



Upcoming Events

July 2024

Independence Day

July 4

DIVAC Quarterly Meeting

July 17

Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act

July 26

National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day

July 27



IMAGE CREDIT: ADA NATIONAL NETWORK

Commemorate

34th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act

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](#).

VA joins the Nation in observing the 34th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) on July 26, 2024. From the [Presidential Proclamation on Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, 2023](#), “The ADA has had a profound impact, but we still have much more work to do...we need to continue building a culture that not only protects disability rights but also celebrates disability pride.”

Historically correlated to the ADA, June 18, 2024, was the effective date for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) Regulatory Final Rule and Interpretive Guidance to implement the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA), 29 C.F.R. §1636.

“The final Interpretive Guidance explains how the provisions of the ADA that require a covered entity to keep medical information confidential apply to employees and information under the PWFA” ([EEOC](#)).

Moreover, within the EEOC’s Interpretive Guidance, the Commission added information calling attention to the possible overlap between the ADA and PWFA by noting that there may be situations whereby the qualified employee may be entitled to protections by both the ADA and PWFA may apply. The EEOC additionally included [multiple examples within the Interpretive Guidance](#), in relation to a qualified employee’s or applicant’s known limitations related to, affected by, or arising out of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions.

Thusly, as exponentially evident by the real-time regulations of the PWFA, the ADA continues to be of immense importance pursuant to the [Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division](#): “The statement of purpose and policy is a reaffirmation of the precepts of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which has been referred to as the 20th century emancipation proclamation for individuals with disabilities.”

Visit [VA’s Individuals with Disabilities Employment Program webpage](#) for more information.

Message from the DAS

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

A video highlighting the accomplishments of the winners of the Eleventh Annual Secretary's Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Excellence Awards is now posted to the [D&I Excellence Awards webpage](#). Please be sure to check it out.

Congratulations again to all of the award winners for their outstanding achievements in support of D&I!

Join the Journey: Advancing Accessibility at VA

Embrace the Resources Offered by the VA Section 508 Team

In 2023, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported that 13 percent of the population, or 42.5 million people, have a disability, making them the largest minority group in the country ([BLS Persons with a Disability: Labor Force Characteristics Summary](#)). Veterans are disproportionately affected, with 30 percent, or 5.3 million, reporting a service-connected disability ([BLS Employment Situation of Veterans - 2023](#)). As the largest federal employer of disabled individuals, VA is committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive culture that reflects the diversity of the Veterans we serve. Central to this commitment is ensuring accessibility. This involves designing products, services, and environments to be usable by all people, including those with disabilities, enabling full participation and benefit for employees, Veterans, caregivers, business partners, and stakeholders alike.

The Office of Information and Technology (OIT) Section 508 Compliance Directorate leads this charge at VA. Enshrined in the [Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 508](#) mandates that federal agencies make their technology accessible to employees and the public with disabilities, provided it does not pose an undue burden. The Section 508 Compliance Directorate is the backbone of our accessibility efforts, ensuring compliance with standards, supporting project managers with tools and training, and advising the VA's Chief Information Officer on pertinent policies. Their work seamlessly integrates accessibility across VA platforms and services, making a significant difference in the lives of our diverse community.

"At VA, we're clearing the way for accessibility every day," says Chet Frith, Section 508 Compliance Director. "We're collaborating with everyone from app developers to end-users to the teams behind the scenes making purchasing and design decisions to make sure that accessibility is considered by everyone at VA."

Within the past year, the Section 508 Compliance Directorate saw an increase of 35 percent of audits processed and successfully aligned the 508 subject matter expert support resources with the OIT product line management. However, one of the most impactful efforts has been user-centric design and collaboration with blind Veterans. This partnership led to the creation of a feature in the [VA Health and Benefits mobile app](#) that aids in reading claim decisions ([VA News—Blind Veterans can now read decision letters](#)). This innovative feature significantly enhances the user experience for visually impaired Veterans, ensuring they can access their claim information independently and efficiently. The 508 Directorate is also engaging with VA stakeholders and Veterans to pinpoint accessibility gaps and devise strategies to address the needs of all users during their annual "508 roadshow."

Christina Weymouth, an Information Technology Specialist for Section 508 Compliance is proud of her team's work. "We've made great strides toward accessibility at VA, but everyone has a part to play." Weymouth adds, "Anyone who writes an email, a newsletter, or utilizes a website, has a responsibility to make that content accessible to people with disabilities. We can't get there without you." Last year, OIT unveiled the meticulously crafted [Brand System](#) and [Accessibility Guide](#). This passion project of the Section 508 Compliance Directorate provides clear, comprehensive instructions for ensuring accessibility throughout content creation in VA communications.

Accessibility isn't just a checkbox for VA—it's a fundamental duty to ensure everyone feels welcome and empowered. Your involvement is essential in shaping a truly inclusive VA. By embracing the resources provided by the 508 team, you're not merely helping us meet standards; you're ensuring that everyone to include employees, Veterans, caregivers, partners, and stakeholders can access and benefit from our services and enjoy what we offer.

For more information, please visit [VA Section 508](#).

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:

FEW National Training Program

The **Federally Employed Women 55th National Training Program** (NTP) will be held at the Hilton Chicago Hotel in Chicago, Illinois, August 4-8, 2024. This year's conference theme is "Unleashing Your Full Potential: Learn, Recall, Apply, Reinforce." The NTP is designed for all occupations at various levels of service, and each training session is mapped to the Office of Personnel Management's Senior Executive Service, Executive Core Qualifications (Leading Change, Leading People, Results Driven, Business Acumen, and Building Coalitions) and the underlying fundamental core competencies. This year exciting, relevant, and engaging new topics in Leadership and Culture, Professional Development, Office Technology and Administration, and Employee Experience learning tracks were added. Over 100 course options are available. Early bird registration for members began in February. For more information, contact Ms. Tynnetta Lee, VA's National Federal Women's Program Manager, ORMDI.



BIG 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.



Annual National HBCU 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 event will be held September 15-19, 2024, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, with the theme, "Raise the Bar: Lead the World." For more information, visit the [HBCU website](#) or contact Ms. Tynnetta Lee, VA's HBCU representative.



HACU 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. (ET). 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 July 3 from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. (ET). 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. (ET). 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. (ET). 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. ET (recast Tuesdays and Thursdays at 4:30 p.m. ET). **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 fellow consultant Dr. Courtney Barrett Smith to explore what qualities enable some to push through while others might falter. Dr. Barrett Smith is a Supervisory Senior Organization Development Psychology and leads the Systems and Analytics team in the Consulting Service at the National Center for Organization Development. Get ready to join us as we explore the journey of misStepping Into Success as we uncover strategies that can help any leader rise to the occasion, even when it seems like the easier path is to yield. The series is also available on the **Talent Management System**.

Under Construction: Leadership VA

Application Period for Next Cohort to Open Spring 2025

The Human Capital Services Center (HCSC) is currently conducting a strategic review of Leadership VA (LVA) to ensure program components meet the strategic objectives of VA. The next cohort will begin in fiscal year 2026 – HCSC anticipates opening applications for this session in spring 2025. In the meantime, visit the LVA SharePoint for program updates and check out the Leadership Development Framework to learn about other professional development opportunities that are a fit for your goals. For the LVA or LDF SharePoint information, contact the [LVA team](#).



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