VA joins the Nation in commemorating Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day on January 17, 2022. Public Law 98-144 established this federal holiday observed each year on the third Monday in January, around the date of Dr. King’s actual birthday on January 15. The recurring theme for this annual observance is “Remember! Celebrate! Act! A Day On...Not A Day Off.”

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is referred to as a national day of service. Dr. King, recognizing the power of service, famously said, “Everyone can be great because everybody can serve” (MLKDay.gov). The COVID-19 pandemic presents challenges to how the Nation would typically honor the Civil Rights leader’s life and legacy through service. In the past, volunteers may have provided food assistance by serving meals. This year consider donating to a food bank or pantry. In addition, there are other ways to serve safely or even virtually. Honor service men and women by sending a care package to deployed troops, wounded soldiers or Veterans. Care for elderly neighbors by clearing leaves or shoveling walkways while wearing a mask and practicing social distancing. Beautify your community by picking up trash or creating a green space by planting grass, flowers or trees.

For information, visit VA’s Departmental Black/African American Special Emphasis Program webpage or contact Ms. Tynnetta Lee, ORMDI.
Message from the DAS
Harvey Johnson, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Resolution Management, Diversity and Inclusion

Just a quick note to wish you a Happy New Year and share this link to my videos on Conscious Inclusion Diversity Equity and Access (IDEA). In these videos, I explore the concept of Conscious IDEA and how we can apply these principles in our daily interactions with co-workers and Veterans to create a more inclusive VA.

The Center for Creative Leadership found that diverse teams are more creative, perform better in problem-solving, and result in better decision-making than homogeneous teams. What if—ultimately—there were no distinction between the perception of “self” and that of “others.” Join me in imagining if everyone felt welcomed, safe and included—a peaceful co-existence in 2022 and beyond!

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Instructor Development Course
ORMDI Seeks Volunteers for Train the Trainer (T3)

To expand the capability and capacity of VA organizations to deliver Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) products and services to VA employees, ORMDI embarked on an initiative to build a VA cadre of professionally trained DEI instructors to deliver, consistently on a greater scale, integrated VA DEI learning products and services to VA employees.

During the past three years, the ORMDI Training and Communications team established partnerships with Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Employee Education Service (EES) teams who provided their technical learning expertise in preparing five DEI learning assets incorporated into this initiative. Additionally, the ORMDI Training and Communication team established a partnership with ORMDI Education, Development and Training Service (ED&T) to ensure that VA candidates have opportunities to develop and demonstrate professional instructor skills.

ORMDI is now ready to launch VA’s DEI Instructor Development Course (IDC) Training Initiative and invites VA employees to participate in the T3 program series beginning July 2022 and continuing for several months to those who are fully committed this year.

ORMDI ED&T IDC is a 40-hour virtual format scheduled for January 24-28, 2022. During the IDC, ORMDI ED&T will teach basic and master instructor skills to pre-qualify prospective candidates as DEI instructors in the T3 program. Individuals who are former graduates of the ED&T IDC or have received Master Instructor Certification do not need to retake the ED&T IDC.

ORMDI is soliciting volunteers, with supervisors’ approval, from each of the following organizations to serve as candidates for the DEI T3:

- National Cemetery Administration Diversity Office
- Veterans Benefits Administration EEO Liaison Office
- VHA Diversity Equity & Inclusion Office
- Office of the Inspector General, Chief Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Officer
- Office of General Council, Personnel Law Group

The DEI T3 is expected to launch in July 2022 and consists of a 40-hour virtual format learning experience inclusive of formative and summative evaluations to qualify graduates of the ORMDI ED&T IDC to deliver the following DEI courses:

- Valuing Workforce Diversity and Workplace Inclusion
- Managing Implicit Bias in VA
- Managing Gender Diversity in VA
- Managing Generational Diversity in VA
- Applying Cultural Competence in A Multicultural VA

VA employees interested in participating should email “VA ODI Training Request and Customer Feedback” with the subject line “DEI IDC Training Initiative” no later than January 6, 2022. Please provide contact information (name, phone number and email) for you as well as your supervisor.
Workforce Recruitment Program
Database of Candidates Now Available

The Human Capital Services Center (HCSC) is strongly committed to supporting the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Administrations and Staff Offices in acquiring new talent and supporting workforce succession efforts to deliver excellent services to our Veterans and their families. To that end, HCSC is pleased to announce the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP). December 13, 2021 was the go live date for all Federal agencies to gain access to the FY 2022 WRP database of candidates.

WRP is a recruitment and referral program coordinated by the Department of Labor (DOL) and the Department of Defense (DOD) that connects Federal and private sector employers nationwide with highly motivated college students and recent graduates with disabilities, including Veterans who are eager to demonstrate their abilities in the workplace.

The Schedule A Hiring Authority for Individuals with Disabilities allows Federal agencies the opportunity to non-competitively appoint an individual with an intellectual, severe, or a psychiatric disability to an excepted service appointment under 5 C.F.R. § 213.3102(u). These appointments may be filled on a permanent, time-limited, or on a temporary basis.

Hiring students through WRP will help the VA hire skilled and diverse employees in an efficient and streamlined manner without posting a job opportunity announcement. Additionally, VA can demonstrate its commitment to be a model employer for people with disabilities through its proactive use of Schedule A.

HCSC encourages Human Resources Specialists to discuss the benefits of using Schedule A with hiring officials during the pre-recruitment consultation and review hiring flexibilities that are available.

The WRP maintains the largest database of Schedule A candidates for hiring into the Federal Government and is recognized by the Office of Personnel Management as a model strategy for the recruitment and hiring of individuals with disabilities and top candidates may be selected quickly.

What are the benefits of the WRP?

- Accelerate the hiring process by reaching candidates directly. No job posting required!
- Year-round access to over 2,500 candidates in a variety of career fields
- Approximately 10 percent self-identify as Veterans
- Opportunity to evaluate summer interns for permanent staffing needs
- Supports Executive Orders on Increasing Federal Employment of Individuals with Disabilities

It is strongly encouraged that all Administrations and Staff Offices access the WRP database to find qualified candidates to support your specific hiring needs.

Any questions may be directed to the HCSC WRP team or visit the VA WRP page for more information.

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Training
Harassment Prevention

This virtual course, Overview of Harassment Prevention Program (HPP) Virtual Training, is a harassment prevention overview designed to assist VA employees and supervisors to develop and maintain a more engaging and productive work environment. The use of scenarios will teach participants how to recognize potential workplace challenges and effectively manage unprofessional conduct before situations escalate into formal EEO complaints and/or harassment allegations. Participants will have the opportunity to discuss the dos and don’ts of the Harassment Prevention Program and learn tips on how to develop and maintain a civil work environment. Classes are scheduled for the first Wednesday of each month from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. EST and 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. EST. All employees and supervisors are welcome. Search for course VA 4563938 in the Talent Management System, and choose a date and time to register.
Presidential Management Fellowship
Applications Now Open for 2022 Cohort

The Presidential Management Fellowship (PMF) Class of 2022 was just announced and you can start recruiting them now! Over eight thousand applications were received, and 1,100 applicants were selected as Finalists. It is a diverse field of talent of 99 different academic disciplines consisting of 848 Master’s Degrees, 129 Doctorates, 123 Juris Doctorates, and 86 Veterans.

Administered jointly by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the Human Capital Services Center (HCSC), the PMF Program attracts graduates with advanced degrees who have a passion for public service and bring world-class expertise to the Federal Government, in law, finance, public health and other critical fields.

Every year, thousands of individuals apply to the PMF and only a fraction of those are accepted. You can hire 2022 PMF candidates to fill critical roles at the GS-9 level and above, on your team.

The highly selective nature of the program adds these additional benefits to you and your team by:

- Saving you time in the hiring process. All PMF candidates are vetted and pre-qualified through OPM, streamlining a potentially lengthy hiring and recruitment process.
- Connecting you with exceptional talent. Fellows bring the latest skills and best practices in their respective field to your team. As advanced degree holders, all PMF’s start at the GS-9 level, and receive 160 hours of formal interactive training and participate in a four-to-six-month developmental assignment during their fellowships.
- Introducing you to new perspectives. In addition to holding advance degrees, Fellows come from diverse social and cultural backgrounds, bringing new solutions and fresh perspectives to help your team tackle VA’s toughest challenges.

If you’re thinking about hiring a PMF, contact the HCSC PMF Coordinator. You can also be granted access to OPM’s Talent Management system to see who may fit the needs of your team. Learn more by visiting VA’s PMF webpage.

Federal Asian Pacific American Council Civilian Awards
Nomination Period Now Open

The Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC) is accepting nominations for the Civilian Awards, Uniformed Services Awards, and Distinguished Public Service Scholarship. The submission deadline for all three awards is Friday, February 18, 2022, at 8:00 pm EST. The awards will be presented during the 37th National Leadership Training Program to be held at the National Conference Center in Leesburg, Virginia, May 9-13, 2022. This conference is held annually during the month of May in commemoration of Asian American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Heritage Month.

The Civilian Awards recognize individuals who have made significant contributions to the advancement of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities and promote diversity and inclusion among the Federal and District of Columbia government workforces. The performance period is Fiscal Year 2021 (October 1, 2020, through September 30, 2021) or Calendar Year 2021 (January 1, 2021, through December 31, 2021). One winner will be selected per category, per grade cluster (GS 1-12, GS 13-15, and Senior Executive Service) for a total of nine (9) awards. The categories are:

1) Outstanding Individual Leadership: Individual has shown bold leadership and innovative ways to promote Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), Affirmative Action, and Diversity.
2) Excellence in Individual Achievement: Individual has made significant contributions toward AANHPI representation at all levels.
3) Diversity Excellence: Individual has shown a remarkable contribution towards diversity and inclusion through collaboration and against all odds.

Nominations must be submitted through the FAPAC Awards webpage. Email awards@fapac.org for more information.

For information about VA’s Departmental AANHPI Special Emphasis Program, contact Ms. Yvonne Rannels, Office of Resolution Management, Diversity and Inclusion.
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce
Government-wide Strategic Plan Published November 2021

The Government-wide Strategic Plan to Advance Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce was published in November 2021. It offers a roadmap for implementing Executive Order 14035, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce, and lays out key steps agencies can take to strengthen DEIA in their workforce policies, practices, and culture.

The Executive Order charges all agencies with analyzing the current state of DEIA across their workforce by reviewing their agency data to assess whether employees, including members of underserved communities, face barriers in accessing employment opportunities. Building on these findings, by March 23, 2022, all agencies are charged with developing an Agency DEIA Strategic Plan to advance DEIA within their workforce and address any barriers to equal employment opportunities.

National Diversity Internship Program
Consider a 2022 Summer Intern

Managed by the Human Capital Services Center (HCSC), the National Diversity Internship Program (NDIP) provides internship opportunities and invaluable work experience in VA career fields to diverse undergraduate and graduate students who are currently enrolled, full-time or part-time, in a degree-seeking program at accredited post-secondary institutions, including Minority Serving Institutions such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, Asian American Colleges, Pacific Islander Serving Institutions, and Tribal Colleges and Universities.

This internship program requires each student to complete up to 40 hours per week on site at a VA location. Student skills, knowledge, experience, and abilities will generally be matched with a suitable intern position. NDIP interns will not be placed in positions such as clinical settings, direct patient care, processing clinical data, or research positions that fall under the purview of the Veterans Health Administration Office of Academic Affiliations.

Students interested in internships must apply directly to one of the approved vendors listed on the NDIP website. Students selected for a NDIP internship are employees of the contracted vendor and receive a bi-weekly stipend. Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, only local internships (interns recruited in the local area not requiring housing or travel) will be approved until further notice.

VA organizations requesting to host a student intern must:
• Receive approval from the appropriate organizational official (Director, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Branch Chief, etc.) to authorize sponsorship of an intern.
• Assign a primary and alternate mentor who will be on site to interact with the intern and provide guidance on project tasks and assignments. Additional requirements are detailed in the mentor agreement available from the NDIP Application Portal.
• Obtain approval for funding prior to applying.
• Submit a completed application and all required documents by the deadlines listed below.

To apply for a NDIP intern, prospective mentors may complete a NDIP application available from the NDIP Application Portal. Applications for the summer session (June through August 2022) will be accepted until January 28, 2022. A separate application must be completed for each intern requested. All applications must include a signed mentor agreement, nondisclosure agreement, and signed funding document (VA Form 90-2237) for the estimated cost of the NDIP internship.

For more information, visit the NDIP website. For access to the NDIP Application Portal, contact the HCSC NDIP Manager.