

Department of Veterans Affairs

Memorandum of Understanding Between

Department of Veterans Affairs

and

Society of American Indian Government Employees

This Memorandum of Understanding is to enable meaningful collaboration between the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE). It is the intent of this Partnership to coordinate and facilitate activities and initiatives that are responsive to the needs of VA's mission and the needs and mission of SAIGE and its constituents.

This is in keeping with VA's Diversity and Inclusion 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.



-----, 2019



By Direction of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs

Daniel R. Sitterly
Assistant Secretary for Human Resources
and Administration/Operations,
Security and Preparedness

Fredericka Joseph
Chair, SAIGE

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN
THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
AND
THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN INDIAN GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES**

I. PARTIES

The parties of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) are the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE).

II. BACKGROUND

The mission of the VA is to "care for him who shall have borne the battle and his widow and orphan." Those words were spoken by Abraham Lincoln during his second inaugural address and reflect the philosophy and principles that guide VA in everything it does.

The SAIGE is a national non-profit organization founded in 2001 whose mission is to promote the recruitment, retention, development and advancement of American Indian and Alaska Native government employees, and work to ensure their equal treatment under the law; to educate federal agencies in the history and obligations of the Federal Indian Trust Responsibility and to assist them in its implementation; to assist government agencies in the development and delivery of initiatives and programs which honor the unique Federal-Tribal relationship; and to provide a national forum for issues and topics affecting American Indian and Alaska Native government employees.

III. PURPOSE

The purpose of this MOU is to establish on a national scope, a commitment to engage in and sustain a partnership that will leverage meaningful coordination and collaboration between the VA and SAIGE. The agreement will foster a mutually supportive relationship and develop initiatives to enhance VA's ability to recruit and retain highly skilled Native American Indians and Alaskan Natives and prepare them to become future VA leaders. This MOU also provides SAIGE and VA the opportunities to enhance services and program delivery to Native American Indian and Alaska Native Federally recognized tribes, tribal communities, and people to include Veterans; and thereby positively affect the fulfillment of goals and obligations under the Federal Trust Responsibility.

IV. OBJECTIVES

A. The objectives of this MOU shall be to coordinate and facilitate activities and initiatives that are responsive to the needs of VA and SAIGE. In this regard, SAIGE and the VA shall meet on a recurring basis to monitor the progression of the recruitment, accessions, training, career development, promotion, and retention of qualified Native American Indians and Alaskan Natives in the VA's workforce.

B. Specific Goals are to:

- Improve the outreach initiatives for Native American Indians and Alaskan Natives in management and other senior level positions through substantive training; mentorship programs, technical career field internship programs, leadership development programs, and Senior Executive Service Candidate programs.
- Continue to promote education and leadership development opportunities through outreach to Native American Indians and Alaskan Natives in the VA.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES

In fulfilling the objectives of this MOU, the parties agree (subject to applicable legal limitations, including the Federal Labor Relations Statute) to participate and be responsible for the following initiatives and activities:

A. In accordance with VA's Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan, VA will:

- Advise Administrations, Staff Offices, and other VA organizations of this MOU and issue Department-wide all-station memoranda encouraging employees to become involved in the NA/AI Program at VA;
- Per availability of resources, participate in SAIGE career fairs, recruitment activities, outreach efforts, Annual National Training Program, and/or conduct agency forums;
- Provide SAIGE with information on employment needs of VA to assist in targeting outreach to Native American Indian and Alaskan Native employees demonstrating the Office of Personnel Management Leadership Competencies;
- VA will regularly provide SAIGE with vacancies and training events to be advertised on SAIGE's Listserv and VA will provide a VA advertisement for use in the Annual National Training Program booklet to fulfill the required plan to combat areas of underrepresentation identified in the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's Management Directive 715 (MD-715) and Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program (FEORP) recruitment and training initiatives;
- Cross promote the National Diversity Internship Program (NDIP), and Leadership VA (LVA) and provide a USAJOBS VA vacancy link to be available on the SAIGE website;
- Collaborate with SAIGE in the development of a strategic plan for increasing outreach to Native American Indians and Alaskan Natives at the GS 12-15 grade levels and Senior Executive Service (SES), through outreach and promoting professional career development. Cross promote SES Candidate Development Program (CDP), MOU with VA and the African American Federal Executives Association (AAFEA) and the Asian American Government Executives Network (AAGEN) SES Fellowship and provide a USAJOBS VA vacancy link to be available on the SAIGE website;

- Provide SAIGE, upon request with access to VA speakers on topics such as diversity and inclusion, affirmative employment programs, and issues affecting the American Indian/Alaska Native community;
- Recommend that the VA will support SAIGE from all three administrations (Veterans Health Administration, Veterans Benefits Administration, and National Cemetery Administration). Also, internally within the VA, provide media support to announce the upcoming SAIGE Training Programs and events, especially the Warrior's Society/Veteran's Forum at the National Training Program, with the intent to get both veteran and VA employee participation in these programs This includes the VA Broadcast News bulletin board and the dissemination of SAIGE's training event(s) to all VA Centers across the United States and Headquarters.
- Serve as a consultant to coordinate among VA Administrations and Staff Offices when planning agency Veterans Forums and training workshops held in conjunction with the SAIGE NTP;
- When agreed by both parties and per availability of resources, purchase exhibit booth space for SAIGE's National Training Program, to further VA's policies and program objectives for Native American Indians and Alaskan Natives within VA; and
- Encourage VA employees to consider Intergovernmental Personnel Act developmental assignments where appropriate.
- VA will promote SAIGE's Youth Program by sending out information to leadership and employees the eligibility and wide distribution for awareness and recruitment of future workforce purposes.

B. In accordance with VA's Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan, SAIGE will:

- Inform all SAIGE leadership and members of this MOU and encourage VA SAIGE members to become involved in the Native American Indian and Alaskan Native Employment Program at VA, including VA events commemorating Native American Indian and Alaskan Native Heritage Month.
- Provide VA the opportunity to hold/host an agency forum in conjunction with SAIGE's National Training Program. SAIGE will provide space and logistical support on a mutually agreed-upon basis.
- Participate in VA-sponsored events supporting Native American Indians and Alaskan Natives as mutually agreed by both parties.
- Recommend speakers on diversity and inclusion, Equal Employment Opportunity, and Native American Indian and Alaskan Native issues to VA.
- Provide assistance and support to VA on policies and programs that further the mission and objectives of both parties to this MOU.

- Advertise VA vacancies and training events on SAIGE's Listserv to help fulfill the required plan to combat areas of underrepresentation identified in the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's MD-715 and recruitment and training initiatives.
- Market VA employment opportunities to SAIGE members via SAIGE's website, social media, and email blasts.
- Market VA career development programs for GS-12s and above to SAIGE members. Cross promote NDIP and LVA to SAIGE members.
- Collaborate with the VA in the development of a strategic plan for increasing outreach to Native American Indians and Alaskan Natives at the GS 12-15 grade levels and SES through outreach and promoting professional career development. Cross promote SES CDP, MOU with VA, AAFEA and AAGEN SES Fellowship and place a USAJOBS VA vacancy link on the SAIGE website.
- Provide VA with the information they need to market SAIGE's Youth Program. Brochures along with information on eligibility requirements listed on the SAIGE website.

VI. BENEFITS

The provisions of this MOU will be utilized as part of VA's Department-wide strategy to improve the outreach initiatives of Native American Indians and Alaskan Native men and women.

VII. PROGRAM FUNDING

Nothing herein shall be construed as obligating VA or SAIGE to expend funds on behalf of the purpose, objectives, and responsibilities set forth in this MOU except as stated herein or agreed to in writing by authorized signatories of the organizations they represent. All obligations of funds for expenditures by VA are subject to the availability of fund.

VIII. EFFECTIVE PERIOD

This MOU shall become effective on the date when the two parties sign. All terms are subject to Federal law and VA policy.

IX. DURATION

This MOU will have a Period of Performance of one (1) year, followed by a five (5) year consecutive option years, subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

X. AMENDMENTS

Amendments must be bilaterally executed in writing, signed by authorized representatives of both Parties. No oral or unilateral amendments will be effective. Only terminations done in accordance with the terms of this agreement may be done unilaterally.

XI. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Should disagreement arise as to the interpretation of the provisions of this agreement that cannot be resolved

between the Parties' POCs, the area(s) of disagreement will be reduced to writing by each Party and presented to the authorized officials on both sides for resolution. If settlement cannot be reached at this level, the disagreement will be raised to the next level in accordance with the Parties' procedures for final resolution.

XII. TERMINATION

This agreement may only be terminated in writing with 60 days' notice sent from the authorized representative of the terminating Party to the authorized representative of the other Party. In no case will any oral termination be effective, nor will any termination attempted outside these stated requirements. Should disagreement arise as to the interpretation of the provisions of this agreement that cannot be resolved between the Parties' POCs, the area(s) of disagreement will be reduced to writing by each Party and presented to the authorized officials on both sides for resolution. If settlement cannot be reached at this level, the disagreement will be raised to the next level in accordance with the Parties' procedures for final resolution.

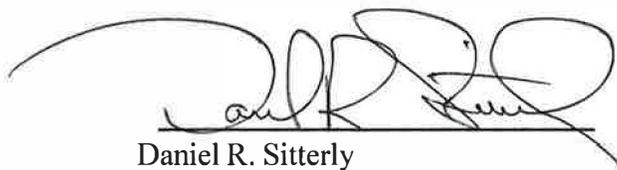
XIII. AUTHORITIES

This MOU is entered into pursuant to 38 U.S.C. § 523, 38 U.S.C. § 317, and 5 CFR Part 251.

XIV. DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

Subject to the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552), decisions or disclosure of information to the public regarding projects and programs within this MOU will be made following consultations by the parties to the MOU.

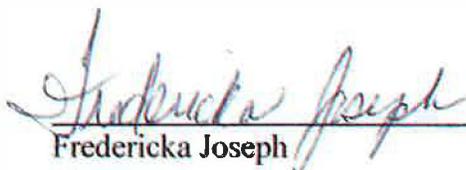
**FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS**



Daniel R. Sitterly
Assistant Secretary for Human Resources
and Administration/Operations,
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U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

16 Sep 2019
Date

**FOR THE SOCIETY OF
AMERICAN INDIAN
GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES**



Fredericka Joseph
Chair
Society of American Indian Government
Employees

June 7, 2019
Date