI also coordinated mandatory RA training for all VBA directors, supervisors, LRACs, and EEO managers, which consisted of two on-line training modules: a two-hour video called “Conversation with Lawyers: Reasonable Accommodation,” and a six-minute training session called “Compliance Impact: Reason Accommodation.” The training provided participants with the legal requirements of RA and guided them through the stages of the RA process in accordance with VA Handbook 5975.1 and EEOC provisions. General Counsel conducted RA training at the Directors’ Conference in June 2015, and EEDI conducted RA training at the St. Louis and St. Petersburg ROs.

VBA performed an annual review and update of its EEO policies to reflect new legal provisions and provide employees with current information for FY 2015: EEO Policy Statement, Prevention and Elimination of Harassment in the Workplace, Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy Statement, and VBA’s ADR Policy.

The National Cemetery Administration continued to receive the highest rating in customer satisfaction for any Federal agency or private corporation surveyed, according to a prestigious, independent survey of customer satisfaction. No other Federal or private organization has scored as high as NCA which has sustained high customer service scores for more than a decade, outpacing such corporations as Apple, FedEx, Starbucks, General Motors, Ford, and many others. NCA participation in the annual All Employee Survey (AES) that measures overall employee satisfaction, specifically, job satisfaction and civility indexes, was 77 percent exceeding the national goal response rate of 60 percent.

Assistant Secretaries

The Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA) Principle Deputy Vice Chairman serves on the Department’s Diversity Council, Subcommittee on Emerging Issues, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Workgroup and the LGBT Public Relations Subcommittee. The Principle Deputy Vice Chairman was a speaker at the LGBT Pride Celebration; serving as a role model for Department employees. The Principle Deputy Vice Chairman served as a visible presence in the Diversity and Inclusion area by networking on behalf of the Department at the Out and Equal Conference, using his connections to book the Army’s first opening gay General to speak at VA’s LGBT Pride Month Celebration. The Principle Deputy Vice Chairman built bridges to LGBT Veterans groups by volunteer to film a Veterans’ Day Ceremony for use in a documentary.

BVA continues to garner much success in the realm of customer service through effective use of the in-house training efforts; the Quality Review staff, and a newly developed Board Diversity Committee. The BVA Diversity Committee is still in its initial development stage with the overarching goal to infuse diversity and inclusion principles into the day-to-day activities of the Board. The combination of these tools has resulted in higher quality decisions and a heightened attention to world class customer satisfaction for both internal and external stakeholders.
The Office of Management (OM) has established and maintains vital relationships, with internal and external stakeholders. This is evidenced by Congressional Support of VA Budget requests. Additionally when VA’s performance metrics were reduced, HRA’s “Percentage of VA Employees who are Veterans” was preserved, enabling OPM to monitor VA’s progress in this area and to raise issues to senior management’s attention.

The Office of Information and Technology (OIT) utilizing the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey results on its workforce to identify underlying themes impacting employee morale and engagement the, DMAC recommended and implemented the following:

- A Dignity and Respect Campaign to be led by the Assistant Secretary for OIT
- Incorporate OPM’s New IQ into OIT. The New IQ consists of a 6 step process that takes 90 days from start to finish.

The DMAC Chairperson attended the 2015 AAPI workshops and Diversity and Inclusion I – DIG National Pre-Conference Institute. OIT hosted a training session on Parallel Thinking: Alternative to Argument. Additionally, the DMAC Chairperson completed the New IQ Master Game-Changer Course presented by OPM.

The Office of Human Resources and Administration (HRA) is the parent office of the Office of Administration, the Office of Resolution Management, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the Office of Labor Management Relations, and the Office of Labor Management Relations.

The Office of Labor Management Relations (LMR) provided timely and effective customer service to the public, Veterans, other Federal and non-Federal agencies as well as VA employees. LMR supported the VA National Partnership Council (NPC) in its work in promoting effective and cooperative labor-management relations across the Department. Additionally, LMR engaged in joint Labor-Management Workgroups, Committees, and Councils as stakeholders in addressing VA issues. LMR made available training initiatives that support the delivery of an effective Labor-Management program, such as Master Collective Bargaining Agreement Training, Labor-Management Forum Training and Interest Based Negotiations Training.

The Office of Resolution Management (ORM) administered the fourth ADR Excellence Awards in March 2015 to recognize exemplary effort on the part of employees, managers, ADR neutrals, the Office of General Counsel, senior executives, ADR programs, and ADR committees/councils/forums in managing conflict and resolving workplace disputes and EEO complaints.

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) has primary responsibility for initiatives related to workforce diversity and organizational inclusion. In FY 2015, ODI accomplished the following:

- Updated the Secretary of Veterans Affairs Policy Statement on EEO, Diversity, No FEAR, and Whistleblower Protections to reflect new legal protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity/transgender status.
• Achieved Office of Special Counsel certification for its Whistleblower Rights and Protection Program.
• ODI delivered 205 elective virtual or face-to-face learning events at VA facilities nationwide to over 8,134 VA employees addressing the following topics: bullying, generations, processing reasonable accommodation requests, VISN Support Service Center training, barrier analysis, LGBT, the inclusion paradigm, diversity and inclusion for new employees and new supervisors, and cultural competency. (This 8,134 includes the 2,092 in item 2.2)
• VA continues to excel with its mandatory bi-annual training programs “EEO, Diversity, and Conflict Management Training for Managers and Supervisors,” The supervisor and manager workforce is 93 percent compliant.
• Administered the mandatory all employees Workplace Harassment and No FEAR training for over 350,000 VA employees.
• Administered training on prohibited personnel practices and whistleblower rights and protection to the executive, manager, and supervisor workforce. The executive, manager, and supervisor workforce is 98 percent compliant.
• Delivered face-to-face training sessions to employees, managers, and supervisors in specialized cultural competency including topics of general cultural competency, generational awareness, and LGBT awareness.
• ODI issued strategic communications through 12 monthly Diversity@Work Newsletters, 6 bimonthly Diversity News broadcasts, and 11 Newslinks.
• Administered the Secretary of Veterans Affairs Annual Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Awards Program to recognize achievements in three categories of the VA workforce.
• Administered quarterly VA Diversity Council meetings and EEO Stakeholder meetings and performed contract oversight and project management for the Diversity Council directed initiatives.

The Office of Labor Management Relations supported the VA National Partnership Council (NPC) in its work on promoting effective and cooperative labor-management relations across the Department. Additionally, LMR engaged in joint Labor-Management Workgroups, Committees, and Councils as stakeholders in addressing VA issues. LMR made available training initiatives that support the delivery of an effective Labor-Management program, such as Master Collective Bargaining Agreement Training, Labor-Management Forum Training and Interest Based Negotiations Training.

The Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (OCLA) Congressional Liaison Service (CLS) provides constituent support services to Members of Congress. During FY 2015, the CLS team fielded over 13,178 telephone and 3,608 e-mail inquiries and processed 7,508 letters in support of Veterans’ constituent casework issues concerning healthcare and benefits.

The Board of Veterans’ Appeals (BVA) continues to garner much success in the realm of customer service through effective use of in-house training efforts and the Quality Review staff. The combination of these tools has resulted in higher quality decisions and a heightened attention to world class customer satisfaction for both internal and external stakeholders. The Principal Deputy Vice Chairman serves on the Department’s Diversity Council, Subcommittee on
Emerging Issues, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Workgroup and also was a speaker at the LGBT Pride Celebration; serving as a role model for Department employees. The Principal Deputy Vice Chairman served as a visible presence in the Diversity and Inclusion arena by networking on behalf of the Department at the Out and Equal Conference, using his connections to book the Army’s first opening gay General to speak at the VA’s LGBT Pride Month Celebration, the Department’s most successful affinity program of the year. The Principal Deputy Vice Chairman built bridges to LGBT Veteran groups by volunteering to film a Veterans’ Day Ceremony for use in a documentary.

*The Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construction (OALC)* provided outstanding customer service to both internal and external customers and stakeholders continuously. OALC is committed to ensuring employees are in compliance with all mandatory training including supplemental classroom training conducted by the Office of Resolution Management which expands on EEO subjects to include topics of Diversity and Inclusion, ADR, conflict management, and EEO General Principles and Processes. As in previous years, OALC continues to work with the VA Veterans Employment Service Office, various other VA organizations, Federal agencies, and other special emphasis organizations that assist Veterans, minorities, and those with disabilities to inform them of programs and employment opportunities in OALC. Engagement meetings were also held with various Federal agencies (DoD, National Institutes of Health, GSA, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Agriculture, etc.) to increase participation in the OALC programs. OALC provided customer training that offered a myriad of acquisition-related material to VA personnel, covering essential topics, such as market research, performance work statements, cost estimates, and technical evaluations. Each of these training units, along with ‘hands-on’ workshops provided the customers with fundamental information that would help them better comprehend the acquisition process and associated documentation.
In FY 2015 and beyond, VA will focus on building upon current initiatives and adding new strategies in furtherance of its goal of “fostering a diverse workforce and an inclusive work environment” to better serve our Nation’s Veterans.

Office of the Secretary

The Office of the Secretary (OSVA) is the top level office for the Center for Minority Veterans, the Center for Women Veterans, the Office of Survivors Assistance, and the Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication.

The Center for Minority Veterans (CMV) will continue to conduct targeted outreach activities with stakeholders in minority veteran communities, and serve on a consultative basis with internal VA program offices. The CMV will collaborate with the VA Office of Health Equity, the Health Equity and Rural Outreach Innovation Center (HEROIC), and the Center for Health Equity Research and Promotion (CHERP) to assist in the efforts to address health disparities, and encourage minority veteran participation in research trials. The CMV will establish relationships with at least eight new stakeholders in minority veteran communities, to provide them information on VA benefits and services. The CMV will continue to collaborate with Minority Veterans Program Coordinators from the three VA Administrations to conduct targeted outreach. The CMV and Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans will conduct a site visit in a city with a large minority veteran population, and later publish a report containing recommendations to enhance service provision to minority veterans. CMV will collaborate with the MyVA and Veterans Experience Office to ensure the inclusion of minority Veterans in surveys, targeted outreach, and other projects.

The Office of General Counsel (OGC) plans to continue to
- Focus on recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce.
- Focus on communication and learning which emphasize understanding and appreciation of diversity and inclusion.
- Review and revise OGC internal policies and practices to ensure compliance with the Departments Diversity and Inclusion goals.
- Develop and institutionalize a sustainable Diversity and Inclusion strategy that is integral to OGC operations.

Office of Inspector General (OIG) will strive to meet or exceed its current level of diversity and inclusion through the use of recruitment strategies, hiring methods, and communication mechanisms. OIG will continue to seek highly qualified candidates of all backgrounds and experiences. Veterans, women, and minorities will continue to make up a significant portion of the hiring pool. Furthermore, OIG has carefully reviewed the results of the recently released “Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey” to ensure the organization remains the employer of choice for individuals seeking a meaningful career in the Federal government. In FY 2015, when asked if they recommend their agency as a good place to work 79.2 percent responded positively,
which is a 12 percent increase from FY 2014. Additionally, in FY 2015 there was a 13.9 percent increase of positive responses when asked how satisfied employees are with OIG. These actions will form the cornerstone of OIG’s plan for 2016 and beyond to promote a diverse, inclusive workplace that helps to promote employee excellence and exceptional service to veterans and their families.

The Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships (CFBNP), in FY 2015, will continue to collaborate with VA’s CWV, CMV, OSA, VBA, VHA and with the Women Veterans Resource Center (WVRC) to educate, inform and engage diverse faith-based, nonprofit and community/neighborhood organizations to meet the needs of our Nation’s Veterans.

CFBNP is proposing to amend regulations enacted under 2003’s “Equal Protection of Laws for Faith-Based and Community Organizations” in order to eliminate confusing language that may prevent or delay services to Veterans, make grant decisions more fair or bolster religious freedoms of Veterans when receiving services from a faith-based organization. The proposed reform involves the simple changing of the phrase “inherently religious activities” to “explicitly religious activities.” While it may appear to be a small change, it is indeed a very important change when providing financial assistance to faith-based partners. By law, the federal government is prohibited from providing funds to pay for religious activities such devotional exercises, worship, or dissemination of devotional guides or other religious material. when applied specifically to VA and the Veterans we serve, the federal government can provide funding to a faith-based organization that provides benefits and services to Veterans as long as the organization does not use the funds to promote religion. This funding must directly benefit Veterans free and clear of any the previously listed religious activities.

VA Diversity Council

The VA Diversity Council (VADC) will move into its seventh year of operation under a new name, the Diversity and Inclusion Veterans Affairs Council (DIVAC) in FY 2016. The new charter will focus on the continued effort to increase its efforts and engagement in driving the diversity and inclusion initiatives essential for VA meets its commitment towards 21st century excellence. In order to meet this commitment, the DIVAC will develop a new VA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan for FY 2016 – FY 2020, which will be alignment with directives of the Diversity and Inclusion in Government Council established March 2015.

Administrations

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) will continue using Veteran hiring authorities such as the Veterans Recruitment Appointment (VRA), the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act (VEOA), the 30 percent or more Disabled Veterans, Title 38 and Title 38 Hybrid authorities, as well as Schedule A utilization to increase Veteran and disability employment levels in the workforce.

VHA will create an email distribution listing of Schedule A applicants to forward VHA Job announcements as a strategy to increase opportunities for employing individuals with disabilities nationally.
In February 2016, the VHA REACH Video is projected to be completed. The video will be distributed nationally and used as a marketing tool to demonstrate workforce diversity and highlighting the positive experiences of all VHA employees.

The VHA ODI and VHA D & I SC will continue to collaborate with the Healthcare Talent Management National Program Office to collect baseline data on workforce diversity to determine if progress is being made to increase diversity in the workforce pipeline and VHA career development programs.

VHA will continue to collaborate with internal and external organizations including VBA, NCA, VESO, the Veterans Entrepreneurship Task Force, and the Wounded Warrior Program to leverage opportunities to increase outreach and recruitment of Veterans and other targeted groups.

VHA ODI will continue to monitor and measure the employment of the VHA workforce by various demographic groupings (Veteran status, race/ethnicity, and disability status). The intention is to identify areas of the workforce lifecycle (i.e. hiring, development, attrition) in which there may be barriers to equal employment opportunities.

VHA ODI will continue to host quarterly Community of Practice (COP) Conference Calls related to diversity and inclusion. One of the COP calls will feature the VHA winners of the Secretary’s Fourth Annual Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Awards program to highlight their award winning programs and best practices.

VHA ODI will coordinate employee engagement training and implement the “Employee Engagement Workgroup” to develop strategies to increase VHA employee engagement and workforce inclusiveness.

The VHA EEO/AEO will continue conducting the VHA EEO Quarterly Survey to assess compliance on the six essential elements of a comprehensive EEO program.

VHA will continue to leverage use of the two year TCF program including its formal mentorship component. The EEO/AEO was approved for 10 positions for the FY 2016 program.

The EEO Training Institute has the following sessions on the training schedule for FY 2016:

- Impact of Generation Diversity in the Workforce
- Special Emphasis Program Manager Role and Responsibilities
- Bullying in the Workplace
- Special Emphasis Program Advisory Committee (SEPAC) Strategic Plan Update
- External Complains
- New Inclusion Quotient
- EEO Law
- Conflict Resolution
- Limited English Proficiency Training
- Building Awareness of Sexual Orientation
- Numbers Count (Barrier Analysis)
- Unconscious Bias
- Micro Inequities
The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) will continue to hire qualified Veterans and IWTDs by utilizing direct hiring authorities, such as the Veteran Readjustment Act (VRA) and Schedule A appointments, participating in job fairs, and through a robust military and Veteran outreach programs that include transition briefings on military bases. These best practices continue to yield VBA results which consistently exceed VA’s onboard and hiring goals for Veterans and individuals with targeted disabilities.

Even with its diverse workforce, VBA has a less-than-expected representation as compared to the Civilian Labor Force for White males and females, Hispanic males and females, and Asian males and females. Further, there is an underrepresentation of Black males and females within the higher grades and SES cadre. VBA will partner with affinity groups and attend job fairs at universities and colleges and other facilities that have a large representation of these groups. This should increase VBA’s applicant pool of qualified individuals from the above underrepresented groups.

VBA will continue to support and promote EEO, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace through training to ensure managers, supervisors, and employees are informed and in compliance with VA and EEOC provisions and requirements.

VBA will conduct EEO, diversity, inclusion, and reasonable accommodations training. Evaluation instruments and metrics including internal surveys will be used to assess the effectiveness of the training and identify additional needs of VBA’s employees, supervisors, and managers. Future VBA leaders will continue to be cultivated through training and educational programs, as well as the Summer Internship Program to foster a diverse and inclusive work environment.

VBA plans for additional responsible authorities to participate in TARS administered by the VA central office.

Senior leaders will continue to be rated on the EEO, Diversity, and Inclusion Element in their performance standards.

In compliance with MD 715, all EEO-related policies will be reviewed, updated, and disseminated to VBA offices. Employees, supervisors, and managers will be monitored to enforce completion of mandatory EEO, diversity, and inclusion training.

The National Cemetery Administration (NCA) will continue to implement strategies that align with VA’s Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan to meet department and administration goals and objectives. Senior leaders, managers, supervisors and employees will continue to participate in diversity and inclusion activities including SEP committee meetings; ERG implementation; diversity and inclusion training; barrier analysis; applicant-flow data analysis; and disability employment. NCA’s EEO Office will continue to engage employees at all levels of the workforce to assure compliance and to assist in coordination and implementation of strategies needed to have a culturally competent workforce.

The following is a list of NCA planned activities for FY 2016:
During FY 2016, the Training and Workforce Development department will continue the process of evaluating all training programs in the Administration to assess their effectiveness, and make necessary changes to increase value.

NCA will promote employee usage of MyCareers@VA, the Equal Employment Opportunity Occupational Family Web site from Veterans Affairs Learning University (VALU) establishing career maps across all occupational groups allowing employees to identify the steps needed to qualify for positions both internal and external to their current occupational family.

The Cemetery Directors Intern program will continue to serve as the primary leadership pipeline program in NCA, recruitment strategies such as the NCA job informational webinars will continue to be implemented to ensure there is sufficient targeted group representation in applicant pools.

NCA will continue implementing GEAR and the monthly formal recognition program to recognize the results and contributions of NCA’s outstanding supervisors and employees, and encourage employees to participate in VALU on-line training on employee competency courses.

NCA will partner with external and internal organizations such as VHA, Veterans Benefit Administration (VBA), the Veteran Employment Service Office (VESO), The Veterans Entrepreneurship Task Force (VET-Force), and the Wounded Warrior Program to leverage opportunities to outreach and recruit targeted groups as well as Veterans.

In FY 2016, all managers will receive comprehensive diversity training. The NCA EEO will continue conducting conflict management training, facilitations, focus groups and group discussions at NCA facilities nationwide, as needed to improve cultural competency and workforce climate. NCA will continue conducting Cemetery Director Intern Program job informational webinars which entail a panel of seven graduates from the program who each discuss different aspects of the course including the mentoring program. Detailed marketing strategies will be employed prior to the event to ensure high levels of target group representation.

In FY 2016, NCA will continue implementation of programs such NCA’s Executive Diversity Council (EDC), the National Special Emphasis Program Committee (SEAPAC), Limited English Proficiency Program; Title VI program; and the Reasonable Accommodation Program. In FY16, NCA plans to implement nationwide employee programs, one of the initial Special Emphasis Employee programs will be an NCA chapter of the Federal Women’s Program (FWP), which will focus heavily on increasing women’s representation and recruiting women to serve in non-traditional positions such as a Cemetery Caretaker position at NCA.

NCA plans to have a series of webinars concerning FWP, and begin addressing issues more centric to women employees at the administration.

In FY 2016, NCA will continue using special hiring authorities and recruiting resources such as Delegated Examining Units and the Compensated Work Therapy Program, to increase levels of Veterans and civilian disabled employees.

NCA will continue to conduct facilitations at NCA facilities with workplace disputes, EEO site visits, group discussions, and conflict management training at facilities with high levels of workplace grievances and complaints.
• NCA will continue providing its employees with access to vital and confidential personal service through the NCA Employee Assistance Program (EAP). EAP provides for up to six counseling sessions with licensed therapists nationwide covering a wide range of personal, work, financial, and emotional issues.

• The EAP also provides 24/7 toll-free hotline support help to those in need. In FY 2016 NCA will continue implementation of the telework program at all levels of the organization.

• NCA continues to develop plans to create nationwide Employee Resource Groups (ERG) for FY 2016. This will include a Veterans’ ERG. The ERG functions will include:
  • Participating in the onboarding process by engaging employees about their transition into the workforce and discussing developmental opportunities
  • Employee Engagement (coaching and mentoring new employees)
  • Participating in the exit survey process to gather and develop data for analysis used to increase retention levels
  • Talent management and targeted recruitment; and
  • Regional Workforce and Barrier Analysis/Management Directive 715 (MD-715)

• In FY 2016, NCA will continue to use the Special Emphasis Program to provide training for managers, supervisors and employees. The program also increase awareness on the needs of targeted groups, such as our Nation’s disabled Veterans and serve as a resource for both managers and employees to educate on the vase cultural diversity in our workforce.

• NCA will continue conducting customer service surveys at facilities nationwide to guarantee the highest level of customer satisfaction the Administration can provide.

• In FY 2016, NCA will continue to participate in the All Employee Survey (AES). Based upon the AES results, NCA District Offices will continue to implement and adjust AES action plans annually, and the EEO Office will coordinate and conduct a series of training events through webinars, conference calls, and site visits.

Assistant Secretaries

The Office of Management (OM) will continue to cultivate a workplace environment of open effective communications, with clear channels for feedback, placing specific emphasis on diversity awareness skills and effective organizational systems that support diversity and inclusion. OM plans to continue building its workforce by leveraging alternative hiring methods, diversity, empowering employees and encouraging staff to participate in Diversity and Inclusion training and events. OM will continue to participate on VA’s Diversity Council and will continue to subscribe and distribute the “Diversity@Work” newsletter to all its employees.

The Office of Information and Technology (OIT) will introduce the Dignity and Respect Campaign to create a more inclusive workplace culture.

The Office of Policy and Planning (OPP) will continue to maintain a strong training program and has incorporated training into the annual performance and individual development plan of all employees. OPP will continue to serve as an active partner on the VADC in 2016. While the OPP senior executive role on the Council will remain, it is fully expected this important council will continue to serve as a communication link between the workforce and leadership, providing
guidance to advance the Department’s goals for diversity and inclusion. OPP will encourage a strong participation in the VA Annual Employee Survey and will carefully analyze, develop action plans, and implement them based on the results of the survey.

The Office of Human Resources and Administration (HRA) is the parent office of the Office of Resolution Management, the Office of Administration, and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

The Office of Resolution Management (ORM) will continue to collaborate with ODI to provide training to VA facilities on EEO, Disability and Reasonable Accommodation when requested as a preventive measure or when ordered by EEOC or OEDCA pursuant to findings of discrimination. Other planned activities include:

- Continue monitoring for compliance of training ordered as a result of a finding of discrimination and certifies all training content and training agendas.
- Ensuring that training is completed in all cases involving a finding of discrimination and evaluations are analyzed and published.
- Conduct site visits to facilities with high per capita rates and conduct training and outreach and assessments when requested/required.
- Ensure neutrals are assigned within 2 business days of ADR election and ADR scheduled promptly so resolution efforts can occur before the Notice of Right to File Formal is issued. Ensure sufficient full-time and contract neutrals are available to timely complete ADR and work with parties to achieve early resolution.
- Collaborate with the Anti-Harassment Office to address allegations of harassment before they become EEO complaints.
- Encourage ORM staff to report to District Managers and Regional Directors complaints involving failure to accommodate, sexual harassment, and per se retaliation as these are the claims on which discrimination is most often found.
- Ensure ORM ADR resources are available to assist parties in resolving work-related issues when ORM neutrals are unavailable.

The Office of Administration (OA) will continue to reach out to VA for VETS to locate qualified Veterans to fill positions within the organization and will provide on-the-job cross training to current employees to preserve the institutional knowledge of retirement eligible employees. OA will advertise employment towards career ladder positions to gain new ideas and technology, as well as maintain the longevity of personnel in the organization. Schedule A and qualified veterans are reached and referred for possible employment through merit promotion and public advertisement via VA for VETS and COHRS Staffing and Recruitment Office on an on-going basis.

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI), in FY 2015 and beyond, will lead the following initiatives:
• Promote participation in the Secretary’s Annual Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Awards Program and in the Secretary’s Annual Alternative Dispute Resolution Excellence Awards Program.

• Refine anti-harassment program: (1) enhance anti-harassment coordinator (AHC) network, (2) expand case management system, and (3) launch training for employees, supervisors, managers, union officials, and AHCs.

• Continue marketing MyCareer@VA to additional facilities focusing on career mapping strategies to facilitate career advancement for all groups.

• Continue to track VA-wide disciplinary actions taken against RMOs in findings of discrimination and report as appropriate.

• Continue implementation of training evaluation instrument and metrics.

• Integrate the new USA Staffing Applicant Flow System into VA HR information system...

• Update VSSC to track participation in VA leadership development programs by REG in VA’s TMS.

• Increase the number of Conflict Assessments conducted to provide insight that may improve workplaces and reduce disputes and complaints.

• Revise the management and implementation of ODI’s Web site.

• Review VA Directive 5975 and related handbooks; publish TAR handbook.

• Design and initiate Special Emphasis Program training for all VBA EEO managers.

• Continue to streamline the FAD process.

• Revise the Relevant Civilian Labor Force computation to align with EEOC guidance.

• VA ODI staff will continue to implement the National Diversity Internship Program that provides career exploration opportunities for current undergraduate and graduate students from diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds.

• VA ODI staff will continue to implement the Workforce Recruitment Program, a program used to connect federal and private sector employers nationwide with college students and recent graduates with disabilities who are eager to prove their abilities in the workplace through summer employment or permanent jobs.

• Design and initiate Special Emphasis Program training for all VBA EEO managers.

• Conduct technical and quality review of the refresh projects on mandatory EEO, D&I, Reasonable Accommodation, Conflict Resolution Training, and whistleblower rights and protection; conduct technical and quality review of the refresh project on harassment prevention, NoFEAR, and whistleblower protection for all employees. Plan deployment for early FY 2017.

• Design, obtain funding, implement, and report on World Café events to initiate race-relations dialogs at the VBA Records Management Center in St. Louis MO in mid 2016, preceded by a pilot test in VACO on December 8, 2015. (Notified local union representatives in St. Louis RMC/VACO in October/November 2015)

• Develop and publish the VA D&I Strategic Plan 2016-2020 and integrate goals into the VA Strategic Plan and HR&A Strategic Plan.

• Manage administration of VA Diversity Council and proposed name change and charter revision.

• Establish a Diversity and Inclusion Competency Model.
• Plan and implement Whistleblower protection campaign to obtain OSC re-certification in Oct 2018.

The Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (OCLA) will continue to fulfill the Departments Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan.

• OCLA will continue to support its high performing, diversified workforce by offering training opportunities to its workforce throughout the year. In regards to hiring actions, OCLA will explore all available hiring authorities, to include Schedule A, in order to select the best qualified candidate to fill the vacant position. All new employees will receive initial on-board training and be immediately assimilated into the OCLA team.

• In FY 2016, OCLA will continue to strive to achieve higher levels of performance. OCLA is a very dynamic organization and values its employees’ initiative and ability to re-prioritize work actions rapidly. OCLA seeks results oriented employees who will be major contributors to accomplishing the organization’s mission. OCLA will continue to nurture and develop its workforce. OCLA supports the MYVA values and inclusion among its workforce. Given the very dynamic and high intensity environment OCLA operates in, the entire workforce is needed to ensure mission accomplishment. OCLA is committed to work in concert with VA’s Learning University to provide its employees with training opportunities designed to benefit their professional development.

• OCLA will continue to fulfill its primary role of advancing pro-Veteran legislation for our diverse Veteran population and will continue to keep the precepts of diversity and inclusion at the forefront as we accomplish our mission.

The Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construction (OALC) will continue its efforts in being a prominent, diverse, results oriented, high-performing workforce in FY 2015. OALC is committed to continue to build a diverse workforce to foster a high-performing workforce that reflects all segments of society. OALC will continually assess its workforce data by evaluating diversity and assuring that promotions, awards, recognitions, training and upward mobility opportunities are occurring equitably. OALC will assess our retention and outreach recruitment strategies as we move forward, utilizing exit interviews to obtain feedback and reviewing the diversity of candidates.

• OALC will expand its flexible and inclusive work environment, while providing outstanding and responsive service to customers and stakeholders, both internal and external.

• OALC will continue to support VA initiatives on Veteran hiring by offering rotational assignments to W2W interns and engage in targeted recruitment to broaden the workforce profile. Special hiring authorities will be utilized whenever possible. Leadership will engage in on-going discussions to educate managers and employees on the benefits of having an inclusive and diverse workforce.

• OALC will continue to participate at Veteran or student job fairs and advertise critical vacancies in professional journals targeting engineering and architectural talent.

• OALC will further encourage employees: (1) to increase their skills using the Federal Acquisition Certification programs, formal education, and participation in professional organizations; (2) to engage networking opportunities through local college and
university career fairs and Veteran outreach programs; and (3) to establish ongoing conversations and exchanges with historically underrepresented groups in our workforce.

- When the information is available, OALC will utilize human capital assessments and surveys to identify and analyze trends with regard to diversity and inclusion.
- OALC will continue to emphasize and provide on outstanding customer service both internally and externally by providing information for Veterans, Industry, and Government to customers and stakeholders. OALC will continue to improve information technology resources for better responsiveness to support customer requirements and reporting needs. OALC will monitor the mandatory EEO, Diversity and Inclusion, and Conflict Management training and courage participation and discussions in diversity and inclusion events and programs.

The Office of Operations, Security, and Preparedness will continue to encourage the employees to support at least two Special Emphasis programs of their choice throughout the year. OSP leadership will continue to focus its outreach and recruitment program for IWTDs and Veterans and follow the Central Office Human Resources Service guidance.
References

April, K. & Blass, E., (2010). Measuring Diversity Practice and Developing Inclusion. University of Cape Town (SA) & Ashridge Business School (UK) and Eddie Blass (Senior Lecturer, University of Hertfordshire (UK).


References


Appendices
VA Diversity & Inclusion Strategic Plan for FY 2012-2016
Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan

FY 2012–2016

Building a diverse workforce and inclusive workplace to deliver outstanding public service in the 21st century

Office of Diversity and Inclusion
Office of Human Resources and Administration
March 2012
# Table of Contents

Message from the Chief Human Capital Officer ................................................................. 97  
Foreword .......................................................................................................................... 98  
Organizational Acronyms.............................................................................................. 101  
The Current State of VA ............................................................................................... 102  
Overview ....................................................................................................................... 109  
Goal 1: *A Diverse Workforce* ..................................................................................... 110  
Goal 2: *An Inclusive Workplace* ................................................................................. 112  
Goal 3: *Outstanding Public Service* ......................................................................... 114  
Applicable Laws........................................................................................................... 117  
Merit System Principles ............................................................................................... 118
Message from the Chief Human Capital Officer

Employees are the foundation of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the key to its success, and there is an obvious connection between the quality of VA’s workforce and the quality of VA’s programs and services.

In order to ensure a continuous high level of care and service to Veterans, VA must recruit, retain, develop, and engage the best people possible. To do so, VA must cultivate a diverse workforce and an inclusive work environment—an environment in which all employees can contribute to the maximum extent possible to VA’s success.

VA’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) has the primary responsibility of providing leadership and guidance for the Department’s diversity and inclusion initiatives, and VA’s Diversity Council (VADC) serves as a forum to share best practices, consider new initiatives, monitor progress, leverage resources, and ensure accountability. Because of the important roles that they play, ODI and the VADC were tasked with revising the Department’s Strategic Plan for Diversity and Inclusion, in response to the President’s call for a more comprehensive, integrated, and strategic focus on diversity and inclusion.

In the pages that follow are an overview of the current state of VA with respect to diversity and inclusion, along with goals, objectives, strategies, initiatives, and measures of progress for the Department’s revised diversity and inclusion strategic plan. Over the next few years, this plan will serve as a guide for the Department’s efforts to create and maintain a diverse, results-oriented, high-performing workforce; cultivate a flexible and inclusive work environment; facilitate outstanding service to our Nation’s Veterans; and ensure agency accountability and leadership.

John U. Sepúlveda
Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration
Foreword

By the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Diversity and Inclusion

In 2008, ODI embarked on a groundbreaking effort to change the dialogue about diversity and inclusion in the public sector and usher in a new paradigm linked to organizational performance. This new paradigm championed two inextricably intertwined precepts: equal employment opportunity (EEO) is foundational to an effective diversity management program; and diversity and inclusion are essential to high performance in the 21st century. VA remains unequivocally committed to ensuring equal opportunity in the workplace. We also understand that EEO is essential but not sufficient to create a high-performing organization in this millennium.

VA defines diversity in its broadest context to include all that makes us unique: race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, disability status, culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, parental status, educational background, socioeconomic status, intellectual perspective, organizational level, and more. By doing so, we are able to harvest the full performance advantages our diversity offers. Inclusion is the means by which we harvest this talent. It is the deliberate effort to leverage diversity and empower all voices to contribute to the mission.

The change in paradigm began by restructuring and renaming our office to reflect the more proactive mission of the new Office of Diversity and Inclusion. That same year, ODI set out to lead the development of VA's first strategic plan for diversity and inclusion. In 2009, the VA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan for FY 2009–2013 was published. The plan attracted the attention of other Federal agencies, as well as the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and Office of Personnel Management (OPM). A year later, OPM convened an interagency task force to develop the Federal sector’s first Government-Wide Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan, largely modeled after VA’s Plan. This work culminated in President Barack Obama issuing Executive Order 13583, “Establishing a Coordinated Government-Wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in the Federal Workforce” in 2011.

In addition to establishing a government-wide initiative, the Executive Order directed individual agencies to develop their own diversity and inclusion strategic plans consistent with the government-wide plan, the agency’s overall strategic plan, human capital plan, applicable laws and Merit System Principles. The government-wide plan identifies three strategic goals—workforce diversity, workplace inclusion, and sustainability—along with associated priorities. The guidance for agency-specific plans directs Federal agencies to outline the actions they will take to achieve the priorities identified in the government-wide plan.

The VA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan for 2012–2016 represents the collaborative efforts and contributions of VA’s organizational components and stakeholders to update VA’s plan to comport with the Government-Wide Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan’s goals and priorities. The original focus on workforce diversity, organizational inclusion, and customer service remains, and new objectives, strategies, and measures have been added to reflect current and emerging priorities. This plan is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to focus on higher priority areas in
light of limited resources. At the same time, it is intended to be discrete enough to guide the operational efforts of all VA components.

**The Business Case for Diversity and Inclusion**

In the 2009 plan, we articulated the business case for diversity. This concept has since become well socialized in the public sector as Federal agencies increasingly understand that government also has a business imperative: fair and effective public service. Since 2009, we have all witnessed the dramatic effects of an interconnected global economy on the public and private sectors. We see with stark clarity that our effectiveness in providing responsive public services is dependent on our ability to rapidly adapt to the changing dynamics of our global environment.

The U.S. Census Bureau projects that in 2042, our Nation will no longer be characterized by one single demographic majority. Foreign-born people and people of color will constitute the majority of new entrants to our labor force. Currently, minority Veterans comprise approximately 20 percent of the Veteran population, and about half of women Veterans are people of color. These numbers are expected to grow exponentially in the coming years. Therefore, for VA to properly serve its client base, it must also have a culturally competent and diverse workforce in all levels of the Department. This will require agility, innovation, and a world view to meet the complex demands of unprecedented societal diversity.

In the decades following the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the field of EEO has evolved from an exclusively legalistic model to the more proactive, business-driven framework of diversity management. The globalization of the last decade spawned yet a new focus on inclusion, and its relationship to employee engagement and performance. Organizations realized that to remain viable in a global economy, it was not enough to recruit a diverse workforce, but they must also retain and leverage the diverse perspectives and talents of its human capital to sustain a competitive advantage in the marketplace. This too applies to the public sector.

**The Inclusion Imperative**

Numerous empirical studies have shown a positive correlation between workforce diversity and organizational performance. Research tells us that diverse teams are more creative, perform better in problem-solving, and result in better decision-making than homogeneous teams. Racial diversity yields higher performance when diverse perspectives are leveraged as resources for product development. Similarly, gender diversity results in more effective group processes in people-oriented performance environments (Diversity Research Network, 2002). However, absent the facilitating conditions that integrate diverse perspectives in the organization, the aforementioned outcomes are reversed. This is the inclusion imperative. Simply put, diversity without inclusion will not work.

Recent studies have shown that legal mandates for EEO and the presence of diversity are necessary but not sufficient to effectively manage organizational diversity (Herring, 2009). Organizations must have conditions in place to ensure that diverse perspectives are heard and all contributors are empowered. To achieve, agencies must look internally at their organizational cultures and the institutional processes that impact employees’ ability to fully participate and contribute to the mission. This requires examining and eliminating systemic barriers to inclusion in all aspects of the
organizations. The aim is to build an inclusive organization as characterized by equal access to opportunity, culturally competent norms, transparent communications, participatory work processes and decision-making, constructive conflict management, leadership development, equitable rewards systems, and shared accountability. These inclusion characteristics are drivers of employee engagement and organizational performance; inclusion holds the key to actualizing the performance potential of workforce diversity.

Implicit in all this is the notion that diversity goes beyond our race and gender, to include the diversity of thought that accompanies our human identity. It is the inextricable link between who we are and how we think that makes diversity such a potent ingredient in organizational performance. Viewed this way, the concept of inclusion galvanizes the field of EEO and diversity management by stressing inclusion of all employees, not only legally-protected classes. It in fact strengthens the commitment to equal opportunity by expanding its stakeholders to the entire workforce, not just segments of it. Inclusion transcends parochial interests, and therefore is championed by all.

We are proud to lead the effort to build diversity and cultivate inclusion in the VA and beyond. We do so in collaboration with all our partners and stakeholders under the guiding principles of being people centric, results driven, and forward looking to provide the best service to our Nation’s Veterans.

Georgia Coffey
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Diversity and Inclusion
# Organizational Acronyms

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<td>Center for Minority Veterans</td>
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<td>Center for Women Veterans</td>
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The Current State of VA

To provide the context for this strategic plan, the following information presents a demographic analysis of the VA workforce (workforce diversity) and internal employee perceptions as revealed in organizational climate surveys (workplace inclusion), as of September 30, 2011.

Workforce Diversity

At the end of fiscal year (FY) 2011, VA’s workforce totaled 315,116 employees, including 19,657 temporary employees. The overall breakdown of the VA workforce in FY 2011 by race, ethnicity, and gender is depicted below:

VA’s FY 2011 Workforce
EEOC requires that Federal agencies compare their workforce composition by race, ethnicity, and gender (REG) with corresponding groups in the Civilian Labor Force (CLF)\textsuperscript{4}, and Relevant Civilian Labor Force (RCLF).\textsuperscript{5} Currently, this data is based on the 2000 census. Compared to the RCLF, VA’s workforce is at, or above, RCLF representation in all areas except White males, and White and Hispanic females. For the purposes of this plan, we will focus on the barriers to groups with historically low participation rates. While White females have low participation rates when compared to the RCLF, they are the largest group in VA. The following graph depicts a comparison of the VA workforce with the RCLF for FY 2010 and FY 2011.

\textbf{VA Workforce vs. RCLF (FY 2010 and FY 2011)}

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        };
    },
    symbolic x coords={White Male, White Female, Black or African American Male, Black or African American Female, Hispanic Male, Hispanic Female, Asian Male, Asian Female, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Male, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Female, American Indian or Alaska Native Male, American Indian or Alaska Native Female, Two or More Races/Undisclosed Male, Two or More Races/Undisclosed Female},
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    ylabel={Percentage},
    ymax=60,
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        \ifnum\pgfmathresult=1
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        \else
            \pgfmathprintnumber{\pgfmathresult}%
        \fi
    },
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]
\addplot [draw=blue, fill=blue!20, bar width=18pt] coordinates {
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    (White Female, 0)
    (Black or African American Male, 0)
    (Black or African American Female, 0)
    (Hispanic Male, 0)
    (Hispanic Female, 0)
    (Asian Male, 0)
    (Asian Female, 0)
    (Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Male, 0)
    (Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Female, 0)
    (American Indian or Alaska Native Male, 0)
    (American Indian or Alaska Native Female, 0)
    (Two or More Races/Undisclosed Male, 0)
    (Two or More Races/Undisclosed Female, 0)
};
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    (White Female, 0)
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    (Black or African American Female, 0)
    (Hispanic Male, 0)
    (Hispanic Female, 0)
    (Asian Male, 0)
    (Asian Female, 0)
    (Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Male, 0)
    (Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Female, 0)
    (American Indian or Alaska Native Male, 0)
    (American Indian or Alaska Native Female, 0)
    (Two or More Races/Undisclosed Male, 0)
    (Two or More Races/Undisclosed Female, 0)
};
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    (White Female, 0)
    (Black or African American Male, 0)
    (Black or African American Female, 0)
    (Hispanic Male, 0)
    (Hispanic Female, 0)
    (Asian Male, 0)
    (Asian Female, 0)
    (Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Male, 0)
    (Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Female, 0)
    (American Indian or Alaska Native Male, 0)
    (American Indian or Alaska Native Female, 0)
    (Two or More Races/Undisclosed Male, 0)
    (Two or More Races/Undisclosed Female, 0)
};
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    (White Female, 0)
    (Black or African American Male, 0)
    (Black or African American Female, 0)
    (Hispanic Male, 0)
    (Hispanic Female, 0)
    (Asian Male, 0)
    (Asian Female, 0)
    (Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Male, 0)
    (Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Female, 0)
    (American Indian or Alaska Native Male, 0)
    (American Indian or Alaska Native Female, 0)
    (Two or More Races/Undisclosed Male, 0)
    (Two or More Races/Undisclosed Female, 0)
};
\legend{FY 2010, FY 2011, RCLF, CLF}
\end{axis}
\end{tikzpicture}

\footnotesize

\textsuperscript{4} CLF reflects all individuals 16 years of age and older employed or seeking employment in the United States, excluding the Armed Forces.
\textsuperscript{5} RCLF is the CLF in occupations specific to VA.
People with Targeted Disabilities

VA continues to increase its representation of employees with targeted disabilities. As of September 30, 2011, people with targeted disabilities represented 1.65 percent of the VA workforce (temporary and permanent). Of the cabinet agencies, VA has the second highest ratio of this population. Beginning in FY 2009, VA reversed a decade long decline in the representation of people with targeted disabilities. For FY 2011, the Secretary’s two percent hiring goal for all of VA was nearly met, 1.90 percent of the total hires (permanent and temporary) have a targeted disability. An eleven year trend of the percentage of the VA workforce with a targeted disability is provided in the graph below. The government average for FY 2011 was not available at the time of this publication; the FY 2010 government average is 0.91 percent.

People with a Targeted Disability (percentage of total workforce) FY 2000–2011
Senior Executive Representation

As of September 30, 2011, the Senior Executive Service (SES) and Title 38 SES Equivalent population was 456, an increase of 26 from September 30, 2010. The graph below provides the representation of the SES and Title 38 SES Equivalent population by race, ethnicity, and gender. In addition, the representation of the entire VA workforce is included in the graph for comparative purposes. Compared with the government average for SES, the representation of White and Black females in the SES and Title 38 Equivalent population are above the government average. Similarly, the representation of the Hispanic and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander male SES population are above the government average.

**SES and Title 38 SES Equivalent Representation in FY 2011**
Hires and Losses

The graph below provides the number of hires and losses (permanent and temporary workforce) data by REG. In FY 2011, VA hired individuals from each group at a rate equivalent or greater than their separations.

Hires and Losses by Race, Ethnicity, and Gender in FY 2011
Comparison of Separations, Hires, and On Board Representation Rates

The graph below provides the representation rate of the workforce as of September 30, 2011, and the losses and hires that occurred during FY 2011. White women and Hispanic women fell below their expected representation rate based on the RCLF. The hire rates for White and Hispanic women also fell below their respective rate in the RCLF.

Separations, Hires, and On-Board Representation Rates in FY 2011

Workplace Inclusion

There are many ways of assessing workplace inclusion. One commonly accepted method is to examine employee perceptions based on their responses to inclusion-related items in employee surveys.

The Partnership for Public Service summarized the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey results by creating various indexes using different combinations of survey items. The collective indexes make up the "Best Places to Work in the Federal Government." This list ranks 308 total Federal organizations including 33 large agencies, 35 small agencies, and 240 subcomponent agencies.
The following table portrays VA’s Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey results and VA’s ranking by the Partnership for Public Service for the past two years. From 2010 to 2011, VA experienced the highest increase in the survey items related to “Support for Diversity.”

### The Best Places to Work Ranking – VA Scores for FY 2011 and 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Index</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support for Diversity</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Leadership - Supervisors</td>
<td>60.1</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Leadership</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Management</td>
<td>58.1</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work/Life Balance</td>
<td>56.8</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Based Rewards and Advancement</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>62.8</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and Development</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td>61.3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Leadership - Fairness</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>No Data</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Leadership - Leaders</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>No Data</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Leadership - Empowerment</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>No Data</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Skills/Mission Match</td>
<td>80.7</td>
<td>81.7</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Friendly Culture and Benefits</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Customer Service and Stakeholder Relations

VA currently gauges customer satisfaction by examining the results of customer surveys. The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) provides information on the satisfaction of some VA customers. For example, the ACSI measures the satisfaction of outpatients at VA clinics, inpatients at VA medical centers, relatives of Veterans interned at VA national cemeteries, and users of VA’s main Web site and the My HealtheVet Web site. By those measures, VA customer satisfaction is fairly high, especially for the National Cemetery Administration.

### American Customer Satisfaction Index Scores for Years 2007 to 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VHA: Inpatients at VA medical centers</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VHA: Outpatients at VA clinics</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VHA: Users of the Civilian Health and Medical Program</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCA: Relatives or individuals responsible for interment</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA Web sites</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [http://www.theacsi.org](http://www.theacsi.org)

Note: Cells marked not applicable (N/A) signify that the identified dimensions were not measured for that specific year.
Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan

Overview

Mission

The mission of the VA diversity and inclusion program is to build a diverse workforce and cultivate an inclusive workplace to deliver the best services to our Nation’s Veterans, their families, and beneficiaries.

Vision

VA is a leader in creating and sustaining a high-performing workforce by leveraging diversity and empowering employees to achieve superior results in service to our Nation and its Veterans.

Values

VA’s diversity and inclusion program adheres to the Department’s core values of integrity, commitment, advocacy, respect, and excellence (I CARE).

Goals

To fulfill the diversity and inclusion program’s mission and vision, VA will pursue the following goals:

1. **A Diverse Workforce**: Build a diverse, high-performing workforce that reflects all segments of society.
2. **An Inclusive Workplace**: Cultivate a flexible, collaborative, and inclusive work environment that leverages diversity and empowers all contributors.
3. **Outstanding Public Service**: Facilitate outstanding, culturally competent public service and stakeholder relations through effective leadership and accountability.

Implementation

The following pages identify the objectives, strategies, and measures designed to achieve the aforementioned goals. In cases where an organization has primary (but not exclusive) responsibility for the execution of a specific strategy, that organization has been identified in parentheses at the end of the strategy. In all other cases where there are joint or overlapping responsibilities, the responsible office may not be specifically identified. The *VA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan* is intended to be a multi-year effort, and changing conditions, including budget constraints, may require refinement to the plan’s components. Implementation will be led by VA ODI, in partnership with VA’s three Administrations (VHA, VBA, NCA), and staff offices. Progress made pursuant to this plan will be reported annually in the *VA Diversity and Inclusion Annual Performance Report*. 
Goal 1: A Diverse Workforce

Build a diverse, high-performing workforce that reflects all segments of society.

Federal agencies are required to take appropriate actions to ensure there is equal opportunity in the workplace by identifying and removing barriers to EEO. Actions include comparing the demographic composition of the workforce to the demographic composition of the relevant labor market, removing internal barriers, conducting strategic outreach to communities and utilizing special hiring authorities for members of groups with less than expected participation rates. Building a diverse, high-performing workforce will involve these established strategies as well as new, proactive strategies aimed at attracting broader, emerging aspects of our diversity.

Objective 1A: Eliminate barriers to EEO at all levels and in all occupations.

Strategies:

- Implement the VA Diversity Index\(^6\) to monitor the status of VA’s diversity and provide quarterly workforce diversity reports to leadership (ODI, VHA, VBA, NCA).
- Identify barriers to EEO by REG, disability status, Veteran status, in hiring, promotions, separations, and career development; and by grade levels and major occupations annually in accordance with EEOC Management Directive 715 (ODI, VHA, VBA, NCA).
- Establish baseline metrics and a reporting system to enable VA offices to identify and eliminate any barriers present in the processes used to recruit or select Hispanic, White female, and people with disabilities (PWD) applicants for initial employment (VA-wide).
- Establish baseline metrics and a reporting system to enable VA offices to identify and eliminate any barriers present in the processes used to recruit or select White, Black, Asian, and American Indian females, and PWD for promotion (VA-wide).
- Establish baseline metrics and a reporting system to enable VA offices to identify and eliminate any barriers present in the processes used to recruit or select women, Black and Asian men (groups with less than expected SES participation) for appointment to the Senior Executive Service (VA-wide).
- Perform applicant flow/adverse impact analyses in recruitment and leadership selection processes (ODI).
- Implement EEO, Diversity and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) dashboard to provide real time status of EEO, workforce diversity and ADR usage (ORM, ODI).
- Utilize staffing flexibilities and special hiring authorities (e.g., Veterans, Schedule A for people with disabilities, student internships, fellowships); use ODI’s Recruitment and Selection Best Practices Guide (http://www.diversity.va.gov/products/files/RSG.pdf) (VA-wide).
- Develop strategic partnerships with affinity organizations, professional associations, and educational institutions focused on groups with low participation rates to perform recruitment outreach (VA-wide).
- Establish hiring and on-board goals for people with targeted disabilities (VA-wide).

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\(^6\) The VA Diversity Index is a new metric developed by VA ODI that measures VA’s aggregate workforce composition by race, ethnicity, and gender as compared with the corresponding CLF/RCLF.
Measures:

- Report VA Diversity Index in quarterly workforce diversity reports and in Monthly Performance Review beginning in FY 2012 (NOTE: this Index is intended for use as an indicator of program impact and overall progress, not as a target metric).
- Deliver timely, accurate quarterly workforce diversity analysis reports to leadership and annual reports to external agencies (EEOC Management Directive 715 Report; diversity reports to OPM) as appropriate.
- Implement applicant flow/adverse impact analysis system by end of FY 2014 and increase representation of groups with low participation rates in recruitment and leadership development applicant pools.
- Implement EEO, Diversity and Alternative Dispute Resolution dashboard by end of FY 2013.
- Participate in a minimum of six national/local job fairs or events targeting outreach to groups with low participation rates.\(^7\)
- Increase on-board representation of employees with targeted disabilities to 2.5 percent by end of FY 2016.

Objective 1B: Achieve diversity in the broadest context throughout the workforce.

Strategies:

- Implement diversity-focused internship and fellowship programs, including centralized Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP), centralized National Diversity Internship Program (NDIP), and Career Pathways Programs (ODI, OHRM).
- Work with VESO, CWV, and CMV to ensure that employment outreach programs target disabled, female, minority, and multigenerational Veterans and spouses of Veterans (VA-wide).

Measures:

- Sponsor 20 WRP interns and 100 NDIP interns annually, budget permitting.
- Increase on-board representation of Veterans to 40 percent of the workforce by end of FY 2014.
- Increase participation in Veteran outreach events targeting demographic groups with low participation rates.

\(^7\) Six outreach events by ODI and per Administration.
Goal 2: An Inclusive Workplace

Cultivate a flexible, collaborative, and inclusive work environment that leverages diversity and empowers all contributors.

In order to reap the benefits of workforce diversity, work environments must maintain the facilitating conditions that enable diverse perspectives to be heard and empower all participants to contribute. This requires deliberate efforts by leadership to provide flexibility with respect to where, when, and how work gets done; promote robust collaboration through teamwork, participatory work processes, and cross-functional work experiences; and engage all employees through cultural competency, leadership development, reasonable accommodation, and constructive conflict management. These are more than retention strategies; they are strategies that engage and develop our human resources to their fullest potential so that they may advance the VA mission.

Objective 2A: Leverage workforce diversity and empower diverse perspectives throughout the organization through career/leadership development.

Strategies:

- Develop workforce succession plans addressing barriers to EEO and diversity; analyze attrition by REG (VA-wide).
- Incorporate diversity and inclusion in the curricula of all leadership development programs (ODI, VALU, CSEMO, VHA, VBA, NCA).
- Aggressively market broad as well as targeted outreach for leadership development and mentoring programs (Aspiring Leaders, Leadership VA, SES Candidate Development Program, Technical Career Field programs) (VA-wide).
- Perform adverse impact analyses of leadership development application and selection processes (ODI).
- Promote and utilize ADVANCE and MyCareer@VA (career mapping system) to facilitate career development and upward mobility (VA-wide).
- Track training and development participation rates by REG in VA Talent Management System (TMS) (VALU, OHRM, ODI).
- Support for broad participation in inter-office/inter-agency details and rotations including Intergovernmental Personnel Act Mobility Program (VA-wide).

Measures

- Reduce “regrettable losses” (non-retirement voluntary separations/resignations) by 10 percent of current baseline for groups with higher than expected attrition rates by end of FY 2016.
- Increase diversity in leadership development and mentoring program applicant pools.
- Develop the ability to track training and development participation rates by REG and disability status in TMS by end of FY 2013.

Objective 2B: Cultivate a flexible, collaborative, and inclusive organizational culture for all employees.
Strategies:

- Implement VA Inclusion Index\(^8\) to measure organizational inclusion (ODI).
- Employ ORM’s Organizational Climate Assessment Programs (OCAP) in organizations experiencing high workplace conflict/per capita complaints (ORM).
- Employ Civility, Respect, and Engagement in the Workplace (CREW) initiatives in organizations experiencing high workplace conflict/per capita complaints (VA-wide).
- Analyze the results of VA’s All Employee Survey and Voice of VA survey and implement corrective strategies as appropriate (VA-wide).
- Conduct EEO program technical assistance reviews in headquarters and field organizations (ODI, VHA, VBA, NCA).
- Support special emphasis programs (SEPs), employee affinity and resource groups, and expand these groups to represent new, emerging aspects of diversity (multigenerational; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender [LGBT]; etc.) (VA-wide).
- Modify existing electronic employee exit survey to include questions focused on diversity and inclusion issues (OHRM, ODI).
- Implement work/life flexibilities (wellness, telework, flexible work schedules) as appropriate (VA-wide).
- Support and participate in ADR processes and promote effective labor/management collaborations (VA-wide).
- Implement and promote use of centralized reasonable accommodation funding and tracking system (ODI).

Measures:

- Implement VA Inclusion Index by end of FY 2013 and determine baseline to inform future goal-setting.
- Implement responsive action plans in accordance with the employee survey results annually.
- Enhance standardized electronic employee exit survey to include questions on diversity and inclusion by end of FY 2014.
- Increase work/life initiatives and telework usage for suitable positions by 10 percent above current baseline by end of FY 2016.
- Increase overall ADR participation rate to 55 percent and resolution rate of informal EEO complaint rate to 50 percent by end of FY 2014.
- Reduce per capita formal EEO complaints to below the government average by end of FY 2016.
- Reduce per capita grievances by five percent below current baseline by end of FY 2016.
- Increase usage of wellness and telework programs by five percent above current baseline by end of FY 2016.
- Conduct a minimum of six technical assistance reviews annually.
- Process 90 percent of reasonable accommodation requests in accordance with established timelines by end of FY 2016.
- Perform compliance review of physical, EIT, and program accessibility standards in VA Administrations in collaboration with the Office of Information and Technology and Office of Acquisitions, Logistics, and Construction by end of FY 2016.

\(^8\) The VA Inclusion Index is a new metric developed by ODI to measure organizational inclusion based on employee responses to empirically-validated survey items related to inclusion in the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey.
Goal 3: Outstanding Public Service

Facilitate outstanding, culturally competent public service and stakeholder relations through effective leadership and accountability.

Research has shown that a diverse workforce and inclusive workplace are associated with greater organizational performance. The ultimate goal of having a diverse workforce and an inclusive work environment is to deliver better services to our customers (internal and external) and meet the needs of our stakeholders. The transformation of an organization’s culture to this end requires a long-term commitment. Effective leadership and accountability are critical to sustaining this organization-wide commitment. The following strategies and objectives are aimed at facilitating and sustaining the effort to achieve the ultimate goal.

Objectives 3A: Provide outstanding, culturally competent services to Veterans, their families, and beneficiaries.

Strategies:

• Deliver cultural competency, diversity and inclusion training to the VA workforce (ODI, VALU).
• Support implementation of patient-centered care (VHA).
• Promote use of Small, Disadvantaged, Veteran-owned businesses (OSDBU).
• Monitor customer service surveys and indicators and take action as appropriate (Staff Offices, VHA, VBA, NCA).
• Target outreach to Native Hawaiian, Alaska Native, American Indian, and other indigenous/rural populations that historically do not avail themselves of VA services (VA-wide).

Measures:

• Establish baseline of employees completing cultural competency/diversity and inclusion training utilizing TMS by end of FY 2014.
• Increase VA scores that fall below industry standards on customer satisfaction index in all populations by end of FY 2014.
• Increase timeliness in approval/certification of Veteran-owned businesses annually.
• Meet or exceed OSDBU socioeconomic procurement goals annually.
• Increase culturally competent services to Native Hawaiian, Alaska Native, American Indian, and other indigenous/rural populations.

Objectives 3B: Strengthen relations with stakeholders.

Strategies:

• Leverage, support, and coordinate with internal and external VA stakeholders, including but not limited to the following:
  • American Indian Science and Engineering Society
  • Asian American Government Executive Network
  • Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies
  • Blacks in Government
Measures:

- Increase participation in national/local outreach and partnership events involving stakeholder/affinity organizations to ten, budget permitting, by end of FY 2014
- Meet or exceed OSDBU goals in contracting activity annually.

Objectives 3C: Equip leaders with diversity and inclusion knowledge and skills to effectively lead their workforce.

Strategies:

- Implement updated mandatory EEO, Diversity and Inclusion, and Conflict Management Training for all Senior Executives, Managers, and Supervisors (ODI, ORM, VALU).
- Implement and monitor mandatory EEO, Diversity and Inclusion, ADR performance standards in all leadership (SES and Title 38 equivalents) and supervisory performance plans (ORM, ODI, CEMO, OHRM).
Measures:

- Implement updated mandatory EEO, Diversity and Inclusion, and Conflict Management Training for Senior Executives by end of FY 2013.
- Implement Executive Dashboard reporting EEO, diversity and inclusion, ADR performance metrics by end of FY 2014.
- Achieve 95 percent timely completion rate on biennial mandatory EEO, Diversity and Inclusion, and Conflict Management Training for all managers and supervisors.
- Increase overall ADR participation rate to 55 percent and resolution rate of informal EEO complaint rate to 50 percent by end of FY 2014.

Objective 3D: Institutionalize shared accountability for a culture of diversity and inclusion.

Strategies:

- Issue a VA Diversity and Inclusion Annual Performance Report reporting progress made on the VA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan (ODI).
- Issue annual VA-wide diversity and inclusion policy directives and statements issued by the VA Secretary (ODI).
- Implement standardized VA-wide diversity and inclusion performance elements and standards in all employee performance plans (ORM, ODI, CSEMO, OHRM).
- Provide EEO, diversity and inclusion, and conflict management training for all employees (ODI, ORM, VALU).
- Maintain VA Diversity Council, comprising representatives from all VA components, reporting to the Secretary of VA (ODI).
- Promote participation in Secretary’s Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Awards Program and in the Secretary’s Alternative Dispute Resolution Excellence Awards Program (ODI, ORM, VHA, VBA, NCA).
- Incorporate broad-based diversity and inclusion content in agency branding and communication strategies (media outreach, public awards, various communications tools and vehicles, strategic communications, Web sites) (ODI, OPIA, OHRM).

Measures:

- Issue timely and accurate VA Diversity and Inclusion Annual Performance Report reporting progress made on VA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan.
- Implement on-line EEO, diversity, and ADR dashboard to report subject metrics, including VA Diversity and Inclusion Indices, to VA leadership, by end of FY 2014.
- Update VA Directive 5975 (EEO and diversity management) and 5975.1 (reasonable accommodation) by end of FY 2013.
- Issue timely annual EEO and diversity policy statements by the VA Secretary.
- Implement standardized VA-wide diversity and inclusion performance elements and standards in all employee performance plans by end of FY 2014.
- Increase nominations for Secretary’s Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Awards Program and the Secretary’s Alternative Dispute Resolution Excellence Awards Program.
- Increase dissemination and readership of the Diversity@Work newsletter, NewsLink, Diversity News broadcasts, and other diversity and inclusion communications annually.
- Maintain updated content on the VA diversity and inclusion Web site (http://www.diversity.va.gov) annually.
Applicable Laws

(not exhaustive)

- Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended – prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin; the law also makes it illegal to retaliate against an individual because he/she complained about discrimination, filed a complaint, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit;

- Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, as amended – prohibits employment discrimination against individuals 40 years of age or older;

- Equal Pay Act of 1963, as amended – prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in compensation for substantially equal work performed under similar working conditions;

- Sections 501, 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended – prohibits employment discrimination and reprisal against people with disabilities in the Federal government or applicants for Federal employment; Section 501 requires reasonable accommodation for known disabilities; Section 504 requires that all Federal programs be accessible; and Section 508 requires that all electronic technology be accessible;

- Genetic Information Non-Discrimination Act of 2008 – prohibits employment discrimination based on genetic information;

- Title V, United States Code Section 2301 – provides that recruitment should be from qualified individuals from appropriate sources from all segments of society; selection and advancement should be determined solely on the basis of merit, after fair and open competition so that all receive equal opportunity; and fair and equitable treatment in all aspects of personnel management without regard to political affiliation, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age, or handicapping condition, and with proper regard for their privacy and constitutional rights;

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, Title 1, and ADA Amendments Act of 2008 – revises the definition of “disability” to more broadly encompass impairments that substantially limit a major life activity. The amended language also states that mitigating measures, including assistive devices, auxiliary aids, accommodations, medical therapies and supplies (other than eyeglasses and contact lenses) have no bearing in determining whether a disability qualifies under the law. Changes also clarify coverage of impairments that are episodic or in remission that substantially limit a major life activity when active, such as epilepsy or post traumatic stress disorder. The amendments took effect January 1, 2009.
Merit System Principles
(5 USC § 2301)

1. Recruitment should be from qualified individuals from appropriate sources in an endeavor to achieve a work force from all segments of society, and selection and advancement should be determined solely on the basis of relative ability, knowledge and skills, after fair and open competition which assures that all receive equal opportunity.

2. All employees and applicants for employment should receive fair and equitable treatment in all aspects of personnel management without regard to political affiliation, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age, or handicapping condition, and with proper regard for their privacy and constitutional rights.

3. Equal pay should be provided for work of equal value, with appropriate consideration of both national and local rates paid by employers in the private sector, and appropriate incentives and recognition should be provided for excellence in performance.

4. All employees should maintain high standards of integrity, conduct, and concern for the public interest.

5. The Federal work force should be used efficiently and effectively.

6. Employees should be retained on the basis of adequacy of their performance, inadequate performance should be corrected, and employees should be separated who cannot or will not improve their performance to meet required standards.

7. Employees should be provided effective education and training in cases in which such education and training would result in better organizational and individual performance.

8. Employees should be--
   a. protected against arbitrary action, personal favoritism, or coercion for partisan political purposes, and
   b. prohibited from using their official authority or influence for the purpose of interfering with or affecting the result of an election or a nomination for election.

9. Employees should be protected against reprisal for the lawful disclosure of information which the employees reasonably believe evidences--
   a. a violation of any law, rule, or regulation, or
   b. mismanagement, a gross waste of funds, an absence of authority, or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety.
For more information, please contact:

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of Diversity and Inclusion (06)
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Phone: (202) 461-4131
Fax: (202) 501-2145
odi@va.gov
http://www.diversity.va.gov
VA EEO, Diversity & Inclusion, No FEAR, and Whistleblower Protection Policy Statement
TO ALL EMPLOYEES


As Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), I am committed to providing our Veterans the world-class benefits and services they have earned. Accordingly, it is critical that all of us at VA reaffirm our commitment to our Mission and our Core Values – Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence. Our commitment to serving our Veterans must be steadfast and unwavering. Likewise, our commitment and obligation to proactively prevent unlawful discrimination, harassment, and reprisal must be clear, convincing, comprehensive, and consistent. As such, I am committed to a VA workforce that draws from all segments of American society and that ensures every VA employee has the opportunity and access to fully contribute to VA's important mission of serving our Nation's Veterans.

This Policy Statement reaffirms our commitment to a fair, equitable, and open work environment, and guides us in promoting healthy relationships with a diverse, cooperative, supportive, and engaged workforce. I believe each of us must adhere to the highest standards of accountability, commitment, compassion, professionalism, and stewardship. To that end, we must all champion the principles of MyVA as a means of orienting our workforce to being employee-led and Veteran-centric. We all have a responsibility to contribute to the well-being of our Nation's Veterans by promoting and sustaining the Department's mission and vision.

Executives, managers, and supervisors bear a unique responsibility to comply with and ensure the policies and processes outlined in the attached Policy Statement are given the widest dissemination and fullest measure of execution and implementation.

Thank you for your commitment, dedication and hard work to this noble cause.

Robert A. McDonald

Attachment
VA is committed to ensuring Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), promoting workforce diversity, workplace inclusion, and constructively resolving conflict to maintain a high-performing organization in service to our Nation's Veterans. VA will vigorously enforce all applicable Federal EEO laws, executive orders, and management directives to ensure equal opportunity in the workplace for all VA employees. This document summarizes VA's EEO, Diversity and Inclusion, Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act (No FEAR), and Whistleblower Rights and Protection policies.

EEO and Prohibited Discrimination

VA does not tolerate unlawful discrimination, including workplace harassment, based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex (including gender identity, transgender status, sexual orientation, and pregnancy), age (40 or older), disability, genetic information, marital status, parental status, political affiliation, or retaliation for opposing discriminatory practices or participating in the discrimination-complaint process. This applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including recruitment, hiring, promotions, transfers, reassignments, training, career development, benefits, and separation.

Employees and applicants for employment seeking redress under the EEO complaint process must contact an EEO counselor in person, by phone, or in writing within 45 calendar days of the date of the alleged discrimination. VA's Office of Resolution Management (ORM) is responsible for administering an impartial and effective complaints management process to receive, investigate, and resolve, if possible, complaints of employment discrimination at the earliest possible stage. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) regulations governing the Federal EEO complaint process are found in 29 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 1614. Employees may report allegations of discrimination to ORM at (888) 737-3361.

Employees may also raise allegations of discrimination to their supervisor or a management official in their chain of command, or they may raise discrimination issues through the VA Negotiated Process, Administrative Grievance Process or the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) as appropriate. While an allegation of discrimination may be raised through these additional avenues, this action does not constitute initiation of an EEO complaint with an EEO counselor through the Federal sector EEO complaint process, and it does not extend the 45 calendar-day time limit to initiate an EEO complaint with ORM.

Complaints of discrimination filed on the basis of marital status or political affiliation may be investigated as prohibited personnel practices and are processed under the jurisdiction of the MSPB or the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC).
Complaints filed on the basis of parental status may be processed through ORM. While parental status is not covered under the EEOC regulations, it is also a form of prohibited discrimination involving Federal employees. If a complaint is filed on this basis, it will be processed by ORM and a final agency decision will be rendered by the Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication (OEDCA).

**Prohibited Workplace Harassment Covered by EEO Laws**

Harassment by or against VA employees, applicants, contract employees, clients, customers, and anyone doing business with VA is strictly prohibited. Harassment becomes unlawful where 1) enduring the offensive conduct becomes a term or condition of continued employment, or 2) the conduct is severe or pervasive enough to create a work environment that a reasonable person would consider intimidating, hostile, or abusive. Harassment is considered unlawful conduct that is based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex (including gender identity, transgender status, sexual orientation, and pregnancy), age (40 or older), disability, genetic information, marital status, parental status, political affiliation, or retaliation for opposing discriminatory practices or participating in the discrimination-complaint process.

Harassment is a form of employment discrimination that violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (ADA), and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). Anti-discrimination laws also prohibit harassment against individuals in retaliation for filing a discrimination charge, testifying, or participating in any way in an investigation, proceeding, or lawsuit under these laws; or opposing employment practices that they reasonably believe discriminate against individuals, in violation of these laws.

Sexual harassment is a form of workplace harassment that is prohibited and will not be tolerated in VA. Compared to other forms of workplace harassment, it involves unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when: (1) submission to or rejection of such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of one's employment; (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by a person is used as a basis for career or employment decisions affecting that person; or (3) such conduct interferes with an individual's performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Sexual harassment or workplace harassment extends to harassing comments posted on social media, such as Internet sites. It is the duty of an employer to protect its employees from unlawful harassment, if there is a nexus with the workplace. This duty is unaffected by the location where harassment occurs, on or off the worksite, including in cyberspace. The duty remains the same—supervisors must intervene and take prompt and effective corrective action to end the harassment.
Supervisors who receive or become aware of allegations of harassment must contact their designated Anti-harassment Officer or the Anti-harassment Office located within ORM for appropriate guidance. Allegations of discrimination and harassment will be taken seriously and appropriate corrective action – up to and including termination – will be taken, if allegations are substantiated. Supervisors who receive complaints or become aware of workplace harassment in the organization should contact ORM for further guidance, and also report the status to VA’s Office of Accountability and Review.

Conflict Management and Alternative Dispute Resolution

Workplace conflict is often the result of miscommunication or creative tension in the organization. Properly managed, it can yield improvements in business processes and positive outcomes in the organizational climate. It is important we maintain an organizational culture in VA that does not suppress creative conflict or constructive dissent. To maintain a respectful, productive, and effective work environment, it is VA’s policy to address and resolve workplace disputes and EEO complaints at the earliest possible stage. VA offers Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) services such as mediation, facilitation, and conflict management coaching to assist parties in constructively resolving disputes. ADR involves a neutral third party working with the employee, supervisor, or group to engage in constructive communication, identify issues, and develop collaborative solutions. Employees and supervisors are encouraged to consult their ADR program manager or VA’s Workplace ADR Program for guidance and assistance in resolving workplace disputes of any kind.

Prohibited Workplace Violence and Bullying

Workplace violence, the threat of violence, or bullying of workers are strictly prohibited. This type of prohibited behavior can occur at or outside the workplace and can range from threats and verbal abuse to physical assaults. “Bullying” conduct constitutes fighting, hate messages, threats, and intention to inflict harm, or abusive, offensive, unprofessional, intimidating, slanderous, malicious, derogatory, or otherwise inappropriate or unacceptable language intended to degrade or humiliate a particular person or group of people. Bullying and workplace violence are violations of VA’s policy and will not be tolerated. Any employee who is subject to bullying behavior or potential workplace violence should immediately report the matter to his or her supervisor or another appropriate official. It is the duty of the supervisors to intervene and take prompt and effective corrective action to end the bullying conduct to prevent workplace violence, and to report the status to VA’s Office of Accountability and Review.

VA’s Office of Occupational Safety and Health under the Office of Administration is responsible for providing oversight of VA’s Occupational Safety and Health and Workers’ Compensation programs in support of VA’s Designated Agency Safety and Health Official. Violence in the workplace is an occupational safety hazard citable under Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards and under VA Directive 7700. Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and other Key
Officials are required to implement a violence prevention program.

Prohibited Personnel Practices

The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, as amended, protects Federal Government applicants and employees from "Prohibited Personnel Practices (PPP)" including discrimination, coercion, intimidation, preferential treatment, and other prohibited practices in violation of merit systems principles. Prohibited Personnel Practices are employment-related activities that are banned in the Federal workforce because they violate the merit system through some form of employment discrimination, retaliation, improper hiring practices, or failure to adhere to laws, rules, or regulations that directly concern the merit system principles. OSC is authorized to investigate and ensure that appropriate action is taken to correct prohibited conduct. Injured persons may bring actions before the MSPB, if OSC declines to act.

OSC has the authority to investigate and prosecute violations of the 13 PPPs. The 13 PPPs are: Discrimination, Considering Inappropriate Recommendations, Coercing Political Activity, Obstructing Competition, Influencing Withdrawal from Competition, Granting Unfair Advantage, Nepotism, Whistleblower Retaliation, Other Retaliation, Other Discrimination, Violating Veterans Preference, Violating Rules that Implement a Merit System Principle, and Imposing Nondisclosure Agreement that Doesn't Allow Whistleblowing. For more information visit: https://osc.gov/Pages/PPP.aspx.

No FEAR Act

It is imperative that all VA employees, supervisors, and officials understand the protections afforded by the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation (No FEAR) Act and the Whistleblower Protection Act. The No FEAR Act of 2002 protects Federal employees from unlawful discrimination and retaliation for opposition to or participation in protected EEO and whistleblowing activity. VA will not tolerate discrimination or retaliation for engaging in protected EEO activity.

Whistleblower Rights and Protection

The Whistleblower Protection Act prohibits retaliation against public employees or applicants for employment for reporting a violation of law, rule, or regulation; gross mismanagement; gross waste of funds; an abuse of authority; or a substantial and special danger to public health or safety. Retaliation against individuals for whistleblowing, opposing discrimination, or participating in the discrimination-complaint process is unlawful and will not be tolerated. This includes complainants, witnesses, and others who provide information concerning such claims.

The Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act of 2012 amended the law regarding whistleblowers’ rights by: (1) making a whistleblower’s oral disclosures legally sufficient; no longer must a disclosure be in writing; (2) making disclosures that
fall within the whistleblower’s job duties an eligible basis of a whistleblower claim; (3) strengthening anti-retaliation restrictions; (4) allowing damages that could be obtained by a whistleblower to include consequential damages such as emotional distress; and (5) establishing a 2-year trial period for these provisions. Avenues of redress available to address claims of reprisal for whistleblowing include local Congressional representatives, the MSPB, and the OSC. VA will not tolerate violations of the spirit or letter of these Federal statutes.

Every VA employee is responsible for safeguarding the privacy of Veterans and other individuals served by VA and for complying with laws that protect patient health information and other sensitive personal information. Be advised that a whistleblower disclosure of information is protected only if the release is specifically permitted by all applicable confidentiality provisions. Wrongful disclosure of sensitive personal information, such as medical or personnel records, may be subject to civil and criminal penalties as well as disciplinary or other adverse action. For additional information visit ODI web site at http://www.diversity.va.gov/whistleblower.aspx.

Reasonable Accommodations

VA is committed to the employment and retention of individuals with disabilities. All Federal employees and members of the public with disabilities must have access to and use of information and data, comparable to that of employees and members of the general public without disabilities, unless an undue hardship would be imposed on the agency. To that end, VA will vigorously enforce Sections 501, 504, 505, and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended; which mirror the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008. This includes maintaining accessibility of electronic and information technology to individuals with disabilities.

Title I (Employment) of the Americans with Disabilities Act is designed to help people with disabilities access the same employment opportunities and benefits available to people without disabilities. An important component in hiring and retaining individuals with disabilities is the provision of reasonable accommodations to employees and applicants on the basis of disability in accordance with law. For individuals with disabilities, a reasonable accommodation is any change in the work environment or in the manner work is accomplished that enables them to perform the essential functions of their jobs and enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment.

Reasonable accommodations may also include the use of properly trained service animals. A doctor’s note does not turn an animal into a service animal. A service animal means any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. The work or task performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual’s disability. Emotional support
animals, comfort animals, and therapy animals are not service animals under Title III of the ADA. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not considered service animals either.

The procedures for requesting and processing requests for reasonable accommodation are contained in VA Handbook 5975.1. VA also has an established Centralized Fund used to reimburse VA Facilities and Staff Offices with costs associated with providing reasonable accommodations to employees and applicants with disabilities. Individuals interested in additional information should contact the VA’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion or visit: http://www.diversity.va.gov/policy/dra.aspx.

Additionally, Title III (Public Accommodations) of the ADA makes it clear that service animals are allowed in public facilities and accommodations. A service animal must be allowed to accompany the handler to any place in the building or facility where members of the public, program participants, customers, or clients are allowed. Even if the business or public program has a "no pets" policy, it may not deny entry to a person with a service animal.

Religious Accommodation

In accordance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, VA also provides religious accommodations to employees unless doing so imposes an undue hardship to the organization. Accommodations may include adjustments to work schedules to accommodate religious observances, allowances regarding religious attire, allowances to be excused from compulsory activities that conflict with the employees sincerely held religious beliefs or practices, and other modifications. Individuals who believe they need a religious accommodation should request the accommodation from their immediate supervisors.

Religious expression and exercise are permitted in the VA workplace provided that such expression does not suggest government endorsement or preference for one faith over another, interfere with efficient working of government VA operations, nor intrude upon the legitimate rights of other employees. For additional information on Guidance on Religious Exercise and Expression in VA Facilities and Property Under the Charge and Control of VA visit: http://www.diversity.va.gov/policy/files/reli-exp-memo.pdf

Language Usage

VA recognizes and respects the right of employees who speak languages other than English in the workplace, outside of the performance of their work duties. Employees may speak another language when the conversation is not related to the performance of their duties; for example, when they are in the break room or making a personal telephone call. Circumstances in which an English-only rule may be justified include: Communications with customers or coworkers who speak English only; emergencies or other situations in which workers must speak a common language to
promote safety; or cooperative work assignments in which the English-only is needed to promote efficiency. Even if there is a need for an English-only rule, supervisors may not take disciplinary action against employees for violating the rule unless VA notified workers about the rule and the consequences of violating it.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has stated that rules requiring employees to speak English only in the workplace violate the law unless they are reasonably necessary to the operation of the business. A rule requiring employees to speak English only in the workplace at all times, including breaks and lunch time, should be limited to the circumstances in which it is needed for the employer to operate safely or efficiently.

Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994

An employee has the right to be reemployed in his or her civilian job, if he or she leaves a civilian job to perform service in the Armed Forces, Reserves, National Guard, or other "uniformed services" as defined by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). USERRA ensures that persons who serve or have served in the uniformed services: (1) are not disadvantaged in their civilian careers because of their services in the uniformed service; (2) are promptly reemployed in their civilian jobs upon their return from duty; and (3) are not discriminated against in employment based on past, present, or future military service. Individuals interested in more information should visit: http://www.osc.gov/outreach.htm.

Mandatory EEO and Diversity & Inclusion Training

In order to sustain the fair, safe, and high performing culture these policies seek to create, VA employees must engage in continuous learning in these areas. VA is committed to educating its workforce on its EEO-related policies and workforce protections on a regular basis to maintain a discrimination-free workplace. Accordingly, VA requires that all employees take mandatory Prevention of Workplace Harassment Awareness and No FEAR Act training in the Talent Management System (TMS Item No. 8872) within 90 days of their initial hire and every two years thereafter.

Additionally, all executives, managers and supervisors are required to take biennial training on EEO, Diversity & Inclusion, and Conflict Management Training (TMS Item No. 1328672), and training on Whistleblower Rights and Protection and Prohibited Personnel Practices (TMS Item No. 3883649). All courses are available online at the following link: https://www.tms.va.gov/learning/user/deeplink_redirect.jsp.
To be a high performing organization, VA must cultivate an inclusive work culture and create an environment that reflects the rich diversity of our increasingly global community. Organizational inclusion involves leveraging the diversity of our workforce and empowering all of our employees to be fully engaged and to contribute to VA’s noble mission. Studies have shown that workplace inclusion drives employee engagement which yields higher organizational performance. To achieve full inclusion, we must also protect all voices and nurture a climate of psychological safety for all our human resources. Together, the principles of diversity and inclusion provide the cornerstones on which to build a high performing organization. They are more than legal or social imperatives in the 21st century; they are business imperatives essential to providing the effective and responsive public services.

We all share the responsibility to promote and embed the complementary principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion throughout VA, and embody VA’s code values of Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence. I ask every VA employee to embrace these principles and values so that we can provide the best possible care and services to our Nation’s Veterans and their families.

Secretary of Veterans Affairs

Date

4/2011
REFERENCES

FEDERAL EEO LAWS

Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967:
http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/adea.cfm

Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1975, as amended:
Prohibited discrimination on the basis of age in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance
http://www.dol.gov/oasam/regs/statutes/age_act.htm

Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008:
http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/adaaa.cfm

Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 (CSRA) - Prohibited Personnel Practices:
http://archive.opm.gov/oversight/proidx.asp

Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act:
http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/gina.cfm


Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009:
http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/111/s181

Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR):
http://www.opm.gov/information-management/no-fear-act/

The Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978:
http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/pregnancy.cfm


Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964: http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/titlevii.cfm

The Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act of 2012:

Uniform Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994:
EXECUTIVE ORDERS

Executive Order 13583, Establishing a Coordinated Government-wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in the Federal Workforce:

Executive Order 11478, as amended by Executive Order 13152:
Extending protection based on parental status

Executive Order 13548, Increasing Federal Employment of Individuals With Disabilities:

DIRECTIVES

Alternative Dispute Resolution, VA Directive 5978, February 7, 2013:

http://www.va.gov/vapubs/search_action.cfm?dType=1

Diversity and Inclusion, Management Directive VA Directive 5975, March 29, 2013:
http://www.va.gov/vapubs/search_action.cfm?dType=1

VA Handbook 5975.1, Processing Requests for Reasonable Accommodation by Employees and Applicants with Disabilities:
http://www.va.gov/vapubs/search_action.cfm?dType=1

Occupational Safety and Health, VA Directive 7700, February 11, 2009:

GUIDANCE


Office of Special Counsel Whistleblower Disclosures: http://www.osc.gov/wbdisc.htm


Filing Whistleblower Disclosures: http://www.va.gov/oig/hotline/default.asp
VA Whistleblower Protection Ombudsman Program:

OSC Pamphlet Whistleblower Rights and Protections: http://www.osc.fv/outjch. m

OSC Prohibited Personnel Practices: https://osc.gov/ppp


VA Workplace Alternative Dispute Resolution:
http://www1.va.gov/adr/workplaceADR.asp

VA Policy on Employee and Management Relations, Directive 5021:
http://www.va.gov/vapubs/search_acti oncfm?dType=1

Violence in the Workplace:
http://www.va.govNASAFETY/Dasholetters/AllVAEmployeesAndVolunteerslett.pdf
CONTACTS

EEOC: http://www.eeoc.gov/

EEOC:

http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/publication

MSPB: http://www.mspb.gov/

U.S. Office of Special Counsel: https://osc.gov/

VA's Office of Occupational Safety and Health:
http://www.va.gov/vasafety

VA's Office of Diversity and Inclusion:

VA's Office of Labor-Management Relations: http://www1.va.gov/lmr VA's Section 508 Office:
http://www.section508.va.gov/index.asp

No FEAR Report
### Equal Employment Opportunity Data Posted Pursuant to the no FEAR Act

**Internal Compliant Activity**

**VA-Wide**

#### 29 CFR §1614.704(a) - ©

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#### 29 CFR §1614.704(d)

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<td>Equal Pay Act</td>
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<td>Non-EEO</td>
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<td>Assignment of Duties</td>
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<td>Awards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conversion to Full-time</td>
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<td>Removal</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>Evaluation Appraisal</td>
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<td>Examination/Test</td>
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<td>Non-Sexual</td>
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<td>Sexual</td>
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<td>Medical Examination</td>
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<td>Pay (Including Overtime)</td>
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<td>Promotion/Non-Selection</td>
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<td>Reasonable Accommodation</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reinstatement</td>
<td>273</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retirement</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time and Attendance</td>
<td>171</td>
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29 CFR §1614.704(f)

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29 CFR §1614.704(g)

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## Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report

### Total Complaints Dismissed by Agency

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### 29 CFR §1614.704(i)

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**29 CFR §1614.704(k) 29 CFR §1614.705 Comparative Data**

**Findings of Discrimination Rendered by Issue**

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**U.S Department of Veterans Affairs**

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Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report
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<td>Final Agency Action</td>
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**29 CFR §1614.704(m)**

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<td><strong>29 CFR §1614.704 Comparative Data</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Total complaints from previous Fiscal Years 704(l)(1)</strong></td>
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**Notes:***
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