The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) commemorates Women’s History Month this March by celebrating women’s’ achievements and their contributions to our Nation.

This year’s theme, as established by the National Women’s History Alliance, is “Women Providing Healing, Promoting Hope.” This theme, “is both a tribute to the ceaseless work of caregivers and frontline workers during this ongoing pandemic and also a recognition of the thousands of ways that women of all cultures have provided both healing and hope throughout history... The 2022 theme proudly honors those who, in both public and private life, provide healing and promote hope for the betterment of all.”  

Continued on the next page.
Commemorate

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VA proudly commemorates the women employees who care for our Nation’s Veterans. As of December 31, 2021, women represent 62.06% of the overall VA workforce, 12.61 percentage points above the Relevant Civilian Labor Force benchmark. The representation of women increased from 61.42% on December 31, 2020 to 62.06% on December 31, 2021. Including both permanent and temporary employees, women Veterans comprise 14.14% of VA’s women employees. Women hold 64.35% of VA’s GS-12 through GS-14 and equivalent positions. Though they are well-represented in this pipeline, women continue to have less than expected representation in VA’s executive leadership positions (GS-15 and Senior Executive Service and equivalent positions) at 41.17%.

Of VA’s 262,132 women employees, 68.77% are in medical occupations. These individuals are responsible for executing a substantial charge and VA honors them for their dedication to this mission. One such woman was Dr. Margaret D. Craighill, one of the first consultants on women Veterans’ medical care at VA. Dr. Craighill, also the first woman doctor to receive a military commission, served as Chief Consultant on medical care for women Veterans. She advocated for the expansion of female doctors and, in November 1946, the first ten women doctors were hired to serve alongside her at VA (VAntage Point).

VA provides care in other important ways that heal and instill hope in Veterans and their families or beneficiaries. The Department also recognizes the women in these vital roles who fulfill the promise of a grateful Nation that remains inspired by the courage and sacrifice of its American heroes.

VA also recognizes there is more to be done to care for women Veterans. The Deborah Sampson Act, passed in 2021, focuses on eliminating barriers to care and services that many women Veterans face. At the age of twenty-one, Deborah Sampson Gannett (December 17, 1760–April 29, 1827) disguised herself as a man and enlisted in the Continental Army under the Fourth Massachusetts Regiment. She served 17 months during the Revolutionary War in the Army as Robert Shirtliff before being honorably discharged in 1783 (Fred W. Smith National Library for the Study of George Washington). Deborah Sampson paved the way for generations of women to serve in uniform and this Act, named in her honor, helps to ensure that our Nation’s women Veterans receive the care they have earned.

Caring for others can be challenging, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, and VA employees are reminded of the many resources available to them including VA Whole Health, the Employee Assistance Program, and Childcare Subsidy Program offered by VA’s Worklife and Benefits Service.

VA organizations and facilities are encouraged to organize activities targeted at raising awareness of women’s issues and addressing barriers to the employment and inclusion of women in VA.

To create a more equitable America, the Smithsonian is researching, disseminating, and amplifying the histories of American women through its American Women’s History Initiative in preparation for the future Smithsonian American Women’s History Museum. Learn more at Because of Her Story.

For more information about Women’s History Month, contact your local Equal Employment Opportunity or Federal Women’s Program Manager.

Visit the ORMDI website for more information on VA’s Federal Women’s Program.

Statue of Deborah Sampson at the Sharon Massachusetts Public Library (Fred W. Smith National Library for the Study of George Washington)
LETS TALK!

Sexual orientation and gender identity matter in health care.

LGBT Health Awareness Week

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Program
Office of Primary Care Services
LGBTProgram@va.gov
Message from the DAS
Harvey Johnson, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Resolution Management, Diversity and Inclusion

VA has embarked on a cultural transformation of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access. This initiative—called I-DEA—aims to help VA deliver better health care, benefits, and customer experience to underserved Veterans while becoming an employer of choice for a talented, empowered, and diverse workforce. We are at the beginning of something big, something lifechanging. It is bigger than you, and it is bigger than me. It is quite literally bigger than all of us. We cannot fix the world, or erase centuries of systemic racism and prejudice, but we can make a difference for today’s Veterans and our employees. We are going to make a difference. We will make I-DEA a reality at VA.

VA is hosting a series of three I-DEA Showcases highlighting the incredible diversity and powerful experiences of VA employees and Veterans whose freedom of expression is matched only by their dedication to our Nation. Some of you may have joined VA’s debut showcase held on February 2 moderated by Dr. Sabrina Clark, Director, VA Center for Development & Civic Engagement. Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs Donald Remy provided opening remarks. For the panel discussion, I was joined by Mr. Jimmy Anderson, Special Assistant/Deputy White House Liaison, Office of the Secretary; Ms. Barbara Morton, Deputy Chief Veterans Experience Officer, Veterans Experience Office; and Ms. Lourdes Tiglao, Executive Director, Center for Women Veterans.

Please join me for the next Showcase on March 8 from 2 to 3 p.m. featuring original song, poetry, and artwork highlighting the individuality and ingenuity of our diverse audience. Attendance is limited; register now (TMS VA 131002498).

Trainers Graduate from Instructor Development Course
Inaugural Class of Instructors One Step Closer to Becoming Qualified Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Instructors

The inaugural class of the Office of Resolution Management, Diversity and Inclusion (ORMDI) Instructor Development Course (IDC) for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Trainers graduated on January 27, 2022! Congratulations to the following graduates:

- Ms. Latoria Thompson—Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Program Manager; Columbia, South Carolina VA Medical Center (VAMC)
- Ms. Diana Gregory—Paralegal Specialist, Office of General Counsel (OGC) North Atlantic District
- Dr. Kelly Gantt—National Improvement Specialist; Kissimmee, Florida
- Mr. Sterling Edward—Harassment Prevention Project Manager, Veterans Benefits Administration Liaison, ORMDI
- Mr. Andrew Hunter—EEO Investigator/LGBTQ+ Committee, Southeast District, ORMDI
- Dr. Sybil Wyatt—Chief Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Officer; Kansas City, Missouri VAMC
- Ms. Whitney Stenhouse—Staff Assistant, Western Region, ORMDI
- Ms. Sophia Eaves—Pacific District Manager, Western Region, ORMDI
- Mr. Kevin Bodas-Turner—Human Resources Specialist, Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer, Washington, DC
- Mr. Steven Pierce—Supervisory Paralegal, OGC North Atlantic District
- Ms. Cassandra Pelullo—Paralegal Specialist; OGC
- Ms. Tracey Erickson—VISN 12 EEO Program Manager

Thanks to Mr. Lewis “Lew” Henson and the Employee Development and Education team, these graduates are now equipped with the instructor skills and tools essential for the delivery of the DEI Train-the-Trainer (T3) five-course curriculum. They—along with graduates of the upcoming April 11-15, 2022, IDC—will advance to the DEI T3 program to be held in July. Graduates of the DEI T3 program will be qualified to deliver the five following 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

For more information, contact Mr. Lester Stephens, ORMDI DEI Training Program coordinator.
Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Awards
Nominations Accepted Through March 31

Nominations are now being accepted for the Tenth Annual Secretary’s Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Excellence Awards! The D&I Excellence Awards recognize exemplary contributions by VA managers/supervisors, employees, and teams who work to create a diverse VA workforce, cultivate an inclusive and engaged workplace, and provide outstanding customer service. Nominations must be received by your Administration point of contact or Staff Office leadership by close of business Thursday, March 31, 2022.

For more information or for nomination materials, contact “Diversity and Inclusion (06).”

Training
Federal Asian Pacific American Council National Leadership Training Program

The Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC) 37th National Leadership Training Program (NLTP) will be held virtually May 10-12, 2022. The NLTP attracts hundreds of attendees across the Federal, State and DC governments and the Uniformed Services annually. Participants learn from the experiences of senior government officials and subject matter experts through workshops on career advancement, leadership, effective communications, diversity, and inclusion. The NLTP also offers free programs and a career exhibition to connect students and Military Veterans with potential employers and broaden their professional networks. The NLTP aligns with the Office of Personnel Management requirements as an appropriate training for Federal workforce in accordance with 5 U.S.C. Chapter 41 and 5 CFR 410.404.

Costs associated with attending must be authorized by each employee’s organization. No centralized funding is available to pay for registration. Employees who plan to attend the FAPAC NLTP should follow appropriate conference attendance approval procedures established for their respective organizations. For additional information, contact Ms. Yvonne Rannels, VA’s Departmental Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Special Emphasis Program Manager, Office of Resolution Management, Diversity and Inclusion.

The NLTP Veterans Program will be held virtually on May 11, 2022, from noon to 3:30 p.m. Veterans, active duty personnel, and their families are invited to attend this free event to learn about opportunities and resources for Veterans in the civilian workforce. Meet government partners from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Department of Defense, Department of Energy, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Homeland Security, Intelligence Community, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, National Park Service, National Security Administration, State Department, Department of Transportation, Veterans Affairs, and more!

The Audacity to Fail Podcast
The Audacity to Fail Podcast: misStepping Into Success focuses on discovering leadership wisdom through experiences with failures and missteps. The podcast features conversations and stories from VA leaders as they share how failure activates a growth mindset, is an important part of learning and provides motivation for improvement. On the February episode, Dr. Shari Dade dives into what it takes to grow beyond what is safe and how to reconcile when you fail to do so. This episode welcomes back to the show Dr. Kevin “Kipp” Corbus, an Organization Consultant and supervisor for the Veterans Health Administration National Center for Organization Development’s Consulting Services which focuses on providing consultative support to leaders as they identify actions and behaviors to help them lead their teams as effectively as possible. In this dialogue, Kipp and Shari revisit the Audacity to Fail Episode 3: The Journey to Diversity and Inclusion. They discuss the process of critical reflection and how this leads to success after a misstep or failure. The series is also available on the Talent Management System.