



DIVERSITY@WORK

A PUBLICATION OF THE OFFICE OF DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT & EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY,
A PROGRAM OFFICE WITHIN VA'S OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES & ADMINISTRATION

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<<http://www.va.gov/dmeeo/ca/daw.htm>>

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Q&A: HR'S STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

In this issue we talk with Gary Steinberg, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration. Look for more of our interview with him on the August 2005 episode of Diversity News, airing on the VA Knowledge Network's Communications Channel.

Q: Tell us about the goals of Human Resource's strategic planning process.

Mr. Steinberg: The Department has a strategic plan that articulates the vision, mission, goals, objectives, strategies, and key performance measures for the organization which tells us how we're going to provide better service to our Nation's veterans. As a subset of that, we're developing a strategic plan for the human resources function which will be our roadmap for the future. Once this plan is finalized, we'll be able to communicate the direction that the organization is headed and the key priorities that we want to achieve, to our customers, our stakeholders, and most importantly to our HR employees. We'll also be able to measure our progress in achieving the results that we need to achieve in order to improve the human resource function in the organization. To put it more succinctly, what we're trying to do is



ensure that we have the right people in the right places with the right capabilities AND with a passion for serving our Nation's veterans.

One of our goals is to focus on workforce and

succession planning—looking into the future and determining what kind of workforce we need and how the organization will manage the transition to this future workforce. This is where we really tie in the human resources function with the Department's strategic planning function. With this strategic plan, we will be answering a number of key questions: How will our office be supporting the future delivery of health care or the delivery of benefits or memorial services? What types of people are we going to need in the future? What are their skills going to be? How many people are we going to need—how many managers, doctors, nurses, claims adjudicators, cemetery directors, etc.? *(Continued on page 3.)*

CELEBRATE!

Women's Equality Day

VA proudly joins the Nation in celebrating Women's Equality Day on August 26, 2005. This year marks the 85th anniversary of the passing of the 19th amendment, granting women the right to vote. Ratification of the Amendment was the culmination of a 72-year-long movement that began at the world's first women's rights convention in Seneca, New York.

In 1967, Executive Order 11375 added sex to other prohibited forms of discrimination. In response to this, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) established the Federal Women's Program (FWP). Executive Order 11478 integrated the FWP into the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Program

and placed the FWP under the direction of EEO for each agency. OPM regulations implementing Public Law 92-261 require that Federal agencies designate a FWP Manager to advise the Director of EEO on matters affecting the employment and advancement of women.

Overall, VA employment of women reached 58.32 percent in FY 2004 and women's representation in VA continues to grow in GS-13 through 15 levels (the leadership pipeline) and Senior Executive Service positions. For information on VA's Women's Program, contact Wanda Jones, National Program Manager, at wanda.jones@va.gov. ■

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BOOKMARKS

- ▶ **American Association of Retired Persons**
www.aarp.org
- ▶ **Asian Week**
www.asianweek.com
- ▶ **Black Voices**
<http://bv.channel.aol.com>
- ▶ **Center for American Women and Politics**
www.cawp.rutgers.edu
- ▶ **Hispanic Online**
www.hispaniconline.com
- ▶ **Indian Country Today**
www.indiancountry.com
- ▶ **Institute for Women's Policy Research**
www.iwpr.org
- ▶ **National Organization on Disability**
www.nod.org
- ▶ **Veterans News and Information Service**
www.vnis.com

FIELD NOTES

News You Can Use

EEO Awards

Nominations are now being accepted for the Secretary's Sixteenth Annual Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Awards Program. The Secretary's EEO Awards represent the highest recognition given to employees who have made significant contributions to VA's EEO program. VA's Strategic Plan for Employees (2003–2008) includes the objective of attracting and retaining "a competent, committed, and diverse workforce that provides high quality service to veterans and their families." The Secretary's EEO Awards celebrate major successes that VA employees have made in realizing that objective.

Awards are given in five categories: non-supervisory employees; supervisors and managers through GS-14 (or equivalent); managers and executives GS-15 and above; EEO program managers, counselors, investigators, special emphasis program managers, EEO committee members, etc.; and employees promoting programs for disabled veterans and people with targeted disabilities. Each recipient will receive a plaque and a cash award in the amount of \$2,500.

For nomination criteria, instructions for preparing nominations, or other additional information, contact DM&EEO at (202) 501-1970. Please note that DM&EEO must receive nominations no later than Friday, August 12, 2005. Descriptions of previous EEO award winners are available at www.va.gov/dmeeo/ca/eoawards.htm.

MD-715 Update

VA has been the Federal leader in automating workforce data tables and program plans required by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's (EEOC's) Management Directive 715 (MD-715). These are available on VA's intranet at the VISN Support Service Center (VSSC) at <http://vssc.med.va.gov>. The Relevant Civilian Labor

Force (RCLF) Report offers a choice of local, regional, and national RCLF comparisons to onboard representation. The other reports which offer RCLF comparisons will soon include local and regional comparisons, as well. EEOC requires that when these comparisons show that there may be a barrier to full participation, they should trigger an in-depth review. Trigger calculations are for analytic purposes only, as one element in the review required by EEOC. This information is not, under any circumstances, to be used to establish hiring quotas or as the basis for any ultimate hiring decision. For further assistance in conducting workforce analysis compliant with MD-715 or for a demonstration of VSSC, contact Mike Dole, Director, Workforce Analysis and Evaluation, at (202) 501-1975.

Diversity News Back on the Air!

Look for the July 2005 episode of DM&EEO's monthly news program, *Diversity News*, on the VA Knowledge Network's Communications Channel. July's broadcast includes an interview with Joy Hunter, dean of the VA Learning University and chief learning officer of VHA's employee education system; the VA Learning Online success story of Hector Ocasio; and the diversity calendar.

New Faces at DM&EEO

Sidney Jasper joined DM&EEO's Communications and Awareness Team for the remainder of the fiscal year. Mr. Jasper is a participant in the Department of Defense transition program and has an interest in computer graphics.

Yuhan Dong joined DM&EEO for a six-week internship through the International Leadership Foundation (ILF). Mr. Dong is a Harvard University student majoring in economics with experience in statistics and related software applications.

Welcome, Mr. Jasper and Mr. Dong! ■

WEB SITE SPOTLIGHT

The Center for Women Veterans

Content: The Center for Women Veterans assures that women veterans receive benefits and services on a par with male veterans, encounter no discrimination in their attempt to access these services, and are treated with respect and dignity by VA service providers. The Center acts as the primary advisor to the Secretary for Veterans Affairs on all matters related to programs, issues, and initiatives for and affecting women veterans.



<http://www1.va.gov/womenvet>

Must-See Feature: "Snapshots of Women in Military Service" which offers pictures, descriptions, and testimonials of women in today's military.

Contact Info: VA (00W) 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420 (202) 273-6193

00W@mail.va.gov

Accessibility: This Web site is Section 508 compliant. ■

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The Role of the Ombudsman

There's more than one way to resolve conflict. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission mandates that Federal agencies must establish or make available an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) program, and that such a program must be available for both the pre-complaint process and the formal complaint process. ADR is a group of processes or techniques that provide alternative ways to resolve disputes. The element that all ADR processes have in common is that each uses a neutral person who is not associated with the problem to help the parties resolve the dispute. The VA Early Mediation Program is the primary ADR technique used by most VA organizations (<http://www1.va.gov/adr/page.cfm?pg=15>). Another form is the ombudsman.

An ombudsman, or ombuds, is an impartial dispute resolution practitioner who (1) receives complaints, concerns, and questions from individuals; (2) works to resolve these issues, making recommendations on individual matters where appropriate; and

(3) brings to an entity's attention chronic or systemic problems and makes recommendations for improvement. This last duty is a key feature that distinguishes ombuds from other dispute resolution practitioners; ombuds work with management to make effective changes in the organization.

As a designated neutral dispute resolution practitioner, ombuds rely on a number of techniques to resolve workplace disputes. These include counseling, mediating, conciliating, and fact-finding.

Two VA organizations have success with their ombuds programs which provide an alternative to the traditional grievance and EEO complaint processes. For more information on these programs as ADR models, contact LaMont Johnson of the Office of Resolution Management's Ombudsman Program at (202) 501-2925, or Dana Moore of the Office of Inspector General at (202) 565-7632. ■

Q&A: HR'S STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS (CONTINUED)

Gary Steinberg, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for HR&A

So we will put these plans in place and also have a succession planning system to ensure that we have a cadre of developing professionals who will be poised to move up in rank and be promoted to positions of higher responsibilities as they become available. Another key part of succession planning is career mapping. We haven't done this extremely well in the past (and really no one within Government has). I'll give you an example of what I mean by career mapping. When new employees are hired, our managers will sit down with them and endeavor to understand what they want to become in the future—what their career goals and aspirations are—and put a career map in place to help them get there. This map will include the training and the types of job experiences they need. This map will essentially tell them where they should go in terms of their career to achieve their aspirations.

Another primary goal involves recruiting, developing, and retaining a world class workforce. Having done our workforce and succession planning, and understanding what the organization needs—the types of employees we want to bring in and how we want to develop them—we now move into the area where the rubber hits the road...how we recruit, engage in outreach and marketing, and how we brand the organization so that more people know about the Department of Veterans Affairs and want to come and work here.

What's more, once they are in the door, we want to focus on how we develop and retain them, ensuring that we have a rich environment where people are excited and motivated to be serving our Nation's veterans. That's really the core aspect to this goal.

One of the key things that I think is changing within the Department, that we are going to see much more of, is a performance-based management system. We are moving from a pass/fail type of system in which it is very difficult to be able to differentiate between the high-performers, the average performers, and the poor performers. With the five-tier system, we are going to be able to identify, recognize, and reward our outstanding employees; and that's something that's extremely important to our employees. There was a recent Government-wide survey conducted that looked at human resources, and one of the issues raised by our employees was a concern that: (1) we do not do a good enough job of rewarding and recognizing our high performers, and (2) we need to improve our ability to identify our poor performers and help them improve the quality of their work so that they're providing more value to the organization. The five-tier performance system will help us considerably in that regard. It will also help us identify who the outstanding performers are and who really has the potential to move up in the organization. ■

Diversity@Work

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OTHER USEFUL LINKS

Department of
Veterans Affairs
www.va.gov

VA's Office of Human
Resources & Administration
www.va.gov/ofcadmin/portal

VA's Office of
Resolution Management
www.va.gov/orm

VA's Office of Human
Resources Management
and Labor Relations
www.va.gov/ohrm

DM&EEO ONLINE



The mission of DM&EEO is to provide leadership in creating and sustaining a diverse workplace free of discrimination at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Here's a sampling of online tools available on DM&EEO's new redesigned Web site that can help you promote the employment of veterans, women, minorities, and people with disabilities:

- ▶ Women's Equality Day resources
- ▶ 2005 events, conferences, conventions, and programs
- ▶ Links to professional and community organizations

2005 DIVERSITY CALENDAR

JULY

16th Biennial International Telecommunications for the Deaf, Inc. (TDI) Conference
July 11–13; New Orleans, LA
www.tdi-online.org/neworleansconference/tdi/16intro.htm

96th Annual 2005 National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) National Convention
July 12–13; Milwaukee, WI
www.psijobfair.com/2005-NAACP-National-Convention.htm

National Council of La Raza (NCLR) Annual Conference
July 16–19; Philadelphia, PA
www.nclr.org/section/events/conference

Federally Employed Women (FEW) 36th National Training Program
July 18–22; Reno, NV
www.fewntp.org

National Association of Hispanic Nurses (NAHN) 30th Annual Conference
July 20–22; Orlando, FL
www.thehispanicnurses.org

National Black Nurses Association, Inc. (NBNA) 33rd Annual Institute and Conference
July 20–24; Chicago, IL
www.nbna.org/conferences/conf05.htm

2005 American GI Forum (AGIF) National Conference
July 27–30; Anaheim, CA
www.agifanaheim2005.com

National Urban League (NUL) 2005 Annual Conference
July 27–31; Washington, DC
<https://www.eventready.com/nul2005>

Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA) 27th National Convention
July 28–31; Las Vegas, NV
www.ocanatl.org/bin/html/00866.1.1023653675900026153

AUGUST

Blacks in Government (BIG) 27th Annual National Training Conference
August 1–5; Orlando, FL
www.bignet.org/ntc/index.htm

American Veterans (AMVETS) 61st National Convention
August 13–20; Kansas City, MO
www.amvets.org/HTML/kansascity.html

Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE) 2nd National Training Conference
August 15–18; Washington, DC
www.saige.org/conf2005/conf05.htm

Women's Equality Day
August 26

Looking Ahead:

SEPTEMBER
Patriot Day
September 11

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Week
September 11–17

National Hispanic Heritage Month
September 15–October 15

For more events, visit www.va.gov/dmeeo and select the Calendar link.

