Department of Veterans Affairs

Memorandum

Date: SEP 28 2016

From: Acting Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration (006)

Subj: The Secretary's Sixth Annual Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Awards Program (VAIQ 7737384)

To: Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials

1. It is my pleasure to announce that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is now accepting nominations for the Secretary’s Sixth Annual Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Awards Program. These awards recognize exemplary contributions by VA managers/supervisors, employees, and teams who work to create a diverse VA workforce and cultivate an inclusive VA workplace.

2. Award eligibility criteria and additional information are attached and are also available on the VA Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) Web site at http://www.diversity.va.gov/programs/sec-awards.aspx. Please note that all nomination packages must be received by Thursday, December 1, 2016, using the procedure outlined in the attachment.

3. Please join me in this opportunity to recognize VA’s diversity and inclusion champions who embody VA’s I CARE core values by demonstrating a commitment to the Department’s efforts to empower all employees to reach their full potential in service to our Nation’s Veterans.

Meghan Flanz

Attachment
THE SECRETARY'S SIXTH ANNUAL DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION 
EXCELLENCE AWARDS PROGRAM 
NOMINATION CRITERIA AND INFORMATION

I. AWARD CATEGORIES

A. Nonsupervisory Employee
B. Manager/Supervisor
C. Equal Employment Opportunity/Diversity and Inclusion Practitioner (Manager or Specialist)
D. Team

II. NOMINATION

A. Anyone can nominate any individual or group for a Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Award. Nominees should be individuals or teams who have achieved outstanding results through unusually effective leadership, skill, innovation, and perseverance in the areas of diversity and inclusion. While special acts or other one-time achievements may be considered, these awards place emphasis on effective, sustained efforts, and significant achievements worthy of recognition within 18 months prior to the nomination submission. This justification will serve as the principal basis for selection of the award recipients.

B. Nominations must be submitted for only one of the four categories listed above and submitted using the attached nomination template available at http://www.diversity.va.gov/programs/sec-awards.aspx. The narrative should clearly highlight individual or team accomplishments in one or more of the three following criteria. These criteria align with the goals of VA's Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan for FY 2012-2016 (http://www.diversity.va.gov):

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.
III. **ELIGIBILITY**

A. Any VA nonsupervisory employee, manager/supervisor, full-time or collateral-duty equal employment opportunity (EEO)/diversity and inclusion (D&I) practitioner (manager or specialist as stated on the position description), or team who meets the criteria may be nominated. Please note that team nominations may include EEO or D&I practitioners.

B. The nominee (or, in the case of a team category nomination, ALL members of the team) must pass a security check. Nominees who have had prior findings of discrimination, adverse actions, harassment or other improper behavior will not be considered. Nominees who are under investigation will be considered as long as no adverse findings are presented as of the date of the awards ceremony. In the event that one team member does not pass through the security clearance process, the head of the sponsoring organization must decide whether to proceed with the nomination without the team member or whether to withdraw the nomination. That determination must be made by close of business **Friday, December 16, 2016**.

C. Prior recipients of the Secretary’s Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Awards are not eligible for nomination in ANY category until two awards program cycles have concluded.

D. For a nominee to be eligible, the deadlines outlined under Section IV must be met.

IV. **DOCUMENTATION AND PROCESSING**

A. How to Apply

1. The nominator must complete the nomination template and gather any supporting documents which serve as direct evidence to support the nomination. Supporting documents may include workforce statistics and graphs. Please do not include photographs.

2. The nominee must complete the attached VA Form 0235 (Security Check for Candidate Requiring Approval of the Secretary), also available at [http://www.diversity.va.gov/programs/sec-awards.aspx](http://www.diversity.va.gov/programs/sec-awards.aspx). In the case of a team nomination, each team member must complete this form.

B. Complete nomination packages are to be processed and approved as indicated below (NOTE: Because VA Form 0235 contains sensitive information, it must be submitted via encrypted email. If you do not have encryption capability and will need to fax or mail this form, contact your Administration/Staff Office coordinator who will instruct you as to how to proceed):
1. Veterans Health Administration (VHA) employees and teams:

- Field nominations must be endorsed by the Medical Center Director, or designee, and then submitted to the VISN Director, or designee, for concurrence and approval.

OR

- Program and Service Office nominations must be endorsed by the respective Program Officer or Service Director, or designee, for concurrence and approval.

AND

- The nomination package (including the completed nomination template, supporting documents, encrypted VA Form 0235, and endorsements) must be submitted by close of business Thursday, December 1, 2016, to Gregory Winston, VHA EEO/Affirmative Employment Office (10A2A3), at Gregory.Winston@va.gov for coordination and submission of (1) VA Form 0235(s) to the Security and Investigations Center (SIC) and then (2) the entire package, including SIC-approved VA Form 0235(s), to the Under Secretary for Health for concurrence and approval.

2. Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) employees and teams:

- Nominations must be endorsed by the Facility Director, or designee.

AND

- The nomination package (including the completed nomination template, supporting documents, VA Form 0235, and endorsements) must be submitted by close of business Thursday, December 1, 2016, to Melissa Gibson, VBA Office of Employee Engagement, Diversity & Inclusion (20M2), at Melissa.Gibson@va.gov for coordination and submission of (1) VA Form 0235(s) to the Security and Investigations Center (SIC) and then (2) the entire package, including SIC-approved VA Form 0235(s), to the Under Secretary for Benefits for concurrence and approval.

3. National Cemetery Administration (NCA) employees and teams:

- Field nominations must be endorsed by the National Cemetery Director, or designee, and then submitted to the MSN Director, or designee, for concurrence and approval.

OR
• Program and Service Office nominations must be endorsed by the respective Program Officer or Service Director, or designee, for concurrence and approval.

AND

• The nomination package (including the completed nomination template, supporting documents, VA Form 0235, and endorsements) must be submitted by close of business Thursday, December 1, 2016, to Nicole Maldon, NCA Office of Diversity Management and EEO (40A2), at Nicole.Maldon@va.gov for coordination and submission of (1) VA Form 0235(s) to the Security and Investigations Center (SIC) and then (2) the entire package, including SIC-approved VA Form 0235(s), to the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs for concurrence and approval.

4. Nominations for all other VA employees and teams must be submitted through the appropriate organizational heads by close of business Thursday, December 1, 2016.

C. Complete nomination packages that have been approved according to the guidelines outlined above in section IV, paragraph B must be received in VA’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) by close of business Thursday, December 16, 2016. A complete nomination package will include the completed nomination template, supporting documents, encrypted SIC-approved VA Form 0235, and endorsements by the appropriate Under Secretary, Assistant Secretary, or Key Official. NOTE: Because VA Form 0235 contains sensitive information, it must be submitted via encrypted email. If the Administration/Staff Office coordinator does not have encryption capability, the form must be faxed or mailed in a secure manner.

D. A screening committee will review all nominations and recommend finalists for consideration by the Secretary.

V. AWARDS

Each individual recipient will receive an award and a personal acknowledgement of his/her accomplishment from the Secretary. Recipients of team awards will be recognized as a group and the award will be presented to the respective facility or organization.

VI. INQUIRIES

Please contact Ms. Yvonne Rannels if you need further assistance at (202) 461-4007 or Yvonne.Rannels@va.gov.