

# I\*DEA YEAR IN REVIEW

2022



VA



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# INTRODUCING A BRILLIANT I\*DEA

VA 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. We are promoting inclusion, increasing diversity, fostering equity, and improving access for VA employees and our Veteran customers.

For over a year, a talented team joined together to lay the foundations for the I\*DEA Initiative. This Annual Report outlines I\*DEA guidance, processes, and tools that improve the experiences of our Veterans and the talented workforce who serve them.

Many involved in the planning phase for this new initiative asked what they could do to be a part of this exciting movement, so we created the I\*DEA Influencer Network, a group of people committed to sharing ideas and making long-lasting change at VA. Today, we invite you to bring your talent and skills to the Influencer Network and to sign up to be a part of our team of employees, contractors, and volunteers who are already contributing to a more inclusive, diverse, equitable, and accessible VA for all.

The goal of the I\*DEA initiative is to improve VA's cultural health by building a more inclusive VA—one that respects and supports the diverse communities we serve and cultivates equitable access to care, benefits, and services.

You can make a difference by inspiring positive change and building a brighter future for us all.



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





VA's I CARE values are the foundation for I\*DEA principles and priorities. Through I\*DEA, we are shaping an organizational culture that empowers VA leaders and employees to demonstrate I CARE through the lens of inclusion, diversity, equity, and access.

In doing so, we will ensure every VA employee, Veteran, and beneficiary feels safe, valued, supported, and welcome and has access to the benefits, care, and opportunities they need to thrive.

## INTEGRITY

Act with high moral principle. Adhere to the highest professional standards. Maintain the trust and confidence of all with whom I engage.

## COMMITMENT

Work diligently to serve Veterans and other beneficiaries. Be driven by an earnest belief in VA's mission. Fulfill my individual and organizational responsibilities.

## ADVOCACY

Be truly Veteran-centric by identifying, fully considering, and appropriately advancing the interests of Veterans and other beneficiaries.

## RESPECT

Treat all those I serve and with whom I work with dignity and respect. Show respect to earn it.

## EXCELLENCE

Strive for the highest quality and continuous improvement. Be thoughtful and decisive in leadership, accountable for my actions, willing to admit mistakes, and rigorous in correcting them.

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# WHAT IS I\*DEA?

In early 2021, Executive Orders 13985 and 14035 and subsequent executive actions signaled a bold new approach to federal employment and service delivery with a clear focus on inclusion, diversity, equity, and access.

In response, The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) seized a unique and meaningful opportunity: To identify and eliminate institutional barriers at VA and build agency-wide practices to ensure all employees, Veterans, family members, caregivers, and survivors are treated with dignity and respect and have access to the care, benefits, and opportunities they need to thrive.

To demonstrate commitment to this goal and improve VA cultural health by weaving these principles into the very fabric of the Department, VA launched an enterprise-wide initiative: I\*DEA. Pronounced “idea,” this initiative represents the four individual yet interdependent principles of inclusion, diversity, equity, and access.



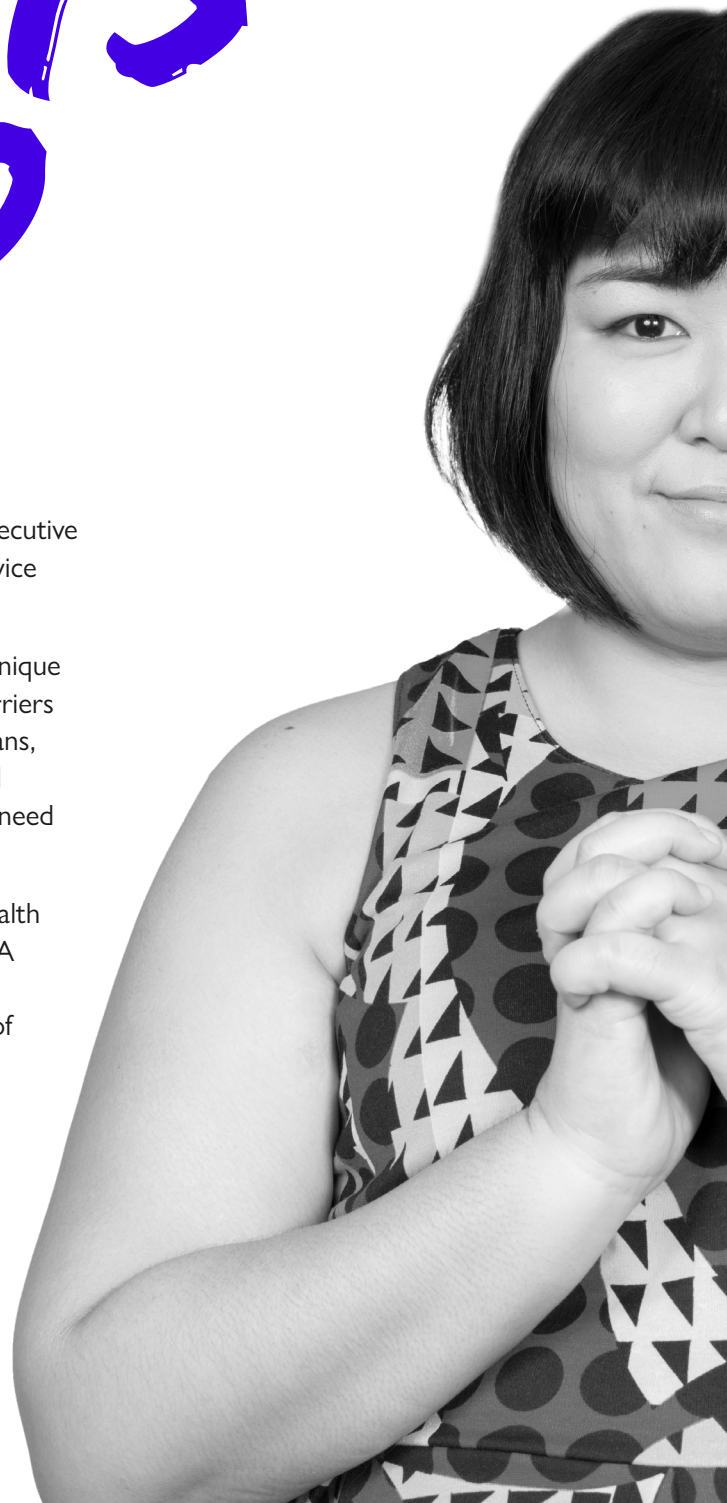
## EXECUTIVE ORDER 13985

Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government



## EXECUTIVE ORDER 14035

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility in the Federal Government



# INCLUSION DIVERSITY EQUITY ACCESS

“

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 NORTH STAR

VA 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.

We are embracing a new way of operating to promote inclusion, increase diversity, foster equity, and improve access and outcomes for Veterans and employees.

Through I\*DEA, VA is becoming a model for federal agencies where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and has access to the care, benefits, and opportunities they need to thrive: We are building cultural health, creating a safe and welcoming environment free of harassment, and promoting bringing your whole self to work.



**VA IS GREAT FOR VETERANS BECAUSE WE EXCEL AT PROVIDING COMPREHENSIVE CARE. THE GOAL OF VA IS TO GO OUT AND MAKE SURE EVERYONE HAS EQUAL ACCESS TO CARE REGARDLESS OF WHERE THEY LIVE.**

— **VIDA PASERO, MD (SHE/HER)**  
CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER, NATIONAL TELEONCOLOGY  
Pittsburgh VA Medical Center  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

## FOUR PILLARS

### 01 **PROMOTING INCLUSION**

Helping 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 so everyone 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**

Alleviating systemic inequities and institutional obstacles to improve outcomes for Veterans and employees. Identifying and mitigating barriers to access and opportunity. Providing everyone the support needed to access health care and benefits and achieve success.

### 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.



# FOUR PRINCIPLES

## 01 BE PROACTIVE

Deliberately and consciously embed I\*DEA into the institutional memory and organizational culture.

## 02 EMBODY EMPATHY

Understand the burden of inequity and demonstrate support for underserved Veteran and employee communities.

## 03 BE ACCOUNTABLE

Embody excellence and accept responsibility to improve VA services.

## 04 CULTIVATE YOU\*NITY

Create a strong, inclusive culture to drive I\*DEA in alignment with VA's mission and strategy.

# OUR 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.



# WITH I\*DEA, EVERYONE WINS

It's a fact: Organizations with diverse, inclusive workforces are stronger, and their employees are happier. And the stronger and happier our workforce, the better we can serve Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors—a win-win-win for employees, Veterans, and the American public.

Through I\*DEA, VA will deliver better services and improved customer experiences to Veterans while becoming an employer of choice for a diverse and talented workforce. To effect real change, we must embody I\*DEA in all offices across the enterprise and at all career levels—horizontally and vertically. The VA workforce of tomorrow will be stronger: It will not just reflect the rich diversity of the American people, it will represent inclusion, equity, and access at all levels of government.

“

**MOST VETERANS ARE MALE AND OVER 50. BECAUSE I AM A WOMAN OF COLOR AND A VETERAN, I BRING A DIFFERENT FLAVOR TO THE POT. VOLUNTEERS AND OTHER VETERANS CAN RELATE TO ME. WHEN I SEE A FEMALE VETERAN, I MAKE IT MY PRIORITY TO TALK TO THEM. I KNOW WHEN THEY SEE MY FACE IT'S FAMILIAR, BECAUSE I'M LIKE THEM. I MAKE THEM FEEL COMFORTABLE.**

— YARELLI MORALESCRUZ (SHE/HER)  
VOLUNTARY SERVICE SPECIALIST  
PROGRAM MANAGER  
My Life My Story





# WHY I\*DEA?

As the nation's largest civilian federal agency employing nearly 400,000 people providing critical care, services, and benefits to Veterans, VA has taken the first steps to understand why disparities occur and create a more inclusive and supportive environment for employees and Veterans—particularly those from underserved or underrepresented communities.

“

**AS I INTERACT WITH PEOPLE AND PROGRAMS THROUGHOUT VA, IT IS APPARENT THAT I\*DEA IS ESSENTIAL TO ACHIEVING VA'S PRIORITIES AND GOALS, AND SERVING OUT OUR MISSION. THE IMPORTANCE OF ELICITING, RESPECTING, AND INCORPORATING DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES IS KEY TO PROVIDING THE HIGHEST QUALITY HEALTH CARE.**

**MANY INITIATIVES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO HIGH RELIABILITY, EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT, VETERAN EXPERIENCE, AND WHOLE HEALTH RELY ON THE INCLUSION OF DIVERSE WORLDVIEWS, CULTURES, AND VALUES. THE INCORPORATION OF THESE ELEMENTS INTO ACTION PLANS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES IS ESSENTIAL IN ORDER FOR US TO TRULY SERVE ALL WHO SERVED.**

— REBECCA AYCOCK, PH.D. (SHE/HER)  
VISN 21 DEI SUPERVISORY CONSULTANT/OFFICER  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

**16%**

16.3% of working mothers with children under the age of 18 are in low-wage jobs<sup>1</sup>

**18%**

18.3% of working mothers with children age 3 and under are in low-wage jobs<sup>2</sup>

**82¢**

\$0.82 is the amount women earn for every \$1.00 men earn<sup>3</sup>





# 46M

46 million Americans cannot afford necessary health care services as a result of system inequality<sup>1</sup>

# 34%

33.7% of the 2,294 women Veterans aged 18 to 45 surveyed at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System perceived gender-based discrimination at VA<sup>5</sup>

# 36%

36% of LGBTQ+ participants in a national study of U.S. households reported experiencing discrimination based on their race or ethnicity, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, economic status, immigration status, or age<sup>6</sup>

# 62%

62% of transgender participants in a national study of U.S. households reported experiencing discrimination in the past year<sup>6</sup>

# 78%

78% of surveyed VA employees said racism was a moderate to serious issue, and another 76% said they had "experienced racially charged actions" while working at VA<sup>7</sup>

# 55%

55% of surveyed VA employees said they witnessed racial discrimination leveled at Veterans while at work<sup>7</sup>

# 29.5%

29.5% of Black Veterans were denied disability compensation by VA compared to the 24.2% of white Veterans<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Twice the work and half the support: COVID-19 and single working mothers, Kayla Wharkey Green, 2020, OpenGlobalRights.org

<sup>2</sup> Nearly One in Every Five Working Mothers of Very Young Children in Low-Wage Jobs, Karen Schulman, 2017, National Women's Law Center

<sup>3</sup> Quick Facts About the Gender Wage Gap, Robin Blewies, 2020, AmericanProgress.Org

<sup>4</sup> Survey: 1 in 5 Americans can't afford necessary care, Anuja Vaidya, 2021, MedCity News

<sup>5</sup> A Third of Women Treated in VA System Perceive Gender-Based Discrimination, Brenda Mooney, 2020, U.S. Medicine

<sup>6</sup> The State of the LGBTQ Community in 2020: A National Public Opinion Study, Center for American Progress (in conjunction with NORC), 2020

<sup>7</sup> The VA to be investigated following "staggering" reports of racism and discrimination, lawmakers say, James Clark, 2020, Task & Purpose

<sup>8</sup> Black Veterans Disproportionately Denied VA Benefits, Jan Dyer, 2023, MDedge Federal Practitioner

# WHAT DOES I\*DEA MEAN FOR ME?

## INCLUSION

Everybody who engages with VA should feel safe, welcome, and valued. VA will treat all employees, Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors with dignity, integrity, and respect by providing an environment free of harassment and discrimination. We are fostering a culture of inclusion—specifically for marginalized and underserved communities—to eliminate prejudice and bias at VA.

### FOR VETERANS

VA deeply respects your service and sacrifice and values your unique contributions, skills, and experiences. We invite you to Choose VA, and we are committed to welcoming, supporting, and serving all Veterans—regardless of background or circumstances—in an environment that is free of harassment and discrimination. VA is building a better future where all Veterans feel safe, welcome, and valued.

### FOR EMPLOYEES

VA's strength lies in the diversity of our people, and we're working to ensure every employee feels welcome, safe, and valued. Respect is a critical component of a positive workplace and we're dedicated to continued improvement toward a more inclusive culture. We value your individual skills, talents, and experiences, and we invite you to bring your authentic self to work.

## DIVERSITY

VA values the wide range of differences and individuality in our Veterans and employees and celebrates our collective strength. By supporting diverse Veteran communities and increasing diversity in the VA workforce, VA is building the foundation for lasting organizational and cultural change that will foster innovation and ultimately result in better care and opportunity for all Veterans and employees.

### FOR VETERANS

VA is making sure we can provide you with world-class care, services, and benefits that meet your individual needs. We are evolving our systems and processes and ensuring VA employees and providers understand, value, and empathize with people from diverse backgrounds, experiences, and cultures to provide effective, culturally sensitive support and services for every Veteran.

### FOR EMPLOYEES

VA is building a workforce that reflects the vast diversity of the American public at all career levels. We are cultivating an environment that demonstrates the true value of diversity: one where diverse backgrounds, experiences, and cultures spark innovation and understanding and help us all provide better care and service to our nation's heroes.



## EQUITY

VA is continuing to evaluate the intersectionality of inequities and dismantle institutional barriers to optimize opportunity, well-being, and outcomes for Veterans and employees. We are identifying and eliminating systemic barriers to equity with the goal of providing every Veteran and employee access to the care, benefits, and opportunity they need to thrive.

### FOR VETERANS

VA is breaking down barriers to further improve health outcomes, mitigate bias, and identify and address the myriad, complex factors that disproportionately affect underserved and marginalized communities. We are making sure you and every one of your fellow Veterans have access to the best-in-class health care, benefits, and services you need to be healthy and successful following your service.

### FOR EMPLOYEES

VA is building a more equitable workplace that supports your success and well-being—promoting your psychological, emotional, and physical health.  
*A More Equitable VA = A More Diverse VA.*  
*A More Diverse VA = A More Innovative VA.*  
*A More Innovative VA = Better Service and Care for our Nation's Heroes.*

## ACCESS

VA is improving access by reducing inequities and proactively embedding opportunities and accommodations across the Department. This includes providing access to training, education, and services, designing and equipping VA facilities, spaces, and amenities to facilitate safe and independent use, and ensuring VA's technological, digital, and physical infrastructures can be easily accessed and navigated.

### FOR VETERANS

VA is eliminating barriers to make sure you have access to the care and services you've earned, including health care, home care, education, job placement, housing, and disability benefits. By ensuring all Veterans have access to the benefits they need to thrive and the training and jobs worthy of their skills and service—whoever and wherever they are—VA is helping our nation's heroes live their most fulfilling and successful lives.

### FOR EMPLOYEES

VA is making sure you have access to resources, services, and opportunity at all stages of the employee lifecycle—from recruiting through retirement. By improving access to VA tools and support, VA is fostering individual success and growth for current employees and opening doors to an expanded pool of skilled professionals who want to dedicate their careers to the service of Veterans.

# SPARKING I\*DEA

“

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 JOURNEY WITH US AS WE IMPLEMENT THE I\*DEA INITIATIVE TO TRANSFORM VA'S CULTURAL HEALTH.

— HARVEY JOHNSON (HE/HIM)  
LTC, USA, RET

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY  
Office of Resolution Management, Diversity & Inclusion  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs





**INCLUSION**  
**DIVERSITY**  
**EQUITY**  
**ACCESS**

# I\*DEA TASK FORCE

## VA TAKES ACTION

### MARCH 2021

As an immediate first step toward achieving the objectives outlined in the Executive Orders, VA launched the I\*DEA Task Force—an interdisciplinary team of experts to evaluate existing policies, programs, and organizational structures across the enterprise. The I\*DEA Task Force included VA employees from various offices and groups, White House representatives, members of academia, community partners, and subject matter experts.

Secretary McDonough chartered the 18-member I\*DEA Task Force to identify and elevate strategic opportunities across VA to improve the lives of employees, Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors by embracing the rich diversity of VA's Veteran and employee populations.

The I\*DEA Task Force was responsible for examining existing policies, programs, and infrastructure and producing actionable recommendations that would chart a course to improve inclusion, diversity, equity, and access for VA employees and Veterans.

### JULY 2021

At the conclusion of a 120-day sprint, the Task Force delivered 20 key recommendations and 68 sub-recommendations for implementing I\*DEA at VA over the next four years. With their mission complete, the I\*DEA Task Force adjourned and turned their findings and recommendations over to the newly established I\*DEA Sub-Council.

## THE 20 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 01 Approve and integrate the definitions of I\*DEA into organizational philosophy
- 02 Build trust with conscious outreach and create new institutional access points for underserved communities
- 03 Promote the cultural transformation of I\*DEA from Field to VA Central Office (VACO)
- 04 Conduct VA Stand Down to address I\*DEA related topics for VA workforce and Veterans we serve
- 05 Design new programming and engagement strategies to conduct outreach to underserved communities
- 06 Develop a VA I\*DEA Dashboard
- 07 Develop a workforce plan to integrate I\*DEA into hiring, position management, talent development, and executive coaching
- 08 Recruit and review VA's partnerships with Minority-Serving Institutions
- 09 Leverage VA benefits and services to increase financial equity for underserved communities
- 10 Evaluate institutional symbols and expression of values displayed and used by VA to ensure inclusiveness and diverse representation

- 11 Conduct feasibility study to evaluate the creation of an I\*DEA Office and Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) position reporting directly to the Office of the Secretary (OSVA)
- 12 Add sexual orientation, gender identity, and pronouns to VA systems, including Veterans Benefits Administration's (VBA) dataset and Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) medical record
- 13 Revamp the VA communications strategy to appeal to and become representative of underserved communities
- 14 Review training and resources centered on I\*DEA to ensure alignment with core principles of cultural competency
- 15 Provide support for and track reports of discrimination-based trauma
- 16 Strengthen Federal Advisory Committees (FACs)
- 17 Explore the use of legal resources and partnerships to serve underserved communities
- 18 Operationalize VA's findings from 200-day equity assessment in accordance with E.O. 13985 (Freely Associated States/Outside of Continental United States (FAS/OCONUS) Veterans)
- 19 Stand up I\*DEA Sub-Council to elevate visibility and sustain efforts at OSVA level
- 20 Conduct feasibility assessments on I\*DEA Action Plan recommendations



# I\*DEA SUB-COUNCIL

Established to evaluate and implement Task Force recommendations, the I\*DEA Sub-Council formalized VA's enduring commitment to embracing the incredible diversity of its employees and Veterans while promoting inclusion, fostering equity, and improving access for all.

The Sub-Council is the primary oversight body to the Office of the Secretary (OSVA) for enterprise-wide decisions regarding inclusion, diversity, equity, and access. It is responsible for ensuring policy decisions are consistent with VA's strategic goals and effectively improve the lives and experiences of VA employees and Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors.

The Sub-Council is comprised of subject matter experts across various VA offices supporting six domain specific workstreams.



## SUB-COUNCIL WORKSTREAMS

### **ACTION PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS**

Creating policies and implementing recommendations outlined in the Action Plan

### **EXECUTIVE ORDERS & PRESIDENTIAL MEMORANDUMS**

Redefining VA's approach and establishing best practices in accordance with Executive Orders and Presidential Memorandums

### **HUMAN CAPITAL & WORKFORCE PLANNING**

Evaluating the needs of internal stakeholders by examining existing policies to grow I\*DEA in the workforce

### **STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENTS**

Creating and strengthening existing partnerships and outreach to internal/external stakeholders and building more robust communications

### **FACILITIES & ACCESSIBILITY**

Identifying and addressing the physical and technological barriers to access for Veterans and employees

### **POPULATION-SPECIFIC SUB-GROUPS**

Addressing issues within three specific focus areas: LGBTQ+, Women, and Preventing Anti-Semitism



# FEASIBILITY ASSESSMENT

JAN - MAY 2022

The I\*DEA Sub-Council conducted a feasibility assessment of the 20 Task Force recommendations to inform the pursuit, prioritization and, in certain cases, modification of the I\*DEA Action Plan recommendations.

Workstreams assessed the technical, operational, legal, and economic feasibility of each recommendation, mapped against their estimated impact. The assessment aimed to identify the most effective and economical course of action for identifying and addressing inequities and answers the questions, *“How much of the identified gap is likely to be closed by the recommendation?”* and *“How many employees and/or Veterans is the recommendation likely to positively impact?”*

# ASSESSMENT RESULTS

MAY 2022

Recommendation #1 and 17 sub-recommendations were identified as items that could be implemented in short timeframes and with limited resources or effort.

Recommendations #6, #11, and #12 were fast-tracked to implementation. Another 10 recommendations were identified as able to achieve significant impact in <2 years.

“

**BECAUSE OF THE SUB-COUNCIL, I’VE SEEN UPDATED GUIDANCE RELATED TO WORKPLACE DRESS CODES—ALLOWING EMPLOYEES TO FEEL COMFORTABLE IN THE CLOTHES THEY CHOOSE TO WEAR.**

**I’VE WITNESSED THE CREATION OF VA’S FIRST EVER EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUP—PRIDEVA—WHICH MADE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS TOWARD ALLOWING LGBTQ+ EMPLOYEES FEEL INCLUDED AND LIVE AUTHENTICALLY IN THE WORKPLACE.**

**THOSE TWO CHANGES ALONE HAVE BROUGHT JOY TO MY LIFE AS A VETERAN AND VA EMPLOYEE. THE SUB-COUNCIL IS SENDING A STRONG MESSAGE THAT I\*DEA IS NOT A FAD OR A PHASE, AND THAT THE MISSION TO MAKE VA MORE INCLUSIVE, DIVERSE, EQUITABLE, AND ACCESSIBLE IS NOT JUST MERE WORDS, BUT ACTIONS WE TAKE SERIOUSLY AND HOLD OURSELVES ACCOUNTABLE TO.**

— SHANITA R. JONES  
USA VETERAN

SR. MANAGEMENT AND PROGRAM ANALYST  
Work-Life Wellness & Employee Experience Division  
Office of Human Capital Services  
Veterans Benefits Administration  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

# CULTIVATING YOU\*NITY

We may be just getting started, but we're already making progress toward becoming a more inclusive, diverse, equitable, and accessible VA.

In 2021 and 2022, VA took substantial steps toward developing and implementing I\*DEA guidance, processes, and tools to improve the Veteran and employee experience—particularly individuals and groups who are historically marginalized or underserved.



## KEY SUCCESSES

### EQUITY ACTION PLAN

Release of the VA Agency Equity Action Plan on April 14, 2022, to eliminate barriers to health care, benefits and services, and create opportunities to improve access and experiences for historically marginalized Veterans

### 2022 INCLUSIVITY CLOSE OUT

“Commitment to F.O.C.S.E.” (Fair Open Cooperative Supportive Empowering)—focused on improving communication, building trust, and encouraging teamwork to create an equitable and inclusive VHA that fosters a culture of dignity and respect

### VA STRATEGIC PLAN

I\*DEA is memorialized in the Department of Veterans Affairs Fiscal years 2022–2028 Strategic Plan

### WOMEN'S HEALTH CARE

Investment in women's health care to increase access to infertility counseling, assisted reproductive technology, eliminate copayments for contraceptive coverage, and improve the safety of women Veterans seeking care at VA facilities through zero-tolerance policy for harassment and sexual assault



“

**I REMEMBER SPEAKING TO THE LEADER AT A FACILITY IN LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS ABOUT HAVING AN LGBTQ+ EVENT. 16 PEOPLE SHOWED UP; FIVE YEARS LATER IT GREW TO 200. IF I CAN IMPRESS UPON LEADERSHIP TO DO ANYTHING, IT'S EMPOWERING YOUR PEOPLE TO BE THEMSELVES.**

— **TONI HIGHTOWER (SHE/HER)**  
MAJ, USAR, RET  
HUMAN CENTERED DESIGNER  
Veterans Experience Office  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

## **I\*DEA SHOWCASE SERIES**

VA hosted a three-part virtual I\*DEA Showcase Series to highlight the spirit and innovation of I\*DEA and introduce the initiative to VA employees

## **EMAIL SIGNATURE INCLUSIVITY**

VA pilot program to include pronouns in email signatures and in the global address list deployed VA-wide in April 2022 to VA LGBTQ+ Support Groups

## **EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUP**

Secretary McDonough approved VA's first ever Employee Resource Group—PrideVA—in April 2021

## **DISABLED VETERANS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAM**

VA submitted the annual Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP) Accomplishment Report and Certification

## **PRIDE**

VA hosted its first National Virtual PRIDE event on June 1—June 30, 2021 with 300+ volunteers across the country planning and producing 27 successful live/virtual events as an inclusive, safe, and open forum

# THE I\*DEA SHOWCASE

In early 2022, VA kicked off a three-part I\*DEA Showcase series to engage employees from the field to headquarters in a first-of-its-kind virtual event celebrating inclusion, diversity, equity, and access at VA. Participants were encouraged to bring their whole selves to the series, share their unique experiences, and learn from VA leaders and each other to understand the importance of I\*DEA.

The Showcase featured guest speakers including VA Deputy Secretary Donald Remy and VA Chief of Staff Tanya Bradsher, an I\*DEA panel of seasoned professionals, key stakeholders, and employee advocates, discussion and presentation, an original song by Sabrina Clark, MD, Director, VA Center for Development and Civic Engagement, and artwork by Tammy Finney, Chief, Voluntary Service at Dorn VA Medical Center, and students from the Columbia Health Care System's Summer Student Program.

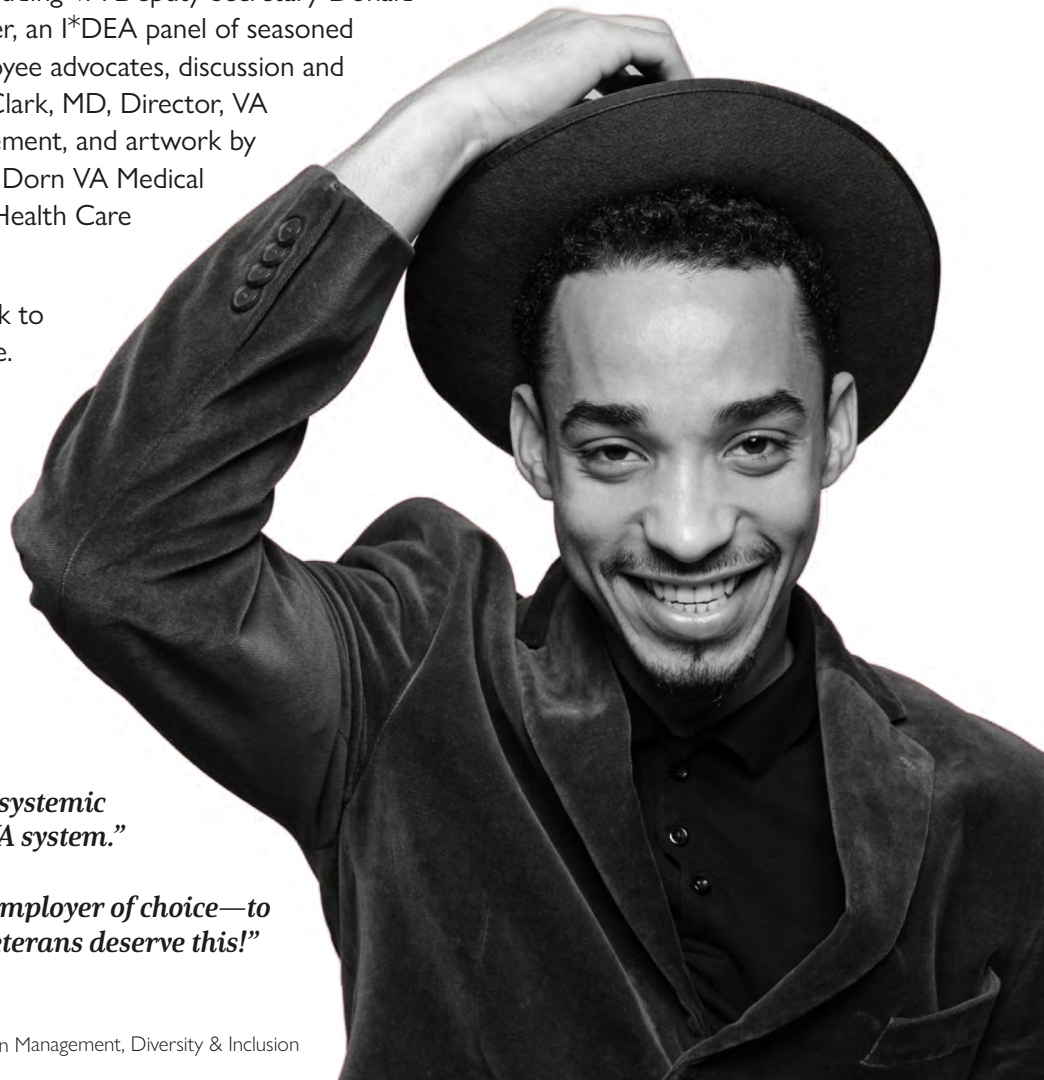
Participants and attendees shared feedback to help VA gauge the impact of the Showcase. Overwhelmingly, the event was described as a positive, transformational experience. Here's a glimpse of what they had to say:

***"I\*DEA is essential for all organizations."***

***"I saw the positive people aware of the issues and committed to proactive changes—and some administrators welcome and encourage change."***

***"It motivated me to know that there are systemic ways to integrate these areas into the VA system."***

***"To make us a center of excellence and employer of choice—to allow us to recruit the very best! Our Veterans deserve this!"***





# BUILDING CONNECTION THROUGH ART

Thor Ringler, writer-editor at the VA hospital in Madison, WI and host of *My Life, My Story*, shared an original poem written on behalf of an anonymous Black Army Veteran and Paralympian who was paralyzed in service and is searching for a partner who sees her as more than her disability—someone who sees her for the person she really is.

## FOR THE MAN I WILL MARRY

Look over here.	An inspiration?
Look my way.	Yes, who else?
Who do you see?	A beautiful lady?
A person in a wheelchair?	Yes, who else?
Yes, who else?	Stop looking now.
A Black woman?	Close your eyes.
Yes, who else?	Lay completely still.
An Army veteran?	Listen to my voice,
Yes, who else?	the rise and fall
A Paralympic athlete?	of my heart
Yes, who else?	inside my chest.
A single mother?	Who do you see now?
Yes, who else?	In the mirror of your
A good person?	heart,
Yes, who else?	in the space of our
A paraplegic?	lifetime
Yes, who else?	together.

“

**SHE'S A BIT OF A CELEBRITY AND I WAS A LITTLE INTIMIDATED WHEN I CALLED TO INTERVIEW HER. I SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN. SHE WAS SO DOWN TO EARTH AND ENGAGING AND FUNNY THAT MY NERVES DIDN'T LAST LONG.**

**BUT I WAS SURPRISED BY WHAT SHE TALKED ABOUT. WHEN YOU'RE ABLE-BODIED YOU MIGHT THINK SOMEONE WITH A DISABILITY WILL SEE THEMSELVES THROUGH THAT LENS.**

**BUT SHE DIDN'T FOCUS ON BEING PARALYZED. SHE TALKED ABOUT LOVE. SHE TALKED ABOUT WANTING A HUSBAND—A MAN WHO WILL TRULY SEE HER FOR WHO SHE IS AND NOT FOR WHAT SHE LOOKS LIKE OR REPRESENTS.**

**THIS WAS A MOMENT THAT HIGHLIGHTED THE ESSENTIAL SAMENESS—THE HUMANNESS—THAT UNITES US IN ALL OUR DIFFERENCES.**

— THOR RINGLER (HE/HIM)  
WRITER-EDITOR  
NATIONAL PROGRAM MANAGER  
*My Life My Story*  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



# BUILDING AWARENESS

To support the change required to embed I\*DEA into organizational culture, processes, and policies, VA has infused all planning, activities, and communications with change management principles and developed a variety of resources and channels to inform, engage, and empower VA employees and leaders.

The Prosci ADKAR® Model is a simple but effective approach to achieving individual and organizational change focused on five components: Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, Reinforcement. The first building block, awareness, is defined as “awareness of the need for change.” Building awareness requires sharing both the nature of the change and answering why this change is necessary.

For VA, building awareness of the need for I\*DEA sets the stage for long-term initiative success and lays the foundation for cultural change that will result in a better workplace for employees and better care and service for our nation’s heroes.



## LEARN ABOUT ADKAR

A is for Awareness: The First Step of Successful Change



**S**  
**INCLUSION**  
**DIVERSITY**  
**EQUITY**  
**ACCESS**

# I\*DEA HUB

## I\*DEA INTRANET

The I\*DEA intranet—open to all VA employees and eligible contractors and partners—is the hub for all things I\*DEA. It outlines the genesis, mission, and goals of I\*DEA, highlights current and upcoming events, spotlights leadership, employee, and Veteran stories through the Showcasing I\*DEA page, and is a one-stop-shop for I\*DEA resources including tools such as referral catalogs, definitions, FAQs, templates, presentations, posters, and one-pagers.

## DIGITAL ASSETS

I\*DEA digital assets include templates, FAQs, toolkits, virtual backgrounds, posters, and flyers. These products are available on the I\*DEA intranet, displayed in VA medical centers and offices, and distributed across the Department.

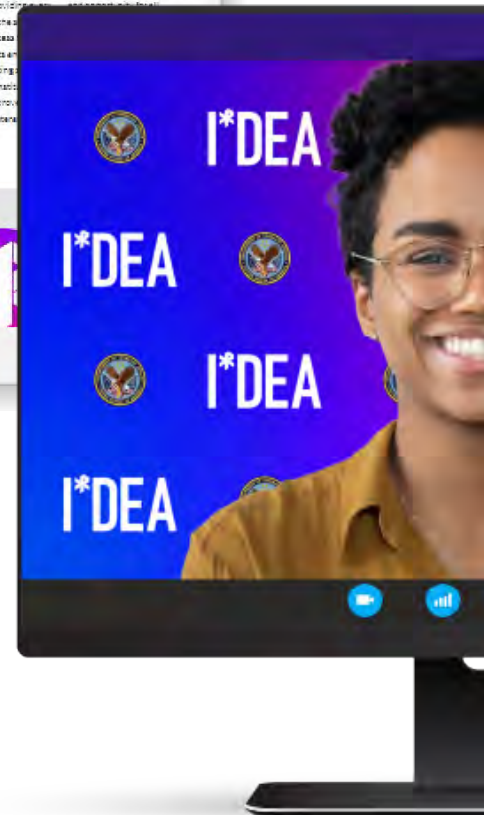


**EXPLORE I\*DEA  
INTRANET** 



**EXPLORE I\*DEA  
DIGITAL ASSETS** 

*If you believe you should have access but encounter an error when following the above links, please contact your VA IT administrator or email [idea@va.gov](mailto:idea@va.gov).*



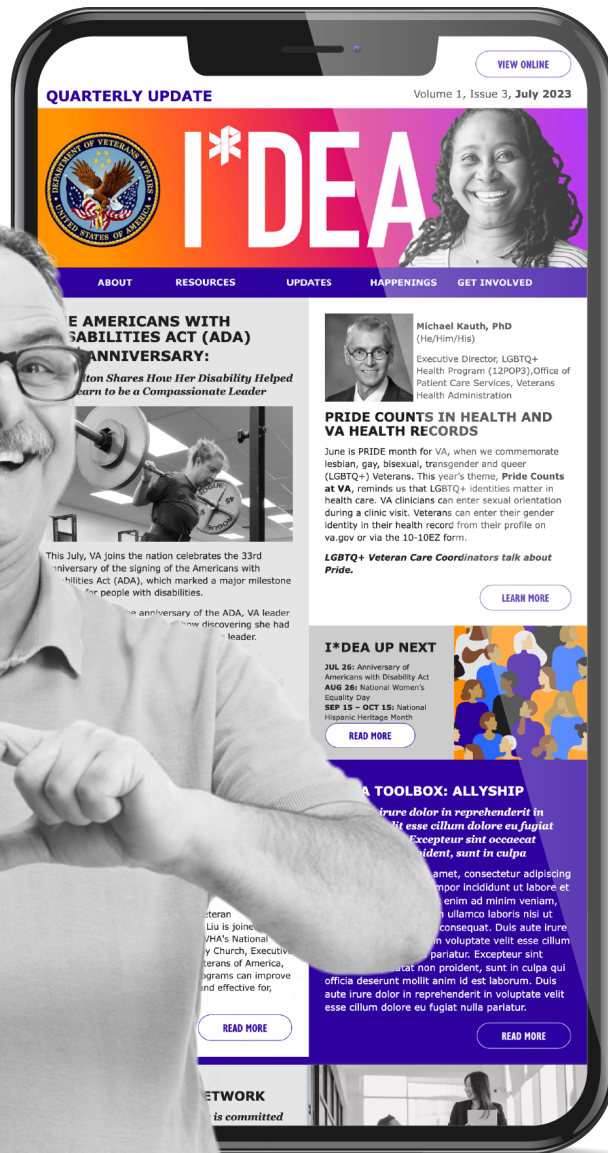
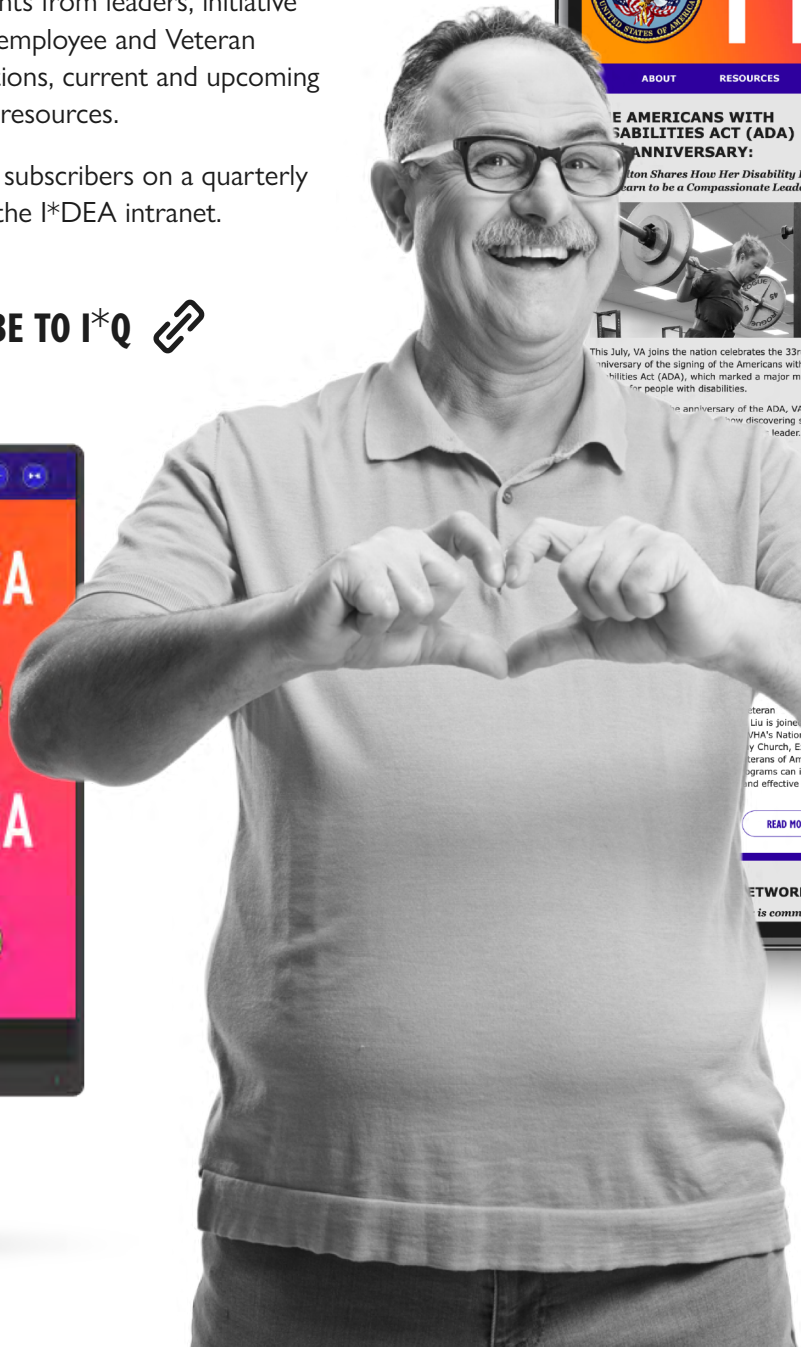
# I\*DEA QUARTERLY

The I\*Quarterly—or I\*Q—is an engaging e-mail round-up that packages key I\*DEA updates and hot topics including insights from leaders, initiative progress and successes, employee and Veteran stories, artistic contributions, current and upcoming events, tips, and links to resources.

I\*Q goes out to internal subscribers on a quarterly basis and is archived on the I\*DEA intranet.



SUBSCRIBE TO I\*Q 





# I\*DEA TOOLBOX

VA has compiled approved definitions, trainings, and educational materials to provide employees with the opportunity to expand their understanding of I\*DEA and positively influence change.





# I\*DEA RESOURCES

The I\*DEA intranet provides a comprehensive, ever-growing list of tools and collateral for employees to learn more about I\*DEA and effectively incorporate change into their day-to-day interactions. Select resources are linked below.

## FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS

 [VA Strategic Plan](#)

 [I\\*DEA Action Plan](#)

## UPDATES & ENGAGEMENT

 [I\\*DEA Influencer Network](#)

 [C20 Interviews with I\\*DEA Leaders](#)

 [VHA Diversity @ Work Newsletter](#)

 [AHPO Newsletters](#)

 [Showcasing I\\*DEA Stories](#)

 [Employee Resource Groups](#)

## EDUCATION & TOOLS


 [Diversity & Inclusion Toolkits & Assessments](#)

 [Articles, Websites, Videos & Books](#)


 [Special Observance Flyers](#)

## TRAINING

 [Bystander Intervention Techniques for Veterans](#)


 [What is Unconscious Bias \(LinkedIn\)](#)

 [Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging \(LinkedIn\)](#)


 [EEO, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Training](#)

 [Whistleblower Rights & Protections Training](#)

 [Harassment Prevention & Accountability Training](#)

 [Serving LGBTQ+ Veterans with Pride All Employee Training](#)

 [No FEAR Act Training](#)

 [Reasonable Accommodations/Personal Assistance Services Training](#)

 [Applying Cultural Competence in a Multicultural VA](#)


 [Combatting Incivility in the Workplace](#)

 [Diversity Tension in the Workplace](#)

 [Managing Gender Diversity in VA](#)

 [Managing Implicit Bias in VA](#)

 [Subtle Acts — How to Understand, Identify & Stop Microaggressions](#)

 [Psychological Safety: Building a Culture of Inclusion and Innovation](#)

 [Enduring: Excuse Me Ma'am, This is for Vets Only - Microaggressions & Intersectionality in Women Veterans](#)

# BRINGING I\*DEA TO LIFE

In 2022—and for much of 2023—VA is focusing on building I\*DEA awareness, engagement, and support with internal audiences. In its first year, interest in and support for I\*DEA grew quickly and the initiative is generating extraordinary energy and enthusiasm across the nation.

To carry this momentum into the future, VA developed a brand that captures attention and represents the bold, human-centric, authentic personality of the initiative. In many ways, the look and feel of I\*DEA is just as important as the messages and information we share: Before reading or otherwise interacting with I\*DEA content, people's perceptions of the initiative have already been shaped by its imagery, graphics, and colors. And VA's commitment to ensuring 508-compliance and access to digital resources ensures individuals who use assistive technologies will have a similarly rich experience when engaging with I\*DEA.

*VA invites you to join us in building a brighter future for employees, Veterans, family members, caregivers, and survivors by promoting inclusion, increasing diversity, fostering equity, and improving access.*





“

**I\*DEA IS EXCITING. IT'S POWERFUL. IT'S ANYTHING BUT BORING, AND IT DESERVES A BRAND THAT MAKES PEOPLE PAUSE AND TAKE NOTICE. IN DEVELOPING THE LOOK AND FEEL OF THIS INITIATIVE WE EMBRACED BOLD, OPTIMISTIC COLORS THAT GIVE US ENERGY. THE BRIGHT ORANGES, PINKS, AND PURPLES HIGHLIGHT WHAT REALLY MATTERS: THE RICH DIVERSITY OF OUR EMPLOYEES AND OUR VETERANS AND THE PEOPLE WHO LOVE AND CARE FOR THEM. I\*DEA IS ALL OF US—OUR UNIQUE, COLORFUL SELVES AND OUR EVER-EVOLVING KALEIDOSCOPE OF TOGETHERNESS.**

— JENNIFER MOFFIT, LP.D. (SHE/HER)  
USAF VETERAN

I\*DEA PROGRAM MANAGER  
Office of Resolution Management, Diversity & Inclusion  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

# BEHIND THE I\*DEA BRAND

The I\*DEA brand is big and bold—designed to capture the hearts and minds of the VA employees and Veterans who play a critical role in shaping a culture where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and has access to the care, benefits, and opportunities they need to thrive. The I\*DEA values are reflected in its brand mark: a stylized asterisk. The asterisk is a foundational component of the brand. It represents a promise to Veterans, VA employees, and the American public.

## A ASTERISK

In writing, an asterisk is used to mark text—typically as a reference to an annotation or to stand for censored or omitted content. As the brand mark, what traditionally represents an afterthought becomes embedded in and central to the message. The asterisk represents historically underserved and marginalized communities. It celebrates difference and signifies conscious inclusion. In math, an asterisk indicates multiplication; I\*DEA is amplifying opportunity and success for Veterans and VA employees.

## B VA

The abstract Vs and As that comprise the asterisk are a nod to VA

## C ARROW

The arrow represents movement, action, and forward progress

## D ONE

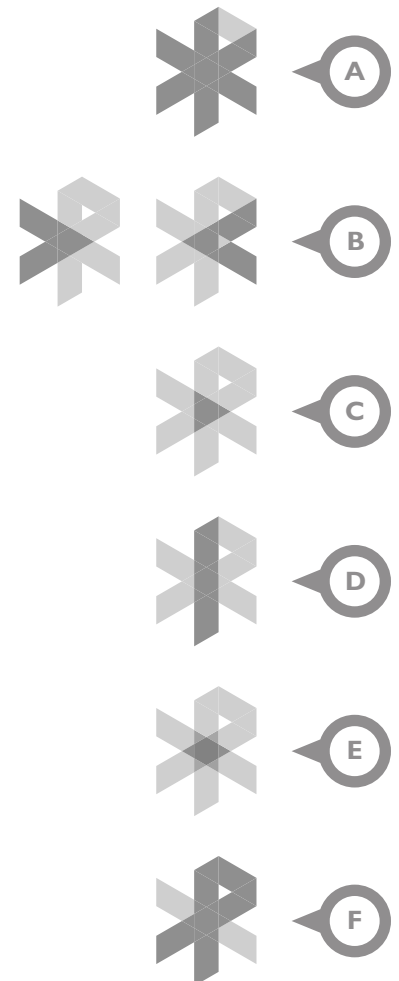
The number one represents unity and “e pluribus unum,” or “out of many, one”

## E KALEIDOSCOPE

The kaleidoscope evokes the vibrant, ever-shifting, fluid spectrum of human diversity

## F AWARENESS RIBBON

The ribbon shows support for inclusion, diversity, equity, and access at VA



# I\*DEA IN FULL COLOR

In a break from the red, white, and blue or other traditional color palettes that are the hallmark of government brands, VA embraced a bright color story that radiates I\*DEA's strength, optimism, and authenticity. VA shares this message with those who cannot fully experience color by describing the mood and energy of digital assets through alt text.

# I\*DEA WINS GLOBAL RECOGNITION

Following its launch in late 2022, the I\*DEA brand won a MarCom Platinum Award recognizing the brand's concept and design. MarCom is an international creative competition recognizing excellence in marketing and communications, and the Platinum Award is bestowed on those entries judged to be among the most outstanding in the competition.

Entries were submitted by corporate marketing and communications departments, advertising agencies, PR firms, design shops, production companies, freelancers, and other marketing and communications organizations and professionals representing 40+ countries.



**LEARN MORE ABOUT THE  
AWARD-WINNING BRAND**



**I\*DEA BRAND GUIDE**





# SHAPING TOMORROW

“

**I\*DEA IS ABOUT BEING INTENTIONAL IN A HUMAN-CENTERED WAY. IT'S ABOUT RECOGNIZING THAT WE ALL HAVE UNIQUE EXPERIENCES AND PERSPECTIVES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE GREATER GOOD OF SERVING VETERANS, THEIR FAMILIES, CAREGIVERS, AND SURVIVORS. TO BRING THIS VISION TO LIFE, VA IS CONVENING EXPERTS FROM ACROSS THE DEPARTMENT, OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS, EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS, AND NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS AND INDUSTRY. WITH EMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING AS OUR SHINING NORTH STAR, THE OPPORTUNITY FOR I\*DEA TO POSITIVELY REACH AND IMPACT ALL VETERANS—FROM EVERY BACKGROUND—IS UNPARALLELED.”**

— **BARBARA MORTON (SHE/HER)**  
DEPUTY CHIEF VETERANS EXPERIENCE OFFICER  
Veterans Experience Office  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs





**INCLUSION**

**DIVERSITY**

**EQUITY**

**ACCESS**

# COLLABORATING INTO THE FUTURE

VA is putting the pieces in place to improve how our leaders, team members, and partners are required to operate. We cannot be the change alone, however. We need the commitment, understanding, and support of everyone to move the needle in the direction of equity. Collaborations are a key priority to ensure VA takes a holistic and well-researched approach to embedding I\*DEA principles and practices throughout the enterprise.

## **OFFICE OF RESOLUTION MANAGEMENT, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION (ORMDI)**

ORMDI, in partnership with program offices, has conducted three equity assessments for Veterans who receive benefits and services from VA.

## **VETERANS EXPERIENCE OFFICE (VEO)**

VEO and ORMDI are engaging VA employees to identify pain points, needs, and opportunities for VA to address obstacles to belonging and improve the overall employee experience.

## **ASSAULT HARASSMENT PREVENTION OFFICE (AHPO)**

ORMDI and AHPO partnered on the development of Veteran Bystander Intervention Techniques, designed to help Veterans understand how to recognize unwanted behavior and the knowledge to respond and intervene safely.



## **THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC & INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS (OPIA)**

OPIA is leading efforts to implement legislation requiring VA to provide agency fact sheets in 10 languages in addition to English, Tagalog and Spanish, so that work might fit seamlessly into the Language Access sub-committee.

## **THE NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION (NCA)**

NCA and ORMDI co-facilitated virtual I\*DEA trainings for cemeteries on topics such as Managing Implicit Bias, Managing Generational Diversity in the Workplace, Managing Gender Diversity in the Workplace, and others throughout the year.

## **VA CENTER FOR WOMEN VETERANS (CWV) & OFFICE OF SMALL & DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS UTILIZATION (OSDBU)**

CWV is working with OSDBU to encourage women Veterans to achieve financial stability and become entrepreneurs as well as working with private industry and universities to bring more women Veterans into science, technology, engineering, and math fields where women are underrepresented.

## **VHA OFFICE OF WOMEN'S HEALTH**

CWV is also collaborating with the Office of Women's Health to enhance women Veterans' access to information about issues and programs that specifically address their concerns; working with internal/external stakeholders to raise awareness of the disparity in spaces/facilities named after women Veterans; and supporting efforts to bridge that gap to promote inclusivity and belonging for women Veterans inside VA.

## **FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER (FFRDC)**

VA partnered with an FFRDC to analyze the lack of diversity among the Department's Senior Executive Service (SES) employees and the feeder pipeline (GS13, GS14 and GS15).

## **OFFICE OF TRIBAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS (OTGR)**

VA consulted with tribal governments to develop partnerships that enhance access to services and benefits by Veterans and their families. OTGR crafted an Interagency Project Team Charter that pulls together, enterprise-wide, the various administrations, leadership and program offices working with tribal governments and and Asian Indian/Alaska Native Veterans across VA to better inform and craft a strategic plan, aligned with the VA strategic plan, to effectively engage and partner with tribal governments.

## **MINORITY-SERVING INSTITUTIONS (MSIs)**

VA is advancing intentional diversity in the federal workplace by partnering MSIs—including Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), and Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs)—to identify and recruit diverse talent from underserved communities.

# SEXUAL HARASSMENT & ASSAULT PREVENTION SURVIVOR CARE & SUPPORT SUB-COUNCIL

Moving the needle on VA cultural health requires a deep dive into the underlying causes that may prevent progress towards building inclusion, diversity, equity, and access. Ensuring we are fostering an environment that is safe and welcoming for all means doing everything in our collective power to eliminate any instances of harassment or sexual assault throughout our facilities.

In partnership with the I\*DEA Sub-Council, the Sexual Harassment and Assault Prevention Survivor Care and Support Sub-Council focuses on activities related to sexual harassment and sexual assault prevention and developing support avenues for the experiencer.

VA established the Sexual Harassment and Assault Prevention Survivor Care and Support Sub-Council under the Evidence Based Policy Council (EBPC) to ensure enterprise policy decisions are consistent with the Secretary's strategic goals and are developed as intended to improve the lives of employees, Veterans, family members, and caregivers.

“

**PRONOUNS ARE A PART OF WHO WE ARE AND IT SHOULD BE RESPECTED. VETERANS DESERVE TO BE CALLED BY THEIR PREFERRED NAME AND PRONOUN, IT SHOWS RESPECT. I FOR ONE AM TIRED OF BEING CALLED MR. AND SIR, VA SHOULD KNOW WHO I AM BECAUSE MY SERVICE IS HONORED THROUGH THAT KNOWLEDGE.**

— TONI HIGHTOWER (SHE/HER)  
MAJ, USAR, RET  
HUMAN CENTERED DESIGNER  
Veterans Experience Office  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs







“

I BELIEVE THAT BY MAKING TRAINING AVAILABLE VA HAS SHOWN ME, PERSONALLY, HOW TO BE A BETTER PERSON, HOW TO ACT CIVILLY IN ALL SITUATIONS. AND WHAT BETTER FEELING IS THERE THAN TO KNOW THAT ONE IS ADDING POSITIVE KARMA TO THE HUMAN RACE RATHER THAN NEGATIVE.

— WILLIAM R. UPTON (HE/HIM)  
SGT, USA, RET

## SELECT HARASSMENT & SEXUAL ASSAULT SUPPORT & SERVICES

Veterans Crisis Line  Dial 988, Press 1  
 Text 838255

MyVA411  1-800-MyVA411

Women Veterans Call Center  1-855-VA-WOMEN

Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Program  [socialwork.va.gov/IPV](https://socialwork.va.gov/IPV)

*If you are in a VA medical facility, see the Designated Points of Contact or VA Clinician Patient Advocates*

# ALLYSHIP

At its core, I\*DEA is about unity. It's about recognizing that we are better together—as One team, One VA, One nation—than we ever are alone.

Being an ally is about taking an active part in building that One. It's about making a conscious effort to understand and empathize with the people around us so we can work toward a common goal and build a better future for us all.

Allyship is a key ingredient for I\*DEA's success, and VA is building the mechanisms and evolving our culture to empower allyship across the Department. Fostering an environment where everyone feels safe and welcome and has the support and tools they need to thrive is no small undertaking—and it begins with all of us! By standing alongside marginalized, disadvantaged, and underserved individuals and communities, we're doing our part to build a stronger VA, support our Veterans, and serve those who call America home.

“

**AS A VETERAN, I THINK ABOUT BEING AN ALLY SIMILARLY TO THE WAY I THINK ABOUT BEING A BATTLE BUDDY. I'VE GOT YOUR BACK WHEN YOU NEED IT, YOU'VE GOT MINE WHEN I NEED IT—AND WE NEVER LEAVE ANYONE BEHIND. MY SERVICE MAY BE OVER, BUT MY MISSION TO SERVE MY COUNTRY LIVES ON IN MY EFFORTS TO HELP AND SUPPORT FOLKS WHO ARE OUT THERE FIGHTING FOR SOMETHING WE ALL DESERVE: EQUITY, SAFETY, AND FREEDOM.**

— TRAVIS MONTGOMERY  
USA VETERAN  
SENIOR PROGRAM ANALYST  
Office of Strategic Support & Initiatives  
Veterans Benefits Administration  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs







# LOOKING AHEAD

Over the next few months and years, VA will continue working to foster a safe, welcoming environment so employees and Veterans—and everyone who uses VA facilities—feels respected, supported, and empowered to be their authentic selves.

“

**I\*DEA IS IMPORTANT TO VA BECAUSE WE OWE IT TO THE VETERANS WE SERVE AND THE STAFF WE WORK WITH TO CONFIDENTLY BRING OUR AUTHENTIC SELVES TO WORK EVERY SINGLE DAY. PROMOTING AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT MUST BE INTENTIONAL UNTIL IT BECOMES THE NORM.**

— LELIA JACKSON

DIRECTOR

VHA Assault & Harassment Prevention Office (AHPO)

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



**INCLUSION**  
**DIVERSITY**  
**EQUITY**  
**ACCESS**



# I\*DEA IN 2023

In just two short years, I\*DEA has already come so far—and yet there's so much more to come. In 2023, VA will continue to build a solid foundation for lasting cultural change. We will connect I\*DEA leaders, influencers, and employees across the Department to engage, inform, and empower change at all levels of the organization.

## ADVANCING KEY PARTNERSHIPS

Throughout 2023, I\*DEA and the Sexual Harassment and Assault Prevention Survivor Care and Support Sub-Council will elevate their partnership by aligning and amplifying our collective work to improve the cultural health of VA.

As part of its broader efforts, I\*DEA is empowering leaders and staff in the field to be change agents and active participants in the prevention of sexual harassment and sexual assault.

In the coming year, I\*DEA and the Sexual Harassment and Assault Prevention Survivor Care and Support Sub-Council will continue to pursue awareness, desire, knowledge, ability, and reinforcement of the need for change across the Department. VA leaders, employees, Veterans, and external stakeholders will work together to foster a safer, more welcoming, and more inclusive environment at VA.

## GROWING AN INFLUENCER NETWORK

I\*DEA is standing up an Influencer Network to mobilize grassroots support and empower employees to learn, engage, and become a change champion in VA's initiative to build a more inclusive, diverse, equitable, and accessible environment. We can all make a difference. Learn more by emailing [idea@va.gov](mailto:idea@va.gov).

## EMPOWERING YOU TO *BE YOUR SELF*

I\*DEA will launch an internal *Be Your Self* campaign in late-2023 to promote inclusion, diversity, equity, and access by embracing individuality across VA's vast audiences—providing VA employees a space to be themselves.

The campaign will spotlight the VA heroes who support our nation's heroes: our diverse, multi-faceted, invaluable public servants who have dedicated their careers to the service of Veterans.

Looking ahead to 2023, our North Star shines bright: VA is promoting inclusion, increasing diversity, fostering equity, and improving access and outcomes for Veterans and employees.

***We invite you to join us on this journey!***





I\*DEA



VISIT [VA.GOV/ORMDI](https://va.gov/ormdi)  
TO LEARN MORE

