



Upcoming Events

June 2024

[VA Pride Month](#)

[Caribbean American Heritage Month](#)

[PTSD Awareness Month](#)

[80th Anniversary of D-Day](#)

June 6

[Women Veterans Recognition Day](#)

June 12

[Flag Day](#)

June 14

[Father's Day](#)

June 16

[Juneteenth](#)

June 19

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

VA Pride Month 2024

VA joins the Nation in observing LGBTQ+ Pride Month in June. VA continues to demonstrate its commitment to furthering workforce diversity and cultivating workplace inclusion, and the LGBTQ+ community is an integral and growing segment of both our workforce and those we serve. VA's best practices have remained constant in its promotion of a more welcoming, inclusive, and diverse workplace and steadily continues its proactivity in an endeavor to recognize and incorporate as such to further exemplify VA's commitment. These leading practices were further supported by President Biden's 2021 executive orders on [Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation](#) and [Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce](#) which foster the shared commitment that every person at VA, whether a customer or an employee, should be treated with dignity and respect. It is this simple premise based on the established principles of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (I*DEA) which benefits our entire workforce, representative of diverse backgrounds, religions, races, national origins, and ethnicities.

The Department's commitment to diversity and inclusion remains evident in VA's institution of policy and practices in accordance with established and enforced employee protections from sexual discrimination or harassment based on sexual orientation or gender identity. This includes the enterprise-wide Equal Employment Opportunity, Diversity and Inclusion, No FEAR and Whistleblower Rights and Protection Policy Statement and associated directives and handbooks; training on LGBTQ+ cultural competency; and consultation and survey-based needs assessments.

In commemoration of Pride Month, VA ORMDI invites all employees, military-connected community partners, and Veterans to join the celebration by attending the fourth annual [VA National Virtual PRIDE](#) beginning on June 3, 2024. VA adopted the slogan, "Pride Counts at VA", and this year's VA National Virtual Pride theme of "Limitless. Overcome. Visible. Empowered." takes that slogan a step further by providing trainings and presentations on LGBTQ+ diversity, adversity, and the relentless spirit of the LGBTQ+ community to fight for equality. VA National Virtual PRIDE encourages participation by any person wishing to support the events in a positive and safe environment.

VA National Virtual PRIDE is a grassroots initiative which began in 2021 under the auspices of ORMDI's VA Departmental LGBTQ+ Workgroup. The purpose is to educate, enrich, and share common daily struggles of the LGBTQ+ community by uniting VA service providers, Veterans, and allies of the LGBTQ+ and related identities community. A combination of Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPMs), Veteran Care Coordinators, and various departments within VA will be presenting valuable information or trainings.

For information on [VA's LGBTQ+ Special Emphasis Program](#), contact Sterling Akins, VA's Departmental LGBTQ+ SEPM, ORMDI. SEPMs should seek local management approval and consult the Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs and/or regional counsel as deemed necessary by local management to ensure that use of VA resources in support of a SEP activity is authorized.

Message from the DAS

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

The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA) is a 2023 law that requires covered employers to provide “reasonable accommodations” to a worker’s “known limitations” related to pregnancy. The Final Rule for the PWFA was published on April 15, 2024. You can review the [PWFA FAQ/brief](#) published by ORMDI.

VA is hosting the [LGBTQ+ Veterans Virtual Outreach Symposium](#) on Thursday, June 6, 2024, at 1 p.m. (ET). The Symposium will focus on the importance of reaching out to our Nation’s LGBTQ+ Veterans. Attendees will be educated and empowered about the benefits and services that may be available to them. The symposium will provide information on current and future VA benefits, to include filing a VA disability claim online, the Sergeant First Class (SFC) Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act, and improving the quality of life for Veterans and dependents through Vet Center services. In addition, there will be presentations on LGBTQ+ healthcare, character of discharge upgrades, and mental health resources.

Finally, the virtual Aspiring Supervisor Program (vASP) is a VA-wide leadership development program for team members with little to no supervisory experience who aspire to lead. If you have little to no supervisory experience and aspire to lead, vASP may be for you. The application will open for the next cohort August 19, 2024. Begin the process by starting a discussion with your supervisor about how vASP fits into your professional goals.

Updates to Standard Policy Directive No. 15

Standards for Maintaining, Collecting, and Presenting Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity

On March 28, 2024, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued updates to **Standard Policy Directive No. 15 (SPD 15): Standards for Maintaining, Collecting, and Presenting Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity**. SPD 15 was established in 1977 and last updated in 1997. The guidance therein applies to ALL federally sponsored statistical data collections. There are four major changes to the standards designed to create more useful and accurate federal data.

1. **Collect race and ethnicity information using one combined race/ethnicity question.** Currently, ethnicity and race are two separate questions. This change combines the two questions into one and reduces confusion among people who understand race and ethnicity to be similar or the same concepts. Additionally, Hispanic respondents will no longer be asked to make two different selections.
2. **Add “Middle Eastern or North African” (MENA) as a new minimum category.** The current definition for “White” states “A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.” However, MENA respondents view their identity separate from White. Creating a new category for MENA and revising the definition for White, allows for more accurate data.
3. **Require the collection of more detail beyond the minimum race and ethnicity categories by default.** Currently, collecting more detailed information beyond the minimum race and ethnicity categories is encouraged but not required. This update requires the collection of more detailed data. In cases where collecting this type of data presents additional burden or risk to privacy or confidentiality, agencies can request an exemption.
4. **Update terminology.** The updates to the terminology in SPD 15 include:
 - Removing the terms “majority” and “minority” (exceptions apply);
 - Using “race and/or ethnicity” in the question stem;
 - Updating the instructions;
 - Using “Multiracial and/or Multiethnic” in tabulations to represent people who identify with multiple minimum categories; and
 - Updating the definitions for the race/ethnicity groups.

Every agency that collects race and ethnicity data from applicants, employees, customers, the public, etc. must submit an Action Plan to OMB within 18 months from the date of issuance. Agencies must make these plans available to the public. Within five years, agencies must fully comply with the new standards. You can read more about the updated SPD 15 at spd15revision.gov.

Commemorate

Juneteenth National Independence Day

VA joins the Nation in observing June 19 as Juneteenth National Independence Day. This year's theme is "Opportunity Freedom Celebrated."

"The holiday's name is derived from the combination of 'June' and 'nineteenth,' signifying the date when Major General Gordon Granger issued the final enforcement of the Emancipation Proclamation in Texas after the conclusion of the American Civil War" (**Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, DEOMI**).

"In 2021, Juneteenth National Independence Day was declared a federal holiday and a Presidential Proclamation was issued on June 18, 2021...Juneteenth honors the end to slavery in the United States and is considered the longest-running African American holiday. Most importantly, it represents victory over the institution of slavery and the beginning of the fulfillment of America's promise of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for African Americans" (**DEOMI**).

"As more Americans celebrate Juneteenth with family and community, it is vital to share the important historical legacy behind Juneteenth and recognize the long struggle to make it an officially recognized holiday. It is an opportunity to honor our country's second Independence Day and reflect on our shared history and future...Juneteenth has always been more than a holiday. The day stands as a testament to and celebration of the unyielding spirit of a people. It is a day for introspection, a platform for education, and a tribute to the monumental contributions of African Americans to the history of this nation. Each year, as Juneteenth grows in popularity, there are festivals, parades, activist rallies, commemorative murals, vitally important discussions about race, and so much more. By celebrating Juneteenth, we foster connections, healing, and revitalization. And we pay tribute to the ongoing fight for social justice and racial equity" (**National Museum of African American History and Culture**).

Check your local area or facility's calendar of events for celebrations related to Juneteenth National Independence Day. For more information on VA's **Black/African American Special Emphasis Program**, contact Ms. Tynnetta Lee, VA's Departmental Black/African American Program Manager, ORMDI.

WRP Recruiter Applications Open Now

Submitted by the Human Capital Services Center

Are you passionate about diversifying our workforce? Consider volunteering as a recruiter for the Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP). WRP is a nationwide program dedicated to diversifying the federal workforce and ensuring equal opportunity employment. It provides a database of qualified, Schedule A eligible candidates to make it easier to find and hire candidates with disabilities.

WRP participants come from a variety of educational backgrounds with different levels of experience. Some are students just beginning their careers, while others are disabled Veterans re-entering the workforce who need a helping hand to coach them through interviews and put their best foot forward. All are qualified, job-ready applicants from across the country. You can help them prepare for interviews by applying to become a WRP Recruiter.

By becoming a WRP Recruiter, you can:

- Have a personal impact on the hiring of people with disabilities in the Federal Government.
- Build your professional skills by mentoring WRP applicants through informational interviews. You will advise candidates with diverse academic backgrounds and career interests.
- Grow their expertise in Federal Government disability hiring initiatives through online training on WRP, accommodations, and the Schedule A Hiring Authority.

To be a WRP Recruiter, you must:

- Be a GS-9 or above with at least two years of experience in the Federal Government.
- Have permission from your supervisor.
- Complete a brief online training session to prepare for informational interviews.
- Be available for 10-15 hours in October - November to conduct informational interviews.

For more information, visit the [WRP page](#). Ready to apply? Register at [wrp.gov](#) under the "Recruiters" tab.

Affinity Conferences

VA employees who plan to attend should follow appropriate conference attendance approval procedures established for their respective organizations. Costs associated with attending must be authorized by each employee's organization. No centralized funding is available to pay for registration:

SAIGE National Training Program

The **Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE) 21st National Training Program** will be held at the Northern Quest Resort & Casino in Spokane, Washington, June 3-6, 2024. SAIGE is a non-profit organization representing American Indian and Alaska Native Federal, Tribal, State, and local government employees. For more information, contact Ms. Tynnetta Lee, VA's Departmental American Indian/Alaska Native Program Manager, ORMDI.



LULAC National Convention and Exposition

The **League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) National Convention and Exposition** will be held in Las Vegas, Nevada, June 26-29, 2024. LULAC's mission is to advance the economic condition, educational attainment, political influence, housing, health, and civil rights of the Hispanic population of the United States. The LULAC Federal Training Institute will provide attendees with workshops, plenary sessions, and other activities that are geared towards enhancing one's career and leadership development skills, with much emphasis on the Executive Core Qualifications required for entry to the Senior Executive Service. For more information, contact Ms. Karen M. Basnight, VA's Acting Departmental Hispanic Employment Program Manager, ORMDI.



FEW National Training Program

The **Federally Employed Women 55th National Training Program** will be held at the Hilton Chicago Hotel in Chicago, Illinois, August 4-8, 2024. Early bird registration for members began in February. For more information, contact Ms. Tynnetta Lee, VA's National Federal Women's Program Manager, ORMDI.



Blacks In Government National Training Institute

The **Blacks In Government (BIG) 2024 National Training Institute (NTI)** will be held at the Tampa Convention Center in Tampa, Florida, August 12-15, 2024. This year's theme is "The BIG Experience 2024: 'Providing Tools and Strategies for an Innovative Workplace'" and will highlight recent changes in public service, as well as prepare employees to successfully manage their careers. The NTI will feature workshops, special enhancement programs, and unlimited networking opportunities. BIG workshops will include innovative approaches, cutting-edge content, and engagement of training attendees from varying government levels (local, federal, and state). For more information, contact Ms. Tynnetta Lee, VA's Departmental Black/African American Program Manager, ORMDI.



Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities Annual Conference

The **Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) 38th Annual Conference** will be held November 1-3, 2024, at the Gaylord Rockies Resort & Convention Center in Aurora, Colorado. This year's theme is, "Championing Hispanic Higher Education Success: Reaching New Heights of Excellence and Equity." 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. For more information, contact Ms. Karen M. Basnight, VA's Acting Departmental Hispanic Employment Program Manager, ORMDI.



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 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.

Harassment Prevention Training

ORMDI will host a virtual “Overview of the Harassment Prevention Program (HPP)” class on June 5 and July 3 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 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 Luke Steinbach. Mr. Steinbach is an Associate Director for the High Reliability Support Team. He provides leadership for the High Reliability Consultation and High Reliability Academy workstreams who are responsible for supporting and developing HRO Implementers across facilities and VISNs. This episode will motivate those who are searching for tips on how to find success by discovering the key principles, strategies, and insights that leaders can employ to cultivate a culture of high reliability within their teams and organizations. The series is also available on the **Talent Management System**.



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