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VA advances equity in benefits, services and health care

Action plan addresses discrepancies among underserved Veterans

WASHINGTON, DC — The Department of Veterans Affairs released its [Equity Action Plan](#), April 14, to eliminate barriers to health care, benefits and services, and create opportunities to improve access and experiences for historically marginalized Veterans.

VA's Equity Action Plan is part of the Biden-Harris administration's broader focus on advancing equity as outlined in [Executive Order 13985, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government](#).

"The department's mission is to ensure equity and access for all those who served their country in uniform and the Equity Action Plan is a natural extension of that mission," said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. "We have efforts underway to change policies, processes and procedures, as well as identify infrastructure and data enhancements to enable access to all Veterans, including underserved Veterans."

To serve all Veterans, VA must reach the most marginalized and underserved — regardless of race, gender, age or socio-economic status. The plan sets forth a myriad of goals to effectively incorporate equity across the department. To help achieve broad equity in every area of VA operations and engagement this includes:

- Building and maintaining trust with underserved Veterans.
- Developing data to measure equitable delivery of care and services.
- Improving access for advancing outcomes when it comes to:
 - Health care, benefits and services for underserved Veterans.
 - Contracts awarded to minority, small disadvantaged and women-owned businesses.

This follows the creation of an Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access task force, [April 1, 2021](#), which developed a set of [20 recommendations](#) to ensure equitable treatment and experiences for all VA employees and Veterans and their families, caregivers and survivors.

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