

CHARTING THE COURSE: TOGETHER, APART JUNE 21-25, 2021



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Racial Equity in Programs and Systems Outcomes



Panelists:

Shawn Liu VHA Homeless Programs Office

Jeffrey Rawlings Forth Worth Housing Solutions

Darryl Vincent U.S. VETS

Implementing Racial Equity in VHA Homeless Programs

Shawn Liu, LCSW, VHA-CM Community Engagement Coordinator Homeless Programs Office Veterans Health Administration U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs





Starting with a Liberated Space

"A liberated space is a space grounded in **community** and **love**. It is a space where we are free (libre) to **be human** along with one another. And since to be human is to err, a Liberated Space is a space where **a mistake, or a transgression will not cost us our freedom**. That being said, in a Liberated Space, we will process whatever intentional and unintentional hurt/pain is caused by our words/actions.

A Liberated Space is a space in which everyone works as a team to **restore that which has been broken**. We all play a part in doing so. In a Liberated Space, we all hold each other accountable for doing so. **We protect each other**." – *Martin Urbach*



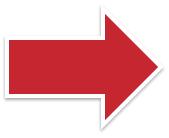


In Liberated Spaces, We...

Are grounded in **community** and **love**.

Look out for each other and protect each other.

Work as a team **to restore** what has been broken.



Are free to bring all of ourselves.

Are free to **take risks** and **make mistakes**.

Are free to be uncomfortable, to hold tension in lifegiving ways.





Racial Equity and Racial Justice Workgroup Overview

- Historically, Black and American Indian / Alaska Native Veterans have been overrepresented in the homeless Veteran population.
- Within this context, in June 2020, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Homeless Programs Office (HPO) established the Racial Equity and Racial Justice Workgroup with efforts addressed through three distinct areas:
 - Policy and program improvements.
 - Direct patient care improvements.
 - Staff support.





Racial Equity and Racial Justice Workgroup Overview

Core Values:

- Ensuring racial equity is key to ending Veteran homelessness.
- For HPO, this means embedding concepts of racial equity and racial justice into its core values.
- Workgroup efforts will work across all HPO program offices to surface opportunities for improvement at the national, Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN), and local levels.

Primary FY 2021 Objectives:

- Conduct an organizational assessment to identify the current status of HPO and use the insights in planning for next steps.
- Develop and launch a racial equity dashboard and quality improvement initiative to identify and address disparities in access and outcomes for Veterans engaged in VA homeless programs.
- Provide educational offerings for staff to ensure competency understanding of racial justice and equity.
- Develop a mentorship network for local homeless program staff.





Synergy with Executive Order 13985

- Executive Order 13985, officially titled Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government, is the first executive order signed by U.S. President Joe Biden on January 20, 2021.
- It advances racial equity and support for underserved communities through the federal government.

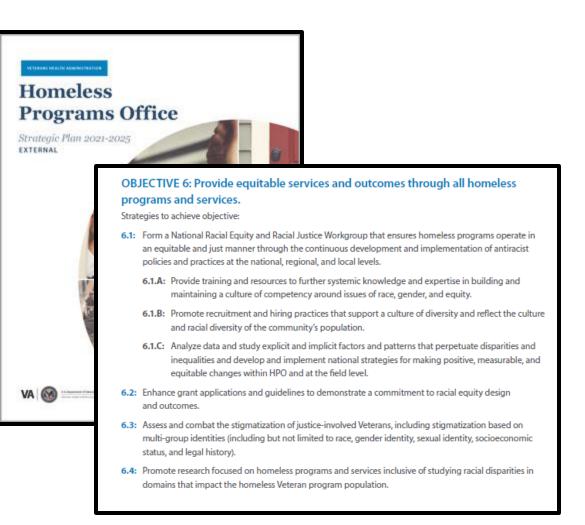






Synergy with HPO's Strategic Plan

- The new <u>2021 2025 Homeless</u> <u>Programs Office Strategic Plan</u> outlines its vision for the future and highlights the path to achieve the ambitious goal of ending homelessness among Veterans and their families.
- The plan includes six fundamental objectives and their associated strategies for the future.







Key Terms

- Equity The consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.
 - Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government
- *Health* Equity The attainment of the highest level of health for all people. Achieving health equity requires valuing everyone equally with focused and ongoing societal efforts to address avoidable inequalities, historical and contemporary injustices, and the elimination of health and health care disparities.

– Healthy People, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services





Key Terms

• **Health Disparity** – A particular type of health difference that is closely linked with social, economic, and/or environmental disadvantage. Health disparities adversely affect groups of people who have systematically experienced greater obstacles to health based on their racial or ethnic group; religion; socioeconomic status; gender; age; mental health; cognitive, sensory, or physical disability; sexual orientation or gender identity; geographic location; or other characteristics historically linked to discrimination or exclusion.

- Healthy People, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

• **Targeted Universalism** – Setting universal goals pursued by targeted processes to achieve those goals. Within a targeted universalism framework, universal goals are established for all groups concerned. The strategies developed to achieve those goals are targeted, based upon how different groups are situated within structures, culture, and across geographies to obtain the universal goal. Targeted universalism is goal oriented, and the processes are directed in service of the explicit, universal goal.

- Othering & Belonging Institute, University of California, Berkeley





In FY2021Q4, HPO will launch a **Racial Equity Improvement Initiative** to provide a framework for local VA homeless programs detect, understand, and reduce or eliminate racial disparities in access and outcomes for Veterans served.





Conceptual Framework for Addressing Disparities



- Acquiring the knowledge that disparities exist.
- Exploring and discovering the factors that contribute to disparities.
- Designing and testing interventions to reduce or eliminate the problem.





Conceptual Framework for Addressing Disparities



Detect

Understand

- Exploring and discovering the factors that contribute to disparities.
- Designing and testing interventions to reduce or eliminate the problem.

Reduce

and

Eliminate



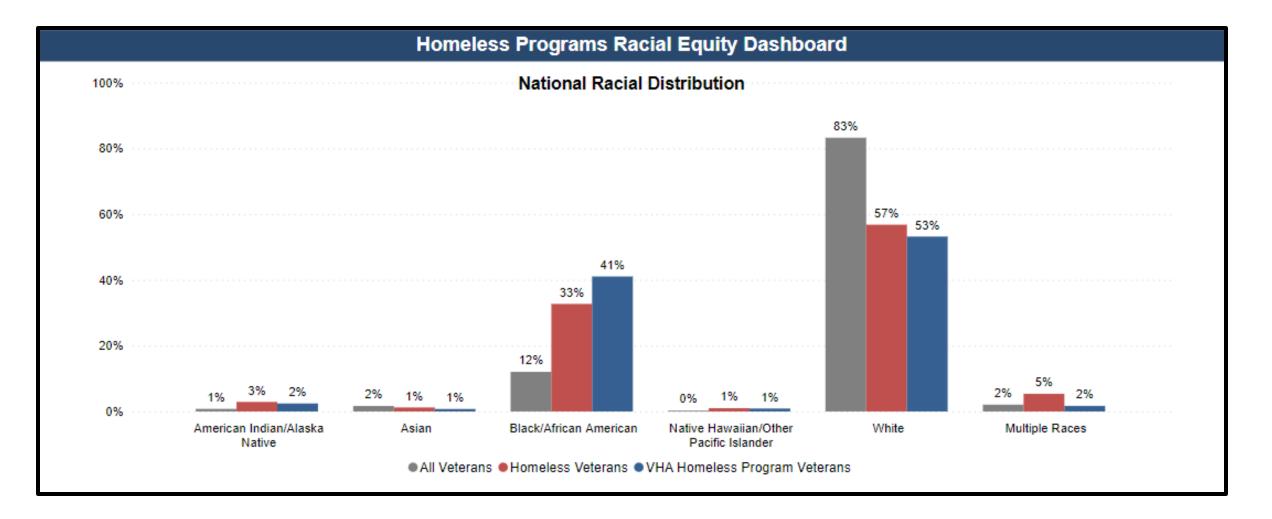


- Also launching in FY2021Q4, HPO's Racial Equity Dashboard will assist with the detection of disparities by providing disaggregated race and ethnicity information on:
 - Total populations.
 - Access to services.
 - Exit outcomes.
 - Lengths of time in programs or in housing processes.
- These reports will display information at the national, VISN, and local levels.
- Future iterations will be able filter by gender and age.





2020 Population Comparisons





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U.S. Department

of Veterans Affairs 16

Entries, Lengths of Stay, and Housing Times

Fiscal Year							
2020	\sim	Race	Unique Veterans Served in FY	Total New Entries in FY	Total New Exits in FY	Average LOS Days	HUD-VASH Average Days to Initial Lease-up
		American Indian/Alaska Native	3,027	1,372	1,439	401	92
		Asian	979	540	489	373	115
VISN, Facility		Black/African American	48,050	21,636	23,153	427	108
All		Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	1,110	511	493	388	128
	\sim	White	66,191	32,561	34,095	385	92
		Multiple Races	1,297	804	817	286	98
		Total	120,654	57,424	60,486	400	99
Program							
All	\sim	Ethnicity	Unique Veterans Served in FY	Total New Entries in FY	Total New Exits in FY	Average LOS Days	HUD-VASH Average Day to Initial Lease-u
		Hispanic/Latino	10,384	4,939	4,991	417	10
		Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino	109,260	51,921	54,846	400	9
		Total	119,644	56,860	59,837	401	9

*Currently displaying national-level information from FY 2020.



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U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs ₁₇

Exit Outcomes

Race	American Indian/Alaska Native		Asian E		Black// Ame	African rican	Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander		W	hite	Multiple	Races	To	tal
Housing Status	N	%	N	%	Ν	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Permanent Housing	705	49%	252	52%	12,228	53%	243	49%	17,336	51%	369	45%	31,133	51%
Temporary Housing	137	10%	39	8%	2,187	9%	39	8%	2,736	8%	77	9%	5,215	9%
Transitional Housing	43	3%	22	4%	938	4%	20	4%	1,411	4%	36	4%	2,470	4%
Institutional Setting	124	9%	41	8%	1,976	9%	53	11%	3,431	10%	83	10%	5,708	9%
Sheltered Homeless	49	3%	20	4%	870	4%	19	4%	1,224	4%	42	5%	2,224	4%
Unsheltered Homeless	47	3%	20	4%	364	2%	27	5%	852	2%	22	3%	1,332	2%
Unknown	334	23%	95	19%	4,590	20%	92	19%	7,105	21%	188	23%	12,404	21%
Total	1,439	100%	489	100%	23,153	100%	493	100%	34,095	100%	817	100%	60,486	100%
Ethnicity	Hispan	nic/Latino	Non-His	oanic/Non-Latir	10	То	tal							
Housing Status	N	%		N %		N	%							
Permanent Housing	2,766	55%	28,14	5 51%		30,911	52%							
Temporary Housing	423	8%	4,73	9 9%		5,162	9%							
Transitional Housing	193	4%	2,25	8 4%		2,451	4%							
Institutional Setting	364	7%	5,24	2 10%		5,606	9%							
Sheltered Homeless	178	4%	2,00	8 4%		2,186	4%							
Unsheltered Homeless	146	3%	1,16	8 2%		1,314	2%							
Unknown	921	18%	11,28	6 21%		12,207	20%							
Total	4,991	100%	54.84	6 100%		59,837	100%							

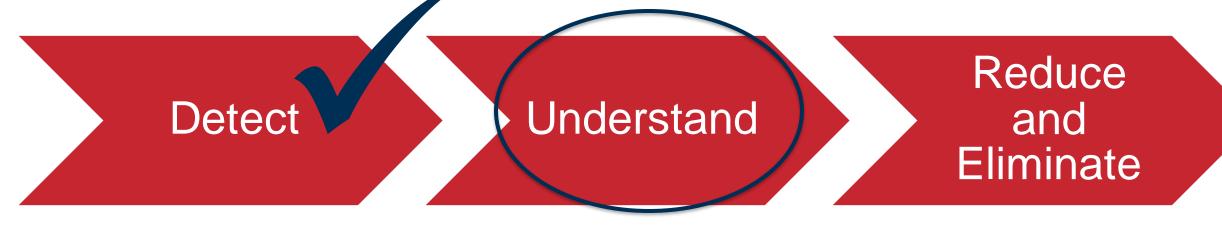
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Conceptual Framework for Addressing Disparities



- Acquiring the knowledge that disparities exist.
- Exploring and discovering the factors that contribute to disparities.
- Designing and testing interventions to reduce or eliminate the problem.





Understanding Disparities

Health System Factors

- Health services organization finance and delivery.
- Health care organizational culture, quality improvement.

Patient Factors

- Beliefs and preferences.
- Race/ethnicity, culture, and familial context.
- Education and resources.
 - Biology.

Clinical Encounter

- Provider communication.
 - Cultural competency.

Provider Factors

- Knowledge and attitudes.
 - Competing demands.Bias.





Conceptual Framework for Addressing Disparities

Detect 🗸

Understand

- Acquiring the knowledge that disparities exist.
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- Designing and testing interventions to reduce or eliminate the problem.

Reduce

and

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Reducing and Eliminating Disparities

Four Key Components:

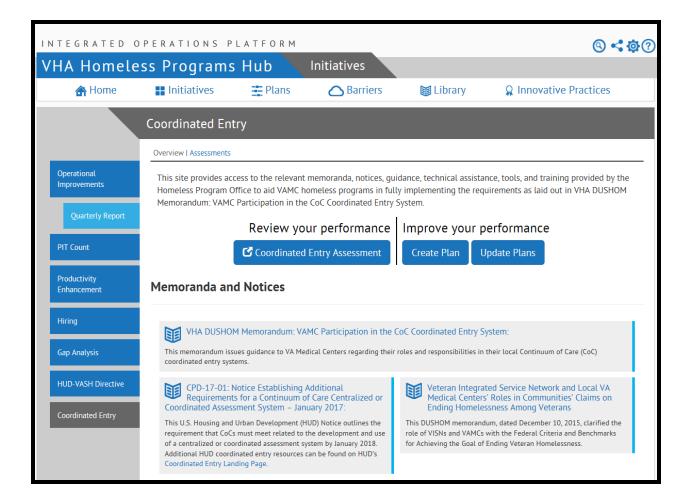
- 1. Developing appropriate intervention strategies, especially for community-based settings that serve vulnerable populations.
- 2. Instituting appropriate evaluation techniques.
- 3. Determining whether a strategy for reducing disparities is ready for implementation and translation into routine care settings.
- 4. Developing strategies that promote policy changes on the basis of the intervention.





Supporting Local VA Homeless Programs in Addressing Disparities

 The internal VHA Homeless Programs Hub will serve as a clearing house with links to the dashboard, toolkits, and technical assistance.

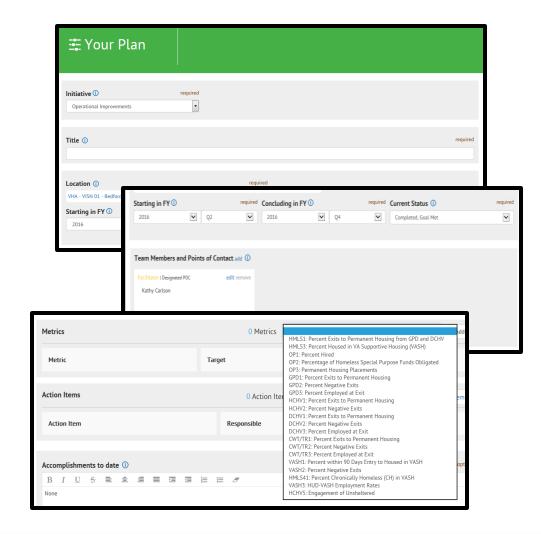






Supporting Local VA Homeless Programs in Addressing Disparities

 The VHA Homeless **Programs Hub's Operating Plan Tool will** be used to allow local VA homeless programs to develop plans to address racial disparities and document progress.







Conceptual Framework for Addressing Disparities Strong and

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Understand

- Acquiring the knowledge that disparities exist.
- Exploring and discovering the factors that contribute to disparities.
- Designing and testing interventions to reduce or eliminate the problem.

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Kilbourne AM, Switzer G, Hyman K, Crowley-Matoka M, Fine MJ. Advancing health disparities research within the health care system: a conceptual framework. Am J Public Health. 2006;96(12):2113-2121. doi:10.2105/AJPH.2005.077628



Innovative

Practices

Coming

Soon!

Looking Ahead

- Improving Policy
- New Training Offerings
- Incorporating Veterans with Lived Expertise
- Identifying and Disseminating Strong and Innovative Practices in Addressing Racial Disparities





Publicly Available Webinars to Support Your Work

- <u>Racial Equity and Homelessness: Understanding the Intersections</u> August 2020; VA Grant & Per Diem Grantee Monthly Operational Call
- <u>Analyzing Racial Disparities in the Homelessness System: What You Should Know</u> July 29, 2020; National Center on Homelessness among Veterans: Homeless National Training Series
- <u>Centering Race Equity through Data</u> February 11, 2021; SSVF National Webinar Series
- <u>Let's Talk about Racism: Effectively Navigating Difficult Dialogues about Racism (Part 1)</u> August 26, 2020; National Center on Homelessness among Veterans: Homeless National Training Series
- Let's Talk about Racism: Effectively Navigating Difficult Dialogues about Racism (Part 2) -September 16, 2020; National Center on Homelessness among Veterans: Homeless National Training Series
- <u>Conversations about Racial Equity Podcast</u> National Center on Homeless among Veterans





Contact Info

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Incorporating Racial Equity into Local Continuums of Care policies and practices



Jeffrey Rawlings NC BoS Region 7 Coordinated Entry Lead NC BoS CoC Steering Committee member NC BoS Consumer Advisory Committee Co-Chair NC BoS CoC Racial Equity Subcommittee member NC Victims Advocacy Support Services (VASS) Projects Director

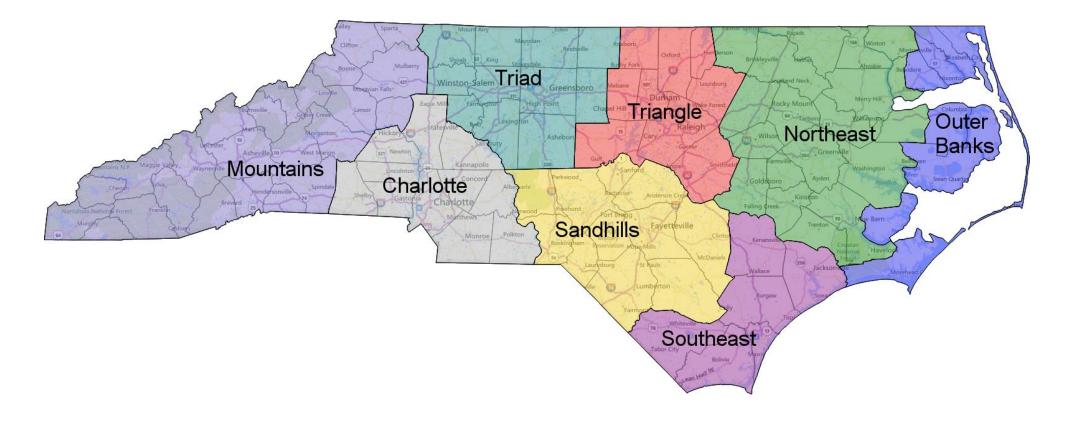
Introductions



Racism and Homelessness in the NC Balance of State CoC Kevin McNamee MSW NCCEH Jefferey Rawlings NC BoS Region 7 Coord. Entry lead

The NC Balance of State CoC covers 79 Counties of North Carolina

Balance of State CoC Regional Committees





Unique challenges exist when tackling racism and homelessness in a rural context.

Large geographic area

Varied political ideologies

Community context, resources, and needs are varied



The NC Balance of State CoC **Racial Equity Subcommittee**

The NC BoS CoC Steering Committee formed the Racial Equity Subcommittee in January 2020.

Open call for membership

Charged with both Assessment and Impact Strategy and decisions driven by Subcommittee members, not CoC staff

Early impact on CoC program scorecards



The Murder of George Floyd –We are "Woke"







Basic Science – Stimulus and Response

The Stimulus





The Response







Pandora's Box: The African American Male Edition



The Racial Equity Dialogue Series

Police Violence and Community Response Racism in the Homeless Service System Racism and Homelessness in the Criminal Justice System

Racism and Voting



The Racial Equity Subcommittee's work continues

Strengthening our CoC's Racial Equity Assessment with additional tools and data

Impacting equity in Coordinated Entry and system access

Incorporating a racial equity lens across all CoC committees and workgroups

Continuing the Racial Equity Dialogue Series to engage providers through dialogue



Thank you for your time and your patience

JEFFEREY RAWLINGS COORDINATED ENTRY DIRECTOR JOHNSTON LEE HARNETT COMMUNITY ACTION 910-984-1047 (W) 984-302-2352 (M) JRAWLINGS.JLHCA@GMAIL.COM





NCVH 2021 Presentation Racial Equity in Programs & Systems: Approach and Outcomes

Presented by: Darryl J. Vincent, MSW, CSAC Chief Operating Officer, U.S.VETS

AN AGE-OLD PROBLEM, AMPLIFIED

Racial injustice is not a new issue. Systemic racism has plagued our country, military, and veteran community, throughout our history.

Over the last year and a half, COVID-19 amplified the inequities present in our society, even further – as did social unrest that stems directly from the racial discrimination that has divided our nation from the very beginning.

These injustices have taken a terrible toll on Black and brown veterans economically, physically, and emotionally.

- Minority veterans have a **44% higher** risk of unemployment than non-minority veterans.
- Veterans who identify as part of a racial/ethnic minority are more likely to experience homelessness: **17.3%** of veterans of color report having experienced homelessness in their adult life, compared to 8.3% of white veterans.
- Minority veterans comprise about **23% of the total veteran population** (will be closer to 36% by 2040).

At **U.S.VETS**, where we serve veterans experiencing homelessness and those at-risk of becoming unsheltered, almost **2/3** of our clients come from communities of color:

- o 43% Black
- o 13% Hispanic
- o 3% American Indian
- o 3% Asian
- o 4% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander



RESPONSIBILITY TO ACT

As a society, we can no longer say we stand *with* our vets, without standing *against* the social inequities they face.

Today, private funders and community leaders are increasingly **investing in DEI** objectives.

U.S.VETS is working to address these issues head on...

Launched in partnership with Boeing, U.S.VETS is piloting a program to increase career access and opportunities for low-income veterans from communities of color. The program will provide:

- Direct assistance for Black and other minority veterans to pursue **career training** that supports long-term career advancement and resources that eliminate barriers to **socioeconomic mobility**.
- **Training for U.S.VETS staff** and partners to best support the advancement of equity for Black and other minority populations, particularly those who are experiencing homelessness or at-risk.

Comprehensive Approach

From the outset, U.S.VETS chose to use grant funding as a launchpad to consider and improve the way that we as an organization conduct business as it relates to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Core to our values: we cannot ask veterans to change if we are not making those changes ourselves.

U.S.VETS has identified and invested in the following key areas of focus for DEI objectives:

- Staffing
- Training
- Volunteer Leadership
- Client Impact
- Strategic Plan



U.S.VETS took advantage of **funder interest** in advancing diversity objectives to secure funding for hired our first-ever National DEI lead.

Goal is to support diversity, equity, and inclusion objectives across all sites and programs, and cultivate a **culture of racial equity** at U.S.VETS internally and with community partners.





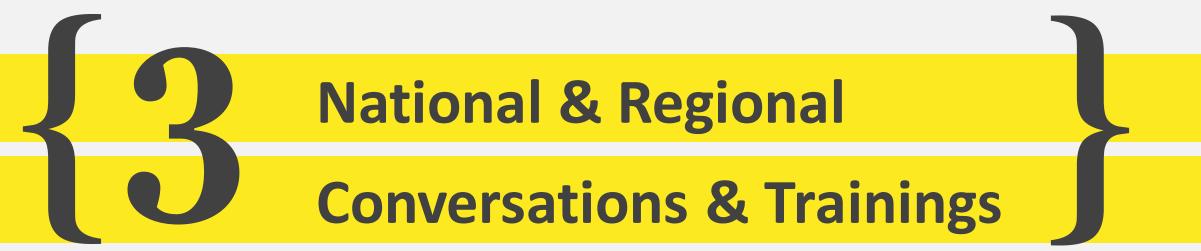
U.S.VETS took advantage of funder interest in advancing diversity objectives to secure funding for hired our first ever National Director of Workforce Programs.

Position plays a key role in **integrating workforce programs** so that all veterans can access culturally competent services that meet their unique employment needs.

Goal is not only to increase employment, but to develop opportunities for career advancement, social capital, and community connection.







U.S.VETS national leadership, site directors, managers and coordinators invested in learning and fostering open dialogue.

Conversations: U.S.VETS CEO & COO issued email and video messages to staff and volunteer leadership in the wake of George Floyd and other racial injustices; and joined corporate partners in a Roundtable to speak out about the barriers facing minority barriers.

DEI Certification: Senior staff, site EDs, HR and workforce staff earned DEI certificates through University of South Florida.

Relias Trainings: Staff participates in professional development, including management & DEI-related trainings.

Provider Trainings: Staff participates in NCHV, Combined Arms and trainings offered by clinicians and corporate DEI experts to learn how to support people of color, women, LGBTQ+, disabled and other veterans.





With multiple sources of corporate and foundation funding dedicated to increasing career access and employment opportunities for Black and other minority veterans, U.S.VETS will:

Hiring: Support 40+ veterans in achieving not only employment but increased socioeconomic mobility by eliminating barriers and increasing opportunities for networking and connection.

Direct Assistance: Provide support for veterans to pursue career training, licensure, certification, educational opportunities, equipment and other necessary resources.





Advancement of diversity objectives must include all levels of organizational staff and leadership in order to ensure success.

U.S.VETS is working to develop our **Board of Directors and Advisory Councils** across the county so that they better represent our constituency, and our military and veteran community.

Requires current state assessment and **active recruitment** of diverse veteran leaders.





DEI Strategy Development

Across All Sites

Each U.S.VETS site held **open forums** for staff, focused on fostering conversation and advancing equity.

Staff at each site collectively developed **specific goals** to achieve as part of the current strategic plan, in order to become a more inclusive organization.

Workgroup comprised of representatives from each site will finalize goals for review by the Board of Directors.

Once approved by the Board, staff will incorporate these goals into our activities and objectives.





U.S.VETS seeks to ensure equitable representation, compensation and advancement opportunities for African-American and other minority veteran clients, staff and volunteer leadership, organization-wide.

To prioritize this work, U.S.VETS has updated its **strategic plan** to include a **goal focused on diversity and racial equity**. That goal is...



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U.S.VETS seeks to advance racial equality, diversity and inclusion for our staff and the veterans we serve, to incorporate equity into our policy, decision making and programs, and to directly increase opportunities for people of color and other minority veteran populations.





QUESTIONS?





THANK YOU

usvets.org







Contact Information



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THANK YOU



