Memorandum of Understanding
Between
The United States Department of Veterans Affairs
And
The Federally Employed Women

I. PARTIES

The parties to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) are the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Federally Employed Women (FEW).

II. BACKGROUND

FEW is a private, non-profit organization founded in 1968 shortly after Executive Order (E.0.) 11375 was issued, which added sex discrimination to the list of prohibited discrimination within the Federal government. Although E.0.11375 was an important milestone, several women were concerned that the Civil Service Commission and individual agencies may not put forth the vigorous effort necessary to ensure compliance with E.O. 11375. Although the Federal Women's Program (FWP) had been established, the early organizers of FEW realized that the government could dismantle FWP. As a protective measure, they wanted to ensure that there would always be an organization dedicated to promoting equality for women and addressing concerns of women in the Federal workforce.

III. PURPOSE

The purpose of this MOU is to outline the terms and conditions between the parties named above as they pertain to VA and FEW. The MOU will foster a mutually supportive relationship and develop initiatives to enhance VA's ability to recruit and retain highly skilled women and prepare them to become future VA leaders.

IV. OBJECTIVES

A. The objective of the MOU shall be to coordinate and facilitate activities that are responsive to the needs of VA and FEW. In this regard, FEW and VA will meet on a recurring basis to monitor the progression of the recruitment, accessions, training, career development, promotion, and retention of qualified women in VA's workforce.

B. Specific goals are to:

- Improve the outreach initiatives for women in management and other senior level positions through substantive training; and

- Continue to promote education and leadership development opportunities through outreach initiatives to women in VA.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES

VA will do the following:

- Advise Administrations, Staff Offices and other VA organizations of this MOU and issue Department-wide all station memoranda encouraging employees to become involved in the FWP at VA;

- Per availability of resources, participate in FEW career fairs, recruitment activities, outreach efforts, National Training Program (NTP), or other professional development activities, which may include workshops, symposia, etc.;

- Provide FEW with information on employment needs of VA to assist in targeting outreach to women employees demonstrating the Office of Personnel Management Leadership Competencies;

- Advertise vacancies and training events on FEW's official web site and other forms of media to fulfil the required plan to combat areas of underrepresentation identified in the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's Management Directive 715;

- Provide FEW with an inventory of career development programs for GS-12s and above with participation rates of women in comparison with total participation rates. Cross promote the National Diversity Internship Program and Leadership VA, and provide a USAJOBS VA vacancy link to be available on the FEW's Web site;

- Collaborate with FEW in the development of a strategic plan for increasing outreach to women at the GS 12-15 grade levels and Senior Executive Service (SES), through outreach and promoting professional career development. Cross promote SES Candidate Development Program, MOU with VA and the African American Federal Executive Association and the Asian American Government Executives Network (AAGEN) SES Fellowships, and provide a USAJOBS VA vacancy link to be available on the FEW's Web site;

- When agreed to by both parties, and per availability of resources, purchase exhibit booth space at FEW's NTP (or other national event), to further VA's policies and program objectives for women in VA; and

- Encourage VA employees to consider Intergovernmental Personnel Act developmental assignments where appropriate.

FEW will do the following:

- Advise all FEW members and partners in the National Coalition for Equity in Public Service consisting of Blacks in Government, Federal Asian Pacific American Council, National Image, Inc., and the Society of American Indian Government Employees of this MOU and afford VA the opportunity to submit article(s) for FEW's newsletter News & Views;

- Provide VA the opportunity to hold an agency forum in conjunction with FEW's NTP (or other national event). FEW will provide space and logistical support on a mutually agreed-upon basis;

- Participate in VA-sponsored events supporting women and other diverse groups as mutually agreed to by both parties;

- Recommend speakers on diversity, equal employment opportunity, and women's issues to VA's FWP committee; and

- Provide assistance and support to VA on policies and programs that further the mission and objectives of both parties to this MOU.

VI. BENEFITS

The provisions of the MOU will be addressed as part of VA's Department-wide strategy to improve on programs and initiatives geared towards attracting, developing, and retaining members of diverse groups, to include women.

VII. PROGRAM FUNDING

Nothing herein shall be construed as obligating VA and FEW to expend funds on behalf of the purpose, objectives, and responsibilities set forth in this MOU except as stated herein or agreed to in writing by the signatories or the organizations they represent. All obligations of funds for expenditures by VA are subject to the availability of funds.

VIII. EFFECTIVE DATE

This MOU shall become effective on the date when the two parties sign. All terms are subject to Federal law and VA policy.

IX. AMENDMENTS

This MOU may be amended at any time by mutual written agreement of VA and FEW.

X. TERMINATION

This MOU may be terminated at any time by either party upon 60-day written notice to the other party.

XI. AUTHORITY

This MOU is entered into pursuant to 5 CFR Part 251.

XII. DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

Subject to the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552), decisions or disclosure of Information to the public regarding projects and programs within this MOU will be made following consultations by the parties to the MOU.

BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS:

Daniel R. Sitterly
Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration/
Operations, Security, and Preparedness (006)

FEDERALLY EMPLOYED WOMEN ORGANIZATION:

Karen M. Rainey
National President
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