Capacity Building

Goal 1. Increase access to VA resources such as small and disadvantaged business development counseling and small business loans to ensure Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) have needed information on available VA resources.

- In June 2015, the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) participated in the CelebrAsian Procurement Opportunity which was sponsored by the U.S. Pan Asian American Chamber of Commerce Education Foundation to share information on business development counseling and small business loans to underserved AAPI populations in support of VA Small Business procurement goals.
- In FY 2015, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Procurement and Logistics Office exceeded established goals for award of contracts to small disadvantage businesses and Plus 8(a) Business Development Program companies. OSDBU’s goal for VHA was 5 percent in FY 2015; the actual obligation was 6.75 percent, or $733,000,000.00 through September 9, 2015.

Goal 2. Promote AAPI presence on VA and other Federal Advisory Councils which promote the goals of Executive Order 13515, Increasing Participation of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Federal Programs.

- Office of Information and Technology (OI&T) created a Blog to interact with employees and gain a better perspective on issues AAPI groups are facing and what is needed to address those concerns and issues.
- VA’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) oversees the VA Diversity Council (VADC), which serves as an internal forum to address diversity and inclusion matters impacting the Department. The Council provides independent recommendations to VA leadership on policies, programs, and initiatives relating to workforce diversity and organizational inclusion. It also serves as a communication link between the workforce, subcomponent VA organizations, VA leadership, and a VA clearinghouse for diversity and inclusion training, resources, and best practices. The President of VA’s Chapter of the Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC) has also served as a nonvoting member of the VADC since 2010, and has briefed the Council on the FAPAC National Leadership Training Program and VA Central Office AAPI Heritage Month.
- ODI participated in the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (WHIAAPI) Summit in May 2015.

Goal 3. Increase access to information on VA grants, to include grant programs for research and development, cemetery grants, homeless Veterans, Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) grant, and the Special Housing Adaptation (SHA) grant.

- In FY 2015, the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) participated in eight outreach events to AAPI communities. Grant applications have also been modified to include social inclusion language.
- The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) met this goal by completing three outreach events. Additionally, to aid outreach efforts, VBA created and utilized fact sheets on Assistance for Homeless Veterans, SAH, and SHA benefits.
The Cleveland Regional Office (RO) was an active participant in recruiting local federal agencies to attend and participate in the WHIAAPI Listing Session that occurred at the Aerial International Center in Cleveland, OH on January 28, 2015. The Public Affairs Officer provided an overview of the ROs and benefits available to nearly 100 participants. The RO seeks qualified AA/PI candidates for the RO to remain competitive compared to the relevant civilian labor force.

The New York RO Human Resources (HR) Office worked with the VA National AAPI Program Manager in outreach activities. The RO HR also attended multiple job fairs and encouraged AAPI candidates to apply, resulting in two new AAPI employees as of August 31, 2015. Outreach activities were geared towards New York Veterans, dependents, and survivors in the Flushing, Jackson Heights, Queens, and Canal Street area of Manhattan. The exchange of information and provision of briefings occurred with the Office of U.S. Representative Grace Meng, whose district has a large AAPI community.

The Honolulu RO conducted VBA Benefits workshops in each of the neighboring islands in Hawaii, American Samoa, and the Island of the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana, which are visited twice a year for the workshop venue. During these workshops, an overview of all VBA benefits was provided to include SAH, Native American direct home loans, and the special adaption grant.

Goal 4. Establish a VA work group to address issues and concerns related to the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (WHIAAPI).

- VA maintained an intra-agency WHIAAPI work group that meets quarterly to ensure WHIAAPI plan goals and objectives are met in a timely manner.
- The VA WHAPPI workgroup collaborated to submit VA’s FY14/FY15 Agency Action Plan on November 22, 2014.
- VA’s OI&T established a VA Workgroup through the Diversity Management Advisory Council to monitor and assess the implementation of the WHIAAPI FY16/FY17 Agency Action Plan.
- The Phoenix RO intra-agency WHIAAPI work group met on a quarterly basis and collaborated on the annual report.

Goal 5. Improve federal civil rights protections for the AAPI community.

- VA’s Office of Resolution Management (ORM) continues to oversee VA’s compliance with civil rights statutes/laws including disseminating educational information, analyzing complaint trends, and providing training to ensure all employees, including AAPIs, are aware of their federal civil rights protections.

Goal 6. Work with the Department of Defense Veterans Groups to address the compensation of Filipino Veterans of World War II.

- The VBA New York RO liaison, the New York City Mayor’s Veterans Affairs Office, and the Department for Aging partnered to assist the surviving spouses of Filipino Veterans
who were deemed ineligible for survivor’s pension due to membership in the “New Philippines Scouts.”

Language Access

Goal 1. Increase access to VA programs by providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services.

- In March 2015, the Department of Justice (DOJ) completed its review of the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) individual plans for VHA, VBA and NCA submitted in FY 2012. In addition to DOJ’s comments and edits, representatives from each Administration recommended consolidating the plans into a single plan for the Department. ORM is collaborating with the three administrations to incorporate DOJ’s recommendations and consolidate the plan, and completion of the consolidated plan is set for the end of FY 2016.
  - The booklet features questions in fourteen different languages including Chinese, Korean, Filipino, Thai, and Vietnamese. It has been distributed in FY 2015 for use in all VHA medical facilities.
- VHA continues to utilize interpreter services primarily at the facility level and uses contract medical interpreters for Veterans and their respective family members as a means to address in-language services that have been assessed across all health care programs.

Workforce Diversity

Goal 1. Foster the recruitment, career development and advancement of AAPIs in the VA workforce.

- In addition, VA’s Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan (VA DISP) supports targeted diversity outreach to the Asian and Pacific Islander community, to realize VA DISP Goal #1, “Build a diverse, high-performing workforce that reflects all segments of society…”, and Goal #2, “Cultivate a flexible, collaborative, and inclusive work environment that leverages diversity and empowers all contributors.”
- NCA’s Minority Veterans Program Coordinators (MVPC), in collaboration with the NCA Outreach Office, participated in several events focused on the AAPI community to include FAPAC conference, Asian Fest 2015, Filipino-American Friendship Day, and the Japanese Citizen League Conference.
- VA’s Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration issued a departmental memorandum on External Affinity Conferences Approved for VA-Wide
Participation in FY 2015 which included the 30th Annual FAPAC National Leadership Training Program that was held in Washington, DC.
  o VA'ers participated in the event which featured an agency forum, and exhibit showcase whereby, information on VA Learning University (VALU), VA’s Diversity program, internship opportunities and Veterans Services was distributed to attendees.
  ▪ ODI produced a Department level memorandum commemorating May 2015 as AAPI Heritage Month for dissemination throughout VA.
    o The VA Central Office AAPI Heritage Month planning committee executed a cultural event on May 21, 2015.
  ▪ VHA provided EEO Managers and Special Emphasis Program Managers with information regarding the 2015 National AAPI Observance month to include the national theme with recommendations for local programs.
  ▪ VA ODI continues to promote the National Diversity Internship Program (NDIP) with various vendors that serve minority serving institutions, including Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs), to expose a diverse group of individuals to VA and build a pipeline for workforce diversity.
    o VHA, VBA, NCA, OI&T and VACO participate in this program annually by hosting NDIP interns.
    o VHA’s ODI and EEO/AEO, in its efforts to cultivate a diverse and multigenerational workforce, partnered with VA ODI to encourage VHA medical facilities and program offices to participate in the 2015 VA NDIP. VHA ODI forwarded announcements to VA Leadership, VHA Diversity and Inclusion Subcommittee Members, VHA VISN Diversity and Inclusion Chairpersons/Champions, VISN Lead Equal Employment Managers, HR personnel, SEPMs, supervisors, and managers.
    o In summer and fall of FY 2015, VHA employed 80 NDIP interns; 42 of the interns were funded by ODI and 35 were funded by VHA.
    o In FY 2015, NCA sponsored 10 NDIP interns through the NDIP program and two interns from Workforce Recruitment Program. As a part of the ongoing efforts to recruit interns into the Federal government, NCA held briefings on the Pathways Programs and MyCareer@VA.
  ▪ NCA conducted job information sessions promoting the Cemetery Director Intern Program. This event was marketed to internal and external organizations, including AAPI serving organizations.
  ▪ In FY 2015, VA submitted a report on support for Minority Serving Institutions, which includes VA support for AANAPISIs.
  ▪ The VHA Special Emphasis Programs Advisor Committee (SEPAC) presented two updates to VHA EEO Managers, SEPMs, and Human Resources Selective Placement Coordinators on their 2013-2018 Strategic Plan Goals and Accomplishments during FY 2015.
The VHA SEPAC has partnered with HR in presenting training on Special Hiring Authorities in 2015 and has plans for Selective Placement Program Coordinator training in early FY 2016.

The VHA Healthcare Recruitment & Marketing Office continues to advocate for activities which support the recruitment of a diverse population of applicants. The FY 2015 marketing plan activities included a recruitment booth at the National Association of Asian American Professionals in Dallas, TX on August 6-8, 2015.

VHA advertised with GoldSea Asian Media Group a 3 month 728x90 Banner delivering a large number of impressions: 588,235. GoldSea delivers unequaled reach to 17 million U.S. Asian consumers.

VA ODI staff conducted four MyCareer@VA career mapping program events at various locations to address grade disparities and glass ceilings for all groups, including AAPIs.

VA ODI staff implemented cultural competency and unconscious bias training for employees, and mandatory Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) training for all managers.

VA’s ODI continued to implement its Diversity Index and Inclusion Index to gauge workforce diversity and workplace inclusion of AAPIs and all groups.

The VA continues to implement D&I performance standards in senior executive’s performance plans that are tied to the VA FY 2012-2016 DISP.

Continued to meet with workforce planners to incorporate VA’s EEO and Diversity and Inclusion goals into VA’s Strategic Plan and to ensure EEO demographic data considerations (including AAPI representation in the workforce) are factored into VA’s Workforce Succession and Human Capital Plans.

VA entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the African American Federal Executives Association (AAFEA), and the Asian American Government Executives Network (AAGEN) and continues to implement actions to actively meet goals identified in the MOU.

  o The intent of the MOU is to build on collaborations for performing outreach, and leveraging resources for talent management of diverse groups within the Federal sector. It is anticipated that VA’s partnership with AAFEA and AAGEN respectively, will encourage and promote more participation from diverse groups in the pipelines for the Senior Executive Service (SES) and senior level positions within the Department, and other Federal sector agencies.

  o ODI is the lead office for this MOU, supporting AAFEA and AAGEN through the Office of Personal Management, White House Initiative on Asian Americans Policy Advisors, AAFEA, AAGEN, the VA Corporate Senior Executive Management Office, and VALU.

  o In April 2015, VA partnered with the AAFEA/AAGEN and hosted a training workshop at VA’s Central Office that consisted of presentations on Executive Core Qualifications and Life as a Senior Executive Service employee.

NCA supported two government-wide Special Emphasis Program (SEP) training opportunities.
The VBA Columbia RO continued to use vocational rehabilitation and employment to encourage job-ready disabled Veterans of diverse backgrounds, including AAPIs. The HR Office was also represented at “Hiring our Heroes” job fairs coordinated through the vocational rehabilitation office.

The VBA Columbia RO recruitment team participated in numerous events and job fairs and sent job information to various organizations, colleges and universities, and Veteran outreach representatives to reach a wide spectrum of diverse individuals including AAPIs.

VBA continued to partner with AANAPISIs and other AAPI organizations to increase awareness and participation in VA internships, fellows programs, and work-study programs.

VBA’s Leadership and Enhance and Development Program (LEAD) were made available to all VA employees. Additionally, the Insurance Center in Philadelphia coordinated and implemented a four-week internal career developmental program, which included information on interviewing skills and resume writing.

Within the Department, as of September 30, 2015, there were a total of 19 AAPIs in the SES (9) and Title 38 SES Equivalents (10) positions. AAPI males in the SES ranks represented 1.46 percent (5) of the SES and 6.52 percent (6) of the Title 38 SES Equivalent population, respectively. AAPI females in the SES ranks represented 1.17 percent (4) of the SES and 4.35 percent (4) of the Title 38 SES Equivalent population, respectively. Excluding the Title 38 SES Equivalents, AAPI males and females in the SES ranks fall below their expected representation.

**Data**

*Goal 1. Work within VA and across other Federal agencies to improve the data that is available on Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Veterans groups and to facilitate public access to the data.*

- VA’s Office of Policy and Planning (OPP) continues to refresh VA’s public facing website (http://www.va.gov/vetdata/index.asp) with data and statistics as new information about Veterans populations and Veterans programs becomes available. Several recent updates to this website present detailed Veteran race and ethnicity information, including the following:
  - Profile of Veterans 2013: This report compares Veterans and Non-Veterans demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, including age, race/ethnicity, employment, marital status, and income. This report was created using U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) data and includes data specific to AAPIs. (Released July 2, 2015)
  - Profile of Post 9/11 Veterans 2012: This report compares the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics among Post-9/11 Veterans, non-Post 9/11 Veterans and non-Veterans. The report also compares the utilization characteristics of Post-9/11 Veterans and other Veterans. AAPI data is included. (Released July 7, 2015)
Veteran’s Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) Participants 2013: Food security is an important part of a Veteran’s wellbeing. Using the U.S. Census Bureau ACS data, VA compiled information on Veterans’ use of SNAP benefits. These summaries examined Veterans’ participation in the SNAP program by race, marital status, education, and income. (Released May 21, 2015)

Veteran Population Projection 2014 (VetPop 2014): VetPop 2014 is an actuarial projection model developed by VA’s Office of the Actuary (OACT) to produce Veteran population projections from FY 2013 to FY 2043. Using the best Veteran data available at the end of FY 2013, VetPop 2014 estimates living Veteran counts by key demographic characteristics, including age, sex, period of service, and race/ethnicity at various geographic levels. (Released October 1, 2014)

National Survey of Veterans (NSV) 2010 public data file: This file contains results from the 2010 NSV data collection, and reflects information about Veterans’ demographics, socio-economic characteristics, and the VA benefits and services used most by Veterans. The public use data file includes weight information to help users conduct independent data analyses. A companion codebook and variable listing are also available. (Released November 7, 2014)

- OPP also continues to work with other Federal agencies, including the U.S. Census Bureau, to report the most complete information possible on Veterans populations, including AAPI Veterans and other minority Veterans groups.

Agency-Specific

Goal 1. FY15 goal statement: In partnership, Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and VA aim to reduce the number of Veterans living on the streets, experiencing homelessness, to zero (as measured by the 2016 point in time count).

- VHA Homeless Program Office (HPO) September 2015 End-Year update:
  - According to the Homeless Operations Management and Evaluation System (HOMES), as of June 30, 2015, the national percentage of Veterans who self-identified as Asian American was 0.6 percent (no change from FY 2014) and for Veterans who self-identified as NHPI was 0.7 percent (no change from FY 2014). The greatest concentrations of Asian American homeless Veterans assessed were in Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISN) 3, 21 and 22. For homeless Veterans who identified as NHPI, nationally, the highest percentages assessed were in VISNs 20, 21 and 22.
  - At the end of the third quarter FY 2015, an estimated 44,266 Veterans were placed in permanent housing, including moves into the HUD-VA Supportive Housing program and moves from VA residential and Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) programs into permanent housing. VA offered the FY 2014 SSVF Notice of Funding Availability at approximately $600 million, which included approximately $300 million in FY 2014 funds and approximately $300 million in FY 2015 funds. In August and September of FY 2014, VA awarded $507 million in SSVF
grants that are expected to help approximately 135,000 Veterans and their family members. In March of FY 2015, VA announced an additional award of $93 million.

- In FY 2015, Robert A. McDonald, Secretary, issued letters to elected officials to encourage them to fully engage their communities, including AAPI communities, and accelerate efforts to end Veteran homelessness. They were encouraged to engage property managers, developers and real estate professionals. This engagement was needed to provide homeless and at-risk Veterans access to affordable housing, employment opportunities and other essential supports to establish and maintain successful housing and an improved quality of life. Advocacy and support from elected officials has yielded positive results in filling gaps in communities by targeting and sharing resources.

**Goal 2. Improve the quality, access, and value of health care, including mental health care, provided to AAPI Veterans.**

- NCA SEPs presented a webinar on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in FY 2015. The webinar received outstanding evaluations. This event was widely advertised to various diverse groups, including AAPI communities.

**Goal 4. Develop relationships between VA ROs, government entities, and community organizations to improve outreach to the AAPI community on VBA services.**

- The St. Paul RO partners with Veteran Service Organizations and the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs to address concerns and issues of the AAPI Veterans population.
- The St. Petersburg RO continued to partner with the VHA to collaboratively participate in outreach activities with different government entities within the state of Florida.
- VBA’s Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment office continued to work with VHA, NCA, the Center for Minority Veterans, and community organizations to reach out to the AAPI community.
- In FY 2015, NCA Minority Veterans Program Coordinators (MVPC) collaborated with VHA and VBA to conduct town hall meetings in the AAPI communities. NCA also continues to participate in nationwide outreach events to the AAPI communities.