

Upcoming Events

September 2023

Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

Hispanic Heritage Month

September 15-October 15

POW/MIA Recognition Day

September 16

Citizenship/Constitution Day and Constitution Week

September 17 and September 17-23

African American Federal Executive Association Leadership Development Workshop

September 18-20; Hyattsville, MD

Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week Conference

September 24-28; Arlington, VA

Gold Star Mother's Day

September 25

Gay and Lesbian Medical Association Conference

September 28-30; Virtual

ORMDI

Steps Toward Conflict Resolution

You can contact ORMDI toll-free at 1-888-566-3982 (TDD/TTY, dial 711 before providing this number) and speak with a specialist regarding equal employment opportunity (EEO) complaint processing or harassment prevention. You must initiate contact with an EEO counselor within 45 days of the date of the alleged act of discrimination by calling 1-888-566-3982 or visiting your local ORMDI Field Office. The harassment prevention procedures do not affect rights under the EEO complaint process. Harassment should be reported immediately to a manager or supervisor, Harassment Prevention Coordinator, or the Harassment Prevention Program. For Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) services, email the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer [ADR team](#).


Commemorate National Hispanic Heritage Month

VA joins the Nation in commemorating National Hispanic Heritage Month (HHM) this September 15 to October 15. This year's national theme is "Todos Somos, Somos Uno – We Are All, We Are One." During HHM, VA commemorates Hispanic cultures and 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 who came from Spain, Latin America and the Caribbean. 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 and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico declared independence on September 16 and Chile on September 18.

As of June 30, 2023, Hispanics represented 7.26% of VA's permanent workforce. Of its permanent workforce, VA employs 120,703 Veterans, of which 8.18% are Hispanic. VA is experiencing less than expected participation for Hispanic men and women when compared to the Relevant Civilian Labor Force. In addition, Hispanic men have less than expected participation rates at GS-01 through GS-03, GS-05, GS-06, GS-08 and GS-11 through GS-14, and women have less than expected participation rates at GS-01 through GS-03, GS-10, GS-12 through GS-15 and Senior Executive Service levels when compared to the permanent VA workforce.

VA managers and supervisors are encouraged to support events and activities that recognize Hispanics and their many contributions to American society. The VA Central Office HHM Planning Committee and others will host a series of hybrid (in-person and virtual) activities. The kick-off event is Wednesday, September 20, 2023, from noon to 1 p.m. (EST) in room C-7 at VA Central Office (810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420). Secretary Denis McDonough will serve as keynote speaker and will be followed by a panel discussion. A second event will be Wednesday, September 27, 2023, from noon to 1 p.m. (EST) at VA's New York Harbor Healthcare System - Campus Atrium in New York, NY, and will feature an introduction to Salsa dancing and performance. Another event will highlight community service will be held on Wednesday, October 4, 2023, from noon to 1 p.m. (EST) (locations TBD). The closing event is Wednesday, October 11, 2023, from noon to 1 p.m. (EST) at VA Central Office (room TBD) and will provide an opportunity for VA employees to connect through cultural interactive activities. For more information, visit

[VA's Hispanic Employment Program](#).



TODOS SOMOS, SOMOS UNO: WE ARE ALL, WE ARE ONE

2023 Hispanic Heritage Month poster design by Mr. Boris A. Jiron. Reprinted with permission.
Materials may be accessed at www.nationalcouncilhepm.com.



Message from the DAS

Harvey Johnson, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Resolution Management, Diversity and Inclusion

VA is dedicated to fostering a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment for all who visit our facilities. Pride Counts at VA because everyone has a gender identity and a sexual orientation. A new VA video, **Transgender Person Using a VA Restroom in a Safe, Welcoming, and Respectful Environment**, demonstrates how access to public accommodations such as restrooms is based on an individual’s self-identified gender identity without harassment. Learn more about VA’s efforts to end harassment on the **VHA Assault and Harassment Prevention Office website** or the **ORMDI Harassment Prevention Program website**.

DAS Johnson

Finally, please join me in welcoming Mr. Nathan Maenle who is serving as the Acting Chief Diversity Officer in the Office of the Secretary. Mr. Maenle will lead VA’s efforts in implementing one of the Presidential priorities of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (I*DEA). Thank you all for your commitment to I*DEA!

VA’s Employee Affinity and Resource Groups

Information on How to Connect

VA strongly supports leveraging partnerships with affinity groups for professional development and recruitment outreach purposes in support of our common aim of promoting inclusion, diversity, equity and access throughout the Federal Government. The following affinity groups have active VA chapters:

Federally Employed Women (FEW) VA Monumental Women Chapter

The FEW VA Monumental Women Chapter works as an advocacy group to improve the status of women employed by the Federal government. VA employees interested in membership or other events open to the public can contact Ms. Chanda Plair, FEW VA Monumental Women Chapter President.

VA Headquarters (VA HQ) Chapter of Blacks in Government (BIG)

VA HQ Chapter of BIG was established to advocate, educate and empower Blacks in federal, state and local government; and provide outreach to the community to serve through educational, employment, and networking opportunities. The VA HQ Chapter of BIG meets the third Thursday of each month from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm (ET). VA employees interested in attending can contact Dr. Frederick White, VA BIG Chapter President.

VA Federal Asian Pacific American Council (VA FAPAC) Chapter

The VA FAPAC Chapter supports the interests of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in all aspects of employment. The VA FAPAC Chapter meets virtually the last Wednesday of each month from 1:30 to 2:30 pm (ET). VA employees interested in attending can contact Ms. Bridget Souza, VA FAPAC Chapter President.

Other VA employee groups include:

PrideVA Employee Resource Group (ERG)

PrideVA is VA’s first official ERG for gender and sexual minorities, including, but not limited to, those identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ+) and related identities, as well as allies. The PrideVA ERG is organized to empower members, improve access and strengthen outcomes for VA employees. VA employees interested in participating can contact Debbie McCallum, President of PrideVA, at prideVA@va.gov.

VA Hispanic Association (VAHA)

The VA Hispanic Association (VAHA) fosters employee engagement, sharing of ideas, and collaboration VA-wide. VAHA meets virtually every Wednesday from noon to 12:30 pm (ET). VA employees interested in attending can contact Mr. William Vargas, VAHA President, at vacovaha@va.gov.

External Affinity Conferences

VA employees who plan to attend any of the following external affinity conferences/events are responsible for obtaining supervisory approvals. Please note that centralized funding is not available for attendance. Funding for registration must come from the employee's benefitting program office. For more information, review [External Affinity Events Approved for Department of Veterans Affairs-Wide Participation for Fiscal Year 2023](#):

African American Federal Executive Association Annual Leadership Development Workshop

The African American Federal Executive Association (AAFEA) 19th Annual Leadership Development Workshop will be held September 18-20, 2023, at the College Park Marriott Conference Center in Hyattsville, Maryland. This year's theme is: "Leading in a Reimagined Workplace." The workshop focuses on the programs, policies, practices and processes that promote career enhancing opportunities and the core subjects critical for becoming a member of the Senior Executive Service. This three-day event is designed for federal and military professionals with experience at the GS-13 and above level. Following supervisory and budget approval, attendees must also register on the [AAFEA website](#). For more information, contact Ms. Tynnetta Lee, VA's Departmental Black/African American Program Manager, ORMDI.



Annual National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week Conference

The Annual National Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Week Conference is planned under the leadership of the White House Initiative on HBCUs and with input from the President's Board of Advisors on HBCUs and its conference sponsors. It provides a forum to exchange information and share innovations among and between institutions. Stakeholders, including federal agencies, provide an overview of successful engagements that, if replicated, could improve instruction, degree completion and the understanding of federal policies that shape and support higher education. This year's event will be held September 24-28, 2023, in Arlington, Virginia, with the theme, "Raising the Bar: Forging Excellence through Innovation & Leadership." For more information, visit the [HBCU website](#) or contact Ms. Tynnetta Lee, VA's HBCU representative.



Gay and Lesbian Medical Association Annual Conference

The 41st Gay and Lesbian Medical Association (GLMA) Annual Conference on LGBTQ+ Health will be held virtually September 28-30, 2023. The theme is: "Power in Every Voice: Rising Up for LGBTQ+ Health Equity." Since its inception in 1981, GLMA's Annual Conference on LGBTQ+ Health has served as the premier scientific conference for LGBTQ+ and allied health professionals to share innovative healthcare breakthroughs and interventions, as well as the latest research on LGBTQ+ health. The conference is open to health care providers of all disciplines, researchers, academics, health administrators, policy experts, advocates and all LGBTQ+ health supporters. Following supervisory and budget approval, attendees must also register on the [GLMA website](#). For more information, contact Mr. Sterling Akins, VA's Departmental LGBTQ+ Program Manager, ORMDI.



Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities Annual Conference

The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) will host its 37th Annual Conference October 28-30, 2023, at the Hilton Chicago, Illinois. This year's theme is: "Championing Hispanic Higher Education Success: Diversifying Our Workforce and Strengthening America." The conference will include plenaries, luncheons and networking opportunities, and it will provide a unique forum to share information and ideas for the most promising practices in the education of Hispanics. Following supervisory and budget approval, attendees must also register on the [HACU website](#). For more information, contact Ms. Karen M. Basnight, VA's Acting Departmental Hispanic Employment Program Manager, ORMDI.



Policy Alert

EEO, I*DEA, No FEAR, and Whistleblower Rights and Protection Policy Statement

The Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO); Diversity, Equity and Access (I*DEA); Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act (No FEAR); and Whistleblower Rights and Protection Policy Statement, directed by Secretary Denis McDonough on July 28, summarizes VA's EEO, I*DEA, No FEAR, and Whistleblower Rights and Protection policies.

Share the NDIP Intern Application with Your Network

Applications Open Until September 26

Growing a diverse and inclusive workforce helps VA maintain talent and mirror the populations Veterans we serve. Help VA honor our commitment to diversity and inclusion by hiring the next generation of talent through the **National Diversity Internship Program (NDIP)**. The NDIP provides internship opportunities and invaluable work experience to recent graduates, undergraduate and graduate students from diverse backgrounds, including Minority Serving Institutions. Interns come from across the country and across disciplines to support VA teams. Whether you have ongoing staffing needs or require an extra set of hands for a project, hiring a NDIP intern helps you play a critical role in building the future of VA. Virtual or remote internships are not authorized. Applications for Spring 2024 interns open August 28 through September 26, 2023. For more information, including costs and access to the NDIP page on the VA Learning Online Resource hosted by the Human Capital Services Center, **contact the NDIP team**.

Training

Leadership VA Accepting Applications for 2024 Cohort

Leadership VA (LVA) is an immersive leadership training program for high achievers across VA who demonstrate leadership, success and career progression. Applications are open until September 15, 2023, to all full-time employees, GS-13–15 (or Title 38 equivalents), with a minimum of 52 weeks in grade for GS-13, across the Administration. For more information, including full program dates and access to the LVA page on the VA Learning Online Resource hosted by the Human Capital Services Center, **contact the LVA team**.

ORMDI Harassment Prevention Training

ORMDI hosts virtual “Overview of the Harassment Prevention Program (HPP)” classes the first Wednesday of each month from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. EST and 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. EST. All employees and supervisors are welcome. Search for course item number 4563938 in TMS, and choose a date and time to register. ORMDI will also host “Overview of VA Handbook 5979 - Harassment Prevention Program Procedures” on September 20, October 18, November 15 and December 20 at 11 a.m. EST. Executives, managers and supervisors are encouraged to attend. Search for course item number 4627175 in the **Talent Management System**, and choose a date and time to register.

Other VA Resources

The Audacity to Fail Podcast

On this episode of **Audacity to Fail Podcast: misStepping Into Success**, get a front row seat as podcast host, Dr. Shari N. Dade, opens the VA Psychology Leadership Conference in San Antonio, Texas, and shares how to begin becoming the audacious leader many of us hope to be! Listen in to the talk focused on helping leaders harness the Audacity to BE Uncertain, Relentless and Authentic while on their leadership journey. The series is also available on the **Talent Management System**.

C20: Take Your 20 for Veteran Health

C20 is a 20-minute live, interactive webinar hosted by Dr. “Chai” Chad Kessler, VA’s National Director for Emergency Medicine. It brings together the VA community through discussions about clinical and health care issues facing Veterans and topics related to VA employee wellness, growth and retention. Join C20 every Tuesday and Thursday at 12 p.m. EST (recast Tuesdays and Thursdays at 4:30 p.m. EST). **Past C20 episodes** are available online.



Office of Human Resources & Administration/Operations, Security and Preparedness
VA on Facebook | VA on YouTube | VA Jobs

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW (08) | Washington, DC 20420