

Diversity@Work

April 2024

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

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Upcoming Events

April 2024

[Arab American Heritage Month](#)

[Limb Loss Awareness Month](#)

[Minority Health Month](#)

[Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month](#)

[Ramadan](#)

March 10-April 9

[Deaf History Month](#)

March 15-April 15

[World Autism Awareness Day](#)

April 2

[Day of Silence](#)

April 12

[Pan American Week/Day](#)

April 14-20/April 14

[DIVAC Quarterly Meeting](#)

April 17; 1-3 pm

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 [ORMDI Harassment Prevention Program](#). For Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) services, email the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer [ADR team](#).

Commemorate

Days of Remembrance/Holocaust Remembrance Day

VA commemorates Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, on Monday, May 6, 2024, and Days of Remembrance which runs from the Sunday before Yom HaShoah through the following Sunday in the United States.

The 31st Annual Federal Inter-Agency Holocaust Remembrance Program, "Stories of Courage", will be held virtually on May 8 from 11:30 am to 1 pm (ET). The program will feature two Holocaust survivors and Ellen Germain for the U.S. Department of State will moderate.

Visit the [Federal Inter-Agency Holocaust Remembrance Program](#) to watch virtually.

Commemorate

Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month

April is [Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month](#) (SAAM), "an important time to speak out, stand with courageous survivors, and finally change the culture that has allowed sexual violence to exist for far too long...Sexual violence affects all people, regardless of geography, race, age, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or economic background" ([Presidential Proclamation on National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, 2023](#)).

During SAAM and year-round, VA works to raise awareness of its resources for survivors of military sexual trauma (MST), which refers to sexual assault or harassment that occurred during military service ([VA](#)). Every VA health care facility has an MST Coordinator who serves as the contact person for MST-related issues and can assist Veterans in accessing care. For questions about treatment and care options related to MST, contact an [MST Coordinator](#) near you. For help with disability compensation related to MST, please contact the [Veterans Benefits Administration \(VBA\) MST Outreach Coordinator](#) at your local VBA Regional Office.

VA Directive 0321, Serious Incident Reports, requires that incidents on VA property that result in serious illness or bodily injury to include sexual and aggravated assault be reported to the VA Integrated Operations Center (VA IOC) as soon as possible but no later than two hours after awareness of the incident. Serious incidents are to be reported to the VA IOC through VA IOC Watch Officer or the Administration/Staff Office Watch Officer using VA Form 0923.

Message from the DAS

Dr. Anne-Marie Duncan, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Resolution Management, Diversity and Inclusion

Public Service Recognition Week 2024 is quickly approaching! From May 5-11, VA facilities across the Nation will take part in virtual events that salute and enrich our workforce. Stay tuned for a schedule of dates and activities! Thank you for your service!

National Diversity Internship Program

Consider a 2024 Fall Intern

Applications for the National Diversity Internship Program (NDIP) Fall 2024 session will open on April 15. NDIP is a VA-wide program supporting Strategy 1 of VA's 2024-25 Human Capital Operating Plan: to build a diverse pipeline into VA that promotes efficient and effective recruitment and hiring of highly qualified candidates to support VA priorities.

The program pairs VA team members with highly motivated students and recent graduates who can provide support in a variety of career fields. Previous interns have supported VA teams with:

- Communications
- Information Technology
- Healthcare Administration
- And more!

NDIP is open to all VA organizations that do not require the intern to provide direct medical care, process clinical data, conduct research for the VA Office of Academic Affiliations, or provide social work or psychology. To apply, employees will need to:

1. Request funding for an intern. Supporting documents are available on the NDIP SharePoint (**contact the NDIP team** for this address).
2. Consider which kinds of tasks the intern will support. It will be the mentor's responsibility to assign tasks and monitor the intern's performance.
3. Identify another member of their team as a secondary mentor to share responsibilities.
4. Provide information about the desired major, academic level, and skills of a potential intern. This helps the NDIP program team match employees with the best interns possible.
5. Submit an **online NDIP application** between April 15-May 17.

Affinity Conferences

FAPAC NLTP

The **Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC) 39th National Leadership Training Program (NLTP)** will be held at the National Conference Center in Leesburg, Virginia, May 6-9, 2024. Each year, the NLTP gathers nearly 300 government leaders from the Federal and District of Columbia governments representing various agencies and parts of the country. The NLTP is three days filled with dynamic keynote sessions, panel discussions, breakout sessions and interactive problem-solving workgroups on topics to build government leadership skills. The NLTP qualifies as a training activity 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 should follow appropriate conference attendance approval procedures established for their respective organizations. For more information, contact Ms. Tynnetta Lee, VA's Departmental Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Special Emphasis Program Manager, ORMDI.



FEW NTP

The **Federally Employed Women 55th National Training Program (NTP)** will be held at the Hilton Chicago Hotel in Chicago, Illinois, August 4-8, 2024. Early bird registration for members began in February. The NTP qualifies as a training activity 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 should follow appropriate conference attendance approval procedures established for their respective organizations. For more information, contact Ms. Tynnetta Lee, VA's National Federal Women's Program Manager, ORMDI.



ANTI-ARAB, ANTI-MIDDLE EASTERN, ANTI-MUSLIM, AND ANTISEMITIC DISCRIMINATION ARE ILLEGAL



The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) works to prevent and remedy employment discrimination based on religion, national origin, and race, including discrimination against those who are, or are perceived to be, Arab, Israeli, Jewish, Middle Eastern, Muslim, or Palestinian.

DISPARATE TREATMENT

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 bars discrimination, including on the basis of religion, national origin, and race, in all aspects of employment, including hiring, firing, pay, job assignments, promotions, layoffs, training, fringe benefits, and any other term or condition of employment. Unlawful discrimination against applicants or employees can include:

- treating an individual adversely based on their actual or perceived religious practices or membership in a particular racial or national origin group (e.g., Israeli or Palestinian);
- treating an individual adversely based on the assumption that the individual holds certain views because of their religion, national origin, or race;
- treating an individual adversely because of the individual's actual or perceived association with, or relationship to, a person of a particular religion, national origin, or race;
- treating an individual adversely for actual or perceived participation in, or association with, civic, cultural, or religious organizations that are closely aligned with particular religions, national origins, or racial groups; or
- treating individuals of different religions, national origins, or races differently because of these protected characteristics when they engage in similar speech or conduct.

SEGREGATION

Title VII bars job segregation based on religion, national origin, or race. For example, an employer may not assign an employee to a non-customer-facing position because of actual or assumed customer bias against religious or ethnic dress, including a hijab, kippah/yarmulke, or turban.

HARASSMENT

- Title VII prohibits workplace harassment — including unwelcome remarks or conduct — based on an individual's actual or perceived religion, national origin, or race. Harassment is illegal when it results in an adverse employment decision, such as denial of a pay raise, or is so frequent or severe that it creates a hostile work environment. A single incident can create a hostile work environment if it is sufficiently severe, such as the display of certain symbols of violence or hatred (e.g., a swastika) toward individuals sharing the same protected characteristic.
- Harassment based on religion may include forcing an individual to abandon, alter, or adopt a religious practice as a condition of employment. Harassment based on national origin or race can include remarks or conduct based on an individual's birthplace, ethnicity, culture, name, language, dress, or accent.
- Conduct that occurs outside of work can contribute to a hostile work environment. For example, if an employee posts religious slurs about a Muslim or Jewish coworker on their personal social media, it can affect the workplace if the coworker learns about the posts directly, or other coworkers see and discuss them at work.

RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS

Title VII requires covered employers to reasonably accommodate a conflict between a work requirement and an individual's sincere religious beliefs, observances, or practices, unless doing so would cause an undue hardship. Religious accommodations may include schedule changes, leave, and exceptions to dress and grooming codes where necessary to accommodate an individual's religion.

RETALIATION

Title VII bars retaliation by an employer because an individual has engaged in specific protected activities under Title VII, including requesting a religious accommodation, objecting to or opposing employment discrimination, participating in employer or EEO investigations, or filing an EEO charge or complaint.



**If you suspect discrimination,
contact ORMDI promptly. There are
strict time limits for filing a charge.
888-566-3982**

Training

Fiscal Year 2024 Management Directive 715: Barrier Analysis Training

The ORMDI Workforce Analysis Team will conduct virtual “Management Directive 715: Barrier Analysis Training” on April 3, April 18, May 14, and July 30 from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. (EST). The purpose of the training is to educate participants on how to conduct a barrier analysis by following four steps: identify triggers, investigate potential barriers, create and implement an action plan, and conduct follow-up. This training is not only intended for EEO Program Managers responsible for conducting barrier analysis but also Human Resources Personnel, Diversity Specialists, Special Emphasis Program Managers, and management. To participate, **register for course item number 3844925 in the Talent Management System (TMS)**. Space is limited.

ORMDI Harassment Prevention Training

ORMDI will host a virtual “Overview of the Harassment Prevention Program (HPP)” class on April 3, May 1, and June 5 from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. (EST). All employees and supervisors are welcome. To participate, **register for course item number 4563938 in TMS**, and choose a date and time to register. ORMDI will also host “Overview of VA Handbook 5979 - Harassment Prevention Program Procedures” on April 17, May 15, June 19, and July 17 from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. (EST). Executives, managers, and supervisors are encouraged to attend. To participate, **register for course item number 4627175 in TMS**, and choose a date and time.

Workplace Civility and Root Causes of Workplace Disputes for Managers and Non-Managers

The Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer (OCHCO) Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) program will be offering the virtual version of their “Workplace Civility and Root Causes of Workplace Disputes for Managers and Non-Managers” training. The training will be held on the last Wednesday of each month. Each training will host up to 40 participants. Register in TMS for VA Supervisors/Managers (VA 4559059), 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. (ET), or for VA Employees (VA 4562623), 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. (EST). For more information and guidance pertaining to this training, contact Mr. Leroy Hill, ADR Specialist, OCHCO.

Other VA Resources

C20: Take Your 20 for Veteran Health

C20 is a 20-minute live, interactive webinar hosted by Dr. “Chai” Chad Kessler, VA’s National Director for Emergency Medicine. It brings together the VA community through discussions about clinical and health care issues facing Veterans and topics related to VA employee wellness, growth and retention. Join C20 every Tuesday and Thursday at 12 p.m. EST (recast Tuesdays and Thursdays at 4:30 p.m. EST). [Past C20 episodes](#) are available online.

The Audacity to Fail Podcast

On the current episode of the [Audacity to Fail Podcast: misStepping Into Success](#), Dr. Shari Dade is joined by Dr. Christopher Watson. Dr. Watson is a psychologist who began his VA career in 1993, is the VISN 19 Chief Mental Health Officer, and has been serving as the Acting Executive Director of the Veterans Crisis Line since late August 2023. He is a member of the American College of Healthcare Executives, Division 18 (Public Practice section) of the American Psychological Association, and the VA Psychology Leaders group. He also regularly provides coaching and mentoring to mental health leaders across the organization, and he has an absolute passion for issues pertaining to diversity, equity, and inclusion. He has particularly demonstrated leadership in addressing systemic racism on the local and national level in VHA, providing numerous presentations and trainings related to diversity and inclusion. Listen in as Dr. Christopher Watson shares the impact insight has on effective leadership, both for the leader and their team. The series is also available on the [Talent Management System](#).



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