Memorandum

Date: AUG 19 2016
From: Acting Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration (006)
Subj: 2016 Hispanic Heritage Month (VAIQ 7723438)
To: Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials

1. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) joins the Nation in observing National Hispanic Heritage Month observed September 15 through October 15, 2016. This year's theme is "Embracing, Enriching, and Enabling America."

2. Each year, during National Hispanic Heritage Month, we celebrate the cultures, histories, and significant contributions Hispanics have made to American Society and to our Nation. In 1968, Congress passed Public Law 40-498 to honor the achievements of Hispanics in America with histories and cultures from ancestors that came from Spain, Latin America, and the Caribbean. The Congress, by Public Law 100-402, as amended, authorized and requested the President to issue annually a proclamation designating September 15 through October 15 as "National Hispanic Heritage Month." These dates are significant as they commemorate the independence of various Latin American countries, including Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico, and Chile.

3. As of September 30, 2015, Hispanics represented 6.77 percent of VA’s permanent workforce. Of its permanent workforce, VA employs (115,162) Veterans, of which 7.62 percent are Hispanics. VA is experiencing less than expected participation for Hispanic males and females when compared to the Relevant Civilian Labor Force. In addition, Hispanic men have less than expected participation rates at the GS-11 through 14 and women have less than expected participation rates at the GS-12 through 15, and Senior Executive Service or Title 38 equivalent pay grades when compared to the pay grade distribution of the total VA workforce. Although VA continues to develop and implement strategies to improve outreach and career development, the numbers indicate that considerable work is ahead of us to ensure that Hispanics are fully included in its workforce.

4. VA Central Office will commemorate Hispanic Heritage Month on Thursday, September 15, 2016, in the G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery Veterans Conference Center, Room 230, at noon. All managers and supervisors are encouraged to support attendance at activities to recognize and honor the contributions of Hispanics.

5. For information on VA’s Hispanic Employment Program (HEP) or to request a reasonable accommodation, contact Aurelia Waters, VA’s National HEP Manager, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, at (202) 461-4124, Aurelia.Waters@va.gov.

Meghan Flanz