

WHAT IS I*DEA?

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is in the midst of a cultural transformation to ensure everyone who enters our facilities and interacts with our people feels safe, welcome, and valued.

To achieve this goal, VA launched an enterprise-wide initiative in 2021. Pronounced “idea,” I*DEA represents the four individual yet interdependent principles of inclusion, diversity, equity, and access.



IMAGINE EVERYONE WHO ENTERS A VA FACILITY SEES THEMSELVES. WITH THIS GUIDING PRINCIPLE LIGHTING OUR WAY, WE SET OFF ON A JOURNEY TO CREATE A SPACE FOR ALL WHO DO BUSINESS WITH VA. WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US.

— HARVEY JOHNSON (HE/HIM)
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY
Office of Resolution Management, Diversity & Inclusion
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



I*DEA



I*DEA's FOUR PILLARS

01

PROMOTING INCLUSION

Making everyone who interacts with VA feel safe and welcome. Treating individuals with dignity, integrity, and respect. Providing an environment free of harassment, discrimination, prejudice, and bias. Ensuring every Veteran and VA employee is recognized, included, and valued.

02

INCREASING DIVERSITY

Recognizing and embracing the strengths of our diverse Veterans and employees. Engaging and supporting underserved communities including women, people of color, persons with disabilities, and individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+).

03

FOSTERING EQUITY

Identifying and mitigating barriers to access and opportunity. Providing every individual with the support they need to access health care and benefits and achieve success. Alleviating systemic inequities and institutional obstacles to improve outcomes for Veterans and employees.

04

IMPROVING ACCESS

Ensuring availability and access of services, support, and opportunity for all Veterans and employees. Developing institutional pathways and accommodations to promote access and improved outcomes for underserved and historically marginalized communities.



I TAKE FULL RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE OUR EMPLOYEES HAVE EVERYTHING THEY NEED TO CARRY OUT THE IMPORTANT WORK BEFORE US AND THAT WE OPERATE IN A CULTURE THAT CELEBRATES AND DRAWS STRENGTH FROM OUR COUNTRY'S GREAT DIVERSITY.

— DENIS MCDONOUGH
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

I*DEA's MISSION

I*DEA's mission is to advance an inclusive environment that values and supports the diverse communities we serve—all who do business with VA—and cultivates equitable access to care, benefits, and services for all Veterans and employees.

BUILDING VA'S I*DEA

STANDING UP THE I*DEA TASK FORCE & SUB-COUNCIL

In early 2021, Executive Orders 13985 and 14035 signaled a era of federal employment and service delivery with a focus on improving inclusion, diversity, equity, and access.

In response, VA chartered an I*DEA Task Force to produce actionable recommendations for achieving these goals.

Four months later, the Task Force delivered 88 recommendations and sub-recommendations to the I*DEA Sub-Council, charged with ensuring decisions align with VA's strategic goals and improve the lives of Veterans and VA employees.

LAUNCHING THE EQUITY ACTION TEAM: THE I*DEA COUNCIL

In the first quarter of 2023, Executive Order 14091 required nearly every federal agency to integrate equity into planning and decision-making. Soon thereafter, VA evolved the I*DEA Sub-Council into an Agency Equity Team to ensure VA delivers on its promise to provide world-class care and benefits to all Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors.

Known as the I*DEA Council, this team is responsible for helping VA improve outcomes and opportunity for historically underserved Veterans and employees.



EXECUTIVE ORDER 13985

Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities



EXECUTIVE ORDER 14091

Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities



EXECUTIVE ORDER 14035

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility



AGENCY EQUITY TEAM PRESS RELEASE



10%

10.2% is VA's target for contracting women-owned and disadvantaged small business; the Department is currently exceeding this goal

30%

30% of new Veterans enrolled in VA health care are women

\$9.8B

\$9.8 billion of VA's 2023 budget was allocated for women Veteran healthcare

100%

All I*DEA tools and assets are 508-compliant to maximize access

10

Ten languages will be included in the development of agency fact sheets

LEARN MORE & BECOME
AN I*DEA INFLUENCER
@ bit.ly/41BqtYI

