



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>>

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2006

VHA'S DIVERSITY AWARDS PROGRAM

Congratulations to the winners!

The VHA Diversity Advisory Board has announced the winners of the 2005 Under Secretary for Health's Diversity Awards.

For 2005, the Level 1 award winner is the Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Hospital in Bedford, Massachusetts. Also at this level, the VA Midwest Health Care Network (VISN 23) received honorable mention.

Level 2 award winners include the VA Central California Health Care System, the VA Southern Oregon Rehabilitation Clinic, Southeast Network Contracting and Purchasing Activities (VISN 7), and the U.S. Army Southeast Regional Medical Command and VA Southeast Network Active Duty Rehabilitation Unit in the Augusta VA Medical Center.

Established in 1993, the Under Secretary for Health's Diversity Awards recognize those facilities, service networks, or program offices within VHA that serve as positive role

CELEBRATE!

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, Birthday and Black History Month

VA proudly joins the Nation in celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, 77th birthday anniversary on January 15, 2006 (observed as a Federal holiday on January 16) and Black History Month, observed in February.

Each year on the third Monday of January, the Federal Government honors the birth of Dr. King. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the national holiday in Dr. King's honor. The national theme for this year's observance is "In the Spirit of Unity and Service—Remember! Celebrate! Act!"

The month of February is designated Black History Month, originally established as Negro History Month in 1926. This observance celebrates the accomplishments

models in developing approaches or initiatives to increase diversity awareness or improve workforce diversity.

The Level 1 Award recognizes innovations, achievements, or successes of the comprehensive diversity management program of a VHA facility, VISN, or VHA Central Office program.

The Level 2 Awards recognize programs demonstrating significant development or achievement in a key component of a diversity management program:

- Workforce development and succession planning.
- Leadership initiatives and governance practices.
- Business practices.
- Cultural competency.

For more information on VHA's diversity awards program, visit the VHA Diversity Advisory Board Web site: www1.va.gov/diversity.■

and contributions that African Americans have made. The 2006 Black History Month theme is "Celebrating Community: A Tribute to Black Fraternal, Social, and Civic Institutions."

Overall, employment of African Americans at VA grew to 24.47 percent in Fiscal Year (FY) 2005. African Americans in the leadership pipeline (GS 13-15) also grew to 8.07 percent in FY 2005. African American veterans among African American employees grew to 39.18 percent in FY 2005. For more information, contact Wanda Jones, National Manager, VA's Black Special Emphasis Program, at wanda.jones@va.gov.■

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BOOKMARKS

- ▶ **American Association of People With Disabilities**
www.aapd-dc.org
- ▶ **Asian Pacific American Heritage Council**
www.apahcinc.org
- ▶ **Black Leadership Forum, Inc.**
www.blackleadershipforum.org
- ▶ **Deaf & Hard of Hearing in Government**
www.dhhigh.org
- ▶ **Federally Employed Women**
www.few.org
- ▶ **League of United Latin American Citizens**
www.lulac.org
- ▶ **National Organization on Disability**
www.nod.org
- ▶ **Washington Internships for Native Students**
www.american.edu/wins

Contact information for other diversity-related organizations can be found on the DM&EEO Web site at: www.va.gov/dmeeo/org/

FIELD NOTES

News You Can Use

Diversity News

Look for the January and February episodes of DM&EEO's monthly news program, *Diversity News*, on the VA Knowledge Network's Communications Channel 2. January's broadcast focuses on organizational change—that is, the reasons for change, implementing change, and managing change. The February episode is dedicated to gender differences in the workplace. Both shows describe several online courses, available through the VA Learning University, which may help employees deal with these topics. The programs also include updates to the 2006 diversity calendar.

Also, we want to hear from you! If you'd like to share your story ideas, comments, or suggestions for *Diversity News*, please e-mail us at dmeeo@va.gov with the words DIVERSITY NEWS in the subject line.

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 Management Directive 715 (MD-715). These are available on VA's Intranet at the VISN Support Service Center (VSSC) at this

address: <http://vssc.med.va.gov>.

A new training video on how to write an EEO report was produced and is now airing on the VA Knowledge Network's Content Distribution Network. The video is also available in VHS, CD, and DVD format; contact DM&EEO at (202) 501-1970 to request a copy.

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 mike.dole@va.gov or (202) 501-1975.

New Faces

David Walton, EEO Manager, recently joined DM&EEO as the national program manager for people with disabilities. As a person with a targeted disability himself—originally hired under the Schedule A appointing authority—David understands the important role disabled employees play at the Department and is dedicated to increasing the number of disabled individuals hired by VA.

Welcome aboard, Mr. Walton!■

WEB SITE SPOTLIGHT

Blacks In Government

www.bignet.org

Content: Blacks In Government (BIG) is a national network of Black Federal, State, and local government employees. BIG was established in 1975 (and incorporated as a non-profit organization under District of Columbia jurisdiction in 1976) as a national response to the need for African Americans in public service to organize around issues of mutual concern and use their collective strength to confront workplace and community issues. BIG's goals are to promote equity in all aspects of American life, excellence in public service, and opportunity for all Americans.

BIG is a mechanism for inclusion, growth, and power for all present and future Black employees in Federal, State, and local governments; acts as an advocate for the employment and general welfare of Blacks employed in Federal, State, and local governments; and works to obtain and secure the rights and privileges of full citizenship participation. BIG wants to ensure that Blacks in government have the opportunity for full, complete, and equitable access to jobs, education, advancement,



housing and health services, and that they have recourse in adverse situations without discrimination because of race.

The BIG Web site offers information on the organization's annual conferences; their history; membership; national programs; the national office staff and location; national officers and chairpersons; regional councils and presidents; the national memorial wall; national pictures and Web casts; the Janice M. Scott Memorial Scholarship; hotline inquiries or requests; African-American history; partnership Web pages; chapter and regional Web pages; Federal, State, and local Web pages; and includes a secure membership section.

Must-See Feature: The job announcements page (the link to this can be found from the home page) provides access to the employment sites of various State and Federal agencies and organizations.

Contact Info: 3005 Georgia Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001-3807
(202) 667-3280.■

COMPLAINTS PREVENTION

A Conflict Management Plan

Edward D. Miller, managing director of The Newsroom Leadership Group, writes in his article, "Reflections on Leadership: Managing Conflict," that conflict is "essential as it is inevitable." Even though conflict can have a negative impact on employees, it is part of a healthy work environment that promotes creativity and does not stifle or suppress individuality. According to Miller, conflicts have many sources, including disputes about inequities; competition for diminishing resources; fault lines of age, gender, race, craft, status, and authority; and expectations, especially when they are unclear or unmet. Because conflict in the workplace is unavoidable, every workplace should have a "conflict management plan."

Miller offers some ideas to help managers resolve conflict. These are:

- Stop blaming.
- Manage your emotions and ego.
- Deal with the impact, not the intentions.

- Focus on interests, not staked-out positions.
- Repeat, rephrase, and reflect; "Repeat what they are saying, rephrase it in your own words to show you have heard and understood, and then invite the other person to join you as you reflect on the facts and circumstances of the case."

According to Miller, there are five tactics to use during a conversation when someone would rather continue a conflict rather than resolve it. Explain:

1. The consequences and benefits of actions.
2. How actions conflict with values.
3. How the long-term disadvantages outweigh short-term convenience.
4. How actions hurt others.
5. How professional reputation can be eroded.

To read the entire article, visit

www.newsroomleadership.com/Reflections/e-050530-ManagingConflict.htm. ■

DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

Change in the Workplace

Diversity management involves creating and sustaining a workplace environment in which the similarities and differences of employees are valued—an environment in which all employees are able to reach their full potential and maximize their contributions to the organization's strategic goals and objectives. For organizations that do not already provide such an environment, developing an inclusive, supportive workplace may involve significant organizational change.

Change is inevitable. Sometimes it is a necessary response to circumstances external to an organization, such as labor legislation or competition for resources. Other times, change is a response to factors more internal to an organization; for example, the desire to improve products, processes, or services.

Change can be categorized as first-order (also referred to as *incremental* or *developmental* change), second-order (also referred to as *transitional* change), or third-order (also called *transformational* change).

From the perspective of organizational development, in order for change to be successful, it must be planned. Specific strategies for change address specific symptoms, and those symptoms may be evident at different levels within an organization. For example, at the level of individual

employees, symptoms indicating that change is warranted may include frustration, resistance, or inadequate performance. At the organization level, symptoms may include a general climate of poor morale, inappropriate organization structure, or poorly defined goals and objectives. At the level of individual employees, strategies for change include career planning, counseling, mentoring, coaching, and training. At the organization level, strategies include surveying employee attitudes, monitoring organizational behavior, and changing organization structure.

There are several things that an organization can do in order to make change easier for employees to accept, these include: regular, open communication; involvement in the process; access to systems of support in order to make the change easier to accept; and providing motivation through short-term wins, or "little victories."

The VA Learning University offers several courses on organizational change that are available at VA Learning Online (http://vaww1.va.gov/VALU_LRN).

For more information on change in the workplace, tune in to DM&EEO's monthly news program, Diversity News, on the VA Knowledge Network's Communications Channel 2 on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. The January 2006 episode is devoted to this topic! ■

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 redesigned Web site that can help you promote the employment of veterans, women, minorities, and people with disabilities:

- ▶ Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday; Black History Month; and other special observance resources.
- ▶ 2006 events, conferences, conventions, and programs.
- ▶ Links to professional and community organizations.

2006 DIVERSITY CALENDAR

JANUARY

National Mentoring Month

January
www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/12/20051222-13.html

Louis Braille's Birthday

January 4
www.louisbraillecenter.org

Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers National Technical and Career Conference

January 4-8; Orlando, FL
<http://www.shpe.org>

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday

January 15 (observed January 16)
www.thekingcenter.org

Religious Freedom Day

January 16
www.firstfreedom.org/programs/natreligious.html

National Association for Bilingual Education 2006 Conference

January 18-21; Phoenix, AZ
www.nabe.org

2006 Native Diabetes Prevention Conference

January 23-25; Phoenix, AZ
<http://hpp.ou.edu/conferences/2006/diabetes>

Lunar New Year (Year of the Dog)

January 29
www.explorechinatown.com



FEBRUARY

Black History Month

February
"Celebrating Community: A Tribute to Black Fraternal, Social, and Civic Institutions"
www.asalh.org

CAREERS & the disABLED Magazine's Career Expo For People With Disabilities

February 2; Los Angeles, CA
www.eop.com/careerfair.html

2006 DeafNation Expo

February 11; Phoenix, AZ
www.deafnation.com/expo.asp

2006 Black Engineer of the Year Awards Conference

February 16-18; Baltimore, MD
www.blackengineeroftheyear.org

Looking Ahead:

MARCH

Women's History Month

March

2006 Pacific Rim Conference on Disabilities

March 13-15; Waikiki, HI
<http://www.pacrim.hawaii.edu>

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