



October 2023

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Upcoming Events

October 2023

Breast Cancer Awareness Month
Disability Employment Awareness Month
Domestic Violence Awareness Month
Global Diversity Awareness Month
Italian American Heritage Month
Polish American Heritage Month
Work and Family Month

CX Day

October 3

German-American Day

October 6

Leif Erikson Day

Columbus Day

Indigenous Peoples' Day

October 9

General Pulaski Memorial Day

October 11

White Cane Safety Day

October 15

Diversity and Inclusion in VA Quarterly Meeting

October 18

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 [ORMDI Harassment Prevention Program](#). For Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) services, email the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer [ADR team](#).

#NDEAM | #RehabAct50
dol.gov/odep

ADVANCING ACCESS & EQUITY

National Disability Employment Awareness Month
Celebrating 50 years of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

OFFICE OF DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT POLICY
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Rehabilitation Act 50

DOL ODEP POSTER ALSO AVAILABLE IN SPANISH

Commemorate

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

VA is proud to join the Nation in commemorating National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) this October. We celebrate the contributions of all America's workers who are persons with disabilities and persons with targeted disabilities, past and present, plus showcase supportive, inclusive employment policies and practices that benefit employers and employees. The 2023 NDEAM theme announced by the [Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy \(DOL ODEP\)](#) is "Advancing Access & Equity" and celebrates [50 years of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#) and the [33rd Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act](#).

DOL's video, "[Disability Pride Month Honoring 50 Years of the Rehab Act of 1973 and 33 Years of the ADA](#)", references the Rehabilitation Act which laid the foundation for the ADA and ensured the provision of Federal or Federally funded/assisted workplace protections. In it, four young people with disabilities speak about the importance of the Rehabilitation Act and ADA, to them individually and America at large.

History has repeatedly taught us that the limit of liberty for one group by tyranny or ignorance equally disqualifies the honor of liberty for all groups. Let us each embrace the resolute responsibility to tangibly integrate our ideas, words and deeds.

Visit [VA's Individuals with Disabilities Employment Program webpage](#) or contact Mr. Roberto Rojo, VA's National Individuals with Disabilities Special Emphasis Program Manager for more.



DAS Johnson

Message from the DAS

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

During the month of October, ORMDI invites all of VA to contribute to improving our collective cultural health by bringing your whole self to work! The month-long **Be Your Self Campaign** highlights the importance of inclusion, diversity, equity and access (I*DEA) at VA and promotes an environment where all feel safe, valued and welcome. The Campaign includes a **series of posters featuring I*DEA Influencers**, our dedicated volunteer team striving to create a safer, more welcoming environment for all who do business with VA. Participants shared their personal experiences and commitment to I*DEA to build awareness, encourage discussions and invite others to join our Network of support. I hope you join me in spreading the word about I*DEA by participating in the Be Your Self Campaign this October!

October 3 is CX Day

Happy CX Day from the ORMDI Strategic Initiatives Group/Customer Experience Strategy Office

ORMDI wishes a Happy CX Day to everyone at VA! CX Day is observed on October 3 this year and is an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the importance of customers, their experiences and CX professionals. This year’s theme is to contribute to a better VA by making improved yet sustainable differences of optimized care for our customers and the employees who serve them. As Goal 1 of VA’s 2022-28 Strategic Plan is Customer Experience, ORMDI encourages you — our VA colleagues—to adopt a CX mindset and be reminded that every interaction increases trust, directly or indirectly, at every touchpoint with customers.

Congress originally proclaimed the first week of October 1992 as Customer Service Week, now a nationally recognized event. In 2011, Executive Order (EO) 13571 on Streamlining Service Delivery and Improving Customer Experience was issued “to improve quality of service to the public”. EO 14058 was subsequently issued was on Transforming Federal Customer Experience and Service Deliver to Rebuild Trust in Government and, “directed a whole-of-government approach to managing customer experience—including specific agency commitments to improving services and establishing a new ‘Life Experiences’ framework...tackle pain points people experience at critical moments...when they need government to work.”

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) expanded the definition of customer to “include [Federal] public servants and employees themselves in their interactions with Federal processes” and also pertains to VA’s approximately 460,000 employees (**OMB Circular A-11, Section 280**). VA understands that to provide the highest level of care and benefits to our Veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors, the same attention and commitments must be accorded to each teammate who are federal employees specified in Section 280.2 because CX will never outpace the employee experience (EX). Measuring “equity,” according to Section 280.3, is a crucial CX measure and specifies, “...measures of experience ...to outline an accountability framework to deliver.”

VA I*DEA was sparked by a culmination of several EOs, presidential memoranda and legislation, resulting in the development of actionable government-wide councils and task forces to ensure a "whole-of-government" approach to advance equity. EO 13985 on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government monumentally serves as the most recent foundational framework.

VA’s Equity Action Plan aims to reduce internal and external barriers that have impeded individuals’ access to benefits, services and healthcare and requires changes to policies, processes and procedures to enable access to underserved Veterans.

Learn more about **VA I*DEA** and related initiatives such as the I*DEA Influencer Network, **Phases 1 and 2 of Identity Insights Findings and Recommendations Reports** and **VA Executive Women in Motion (VA*EWIM)**. Forthcoming initiatives include a webpage for the I~STAND Sub-Council and Identity Insights Part 3/Insights Into Action—VA Onboarding.

Thank you for your support and Happy CX Day!



External Affinity Conferences

VA employees who plan to attend the following external affinity conference 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.

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.



Training

Coming Soon: FY 2024 Management Directive 715: Barrier Analysis Training

The ORMDI Workforce Analysis Team will conduct virtual Management Directive 715: Barrier Analysis Training on the following dates:

- October 11, 2023, from 12pm to 3pm EST
- January 18, 2024, from 12pm to 3pm EST
- April 18, 2024, from 12pm to 3pm EST
- July 30, 2024, from 12pm to 3pm EST

The purpose of the training is to educate participants on how to conduct a barrier analysis by following four steps: identify triggers, investigate potential barriers, create and implement an action plan and conduct follow-up. This training is not only intended for EEO Program Managers responsible for conducting barrier analysis but also Human Resources Personnel, Diversity Specialists, Special Emphasis Program Managers and management. To participate, **register for course item number 3844925 in the Talent Management System (TMS)**. Space is limited.

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. To participate, **register 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 October 18, November 15 and December 20 at 11 a.m. EST. Executives, managers and supervisors are encouraged to attend. To participate, **register for course item number 4627175 in TMS**, and choose a date and time to register.

Other VA Resources

Protecting Veterans from Fraud

Visit VA's new [Protecting Veterans from Fraud website](#).

The Audacity to Fail Podcast

On this episode of [Audacity to Fail Podcast: misStepping Into Success](#), Dr. Shari Dade takes a moment to chat with Paul Harman, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker who has been the Associate Chief of Staff for Mental Health at the Montana VA for seven years. Listen in to a discussion on how leaders can become trauma informed and build workplaces that allow employees to thrive and provide the best care to our Veterans. 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.

VA'S Warriors to Workforce Program

Recruiting Next Cohort

The Warriors to Workforce (W2W) Program at the Veterans Affairs Acquisition Academy in Frederick, Maryland, is accepting resumes for its next cohort that begins in January 2024. This program hires, transitions, and trains Veterans with a service-connected disability and little to no post-high school education for a career in federal contracting. This hybrid position includes remote work and training, as well as multiple temporary duty travel events to the academy for in-person training. Participants are hired as GS-5 federal government employees.

The education component enables participants to obtain the 24 college-level business credits required for the contract specialist career field by using their VA education benefits. After successful completion, participants transition into the 11-month Acquisition Intern Program, where they attend a combination of virtual and in-person training at the academy and go to VA acquisition offices for on-the-job training and permanent placement.

Participants must sign a mobility agreement for placement based on the needs of the agency and a continuing service agreement committing to work for VA for 18 months upon graduation.

The W2W Program is accepting resumes through October 15, 2023. Share with Veterans you know! Interested candidates can **email the W2W Program**, **visit the W2W website**, or **view the W2W video**.

VA Military Spouse and Family Employee Resource Group

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 VA Military Spouse and Family Employee Resource Group (ERG) is a VA-recognized ERG for VA employees interested in helping amplify the voices of military spouses and family members employed at VA. The ERG's focus is to work with VA leadership to address the unique workplace challenges facing VA employees who are spouses and family members of active and reserve component U.S. Armed Forces Service members through creative, inclusive solutions, resources and other support. The ERG also highlights the contributions of this population to help VA become an employer of choice for military spouses. The group welcomes all spouses, partners, and family members through all stages of the military and Veteran lifecycle and from all branches and components of military service, as well as anyone who supports this community. Reach out to [VA Military Spouses](#) to express interest in joining.

VA Special Emphasis Program Managers National Group

"Working Together Under One Umbrella"

ORMDI established a Teams channel where VA Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPMs) can gather to share best practices, working documents, discuss trends and barriers within their respective programs and brainstorm ways to address such barriers. Additionally, SEPMs will collaborate and provide guidance and assistance with VA's special observances events. The goal is to enhance VA's special emphasis programs (SEPs) by connecting SEPMs across the enterprise while sharing innovative ways to elevate SEPs throughout VA. SEPMs interested in joining the Teams channel or who would like more information can contact Ms. Tynnetta Lee, ORMDI.



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