Department of Veterans Affairs

Memorandum

Date: FEB 15 2019

From: Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration/Operations, Security, and Preparedness (006)

Subj: Fiscal Year 2019 Workforce Recruitment Program-Employing Individuals with Disabilities (VIEWS 00154356)

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

1. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is proud to participate in the Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) and to offer employment for individuals with disabilities including disabled Veterans and those with targeted disabilities. VA has set a goal to hire 20 WRP summer interns in fiscal year (FY) 2019.

2. The WRP is a recruitment and referral program coordinated by the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy and the Department of Defense's Office of Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity. The WRP connects federal and private sector employers nationwide with highly motivated college students and recent graduates with disabilities, including Veterans who are eager to prove their abilities in the workplace. Candidates are hired through the Schedule A hiring authority, under 5 CFR§213.3102(u); which is an excepted service appointing authority that serves as a critical and efficient tool for hiring individuals with physical, psychiatric, and intellectual disabilities.

3. The WRP maintains the largest database of Schedule A candidates for hiring into the Federal Government and is recognized by the Office of Personnel Management as a model strategy for the recruitment and hiring of individuals with disabilities.

4. I strongly encourage Human Resources Officers throughout VA's Administrations and Staff Offices to work with Hiring Officials and their respective Human Resources (HR) Selective Placement Program Coordinators (SPPC's) to identify a plan and commit to hire qualified individuals with disabilities from the WRP candidate database (www.wrp.gov) to help meet our goal towards building and maintaining a diverse and inclusive workforce, positioned to deliver excellent services to our Veterans and their families. A WRP General Recruitment Checklist for HR professionals is attached.

5. For questions on WRP or VA’s hiring goal of 20 WRP summer interns for FY 2019, please contact Ms. Aurelia Waters, VA’s WRP Manager, Human Resources Enterprise Center at (202) 461-4124 or Aurelia.Waters@va.gov.

Daniel R. Sitterly

Attachment
1. **Secure Funding.** WRP interns are temporary employees and receive a salary paid by VA and may also be eligible to receive other limited employment benefits available to temporary employees. If you are restricted to participate in fiscal year 2019 because of limited funding, we highly encourage you to work with appropriate staff to identify and secure funding for future participation.

2. **Classified Position Description.** Identify a classified Title 5 position, in a suitable job series, ranging from GS 4 to 11. A position description is required.

3. **Register and Search Database.** Log on to the WRP website by registering at: https://wrp.gov. Once registered, you should receive a password within 48 hours. Once you gain access, you will be able to search by Veteran status, school, location, job preference, or academic degree. Please keep in mind that top candidates will go fast, please plan accordingly. A new database is released each December and registration is required each year.

4. **Contact Candidate(s).** Once candidates are identified, contact them directly to see if they are interested in being considered for an interview for the pre-identified position. The SPPC or appropriate HR Specialist will determine whether the individual(s) meet the minimum qualifications for the pre-identified position and at what grade level.

5. **Interviews.** For candidate(s) who meet the minimum qualifications, work with Hiring Officials to schedule and conduct 30 minute phone interviews. Hiring officials should be advised that they must focus on the qualifications of the candidates. Questions designed to elicit information about the candidate’s disability are not permitted by law. You should clearly convey job expectations during this meeting.

6. **Schedule A Letter.** Occasionally, HR staff may need additional documentation from the student. If so, HR staff should contact the candidate(s) and have them provide the additional information directly to the staffing specialist. Before an official offer is made by HR, HR should contact the student for a copy of their Schedule A eligibility letter. This letter only goes to HR, not the hiring official.

7. **Employment Offer.** HR staff notifies the qualified candidate and makes the tentative offer. The offer of employment is contingent on a favorable fingerprinting/background check results. HR will make the final offer to the candidate. Factors such as a hiring freeze may impact the ability to hire a WRP intern.

8. **Hiring Action.** The servicing HR Specialist will note the approved specified temporary appointment of the internship (e.g., temporary appointment not to exceed 12 weeks) and hiring authority on the SF-50. The Schedule A excepted appointment authority is described on the Office of Diversity and Inclusion’s Disability Program web page at https://www.diversity.va.gov/programs/scheda.aspx. Regarding coding, W9R was the
PAID code for WRP. Until a way to capture this data in HR Smart becomes available, we ask that you notify the Program Manager of your WRP hires by sending an email to vawrp@va.gov.

9. Employment Benefits. These include transit benefits; old age, survivor and disability insurance, more commonly referred to as Social Security; and Medicare. In addition, as of January 2015, in accordance with the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (P.L. 111-148), the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has expanded eligible coverage under the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) program for temporary employees who meet the eligibility criteria (Please see Human Resources Information Service Bulletin 14-18: Expansion of FEHB for certain Temporary, Intermittent, and Seasonal Employees.) For additional guidance concerning any of these benefits, please consult your servicing HR staff.

10. New Employee Orientation/Onboarding. WRP interns participate in new employee orientation. Ensure your new employee orientation incorporates policies, training and practices related to disability inclusion such as reasonable accommodation procedures, etc. Ensure you have effective onboarding procedures so that the WRP intern can fully participate and effectively contribute to VA’s mission from day one. We all play an important role in helping our new employees learn about VA, adjust to the new work environment, and in helping our new employees understand behaviors required to function effectively within the Department.

11. Job Accommodations. Once the candidate accepts the job offer, the SPPC/HR Specialist will review the accommodation notes section found on the student information report, which will give the Specialist an idea of what the student’s accommodation needs may be. Keep in mind that only after HR makes the offer and the student accepts can HR question the student regarding their reasonable accommodation needs for the position (if any). If the intern requires adaptive equipment, it can be requested through VA’s partnership with the Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program (CAP) at no cost, by visiting their website, at http://www.cap.mil/. Accommodations not available through CAP should be obtained by the employee’s office as per VA’s Reasonable Accommodation policy. For more information and for a list of Accommodation Coordinators and procedures, please go to: http://www.diversity.va.gov/programs/pwd.aspx#accommodation. The designed Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the job accommodation for the candidate. To ensure a smooth onboarding process, it’s encouraged to have accommodations in place before the intern starts employment.

12. Reporting. The SPPCs reports each hire on the WRP website and must also send an email to vawrp@va.gov, include candidates name, title, grade, work location, hiring authority used, and name and title of supervisor.

Thank you for supporting the WRP. For questions about the WRP, please contact Ms. Aurelia Waters, VA’s WRP Manager, Human Resources Enterprise Center at (202) 461-4124 or Aurelia.Waters@va.gov.