# NINTH ANNUAL Secretary’s Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Awards Program Nomination Criteria and Information

## **AWARD CATEGORIES**

1. Nonsupervisory Employee
2. Manager/Supervisor
3. Equal Employment Opportunity/Diversity and Inclusion Practitioner (Manager or Specialist)
4. Team

## **NOMINATION**

1. Any VA employee can nominate any individual VA employee or group of VA employees for the Secretary’s Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Award. Nominees should be individuals or teams who have achieved outstanding results through unusually effective leadership, skill, innovation and perseverance in the areas of diversity and inclusion. While special acts or other one-time achievements may be considered, these awards place emphasis on effective, sustained efforts, and significant achievements worthy of recognition within 18 months prior to the nomination submission. This justification will serve as the principal basis for selection of the award recipients.
2. Nominations must be submitted for only one of the four categories listed above and submitted using the attached nomination template. Nominations must include a brief (200-250 words) narrative that succinctly summarizes accomplishments and a more detailed narrative that addresses individual or team accomplishments in one or more of the three following criteria that align with goals of VA’s Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan:
3. Grow a diverse, high-performing workforce that reflects all segments of our society and values all aspects of our human diversity.
4. Cultivate an inclusive work environment and create an engaged organization that leverages diversity and empowers all contributors.
5. Facilitate outstanding, responsive public service through principled leadership, shared accountability, and educated stakeholders.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

1. Any VA nonsupervisory employee, manager/supervisor, full-time or collateral-duty equal employment opportunity (EEO)/diversity and inclusion (D&I) practitioner (manager or specialist as stated on the position description) or team who meets the criteria may be nominated. Team nominations may include EEO or D&I practitioners.
2. The nominee (or, in the case of a team category nomination, all members of the team) must pass a security check. Nominees who have had prior findings of discrimination, adverse actions, harassment or other improper behavior will not be considered. Nominees who are under investigation will be considered if no adverse findings are presented as of the date of the awards ceremony. If one team member does not pass through the security clearance process, the head of the sponsoring organization must decide whether to proceed with the nomination without the team member or whether to withdraw the nomination.
3. Prior recipients of the Secretary’s Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Awards are not eligible for nomination in any category until two awards program cycles have concluded.
4. For a nominee to be eligible, the deadlines outlined under Section IV must be met.

## **DOCUMENTATION AND PROCESSING**

1. How to Apply
2. The nominator must complete the nomination template and gather any supporting documents which serve as direct evidence to support the nomination. Supporting documents may include workforce statistics and graphs, must be Section 508 compliant and limited to five pages.
3. The nominee must complete VA Form 0235 (Security Check for Candidate Requiring Approval of the Secretary) and VA Form 10-3203. In the case of a team nomination, each team member must complete both forms.
4. Complete nomination packages are to be processed and approved as indicated below (**NOTE:** Because VA Form 0235 contains sensitive information, it must be submitted via encrypted email.):
   1. Veterans Health Administration (VHA) employees and teams:

* Field nominations must be endorsed by the Medical Center Director, or designee, and then submitted to the VISN Director, or designee, for concurrence and approval (sample leadership memo attached).

OR

* Program and Service Office nominations must be endorsed by the respective Program Officer or Service Director, or designee, for concurrence and approval.

AND

* + The nomination package (including the completed nomination template, up to five pages of supporting documents, encrypted VA Form 0235, and endorsements) must be submitted by close of business **Friday, February 19, 2021**, to Ms. Lora A. Cypress Kirk, EEO Manager, VHA EEO/Affirmative Employment Office (10A2A5), at [Lora.Kirk@va.gov](mailto:Lora.Kirk@va.gov) for coordination and submission of (1) VA Form 0235(s) to the Security and Investigations Center (SIC) and then (2) the entire package, including SIC-approved VA Form 0235(s), to the Under Secretary for Health for concurrence and approval.
  1. Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) employees and teams:
* Nominations must be endorsed by the Facility Director, or designee (sample leadership memo attached).

AND

* The nomination package (including the completed nomination template, up to five pages of supporting documents, encrypted VA Form 0235, and endorsements) must be submitted by close of business **Friday, February 19, 2021**, to Ms. Lois Scoon, Supervisory EEO Manager, Office of Resolution Management VBA EEO Liaison Office (08A2), at [Lois.Scoon@va.gov](mailto:Lois.Scoon@va.gov) for coordination and submission of (1) VA Form 0235(s) to the Security and Investigations Center (SIC) and then (2) the entire package, including SIC-approved VA Form 0235(s), to the Under Secretary for Benefits for concurrence and approval.
  1. National Cemetery Administration (NCA) employees and teams:
* Field nominations must be endorsed by the National Cemetery Director, or designee, and then submitted to the District Director, or designee, for concurrence and approval (sample leadership memo attached).

OR

* Program and Service Office nominations must be endorsed by the respective Program Officer or Service Director, or designee, for concurrence and approval (sample leadership memo attached).

AND

* + The nomination package (including the completed nomination template, up to five pages of supporting documents, encrypted VA Form 0235, and endorsements) must be submitted by close of business **Friday, February 19, 2021**, to Ms. Terri Beer, Director, Office of Workforce Relations (43F4), at [Terri.Beer@va.gov](mailto:Terri.Beer@va.gov) for coordination and submission of (1) VA Form 0235(s) to the Security and Investigations Center (SIC) and then (2) the entire package, including SIC-approved VA Form 0235(s), to the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs for concurrence and approval.
  1. Nominations for all other VA employees and teams must be submitted through the appropriate organizational heads (sample leadership memo attached) by close of business **Friday, February 19, 2021**.

1. Complete nomination packages that have been approved according to the guidelines outlined above in section IV, paragraph B may only be submitted by Administration/Staff Office coordinators to VA’s Office of Resolution Management, Diversity and Inclusion (ORMDI) by close of business **Friday, March 12, 2021**. A complete nomination package will include the completed nomination template, up to five pages of supporting documents, SIC-approved VA Form 0235, VA Form 10-3203 and endorsements by the appropriate Under Secretary, Assistant Secretary, or Key Official. **NOTE:** Because VA Form 0235 contains sensitive information, it must be submitted via encrypted email.
2. A judging committee will review all nominations and recommend finalists for consideration by the Secretary.

## **AWARDS**

Each individual recipient will receive an award and a personal acknowledgement of his/her accomplishment from VA leadership. Recipients of team awards will be recognized as a group and the award will be presented to the respective facility or organization.

## **INQUIRIES**

For more information, contact Ms. Yvonne Rannels, Office of Resolution Management, Diversity and Inclusion, at (202) 461-4007 or [Yvonne.Rannels@va.gov](mailto:Yvonne.Rannels@va.gov).