Upcoming Events
August 2022

International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples
August 9

Blacks In Government 43rd Annual National Training Institute
August 15-18; Cleveland, Ohio

Women’s Equality Day
August 26

ORMDI
Steps Toward Conflict Resolution
You can contact ORMDI toll-free at 1-888-566-3982 (TDD/TTY, dial 711 before providing this number) and speak with a specialist regarding equal employment opportunity (EEO) complaint processing or harassment prevention. You must initiate contact with an EEO counselor within 45 days of the date of the alleged act of discrimination by calling 1-888-566-3982 or visiting your local ORMDI Field Office. The harassment prevention procedures do not affect rights under the EEO complaint process. Harassment should be reported immediately to a manager or supervisor, Harassment Prevention Coordinator, or the Harassment Prevention Program. For Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) services, email the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer ADR team at workplaceadr@va.gov.

VA joins the Nation in observing Women’s Equality Day on August 26. The theme is “Celebrating Women’s Right to Vote.” Though Women’s Equality Day commemorates the 1920 passage of the 19th Amendment securing women’s right to vote, it also highlights women’s continuing efforts to gain full equality. In some states women—particularly those of color—were blocked from voting even after 1920. Women’s Equality Day is an opportunity to reflect on the meaning and benefits of equality, and on the responsibility of cultivating inclusive communities that promote an equal voice for all, regardless of gender.

VA managers and supervisors are encouraged to champion events and activities that recognize women and their many contributions to American society including military service. For more information, visit VA’s Federal Women’s Program (FWP) webpage or contact Ms. Tynnetta Lee, VA’s National FWP Manager. For information on health care, benefits, services and programs for women Veterans, visit the Center for Women Veterans website.
Message from the DAS

Harvey Johnson, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Resolution Management, Diversity and Inclusion

Congratulations to VA on our recent recognition by the Partnership for Public Service as one of the Top 5 Best Places to Work in the federal government among large agencies—VA’s first time in the Top 5. VA was also named the Most Improved Large Federal Agency for 2021. Let’s continue to ensure that we deliver world-class care and benefits to Veterans by growing a diverse workforce and cultivating inclusive workplaces.

On that note, the 2nd VA National Virtual PRIDE Month observance was successfully held this past June. The theme was, “Strength in Diversity = Stronger Together, PRIDE 2022.” Secretary McDonough joined me for the kick-off of the month-long series of virtual events. Admiral Rachel Levine, M.D., Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services, was a gracious and informative addition to the event for the second year as the keynote speaker.

VA National Virtual PRIDE is the first LGBTQ+ Special Emphasis Program observance to have a national impact, reaching across the entire VA enterprise with participation from all three Administrations and ORMDI. Over 22 days, over 3,000 participated in 42 presentations and on June 20 one special tribute for Juneteenth to honor all African American and Black employees. All 19 VISNs were represented from 43 states. If you missed any of the events, please contact Mr. Sterling Akins, VA’s National LGBTQ+ Program Manager, ORMDI, about how to gain access to the Team channel where you can view the recordings.

Finally, this August, VA’s Human Capital Services Center (HCSC) will be accepting applications for the next cohort of Leadership VA (LVA), and I encourage you to apply. Since its inception in 1978, LVA has prepared hundreds of high-performing and results-oriented leaders to confront some of VA’s most urgent challenges while meeting the needs of a diverse population of Veterans, family members, survivors, employees and stakeholders. For more information, please check out the article below.

Leadership VA

Application Period Now Opens August 1

No matter where you are in your career, there’s always an opportunity to take time to reflect on your professional development. With the Leadership VA (LVA) Fellowship Program, you can strengthen your skills to make an impact today and in the future.

LVA is an enterprise-wide Fellowship created for high-performing GS-13 to GS-15 (or Title 38 equivalent, minimum 52 weeks in grade for GS-13) who want to grow their skillsets and help their teams thrive.

Through in-person and virtual sessions, LVA Fellows work together to create major process improvement projects where they devise solutions to some of the most pressing challenges facing VA today. All LVA applicants must receive a nomination by their manager and Senior Executive Service (SES) leader. Fellows must be able to attend one virtual and three in-person sessions, including additional independent assignments throughout the duration of the program.

The application period is open August 1-26, 2022. For information, contact the LVA team at lva@va.gov.

Training

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 July episode, Dr. Shari Dade is joined by Mr. Seginald Bryant, the Information Technology Area Manager for Durham, North Carolina. In this episode, he talks about how he has been able to charge past failures of his past and remain encouraged to push himself to success. Listen in for a discussion on how to turn the adversity of today into the success of tomorrow by playing the long game! The series is also available on the Talent Management System.
External Affinity Conferences

VA employees who plan to attend any of the following external affinity conferences/events are responsible for obtaining supervisory approvals. Please note that centralized funding is not available for attendance. Funding for registration must come from the employee’s benefitting program office:

**Blacks In Government 43rd Annual National Training Institute**
The Blacks In Government (BIG) 43rd Annual National Training Institute (NTI) will take place August 15-18, 2022, at the Huntington Convention Center in Cleveland, Ohio. This year’s theme is “Training in a Transformed Workplace – Providing Innovative Professional Development” BIG has four scheduled days filled with government leaders as guest speakers and workshops covering professional development, career development, diversity studies, financial management, human resources management, communications skills, technical and professional skills, and health awareness and wellness. Following supervisory and budget approval, attendees must also register on the BIG website. For more information, contact Ms. Tynnetta Lee, VA’s Departmental Black/African American Program Manager, ORMDI.

**Asian American Government Executives Network Leadership Workshop**
The Asian American Government Executives Network (AAGEN) Leadership Workshop will take place September 9, 2022, at the DoubleTree by Hilton Washington DC - Crystal City in Arlington, Virginia. This year’s theme is “Advancing leadership for the future workforce.” Join other professionals and leaders from across government for a professional development training event with interactive panel discussions focused on developing critical professional skills and shaping the future workforce. Come for individual advice from Senior Executives in the Speed Mentoring/Resume Review Room and hear inspiring Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) leaders from the White House and other federal agencies share their leadership stories and career advice. Following supervisory and budget approval, attendees must also register on the AAGEN website. For more information, contact Ms. Yvonne Rannels, VA’s National AANHPI Program Manager, ORMDI.

**African American Federal Executive Association Annual Leadership Development Workshop**
The African American Federal Executive Association (AAFEA) 18th Annual Leadership Development Workshop will be held virtually September 19-21, 2022. The Workshop focuses on the programs, policies, practices, and processes that promote career enhancing opportunities and the core subjects critical for becoming a member of the SES. This three-day event is designed for federal and military professionals with experience at the GS-13 and above level. Following supervisory and budget approval, attendees must also register on the AAFEA website. For more information, contact Tynnetta Lee, VA’s Departmental African American Program Manager.

**Annual National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week Conference**
The Annual National Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Week Conference is planned under the leadership of the White House Initiative on HBCUs and with input from the President’s Board of Advisors on HBCUs and its conference sponsors. It provides a forum to exchange information and share innovations among and between institutions. Stakeholders, including federal agencies, provide an overview of successful engagements that, if replicated, could improve instruction, degree completion, and the understanding of federal policies that shape and support higher education. This year’s hybrid event will be held at the Washington Hilton and virtually on September 20-23, 2022. The theme is, “Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence and Economic Opportunity.” There are no conference fees to attend this annual convening, however participants are responsible for their own hotel, ground transportation and some meals. Please note that centralized funding is not available. VA employees who plan to attend are responsible for obtaining supervisory approvals. To register, visit the HBCU Week Conference webpage. For more information, visit the HBCU website or contact Ms. Tynnetta Lee, VA’s HBCU representative, ORMDI.

**Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities 36th Annual Conference**
The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) will host its 36th Annual Conference on October 8-10, 2022, at the Manchester Grand Hyatt in San Diego, California. The conference will include plenaries, luncheons, and networking opportunities, and it will provide a unique forum to share information and ideas for the most promising practices in the education of Hispanics. Following supervisory and budget approval, attendees must also register on the HACU website. For more information, contact Ms. Karen M. Basnight, VA’s Acting Departmental Hispanic Employment Program Manager, ORMDI.
External Affinity Conferences (Continued)

VA employees who plan to attend any of the following external affinity conferences/events are responsible for obtaining supervisory approvals. Please note that centralized funding is not available for attendance. Funding for registration must come from the employee’s benefitting program office:

Out & Equal Workplace Summit
Out & Equal Workplace Advocates will host its annual Workplace Summit on October 17-20, 2022, in Las Vegas, Nevada. Each year, more than 5,000 executives, employee resource group leaders and members, human resources, diversity and inclusion professionals and experts convene at the Out & Equal Workplace Summit – the largest LGBTQ focused conference in the world. The Summit has grown to become the preferred place to network, share strategies and best practices that help create workplaces which are inclusive of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions – workplaces where everyone belongs, and where LGBTQ employees can be out and thrive. Following supervisory and budget approval, attendees must also register on the Out & Equal website. For more information, contact Mr. Sterling Akins, VA’s Departmental LGBTQ+ Program Manager, ORMDI.

Gay and Lesbian Medical Association Annual Conference
The 40th Gay and Lesbian Medical Association (GLMA) Annual Conference on LGBTQ Health will be held at the Hilton San Francisco Union Square October 19-22, 2022. The theme is “Local Action, Global Impact.” GLMA aims to highlight speakers (including community leaders, researchers, policy makers and clinicians, particularly those from the Bay Area) who are acting locally, but with a global impact, both by setting the tone for innovative and forward-thinking approaches to care, and by creating models that are replicable beyond the Bay’s footprint. The conference is open to healthcare providers of all disciplines, researchers, academics, health administrators, policy experts, advocates, and all LGBTQ+ health supporters. Following supervisory and budget approval, attendees must also register on the GLMA website. For more information, contact Mr. Sterling Akins, VA’s Departmental LGBTQ+ Program Manager, ORMDI.

Identity Insights Initiative Update
Phase I Report Available Soon on ORMDI Website

Providing consistent exceptional Customer Experience (CX) is VA’s top priority and the underpinning of the organization. To provide the highest level of care and benefits to our Veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors, the same attention and commitments must be accorded to each of its teammates, because CX will never outpace the Employee Experience (EX).

The Department is committed to the principles and ideals of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) and ensuring all its employees feel safe and welcomed to bring their whole selves to work. In 2021, the Veterans Experience Office (VEO) Employee Experience Directorate (EXD) and ORMDI partnered to launched Phase I of an Identity Insights Initiative to help understand the unique bright spots and pain points of employees using an intersectional lens.

The long-term intended impact of the project is measurable improvement in employees’ sense of belonging characterized by VA policies, processes and procedures which promote IDEA across identity groups. By identifying opportunities to improve EX—and thus sense of belonging—employees will feel supported and motivated and can better serve our Veterans.

VEO EXD and ORMDI engaged employees from eight identity groups that have faced either historic lower than expected representation and/or discrimination and bias in the VA workplace. Through 16 two-week sprints of human-centered design interviews and focus groups, VEO EXD and ORMDI worked to identify pain points, needs and opportunities for VA to address impediments to belonging and improve EX at VA. The goal of these confidential interviews was to identify tangible and actionable opportunities for VA to focus on to improve EX within and across identity groups.

The Phase I report is now published on the ORMDI website. For more information, or if you are interested in participating in Phase II beginning in August, please email the ORMDI CX team at ORMODICXEngagement@va.gov.