

ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE
DISABLED VETERANS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAM PLAN (DVAAP)
ANNUAL REPORTING

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Title 5, of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 720, subpart C, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is required to develop an annual Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP) Plan. This plan is effective for the time period of October 1, 2011, through September 30, 2012, and will be accessible on the Human Resources Division (HRD) and Office of Civil Rights Enforcement and Compliance (CREC) websites.

As part of the DVAAP Plan, APHIS will conduct a continuing program to help carry out efforts to recruit, hire, and retain disabled veterans. The agency will adhere to the vision and strategic goals set forth in the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) Government-wide Veterans' Recruitment and Employment Strategies Plan for FY 2010 – FY 2012, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Strategic Plan.

This plan will also coincide with and compliment the strategic goals stated in mission critical reports, such as the MD -715 Report and the Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Recruitment Program (FEORP) Plan to analyze and determine trends in recruitment, placement and promotions.

This report includes the following:

- A) FY-2011 DVAAP Plan;
- B) FY-2011 Accomplishment Report;
- C) FY-2012 DVAAP Plan, and;
- D) Plan Certification for FY-2012 with Official Signatures.

DEFINITIONS

Veteran. A person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable (Section 101(2) of Title 38, U.S.C).

Disabled Veteran. An individual who has served on active duty in the Armed Forces, has been separated under honorable conditions, and has established the present existence of a service-connected disability or is receiving compensation, disability retirement benefits, or pension because of a public statute administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs or a Military Department according to sections 5 United States Code (U.S.C.) 2108, 3504, and 3310.

5 Point Veteran (TP). Five points are added to the **passing** examination score or rating of a veteran who served: During a war; During the period April 28, 1952 through July 1, 1955; For more than 180 consecutive days, other than for training, any part of which occurred after January

31, 1955, and before October 15, 1976; During the Gulf War from August 2, 1990, through January 2, 1992; For more than 180 consecutive days, other than for training, any part of which occurred during the period beginning September 11, 2001, and ending on the date prescribed by Presidential proclamation or by law as the last day of Operation Iraqi Freedom; **OR** in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign medal has been authorized. Any Armed Forces Expeditionary medal or campaign badge, including El Salvador, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, Southwest Asia, Somalia, and Haiti, qualifies for preference.

10-Point Compensable Disability Preference (CP). Ten points are added to the **passing** examination score or rating of a veteran who served at any time **and** who has a compensable service-connected disability rating of at least 10 percent but less than 30 percent.

10-Point 30 Percent Compensable Disability Preference (CPS). Ten points are added to the **passing** examination score or rating of a veteran who served at any time and who has a compensable service-connected disability rating of 30 percent or more.

10-Point Disability Preference (XP). Ten points are added to the **passing** examination score or rating of: A veteran who served at any time and has a present service-connected disability or is receiving compensation, disability retirement benefits, or pension from the military or the Department of Veterans Affairs but does not qualify as a CP or CPS; **or** A veteran who received a Purple Heart.

10-Point Derived Preference (XP). Ten points are added to the **passing** examination score or rating of spouses, widows, widowers, or mothers of veterans who meet certain conditions. This type of preference is usually referred to as "derived preference" because it is based on service of a veteran who is not able to use the preference.

Veterans Recruitment Authority. The VRA is a special authority by which agencies can, if they wish, appoint eligible veterans without competition to positions at any grade level through General Schedule (GS) 11 or equivalent. (The promotion potential of the position is not a factor.) VRA appointees are hired under excepted appointments to positions that are otherwise in the competitive service. There is no limitation to the number of VRA appointments an individual may receive, provided the individual is otherwise eligible.

Veterans Employment Opportunity Act of 1998. Provides that agencies must allow eligible veterans to apply for positions announced under merit promotion procedures when the agency is recruiting from outside its own workforce. A VEOA eligible who competes under merit promotion procedures and is selected will be given a career or career conditional appointment. Veterans' preference is not a factor in these appointments. To be eligible for a VEOA appointment, a veteran must: Be a preference eligible **OR** veteran separated after 3 or more years of continuous active service performed under honorable conditions.

30% or more Disabled Veteran Appointment Authority. An agency may give a noncompetitive temporary appointment of more than 60 days or a term appointment to any veteran retired from active military service with a disability rating of 30 percent or more; **or** rated by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) since 1991 or later to include disability determinations from a branch of the Armed Forces at any time, as having a compensable service-connected disability of 30 percent or more. There is no grade level limitation for this authority, but the appointee must

meet all qualification requirements, including any written test requirement. The agency may convert the employee, without a break in service, to a career or career-conditional appointment at any time during the employee's temporary or term appointment.

NOTE: The above are basic definitions of the different types of Veterans' Preference and Veterans' Hiring Authorities. These are NOT all inclusive definitions and additional guidance may be obtained by referring to the Office of Personnel Management's Vet Guide which can be found at: <http://www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vetsInfo.asp>.

Recruitment. The total process by which the Federal government and the Federal agencies locate, identify and assist in the employment of qualified applicants from underrepresented groups for job openings in categories of employment where underrepresentation has been determined. It includes both innovative internal and external recruitment actions. It is also intended to cover processes designed to prepare qualifiable applicants (those who have the potential but do not presently meet valid qualification requirements) for such job openings through programs of training, work experience or both.

MD-715 Report. Management Directive -715 sets forth general reporting requirements for federal agencies and provides a roadmap for creating and maintaining a model EEO program. Policy guidance is provided by the EEOC to federal agencies for their use in establishing and maintaining effective programs of EEO under Section 717 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), as amended, 42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq., and Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, 29 U.S.C. 791 et seq.

FEORP. The Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program is a targeted recruitment, advancement, and developmental program based on a determination of underrepresentation of minorities and/or females in the various occupational categories. OPM has the responsibility to annually report to Congress on progress under the FEORP in compliance with 5 U.S.C. 7201.

A. FY 2011 Agency DVAAP Plan (5 C.F.R. 720 Subpart C – Section 304(c) – “Plan Submission)

Program Leadership and Responsibilities

While the DVAAP function is typically considered a “human resources function” as it focuses on *recruitment* of veterans, within APHIS, both the Human Resources Division and Civil Rights Enforcement and Compliance collaborate to establish Veteran’s Hiring programs. To that end:

The Directors of HRD and the Civil Rights will carry out relevant Veteran related Departmental policies and procedures and provide the necessary resources to achieve program objectives and enhance overall program effectiveness. Some examples include providing appropriate guidance and assistance to managers, supervisors, and field components to further their understanding of Veteran hiring options and flexibilities; fostering even more effective partnerships with the agency’s Veterans Emphasis Program Managers on outreach initiatives targeting veterans and disabled veterans; distributing the DVAAP plan to appropriate parties; reviewing and analyzing veteran employment data; and, preparing reports as required. It is essential that this program be used as a vehicle to strategically improve recruitment efforts and the diversity of the agency’s workforce.

The agency, with the support of the HRD and CREC, will continue to pursue partnerships within the mission area, with other organizations, and in the local community to support disabled veterans programs and the hiring of veterans in the Federal Service. The organization will seek new ways to communicate employment information, and to provide resources to support veterans in the APHIS workforce. Whether via established Agency recruitment goals or through the Agency performance management system all managers and supervisors are responsible for providing equal employment opportunities for disabled veterans.

APHIS fully supports the achievement of these goals and via the continued collaboration of its Civil Right Enforcement and Compliance Program and Human Resources Division will continue its efforts to target and identify disabled veterans through special recruitment efforts. Some specific features of this collaboration include:

- The communication of recruitment strategies to managers, supervisors and Equal Employment Opportunity collateral duty officials.
- The maintenance of Veterans Emphasis Programs designed to promote employment, advancement, development, and retention of veterans.
- The partnership between HRD, CREC with designated Disability Employment Program Managers and Veterans Emphasis Program Managers to research and focus on various opportunities to target disabled veterans for employment opportunities.

- Ongoing education and information campaigns to publicize the two special appointment authorities that apply to veterans (Veterans Recruitment Appointment and noncompetitive or direct appointment of a 30% or more disabled veteran).
- Utilization of special hiring authorities, job development and mentoring programs for veterans.
- Maintaining contacts with vocational rehabilitation offices, state employment offices, veterans' organizations, colleges/universities, veteran-targeted career fairs, and other facilities to obtain applications from disabled veterans.
- Coordination of outreach activities when vacancies occur, particularly those amenable to external recruitment.
- Educating and emphasizing the importance of recruiting disabled veterans to management staff and hiring officials when advising them of best hiring practices.
- Providing recruiters with proper training and the necessary tools to achieve recruitment goals and function effectively at career fairs and annual conferences aimed specifically at hiring disabled veterans.
- Enhancing the collaboration between the HR Talent Branch and the HR Operations and Policy Directorate in strategically advertising positions to coincide with attended career fairs and annual conferences.
- Providing agency sponsored programs designed to educate managers, supervisors and human resources managers on ways to use the Schedule A hiring authority to recruit and hire talented individuals with disabilities.
- Partnering with employees who are veterans with disabilities to participate in recruitment, outreach, and other employment programs, as consultants, role models, and as recruitment/outreach personnel.
- Making reasonable accommodations and Work Life Wellness (WLW) information available to disabled veteran applicants during the recruitment process. Through WLW, veterans have access to a number of services, including an agency-paid benefit which offers counseling.
- Information and referrals to assist military families facing military deployment or those eagerly awaiting the return of family members. The WLW committees will continue to provide presentations by veterans and military personnel to help educate non-veterans on the needs of veterans returning to the civilian workplace.
- Partnering with NISH Affiliated Community Rehabilitation Programs to provide a more grassroots approach to the mission area's outreach/recruitment efforts.

Internal Advancement Opportunities

The objective of internal advancement opportunities is to offer training and job development program(s), mentoring programs, etc. that will provide knowledge, skills and abilities to qualify veterans and disabled veterans for advancement opportunities. APHIS will ensure that:

- Veteran employees are aware of career opportunities and procedures to follow for positions under the Federal Career Intern Program (now Student Program) and through Delegated Examining Unit vacancy announcements. These opportunities may provide career advancement beyond the current full potential level of their current positions.
- Management identifies disabled Veterans on selection certificates, especially those who are 30% or more disabled, who possess the requisite skills and abilities.
- The status of hiring and advancement of disabled veterans is regularly communicated to senior leadership during staff meetings and other appropriate forums.
- Veteran employees with disabilities are included in recruitment and outreach as consultants. Suggestions and recommendations relative to employment and career concerns and issues will continue to be solicited from disabled veterans, to help managers, and human resource and training officials formulate viable strategies and programs to employees and advance veterans with disabilities.
- Selecting officials are encouraged to include disabled veterans for membership on promotion/interview committees, commissions, panels, or boards.
- Possible impediments to career progression, accessibility and reasonable accommodation are addressed through regular collaboration with the USDA TARGET Center.
- The Post 9/11 GI Bill is effectively communicated to veteran employees. This legislation provides funding for educational opportunities for veterans to improve their ability to succeed at work. Approved training under the Post 9/11 GI Bill is funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs and includes support to obtain graduate and undergraduate degrees, as well as vocational/technical training.

Monitor, Review, and Evaluation

HRD and CREC will monitor and review the employment and advancement of disabled veterans, and will collaborate to determine if there are any barriers that need to be removed to improve the employment and retention of disabled veterans.

HRD and CREC will monitor, review and evaluate its planned efforts to promote employment and advancement opportunities for qualified veterans, through reviewing and analyzing the hiring, retention and promotion rates of said employees based on statistical data reports.

Mission critical reports, such as the FEORP Plan and the MD-715 Report will continue to be analyzed to determine trends in recruitment, placement and promotion of disabled veterans.

B. FY 2011 Agency Accomplishment Report (5 C.F.R. 720 Subpart C – Section 305 – “Agency Accomplishment Reports”)

1. Methods used to recruit and employ qualified disabled veterans, especially those who are 30 percent or more disabled.

In October, 2010, APHIS increased emphasis on the government-wide hiring reform initiative that requires management involvement in the recruitment and hiring process. APHIS hiring managers and human resources representatives are working together to identify recruitment strategies that will result in a diverse, highly qualified applicant pool. Anecdotal evidence has already shown that using resumes rather than the traditional Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs) results in a more diverse applicant pool.

A “Hiring Manager” website was launched to provide easily accessible information to supervisors and managers with information on the APHIS 80 day hiring model, explanations of hiring authorities and detailed guidance on a variety of employment processes. HRD will expand the website to include an interactive 80 day Hiring Model roadmap for managers. Additionally, HRD revised correspondence and email instructions to hiring managers, which included updated instructions on processing selection certificates, conducting applicant assessment panels and encouraging managers to complete the OPM Hiring Manager survey.

The APHIS-wide recruitment plan was revised to meet goals set forth by the Office of Personnel Management, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and APHIS, which includes creating awareness and increase employment of veterans/disabled veterans.

Members of the HRD, CREC, and the Veterans Emphasis Program Manager (VEPM), organized and attended multiple targeted outreach events in FY 2011. The events provided an opportunity to increase networking opportunities within and outside of the USDA as well as promoting the USDA’s contributions to society. Recruiting veterans is a priority for the mission area. During this fiscal year APHIS attended the following events targeting transitional employment for veterans and their families:

- Henderson Hall- Education and Career Fair, October 19, 2010. Sponsored by the Marine Corps, this is a recruiting opportunity to reach a diverse pool of women and men in the professional field from all ranks and branches of the armed services.

- 2010 Veterans Extravaganza on November 3, 2010. The Veterans Extravaganza celebrates more than 5,000 military service members, their families and friends from MD, DC, VA, NJ, WV, DE and NC.
- Virtual Career Fair on November 4, 2010. This event was sponsored by Milicruit and the Military Officers Association of America and drew more than 1,000 job seekers.
- RecruitMilitary Career Fair on March 17, 2011. RecruitMilitary serves veterans of all ranks and all branches of the armed forces. This event focused on providing opportunities for hiring returning military members and their families.
- Hiring our Heroes career fair on August 27th, 2011. The Hiring Heroes Career Fair provides injured service members, their families and caregivers an opportunity to meet with more than Department of Defense, Federal and corporate employers to obtain information about career and employment opportunities.
- Career fairs at the following military installations: Quantico, Fort Meade, Andrews AFB.

To reach individuals with disabilities, APHIS attended the following events:

- Careers and the DisABLED Career Fair on March 31, 2011. This is one of the largest career fairs for the disabled and allowed applicants with disabilities access to Federal government employers. There were over 1,000 attendees who were able to investigate employment opportunities with APHIS and the mission area.
- Careers and the DisABLED, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics fair held on June 3, 2011. This event that brings industry and government together with members of minority groups, women and people with disabilities in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics career disciplines.

In addition, to reach individuals with disabilities, APHIS has increased collaboration and partnerships among Human Resources and Civil Rights staff in order to provide greater support to supervisors and managers. A MRP Selective Placement Coordinator for people with disabilities was identified and participates in monthly White House and Departmental Disability calls for the purpose of obtaining timely updates on the Administration's concerns, commitments and communications. The Coordinator also participates in conference calls with other selective placement coordinators to share best practices, resources, and effective outreach strategies.

CREC initiated a Veteran's Emphasis Program (VEP). The VEP consists of a National VEP Manager and 19 VEP Managers agency-wide. The VEP Managers, in collaboration with HRD, the Disability Employment Program Managers, and other Special Emphasis Programs Managers (SEPMs), have worked closely with the USDA Veterans

Employment Manager to address the four key elements of the Government-wide Veterans Recruitment and Employment Strategic Plan.

The VEP Managers continue to partner with HRD and the agency recruiters to increase outreach efforts for veterans. As a result, the Agency has established strong working relationships with numerous veterans programs and services including the following: The Vet Center; VA Vocational Rehabilitation Program; Operation Warfighter Program; U.S. Army Wounded Warrior Program (AW2); and Military installations and transitions offices (Coast Guard, Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines) throughout the United States including the Hawaiian Islands, Guam, and American Samoa.

Attended the Veterans Employment Symposium sponsored by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Through this event, the agency established partnerships, and shared resources and best practices with the following Federal agencies: OPM, Veteran Affairs, Department of Defense, Department of Education, Department of Health and Human Services, and the Bureau of Prisons. This event brought awareness in the area of assistance technology and new developments in assistance technology.

HRD and CREC continue to be active in the Army Career and Alumni Program, the Transition Assistance Program, the Office of Disability Employment Program and the Workforce Recruitment Program.

Disability Employment Program Managers (DEPMs) continue to solicit information on training sessions, (*i.e., sponsored by the USDA TARGET Center, and the Association for Persons with Disabilities in Agriculture-APDA*), conferences, and job fairs which will continue to benefit the agency, persons with disabilities, and disabled veterans.

HRD continued to educate hiring managers on the use of a special appointing authority for 30-percent disabled veterans to make a non-competitive temporary appointment of more than 60 days or a term appointment. This information was also included in the HR Broadcast Newsletter which is published on a quarterly basis.

As a result of these and other efforts, APHIS successfully placed individuals with reportable and targeted disabilities from a variety of sources, including the OPM Shared (Bender) list. (Within the first 3 quarters of FY 11 the annual goal of hiring 10 individuals with disabilities was exceeded by one.)

2. Methods used to provide or improve internal advancement opportunities for disabled veterans. Please indicate specific efforts and accomplishments in providing developmental (formal training) opportunities for veterans in your narrative.

The agency, through the HR Operations Staff, established a veteran action planning team to assist with providing better support to veterans. The group published a Veteran's Hiring Guide with hiring authorities for managers and sponsored presentations to newly hired veteran employees through the Federal Occupational Health EAP counselor with tips on transitioning from active duty back into the workforce.

The APHIS Talent Management and Leadership Development Board (TMLDB) is composed of agency senior executives who champion and guide the learning and developmental activities of the organization for Veteran and Non-Veteran employees. In fiscal 2011 the Board continued its work to formalize and improve APHIS' various leadership development programs. The APHIS Talent Management and Leadership Development Board:

1. Charts the course for achieving the Agency's succession planning priorities, including recruitment and retention strategies for Veterans;
2. Assesses the leadership potential and recommends talent development opportunities for APHIS employees from an Agency wide perspective;
3. Facilitates the development and tracking of metrics for leadership and talent development;
4. Provides input to the HR Division on Agency goals related to leadership and talent development.

Key elements of APHIS' career development strategy for its employees, both Veteran and Non-Veteran alike, continue to be the use of the APHIS Leadership Roadmap and the APHIS Leadership Development Toolkit. These employee and career development resources are based on OPM's 28 specific leadership competencies and provide employees with information on the various competencies associated with each stage in their potential career path. While the Roadmap presents this information in a useful one page summary, the Development Toolkit carries the process further by describing in detail the behavioral examples for each competency at each employee level. The Toolkit also identifies a wide variety of learning experiences (classroom, on-line, detail assignments, assessments, action learning projects, and etc.) and learning relationships (mentoring and coaching) to build each of the competencies. The Kit was updated in FY 2011 to increase the use of this tool as a resource which provides a methodical process to develop employees' Individual Development Plans, and program managers can utilize this guide for ongoing development discussions with all employees to facilitate growth and continuing advancement.

In addition to providing employees with career development information in the form of strategies and guides, APHIS fully utilizes both formal training and partnerships with academia to develop its employees. Some of the training and developmental activities available to employees include:

- The Federal Executive Institute's "Leadership for a Democratic Society", "Public Service Leadership: Vision, Values and Vital Strategies".
- The USDA Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program (SES CDP) is used to develop senior managers based on OPM's five Executive Core Qualifications.
- Fundamentals of APHIS Human Resources Management (FAHRM) the Agency's mandatory training program for new supervisors providing a broad survey of the key skills and competencies required for successful performance in a new supervisory position.

- Administrative Processes Training - An overview for Administrative support personnel of the various business support functions in APHIS offered by Human Resources, Procurement and Finance.
- Training courses developed by APHIS focusing on the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) 28 leadership competencies. Training and development methodologies include web-based training, classroom instruction, coaching, mentoring and rotational opportunities, and shadow assignments to strengthen leadership competencies.
- APHIS sponsored in-house leadership and career development programs at the basic, intermediate, project/program manager and advanced levels. A new program was launched in FY2011 for administrative support personnel.
- The agency has a cross-cultural international training program designed to help strengthen an individual's success in international components of their position. By participating in the various program components, employees enhance their ability to work more effectively with their international counterparts, therefore bridging differences through successful dialogue. They learn to see, think, act, and mobilize in culturally mindful ways. 25 APHIS employees including supervisory personnel participated in APHIS International Training Program.

The APHIS Basic Leadership Development Program (BLDP) is the foundation for every employee to build strong individual leadership skills starting at the lowest levels of the agency. The BLDP has been revised to include a variety of assessments that focus on leveraging individuals' strengths and identifying areas for professional improvement. This program targets employees at the grades 4 to 6 level and provides career management opportunities to build a competitive career portfolio. Access to the program requires supervisory approval but is otherwise available to all employees. APHIS recently converted this curriculum to a web based format designed to increase employee access while reducing the travel costs associated with the program. As a result, the BLDP is now accommodating 69 individuals throughout the country. The program focuses on developing the following competencies: customer service, interpersonal skills, written communication, oral communication, resilience, integrity/honesty, flexibility, public service motivation, continual learning and problem solving.

The Intermediate Leadership Development Program (ILDLP) is a key component to ensuring that APHIS meets its mission and goals in the 21st century. Selection for participation in the program is selective. The ILDLP consists of a blended learning curriculum, a shadow assignment, a panel discussion with organizational leaders and an action learning team project. It is designed to develop a number of critical core competencies required for participants to successfully perform in GS 7-11 level positions including: accountability, conflict management, influencing and negotiating, leveraging diversity, partnering, political savvy, problem solving, resilience, and strategic thinking. Participation in the program is competitive.

Leadership Development for Project/Program Managers (LDPM) targets GS 12-14 employees who manage projects or programs and who lead teams (within their units or across program or agency lines) in accomplishing those projects and programs. Employees at this level of the Roadmap do not have supervisory authority over the team members they lead; however, because of the critical work APHIS Project and Program

Managers play in creating a high performing organization, the LDPM program addresses an important niche in APHIS' constellation of employee development programs. The LDPM goals are to:

- Equip participants to lead from their position, regardless of supervisory status;
- Equip participants to confidently and efficiently lead projects and programs;
- Equip participants to effectively communicate internally and externally (stakeholder engagement) in both oral and written format; and,
- Provide a stepping stone in career development and management.

APHIS' Advanced Leadership Development Program (ALDP) is a vital component of the organization's succession planning strategy and is designed to help participants perform successfully in advanced supervisory and managerial level positions. The ALDP is filled via a competitive process open to all full-time GS 12-14 employees. Participants must have been employed with the Agency for a minimum of 1 year. The program is designed to develop the following competencies: creativity and innovation, developing others, external awareness, financial management, human capital management, leveraging diversity, partnering, political savvy, strategic thinking, technology management, and vision.

Administrative Career Development Services (ACDS) – The new program offers entry level clerical GS-4 and GS-5 administrative support personnel and their supervisor's custom curriculum design services intended to expand the basic administrative support skill set.

In addition to the programs described above, APHIS provides the following stand-alone offerings to employees in support of their developmental needs:

- Communication and Managing Up – Participants learn skills needed to support their leaders by making sound decisions that lead to positive results. Open to employees at all grade levels, one session of this 3-day training was provided to approximately 30 participants in 2011. The purpose of this course is to:
 - Enhance participants' interpersonal communication skills;
 - Provide critical elements needed to foster teamwork; and,
 - Learn effective conflict management styles in order to turn challenging situations into win-win experiences.

- Situational Frontline Leadership - Situational Frontline Leadership helps new and existing leaders build the essential leadership skills to positively impact employee performance and engagement and offers practical skill-building opportunities by allowing participants to select and practice with real work situations. The program equips leaders with a shared language and a method for adapting leadership behavior to meet the individual development needs of their direct reports. This year six 2-day in-class programs were offered as well as three classes conducted virtually; 126 experienced supervisors participated in FY2011.
- Situational Self Leadership Training - This 2-day in-class training program is designed to enable the transition from responsiveness to responsibility as individuals learn to take the initiative for ideas generation, innovation and problem solving. The program enables individuals to transition from responsiveness to responsibility and helps employees to become more productive and satisfied in their work. The tools developed during the program help employees to effectively work with their supervisor in obtaining appropriate levels of direction and guidance for the various tasks that confront them on a daily basis. Participants explore what motivates them and what they need to do to improve their skills and confidence. This course was offered 4 times this year; 132 participants in FY 2011.

As APHIS continues to embrace Cultural Transformation, the Agency has offered seminars designed to help on create a workplace where all employees and customers are treated with dignity and respect. To that end, the Agency has provided employees with several Leadership Series Seminars (LSS) to address current leadership initiatives and challenges. For example:

Crucial Conversations - Tools for Talking When the Stakes Are High - One of the overarching goals of the CT initiative is improving communication. It is noted that a “one size fits all” approach is not appropriate yet threads of consistency would facilitate effective communication. The briefing on Crucial Conversations introduced a general communications tool which provides for conflict management skills to enhance direct two-way communications. The webinar provided ideas for identifying when employees are having (or need to have) a crucial conversation, and techniques for approaching the conversation in such a way that makes it a dialog rather than a confrontation. The leadership competency focus was interpersonal skills and conflict management; 188 participated in a VTC broadcasted program.

Building, Maintaining and Repairing Trust - This program was designed to address the concerns of APHIS employees regarding trust that were uncovered in the Employee Viewpoint Survey and focus groups held throughout APHIS. The purpose was to create connections for participants of the importance of building, maintaining and repairing trust in the leadership competencies of Integrity and Honesty, Developing Others, Influencing and Negotiating, Team Building, Partnering, Conflict Management and Leveraging Diversity. Additionally, the session provided a process for participants to build, maintain and repair trust in

their working relationships. This webinar was offered at a variety of times, including an evening session, to increase access nationally and internationally; 169 employees participated.

The Mechanics of IDP's and Engagement in Development Discussions - These sessions addressed the new mandate for IDPs and tips for engaging employees in the discussion and the use of a wide range of development activities beyond formal training. The APHIS Cultural Transformation Action Plan (CTAP) set a goal for improving the Individual Development Plans (IDP)/ Learning Contract (LC) process. IDPs' are a key component of succession planning, and long-term career planning. Employees and supervisors can use IDPs to outline training and create activities that will lead to a more engaged, effective and skilled workforce that will be needed in the future. For FY2011, USDA established the goal of having at least 80% of employees with a formal IDP; APHIS was successful in getting 72% of employees with IDPs in AgLearn. We credit that success to the fact that 367 employees participated in these webinars.

Resilience and Optimal Performance - The cultural transformation initiative embraces employee engagement at all levels and helping develop competencies required in a fast moving environment. This seminar addressed the competency of "resilience" the capacity to bounce back, again and again, meeting all the demands required of us; 143 employees participated in this VTC broadcasted seminar.

APHIS continued to utilize its Civil Rights Information Academy to provide guidance to employees on the importance of equal opportunity in program delivery. Civil rights webinars were provided throughout the country and included briefing modules for Program Delivery, Outreach, and Compliance. The briefings included review of civil rights statutes, regulations, directives, and other guidance pertaining to equal opportunity in program delivery. Other subjects covered included limited English proficiency, program complaint processing, and accessibility to program and activities by disabled persons. The briefings are a standard component of the Fundamentals of APHIS Human Resources Management (FAHRM) courses open to potential and newly appointed supervisors. The Civil Rights Enforcement and Compliance Staff continue to support HR in the FAHRM courses. APHIS will continue to offer briefings about Program Delivery, Outreach and Compliance; as well as address these subjects in the APHIS Civil Rights Update (e-newsletter).

Mentoring and Coaching

Currently there are approximately 77 participants in APHIS formal Mentoring Program. It is open to employees at all grade levels although participants must have supervisory approval to join the program. Participants must include the mentoring program as an employee development option on their IDP. In addition, the Fundamentals of Human Resource Management (FAHRM) requires that all new supervisors also have a mentor for one year. For FY 2011 there are 95 participating in this aspect of formal mentoring.

The APHIS Leadership Development Toolkit provides an outline of the Mentoring Program requirements and explains how mentors and protégés can self-select their mentoring partner.

The APHIS Mentoring Program Coordinator enrolls the participants, provides orientation training and coaching, helps participants identify appropriate mentoring partners, reviews their mentoring applications, mentoring partnership agreements, and provides guidance with competency development and goal setting. The coordinator also initiates regular monthly check-ins with each participant offering tips, tools, discussion topics, support and encouragement during these sessions. On a regular basis, the effectiveness of each mentoring relationship is evaluated.

APHIS offers an internal coaching program designed to better prepare the agency to meet the succession needs by passing on institutional knowledge and developing its leaders. Participating employees provide coaching, mentoring, and guidance to other leaders, share best practices thereby preserving institutional knowledge. This service is intended, among other things, to provide APHIS leadership with continuing support to effectively deal with the challenges of a changing workplace and environment. Currently, the internal coaching cadre is comprised of 48 APHIS leaders serving as internal coaches. At this time 38 APHIS employees are matched with an internal coach.

APHIS has instituted a process to track changes in leadership personnel and offer assistance in smoothing the transition process that inevitably occurs when a new supervisor or manager assumes their role. Such assistance may include an organizational briefing, situational coaching, a Leadership Transition Workshop, or team building. During FY2011, 101 supervisors and managers were identified as entering a new leadership position and a variety of coaching and support services was offered to each.

3. A description of how the activities of major operating components and field installations were monitored, reviewed, and evaluated.

In each program area, VEPMs, SEPMs, and DEPMS are assigned to communicate with management on a regular basis and discuss critical needs areas and potential opportunities.

Collateral recruiters complete a recruitment activity report for each event attended. The report tracks the number of people contacted and accounts for gender, ethnicity, and positions of interest.

Members of HRD, CREC and program representatives serve on a Recruitment Advisory Committee to discuss outreach efforts and the effectiveness of attended events. Through the committee, a more uniformed and centralized recruitment effort was established. A web-based process has been developed for completing the exit survey on-line. As part of the Department's goal for cultural transformation, the exit survey gives employees the opportunity to communicate reasons for leaving, their perceptions of the work environment, and overall satisfaction while working for the agency. The data can provide information critical to:

- Assess workplace deficiencies;
- Enhance the work environment;
- Improve employee retention; and,
- Achieve a diverse workforce through workforce planning.

Supervisors, HRD and CREC have vital roles regarding the exit survey. Supervisors notify the employee of the exit survey and its importance prior to their departure. HRD provides guidance on completing the exit survey, and compiles the data for analysis to be shared with the appropriate senior level managers. CREC uses the results as a factor in establishing action plans and provides interpretation and advice to management officials on how to address issues, comments and opinions provide by the exiting employee.

An agency wide barrier analysis is conducted annually in conjunction with the preparation of the MD-715 Report. Over 350 managers and supervisors are surveyed and their responses are analyzed and summarized to help identify deficiencies and barriers. Workforce profile data is also analyzed to help identify underrepresentation. Feedback is provided to managers along with action items to correct deficiencies and barriers.

4. An explanation of the agency's progress in implementing its affirmative action plan during the fiscal year. Where progress has not been shown, the report will cite reasons for the lack of progress, along with specific plans for overcoming cited obstacle to progress.

APHIS has a total of 881 new hires and of those hires 118 (13.4%) are newly hired veterans for FY-2011. Currently, APHIS has a total of 1141 (12.8%) employed with APHIS of which 329 (3.7%) are disabled Veterans.

Although APHIS hired fewer employees as compared to FY-2010 (1002), we have a slight increase in newly hired veterans/disabled veterans and have remained relatively steady in retaining our veteran workforce. Upon further investigation, our numbers have slightly increased from hiring and retaining disabled veterans of 3.5% from FY-2010 compared to 3.7% FY-2011.

HRD and CREC will continue to review existing and projected attrition/retention and related issues and, in concert with key management officials, strategize corrective/positive measures.

On a quarterly basis, the HR Broadcast Newsletter is published and provides valuable information to managers, supervisors, as well as employees.

In order to maintain our ability to reach as many disabled veteran's as possible, recruiters attended several high profile recruitment events and publicized information on Schedule A hiring. During these events, recruitment staff marketed APHIS specifically, as well as USDA as a whole. They also provided advice and guidance to attendees of the many opportunities for employment with APHIS and their rights in applying for those jobs.

The VEPMs contributed to the following recruitment and retention efforts:

- Established an operating budget and ensured funds were provided to support travel, outreach materials and other expenses necessary to carry out an effective VEP within their unique program area.
- Coordinated activities within their program EEO Advisory Committees. VEPMs arranged for the distribution of outreach information during monthly observances in collaboration with program SEPMS.
- The NVEPM conducted 3 webinars, 4 teleconferences, 6 informational sessions and 2 manager briefings, as well as a joint presentation with the USDA VEPC.
- Partnered with Work Life Wellness (WLW) representatives and veterans within their programs to develop a "Buddy System" that compliments their unique program areas.
- Coordinated activities for Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Veterans Day, etc.
- Identified and honored veteran employees within their program areas for their individual service.
- Arranged for representatives from HRD to address various veterans hiring authorities and their benefits during regularly planned meetings.
- Provided copies of the DVAAP Plan to selecting officials and encouraged them to meet agency goals through the use of special hiring authorities. This was supplemented by some VEPMs sharing the information with all field employees and establishing and advertising a VEP site on program SharePoint sites. The information shared on the site also included, Executive Order 13518, Mil Spouse Program Overview, VEP Policy and Duty Statement, VEP Retention Plan, VEPM Guide, VEPM Training Module, VEPMs handout and the veteran's hiring authorities.
- Encouraged participation in VEP training opportunities that were provided via Webinar or Teleconference.
- Established lending libraries consisting of DVDs for appropriate special emphasis months, national holidays, and other days of celebration for veterans, as well as educational videos.
- Assisted current, incoming, and potential veteran employees by assisting them in correcting information in their personal record through HR, answering inquiries about veterans' preference and special hiring authorities, and resume edits and the USA Jobs application process.

- Attended training courses and events to increase their knowledge base on topics such as Veterans' Preference, Workforce Diversity, Affirmative Action, Special Hiring Authorities, etc.
- Developed introduction letters/packets within their programs to make veterans aware of the program.

**APHIS
Veteran Employees by Preference Type
FY 2011**

VETERAN HIRING					
		Total Hires	Total Vets	Non-disabled Vets	Disabled Vets
2011 Hires	#	881	118	70	48
	%		13.4%	7.9%	5.4%
2010 Hires	#	1064	146	78	68
	%		13.7%	7.3%	6.4%
2011 Profile	#	8762	1141	814	327
	%		13.0%	9.3%	3.7%
2010 Profile	#	8923	1167	855	312
	%		13.1%	9.6%	3.5%

Total number of new hires in FY 2011 = 881 (13.4% veterans & 5.4% Disabled Veterans)

C. FY 2012 Agency DVAAP Plan (5 C.F.R. 720 Subpart C – Section 304(c) – “Plan Submission”)

Within the Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), the Human Resources Division (HRD) and Civil Rights Enforcement and Compliance (CREC) work in partnership to support the Agency’s Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP) objectives. Both organizations provide guidance and assistance to field and headquarters managers and supervisors in an effort to help the Agency meet its goal to acquire and develop a diversified workforce. As part of this effort, both HRD and CREC review and analyze employment data and prepare various reports outlining the Agency’s efforts to achieve the objectives of the APHIS DVAAP. As such, the APHIS DVAAP is an essential component of the Agency’s efforts to improve its recruitment efforts for veterans and achieve diversity in its workforce. Its outreach and targeted recruitment strategies, partnerships with organizations and special activities are designed to promote APHIS throughout targeted communities, and to increase the number of diverse candidates for positions within the organization.

To assist each APHIS program in reaching its workforce goals and the goals of the Department, HRD will continue to:

1. Implement hiring reform with mechanisms to track improvements in the hiring process and use of hiring flexibilities;
2. Promote and support Veteran/Disabled Veteran recruitment, hiring and transition support;
3. Promote and support Persons with Disabilities recruitment and hiring;
4. Focus recruitment activities based upon the responses to and results of mission critical reports and mandates;
5. Implement On-boarding assistance for employees and supervisors and increase effectiveness; and,
6. Assist hiring officials in taking a proactive approach to targeted recruitment strategies when filling positions.

In order to meet the goals above, recruitment activity will be directed by Agency workforce planning, the Department's Diversity Roadmap and Cultural Transformation Initiatives, and other human capital initiatives. The information derived through these efforts guides marketing strategies, organizational outreach, and targeted recruitment and hiring goals. HRD will effectively collaborate with program managers on the development of recruitment strategies and plans for closing gaps identified in the agency's mission critical occupations. Recruitment activities will be based on projected attrition and retention rates and strategies identified in collaboration with key management officials. In addition, the Agency will continue to develop strategies for implementing Executive Order 13518 (Employment of Veterans in the Federal Government), Executive Order 13548 (Increasing Federal Employment of Individuals with Disabilities), and Executive Order 13583 (Establishing a Coordinated Government-wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in the Federal Workforce).

APHIS is committed to the Department's cultural transformation efforts that will build the Agency into a model workforce. One of the action items under the Secretary's Cultural Transformation Initiative is Customer Focus and Community Outreach. In order to transform the culture, you have to create awareness. HRD and CREC, as well as APHIS recruiters and program representatives will provide information on the Agency's employment opportunities to students and faculty at various educational institutions and school systems and to the underrepresented communities. Nurturing long-term partnerships with academia and professional associations for the purpose of recruiting high-quality diverse candidates will remain a priority.

In accordance with the requirements of the Department's Diversity Roadmap, APHIS will continue to utilize an Executive Level Diversity Ambassador. This individual operates in an oversight capacity to ensure that the organization takes the steps necessary to support the Department's cultural transformation efforts. In addition, APHIS continued to support a cadre of special emphasis program managers whose role is to provide support and guidance to veterans and persons with disabilities.

APHIS remains dedicated to increasing the total number of veterans and disabled veterans total workforce. APHIS' goal is to continue to put forth efforts and remain committed to increasing the number of veterans and disabled veterans in FY-2012 by:

- Regular reviews of Agency progress in implementing the hiring goal by both HRD and CREC. This will include, but is not limited to, a quarterly review of the number of disabled veterans employed by each agency and program area.
- Continued participation in targeted recruitment events sponsored by the Operation Warfighter Program, RecruitMilitary, Hiring Heroes, and Careers and the DisABLED.
- Continue to expand the Agency's working relationships with numerous Veterans programs and services including: The Vet Center; VA Vocational Rehabilitation Program; U.S. Army Wounded Warrior Program; and, Military installations and transitions offices.
- Continue to partner with hiring officials and encourage participation in all Federal-wide government initiatives as it relates to the hiring, developing, and retaining the veteran workforce.
- Utilizing retention incentives to retain employees that are disabled veterans.
- Analyzing the results of the agency's exit survey. The survey assists the agency take a proactive approach to making this organization a better place to work for future employees. The survey asks questions about reason(s) for leaving, perceptions of the work environment, and overall satisfaction while working for the agency.
- Establishment of an HR Operations Veterans Employment Program Coordinator to work alongside CREC and Recruitment Branch staff in implementing Departmental veteran hiring efforts, assist in linking existing vacancies to outreach, recruitment and hiring activity, and acting as an internal resource for Veteran hiring issues within HR Operations.

A dedicated, knowledgeable, skilled, and diverse workforce also plays a critical role in the fulfillment of strategic mission priorities. APHIS is committed to its workforce and to creating a work environment in which employees are actively involved and have a framework to support their work. APHIS continues to demonstrate its commitment through its use of:

- Effective management and leadership development programs;
- Developmental opportunities to gain needed skills and knowledge;
- Appropriate employee feedback systems including rewards and recognition as appropriate; and,
- Human resource policies and practices that recognize APHIS' critical responsibilities yet remaining sensitive to employees' personal needs.

D. Plan Certification for FY 2012 with Official Signature

IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

Name and Address of Agency

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
4700 River Road, Unit 17
Riverdale, MD 20737

**Name and Title of Designated DVAAP Official (include address, if different from above)
Telephone and Fax number:**

Ted Gutman, Acting Director
Human Resources Division
(202) 720-5323 – Office
(202) 720-6308 – Fax

**Name and Title of the Contact Person (include address, if different from above) Telephone
and Fax number:**

Charlotte Y. Jones, Chief
Talent Acquisition Branch
Human Resources Division
(202) 720-9817 – Office
(202) 690-2782 – Fax

CERTIFICATION: I certify that the above named agency (1) has a current DISABLED VETERANS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAM (DVAAP) plan and the program is being implemented as required by 38 U.S.C. 4214, as amended, and appropriated regulations and guidance issued by the U. S. Office of Personnel; (2) that all field offices or installations having less than 500 employees are covered by a DVAAP plan; (3) that all field offices or installations having 500 or more employees are covered either by this plan or by a local plan; and (4) that such plans are available upon request from field offices or installations.

SIGNATURE



DATE

10-14-11