

**Department of  
Veterans Affairs**

**Memorandum**

Date: DEC 21 2018

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

Subj: Special Emphasis Program Observances for Fiscal Year 2019 (VIEWS 00121000)

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

1. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) commemorates designated days, weeks, and months as reflected in the attached VA schedule of Special Emphasis Program (SEP) Observances for fiscal year (FY) 2019. Observances are held each year in compliance with Executive Order 11478, 29 CFR Part 1614.102(b)(4), joint Congressional Resolutions, Presidential Proclamations, and the VA's Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) goals as articulated in the VA's D&I Strategic Plan for FY 2017-2020.

2. I strongly encourage all managers and supervisors to be on the forefront of these invaluable outreach and retention SEP observances by supporting activities and establishing strategic partnerships focused on addressing identified challenges faced by the group(s) the specific observance is focused on such as by race, ethnicity, gender (REG), disability status or another SEP area. The Department will benefit through participation by helping to address specific challenges, leading to increased participation in groups with historically low participation in the VA's workforce, higher retention of talented staff, and increased positive outcomes for Veterans health and benefits services. These activities directly support the VA's goal to attain and maintain a diverse, inclusive, and engaged workforce. As leaders, we model the VA's Core Values of integrity, commitment, advocacy, respect, and excellence through participation in activities related to these observances in addition to demonstrating our commitment and belief in the value that each employee brings to the Department. Information about SEP observances may be found on the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) Web site at: <http://www.diversity.va.gov/calendar/default.aspx>. Each SEP has an ODI designated program manager who can answer your questions about specific observances and activities. They may be contacted via email, at ODI's Web site or (202) 461-4131.

3. Thank you for your continued support for these Special Emphasis Program Observances.

  
Jacquelyn Hayes-Byrd

Attachments

<b>MONTH/DATE OF OBSERVANCE</b>	<b>U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Special Observances for 2019</b>
January 15	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day
February	Black History Month
March	Women's History Month
April	Take Our Daughters and Sons To Work Day
May	Asian Pacific American Heritage Month
June	LGBT Pride Month
August 26	Women's Equality Day
September 15 – October 15	Hispanic Heritage Month
October	Disability Employment Awareness Month
November	Native American Heritage Month

## Department of Veterans Affairs

### SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR SPECIAL EMPHASIS PROGRAM OBSERVANCES

Suggested activities include, but are not restricted to the following:

- Announcement by the field facility director requesting participation and support of all managers, supervisors, and employees for the special program activity/ies.
- Equal Employment Opportunity presentations, workshops, and seminars for managers, supervisors and employees on Affirmative Employment and Diversity Programs.
- Training and career development opportunities for your employees of all race, ethnicity, gender, and disability backgrounds.
- Lectures by guest speakers such as community leaders, representatives from local government, professional organizations, and academia on diversity.
- Identification of “best practices” through sharing between field facilities who promote diversity in the workplace.
- Community outreach events targeting venues, such as coordination with affinity organizations including, but not limited to: Blacks in Government (BIG), Federally Employed Women (FEW), League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC), and Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE) to encourage qualified individuals to apply for positions at VA for a diverse applicant pool. Additional diversity outreach venues and organizations can be found at:  
<http://www.diversity.va.gov/org/default.aspx>.
- Hiring and recruitment event focused on actively filling current vacancies, especially those utilizing non-competitive hiring authorities.
- Special programs and award ceremonies to honor outstanding employees, who have contributed to diversity and resolved conflicts in the workplace.
- Mentoring programs, at the facility level, for managers, supervisors, employees, and interns.
- Local facility newsletters, handouts, and sharing literature in your facility or office.