

**2010 Hiring Reform Action Plan
Department of Veterans Affairs
July 30, 2010**

Hiring Reform Initiative:

- Eliminate any requirement that applicants respond to essay-style questions when submitting their initial application materials for any Federal job.
- Allow individuals to apply for Federal employment by submitting resumes and cover letters or completing simple, plain language applications, and assess applicants using valid, reliable tools.
- Provide for the selection from among a larger number of qualified applicants by using the 'category rating' approach, rather than the 'rule of 3' approach, under which managers may only select from among the three highest scoring applicants.
- Require that managers and supervisors with responsibility for hiring are more fully involved in the hiring process including planning current and future workforce requirements, identifying the skills required for the job, and engaging actively in the recruitment and, when applicable, the interviewing process.
- Require hiring managers to be accountable for recruiting and hiring highly qualified employees and supporting their successful transition into Federal service, beginning with the first performance review cycle starting after November 1, 2010.
- Improve the quality and speed of agency hiring by reducing substantially the time to it takes to hire mission-critical and commonly filled positions, measuring the quality and speed of the hiring process, and analyzing the causes of agency hiring problems and action that will be taken to reduce them.
- Provide every hiring manager training on effective, efficient, and timely ways to recruit and hire well-qualified individuals.
- Notify individuals applying for Federal employment through USAJOBS about the status of their application at key stages of the application process.
- Encourage agency heads and other senior administration officials visiting university or college campuses on official business to discuss career opportunities in the Federal Government with students.

Describe the barrier, problem, or deficiency being addressed:

1. The speed of the hiring process is a major barrier for the Department of Veterans Affairs. USA Staffing implementation was delayed for several years due to union opposition. Effective March 2010, VA resolved all issues that restricted the use of USA Staffing when accepting applications for bargaining positions. USA Staffing will address the lack of job opportunity announcement templates and assessment questionnaires that were targeted in the 2009 barriers. Action Step 9 addresses implementation of USA Staffing.
2. An area identified in the 2009 Action Plan was the need for guidance and training to Hiring Managers and HR professionals on effective recruitment and hiring strategies, using delegated examining processes, and their responsibilities in the hiring process. This is being addressed by training in Action Step 9 and the hiring reform website which is part of Action Step 8.

Describe what is causing the barrier/problem (i.e., What is the root cause?):

VA's antiquated paper-based systems are a root cause of long hiring timelines. Implementation of automated systems, such as e-Classification and USA Staffing, will make the process more efficient. The sheer size of the VA HR community and its structure presents a challenge for organizational transformation as well as quickly accomplishing training for the HR Specialists as well as the hiring managers. In response to VA's challenges:

- All 14 VA delegated examining units that conduct title 5 competitive hiring have been trained and are fully utilizing USA Staffing. An agency-wide plan to accomplish the training of the remaining HR components that conduct merit, non-competitive and excepted hiring is in development; however, the estimated timeframe to accomplish the training is March 2011. Action Step 9.
- Training over 3,000 HR Professionals and 40,000 hiring supervisors/managers stationed across the United States in various topics (hiring reform, workforce planning, etc) is underway. VA is training hiring managers and HR professionals by supplementing classroom training with webinars, satellite broadcasts and web-based learning events. Many training sessions will be filmed, digitized and provided through VA's Learning Management System (LMS) giving the greatest opportunity to reach the intended audience. Action Step 8.
- VA is maximizing training opportunities through the HR Academy, a human capital initiative designed to promote a more consultative HR workforce. The academy includes a comprehensive set of courses designed to help HR professionals learn more about important HR issues including: staffing; pay setting; position classification and management; effective communication; consulting skills; customer service; performance management; Veterans' preference; and Hiring Reform. Action Step 8.

Define success or the desired outcome upon completion of applied tasks:

VA is working to transform itself into a model 21st century organization that is Veteran-Centric, Results Driven, and Forward Looking. It began with President Barack Obama charging Secretary Eric Shinseki with transforming the VA into a 21st century organization, and it continued with the Secretary's declaration that VA's commitment to employees as individuals is not merely important, but a strategic goal for transforming VA.

Each desired outcome [described above as well as the metrics listed below (see #10 for detailed data dictionaries)] is aligned with the VA Strategic Plan, Integrated Objective 3 – *Build our internal capacity to serve Veterans, their families, our employees, and other stakeholders efficiently and effectively*; Integrated Strategy 3b – *Recruit, hire, train, develop, deploy, and retain a diverse VA workforce to meet current and future needs and challenges*.

VA recognizes that employees are our foundation and the key to the Department's capacity to deliver quality health care, benefits and other services to Veterans and their families. There is an obvious connection between the quality of VA workforce and the quality of VA programs and services. Therefore, it is of paramount importance that the Department not only recruits, hires and retains the best people possible to ensure that the high level of care and services to Veterans continues, but that the workforce is trained and developed to sustain and improve services to Veterans. VA's Human Capital Investment Plan, which is embedded in Integrated

Strategy 3b, is the roadmap for developing a competent, committed and diverse workforce, now and in the future.

Metrics are detailed in Action Step 10.

1. Increased Applicant Satisfaction
2. Increased Manager Satisfaction with Quality of Candidates/Hires
3. Improvements in Time to Hire
4. Full implementation of Hiring Reform by VA DEUs
5. Self Assessments conducted at VA DEUs
6. Performance element in every SES/Manager/Supervisor Performance Plan
7. Hiring Reform Training for every HR Specialist
8. Hiring Reform Training for every Manager and Supervisor
9. Workforce Planning Training for every Manager and Supervisor
10. Workforce Planning Training for every HR Specialist

Primary Action Planning Team

Mr. John Sepulveda, Assistant Secretary for HR&A, VA Senior Official
 Ms. Tonya Deanes, Deputy Assistant Secretary for HRM, Alternate VA Senior Official
 Ms. Annie Spiczak, Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning, VA POC
 Ms. Debbie Kolen, Service Director, Recruitment & Placement Policy, Alternate VA POC

Action Steps

Actions to be Taken	Key Deliverables/Output	Start Date/ End Date	Responsible Party (Parties)	Budget, Resources, and Approvals Needed
#1 Identify senior officials accountable for leading agency implementation of Hiring Reform.	Due to OPM	Completed May 20, 2010		ADAS (05C)
#2 Identify POC for hiring reform.	Due to OPM	Completed May 20, 2010		ADAS (05C)
#3 Submit Agency Assistance Request.	Due to OPM	Completed June 2, 2010		ADAS (05C)
#4 Complete Hiring Reform Pre-Implementation Checklist	Pre-requisite to #6 and #15 below	Completed July 9, 2010	Oversight & Effectiveness Service (054) /	Associate Deputy Assistant

			Compensation & Classification (055) / Recruitment & Placement (059) / Worklife & Benefits (058) / Strategic Human Capital Planning Service (053) / Employee Relations & Performance Management (051)	Secretary for Policy & Planning (05C) approval
#5 Convene a panel of title 5 hiring managers and supervisors to review and provide feedback on the Department of Veterans Affairs Hiring Reform Action Plan.	Feedback and comments with comments due to ADAS (05C) by July 23, 2010	Completed July 22, 2010	ADAS (05)	Action Planning Team
#6 Submit updated Hiring Reform Action Plan including goals, targets, timelines and indicators of progress for implementation.	Due to OPM/OMB on August 1, 2010	Completed July 30, 2010	Hiring Reform Task Force / Action Planning Team	Assistant Secretary HR&A approval
#7 Develop a Strategic Communications Plan (completed) that will provide a blueprint for managing the strategic and tactical communications activities related to the implementation of "Fed Reform Hiring" as directed by the President of the United States.	A plan that outlines the broad objectives, timelines and products for which the Department of Veterans Affairs, Hiring Reform Task Force and Strategic Communications Team is responsible. The plan covers the period May 11, 2010, to not later than December 15, 2011.	May 11, 2010 / December 15, 2011	Hiring Reform Task Force / Strategic Communications Team	Assistant Secretary HR&A approval for VA Hiring Reform Logo and Tagline OI&T approval for the VA Hiring Reform Web Site

<p>#8 Develop a Comprehensive Training Plan (completed) that provides the training strategy and activities that ensure VA Hiring Managers and HR professionals have the information and tools that they need to implement Hiring Reform.</p>	<p>A plan that delivers a centralized and standardized curricula with objectives, timelines and products for which the Department of Veterans Affairs, Hiring Reform Task Force and Training Team is responsible. The plan covers the period June 1, 2010, to not later than December 15, 2011.</p>	<p>June 1, 2010 / December 15, 2011</p>	<p>Hiring Reform Task Force / Training Team / HR Academy / VALU</p>	<p>Funded by HCIP</p>
<p>#9 Develop a USA Staffing training and implementation schedule (completed) for HR Specialists and hiring managers and supervisors.</p>	<p>A schedule that ensures that USA Staffing is fully implemented across the entire Department.</p>	<p>June 1, 2010 / March 30, 2011 for HR Specialists June 1, 2010 / September 30, 2011 for managers and supervisors</p>	<p>Recruitment & Placement Policy Service (059) / VHA / VBA / NCA / COHRS / OI&T</p>	<p>Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy & Planning (05C) approval Deputy Assistant Secretary (05) approval</p>
<p>#10 Develop metrics (completed) that will measure our success at implementing Hiring Reform.</p>	<p>Balanced measures that determine the efficiency and effectiveness of Hiring Reform implementation.</p>	<p>June 1, 2010 / December 15, 2011</p>	<p>Oversight & Effectiveness Service (054) / Recruitment & Placement Policy Service (059) / Strategic Human Capital Planning</p>	<p>Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary (ADAS) for Policy & Planning (05C) approval</p>

			Service (053) / Employee Relations & Performance Management Service (051)	
#11 Develop a Performance Management Plan (completed) that adds a critical element to all performance plans for managers and supervisors starting with the FY 2011 performance cycle.	A plan that ensures that the requirement for additional performance standards for managers and supervisors is communicated to VA management and HR professionals for implementation during the rating period that commences on October 1, 2010.	July 2, 2010 / November 30, 2010	Employee Relations & Performance Management Service (051), OHRM	Assistant Secretary HR&A approval for management directive
#12 Encourage agency heads and other senior administration officials visiting university or college campuses on official business to discuss career opportunities in the Federal Government with students.	6 major events	July 15, 2010 / December 15, 2011	Agency Leaders	Recruitment & Placement Policy (059) Report to VA Leadership
#13 Evaluate Hiring Reform Action Plan for Lessons Learned, Successful Practices and Improvement Opportunities	NLT December 1, 2010	August 1, 2010 / December 15, 2011	Hiring Reform Task Force / All Work Group Members	ADAS (05C) Report to VA Leadership
#14 Meet with OPM and OMB to review submitted Action Plan and collaborate on ability to meet hiring reform objectives.	NLT September 30, 2010	September 30, 2010	Hiring Reform Task Force / Action Planning Team	ADAS (05C)
#15 Complete Implementation Checklist certifying that the agency is ready to implement the hiring reform requirements by November 1, 2010.	Due to OPM on October 1, 2010	October 1, 2010	Hiring Reform Task Force	ADAS (05C)

#16 Meet with OPM/OMB twice annually to assess hiring reform.	Starting December 2010	December 2010 / December 2011	OPM / OMB / Hiring Reform Task Force	ADAS (05C) Report to VA Leadership
#17 Submit hiring information in HCMR.	Due December 15, 2010	December 15, 2010	Oversight & Effectiveness Service (054) / OHRM	Assistant Secretary HR&A approval of HCMR
#18 Complete actions contained in the December 2009 Hiring Manager Involvement (HMI) Action Plan.	5 objectives and 18 actionable items	August 1, 2010 / December 15, 2011	Oversight & Effectiveness Service (054) / Recruitment & Placement Policy Service (059) / Strategic Human Capital Planning Service (053) / Employee Relations & Performance Management Service (051) / OHRM	ADAS (05C) / Deputy Assistant Secretary (05)