

Upcoming Events

September 2022

[Suicide Prevention Awareness Month](#)

National Hispanic Heritage Month

September 15-October 15

POW/MIA Recognition Day

September 16

Citizenship/Constitution Day and Constitution Week

September 17 and September 17-23

Gold Star Mother's Day

September 25

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.



Commemorate
National Hispanic Heritage Month

VA joins the Nation in commemorating National Hispanic Heritage Month (HHM) this September 15 to October 15. This year's national theme is "Unidos: Inclusivity for a Stronger Nation." VA managers and supervisors are encouraged to support events and activities that recognize Hispanics and their many contributions to American society.

During HHM, VA commemorates Hispanic cultures and histories, and significant contributions Hispanics have made to American Society and to our Nation. In 1968, Congress passed Public Law 40-498 to honor the achievements of Hispanics in America with histories and cultures from ancestors who came from Spain, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Congress, by Public Law 100-402, as amended, authorized, and requested the President to issue annually a proclamation designating September 15 through October 15 as "National Hispanic Heritage Month." These dates are significant as they commemorate the independence of various Latin American countries among them are Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico declared independence on September 16, and Chile on September 18.

To promote awareness and engage VA employees about cultural diversity, the VA Central Office HHM Planning Committee will host two virtual HHM observance programs. The opening event will be held on Wednesday, September 21, 2022, from noon until 1:00 p.m. (EST), and a closing event is scheduled for Wednesday, October 12, 2022, from noon until 1:00 p.m. (EST). For more information, visit [VA's Hispanic Employment Program webpage](#).



DAS Johnson

Message from the DAS

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

Two new training courses are now available on the Talent Management System (TMS) to help VA employees practice inclusive, respectful and welcoming interactions with LGBTQ+ Veterans, VA beneficiaries and VA employees. I encourage you to take this new recorded webinar training series. If you are in a supervisory role, start with "[Serving LGBTQ+ Veterans with Pride Supervisory Training](#)" (TMS Number: 131004136) and then consider assigning to your staff "[Serving LGBTQ+ Veterans with Pride All Employee Training](#)" (TMS Number: VA 131004185) which focuses on building empathy and strong, supportive interactions with all Veterans. For questions, email lgbtqtraining@va.gov.

VA's Employee Affinity and Resource Groups

Information on How to Connect

VA strongly supports leveraging partnerships with affinity groups for professional development and recruitment outreach purposes in support of our common aim of promoting inclusion, diversity, equity and access throughout the Federal Government. The following affinity groups have active VA chapters:

Federally Employed Women (FEW) VA Monumental Women Chapter

The FEW VA Monumental Women Chapter works as an advocacy group to improve the status of women employed by the Federal government. VA employees interested in membership or other events open to the public can contact Ms. Chanda Plair, FEW VA Monumental Women Chapter President.

VA Headquarters (VA HQ) Chapter of Blacks in Government (BIG)

VA HQ Chapter of BIG was established to advocate, educate and empower Blacks in federal, state and local government; and provide outreach to the community to serve through educational, employment, and networking opportunities. The VA HQ Chapter of BIG meets the third Thursday of each month from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm (ET). VA employees interested in attending can contact Dr. Frederick White, VA BIG Chapter President.

VA Federal Asian Pacific American Council (VA FAPAC) Chapter

The VA FAPAC Chapter supports the interests of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in all aspects of employment. The VA FAPAC Chapter meets virtually the last Wednesday of each month from 1:30 to 2:30 pm (ET). VA employees interested in attending can contact Ms. Bridget Souza, VA FAPAC Chapter President.

Other VA employee groups include:

PrideVA Employee Resource Group (ERG)

PrideVA is VA's first official ERG for gender and sexual minorities, including, but not limited to, those identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ+) and related identities, as well as allies. The PrideVA ERG is organized to empower members, improve access and strengthen outcomes for VA employees. VA employees interested in participating can contact Mr. Steven A. Johnston, President of PrideVA, at prideVA@va.gov.

VA Hispanic Association (VAHA)

The VA Hispanic Association (VAHA) fosters employee engagement, sharing of ideas, and collaboration VA-wide. VAHA meets virtually every Wednesday from noon to 12:30 pm (ET). VA employees interested in attending can contact Mr. William Vargas, VAHA President, at vacovaha@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 podcasts dives into conversations and stories from leaders as they share that failure activates a growth mindset, is an important part of learning, and motivation for improvement! On this inaugural episode of Consultant Connection, Dr. Shari Dade sits down with Dr. Mira Brancu a Senior Organization Development Psychologist for VA's National Center for Organization Development (NCOD). Listen in for a moment to connect with a leadership consultant around, The Power in Managing Up! 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:



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.



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.



More External Affinity Conferences

VA employees who plan to attend the following external affinity conference is 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:

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.



TEDxVeteransAffairs

Annual Series of TED Talks to Focus on Changemakers

From October 18-20, VA will host its annual series of TED Talks—TEDxVeteransAffairs. The theme for this year's event, Changemakers, will highlight individuals that have shown tremendous resolve and an amazing ability to foster positive change throughout their lives. This year's talks will be highlighted by such speakers as former Marine and current Lieutenant Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, the honorable Winsome Sears, and the Secretary of Transportation of Puerto Rico, the honorable Eileen Velez Vega. Both women are trailblazers, as Ms. Sears is the first black female Lt. Governor of Virginia and Ms. Vega is the first female Transportation Secretary of Puerto Rico. They epitomize what our Changemakers theme is for this year's TEDxVeteransAffairs.

TEDxVeteransAffairs is available exclusively on VA's internal network. Remember that TEDxVeteransAffairs is produced for employees, by employees. It's one of many initiatives offered as part of a VA-wide effort to enhance the employee experience.

In addition to Ms. Sears and Ms. Vega, VA lined up a host of excellent speakers who will speak on a variety of topics, including breaking barriers and overcoming personal and professional obstacles to achieve their goals. From VA field employees to VA Central Office staff, to Veterans, to celebrated authors, artists, and volunteers, this year's TEDx event promises to continue VA's trend of featuring engaging and exciting talks on a variety of subjects relevant to providing the best benefits and service to all Veterans.

Employees are VA's greatest resource, which is why we hope every employee can tune in and see what's new at VA, what's happening in the Veteran space, and gain new insight and inspiration. It's a fantastic opportunity for all of VA to learn and grow together.

Remember to stay tuned for a future announcement on an exact date and time this August. Get ready to add a place holder on your calendar, grab your lunch or a cup of coffee, and join TEDxVeteransAffairs. You'll be glad that you did!

For comments or questions regarding TEDx Week, please contact the TEDxVeteransAffairs Chairperson, Mr. Prince Taylor.



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