



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program in the [REDACTED] District

Advisory Report

Report Number
HR-MA-15-005

September 9, 2015





OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

Highlights

██████████ District officials did not fully comply with the Postal Service's DVAAP.

Background

The Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP) was designed to promote federal employment and advancement opportunities for qualified disabled veterans. Federal government agencies, including the U.S. Postal Service, are required to have affirmative action programs to recruit, employ, and advance disabled veterans. Federal law requires agencies to develop plans to promote the DVAAP and report program accomplishments to the Office of Personnel Management annually.

Postal Service Headquarters personnel oversee the required agency-wide plan for the Postal Service and area and district offices have copies of the plan and must implement their respective responsibilities. To promote the DVAAP, the Postal Service established a veterans coordinator for each district with ad hoc duties that include recruiting and networking activities.

This report responds to a request from Senator Bill Nelson to review concerns regarding how the DVAAP is implemented in the ██████████ District. The objective of our review was to assess the ██████████ District's compliance with the DVAAP.

What the OIG Found

██████████ District officials did not fully comply with the Postal Service's DVAAP. Specifically, the district veterans coordinator did not always communicate and partner with veterans organizations across the ██████████ District or participate in job fairs in the district to promote the Postal Service as a "Best Place to Work" and "Employer of Choice" as required.

These incidents occurred because the ██████████ District veterans coordinator worked full time as a safety specialist at the ██████████ Processing and Distribution Center. He stated his safety specialist duties limited his time to perform his duties as veterans coordinator; therefore, he was only able to conduct limited outreach activities to areas closest to the duty station ██████████ ██████████ is the only district in the Southern Area of operations where the veterans coordinator is not a Human Resources employee directly involved in recruiting.

In addition, the ██████████ District Human Resources manager, who is responsible for program oversight, was not aware of the DVAAP or its associated requirements. Therefore, the manager did not oversee, guide, or train the veterans coordinator.

Inadequate oversight, guidance, and training of the district veterans coordinator impeded the ██████████ District's ability to effectively recruit, employ, and advance disabled veterans.



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What the OIG Recommended

We recommended management evaluate transferring veterans coordinator duties to a Human Resources employee who is directly involved in recruiting, establish oversight procedures to ensure the Human Resources manager and veterans coordinator perform their duties to include the entire district, and train the district Human Resources manager and veterans coordinator on DVAAP policies and procedures.

Transmittal Letter



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

September 9, 2015

MEMORANDUM FOR: JEFFERY A. TAYLOR
DISTRICT MANAGER, [REDACTED] DISTRICT

E-Signed by Janet Sorensen
VERIFY authenticity with eSign Desktop


FROM: Janet M. Sorensen
Deputy Assistant Inspector General
for Revenue and Resources

SUBJECT: Management Advisory Report – Disabled Veterans
Affirmative Action Program in the [REDACTED] District
(Report Number HR-MA-15-005)

This advisory report presents the results of our review of the U.S. Postal Service's Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program in the [REDACTED] District (Project Number 15RG026HR000).

We appreciate the cooperation and courtesies provided by your staff. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Monique P. Colter, director, Human Resources and Support, or me at 703-248-2100.

Attachment

cc: Corporate Audit and Response Management

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Findings

The Postal Service is one of the nation's largest employers of veterans and disabled veterans. It employs 89,319 veterans, 1,412 of whom (2 percent) are in the [REDACTED] District.

Introduction

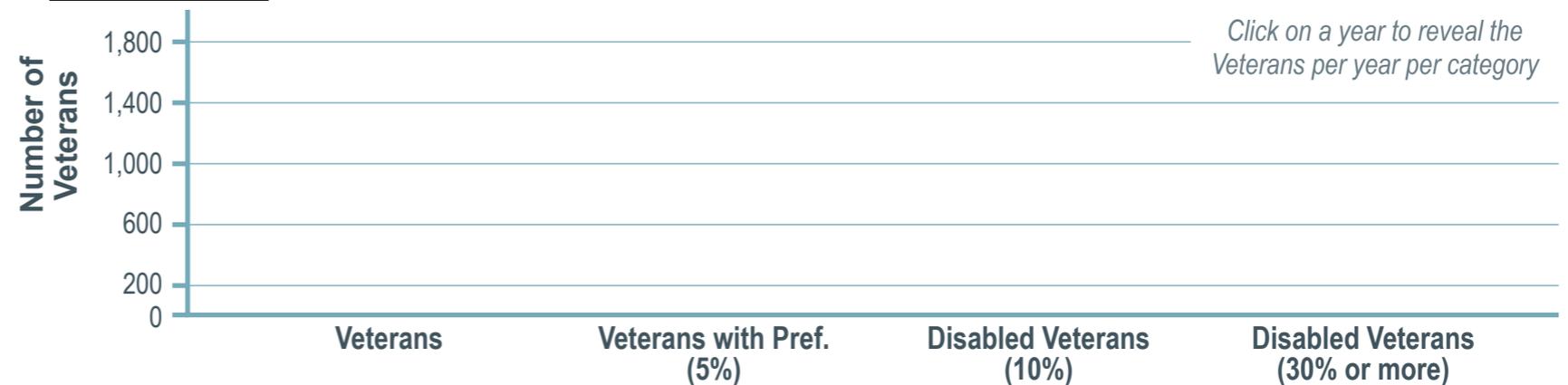
This advisory report presents the results of our review of the U.S. Postal Service's Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP) in the [REDACTED] District (Project Number 15RG026HR000). The advisory report responds to a request from Senator Bill Nelson to review concerns regarding implementation of the DVAAP in the [REDACTED] District. Our objective was to assess the [REDACTED] District's compliance with the DVAAP. See [Appendix A](#) for additional information about this review.

The DVAAP is designed to promote federal employment and advancement opportunities for qualified disabled veterans. Federal government agencies, including the Postal Service, are required to have an agency-wide affirmative action program to recruit, employ, and advance disabled veterans. Federal law requires agencies to develop plans to promote the DVAAP and report program accomplishments to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) annually. Postal Service Headquarters personnel oversee the plan and area and district offices have copies of the plan and must implement their respective responsibilities.

The Postal Service is one of the nation's largest employers of veterans and disabled veterans. It employs 89,319 veterans, 1,412 of whom (2 percent) are in the [REDACTED] District.¹ To promote the DVAAP, the Postal Service established a veterans coordinator for each district with ad hoc duties that include assisting with employment processes and activities affecting veterans. The [REDACTED] District's Human Resources manager, in conjunction with the [REDACTED] District veterans coordinator, is responsible for administering the program and implementing actions outlined in the Postal Service's annual DVAAP plan.²

During fiscal year (FY) 2012 through FY 2014, the [REDACTED] District experienced a decline in hiring veterans (see Figure 1). According to the Postal Service's DVAAP plans and reports for FY 2012 through FY 2015, there was a hiring freeze, which limited hiring to essential positions. In addition, factors such as employment trends and the availability of qualified disabled veterans, may affect the district's ability to hire and promote them.

Figure 1. [REDACTED] District Veterans Trends by Category,³ FY 2012 Through FY 2014



Source: U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) analysis.

- 1 Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action FY 2015 Program Plan and FY 2014 *Accomplishments Report*.
- 2 Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action FY 2015 Program Plan and FY 2014 *Accomplishments Report*.
- 3 Veteran – anyone who has served 180 consecutive days on active military duty.
Veteran with 5 percent preference - veteran who was honorably discharged or released from active military duty.
Disabled Veteran with 10 percent preference – veteran with a disability less than 30 percent.
Disabled Veteran with 10 percent preference – veteran with a disability greater than 30 percent.

The [REDACTED] District veterans coordinator did not always communicate and partner with veterans organizations across the [REDACTED] District or participate in job fairs across the district to promote the Postal Service as a “Best Place to Work” and “Employer of Choice” as required.

Conclusion

[REDACTED] District officials did not fully comply with the Postal Service’s DVAAP plan to enhance the recruitment, employment, and advancement of veterans in the district. Specifically, the [REDACTED] District veterans coordinator did not always communicate and partner with veterans organizations across the [REDACTED] District or participate in job fairs across the district to promote the Postal Service as a “Best Place to Work” and “Employer of Choice” as required.

The [REDACTED] District veterans coordinator worked full time as a safety specialist at the [REDACTED] Processing and Distribution Center (P&DC). He stated his safety specialist duties limited his time to perform his duties as veterans coordinator; therefore, he was only able to conduct limited outreach activities to areas closest to the duty station [REDACTED]). [REDACTED] is the only district in the Southern area where the veterans coordinator is not a Human Resources employee directly involved in recruiting. Also, the [REDACTED] District Human Resources manager, who is responsible for program oversight, was not aware of the DVAAP or its associated requirements; therefore, the manager did not oversee, guide or train the district veterans coordinator.

Inadequate oversight, guidance, and training of the district veterans coordinator impeded the [REDACTED] District’s ability to effectively recruit, employ, and advance disabled veterans.

Compliance with the Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program

[REDACTED] District officials did not fully comply with the Postal Service’s DVAAP plan to enhance the recruitment, employment, and advancement of veterans in the district. Specifically, the [REDACTED] District veterans coordinator did not always communicate and partner with veterans organizations across the [REDACTED] District or participate in job fairs across the district to promote the Postal Service as a “Best Place to Work” and “Employer of Choice.” as required. Table 1 outlines the action items in the Postal Service’s FY 2015 DVAAP plan.

Table 1. Postal Service FY 2015 DVAAP Program Plan

| Action Item | Responsible Organizational Component | Expected Results |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| Continue contact with the Department of Veterans Affairs and the State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to ensure information on Postal Service recruitment activities and job opportunities reach disabled veterans. | District Human Resources | Ongoing communication with veterans organizations and departments will allow greater access to veterans. |
| Continue to partner with the Postal Service Disability Programs’ Selective Placement Program coordinator and externally with groups such as local and national veterans and employment agencies, Transition Assistance Program offices, and Student Veterans of America. Maintain resources specifically for veteran recruitment efforts. | District Human Resources | Increased outreach to veterans and disabled veterans will generate awareness of employment opportunities at the Postal Service. |
| Participate and provide employment information at national, regional, and local veterans summits and job fairs. | District Human Resources | Continued community outreach will promote the Postal Service as a “Best Place to Work” and “Employer of Choice.” |

Source: The Postal Service’s Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action FY 2015 Program Plan and FY 2014 Report.

The [REDACTED] District veterans coordinator worked full time as a safety specialist at the [REDACTED] P&DC. The coordinator stated that his safety specialist duties limited his time to perform his duties as veterans coordinator; therefore, he was only able to conduct limited outreach activities to areas closest to the duty station ([REDACTED]). [REDACTED] is the only district in the Southern area where the veterans coordinator is not a Human Resources employee directly involved in recruiting.

In addition, the [REDACTED] District's Human Resources manager, who is responsible for program oversight, was not aware of the DVAAP or its associated requirements; therefore, the manager did not provide program oversight, guidance, or training to the district veterans coordinator. Management must communicate information that enables personnel to perform key roles.⁴ Further, management must provide policies, procedures, techniques, and mechanisms that enforce those directives management needs to follow to achieve Postal Service objectives.

Inadequate oversight, guidance, and training of the district veterans coordinator could impede the [REDACTED] District's ability to effectively recruit, employ, and advance disabled veterans. Effective oversight and coordination among responsible [REDACTED] personnel is critical to ensuring the DVAAP is implemented and managed in accordance with federal requirements. In addition, greater recruitment and outreach participation throughout the entire [REDACTED] District in the future could help potentially reverse the declining number of disabled veterans who are hired.

4 GAO Federal Internal Controls Standards (GAO-14-794G), September, 2014.

Recommendations

We recommend management evaluate transferring veterans coordinator duties to a Human Resources employee who is directly involved with recruiting; establish oversight procedures to ensure the district's DVAAP is implemented in accordance with the national program plan; and train the district Human Resources manager and veterans coordinator on DVAAP policies and procedures.

We recommend the [REDACTED] District manager:

1. Evaluate transferring the veterans coordinator's duties to a Human Resources employee who is directly involved with recruiting.
2. Establish oversight procedures to ensure the district's Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program is implemented in accordance with the national program plan.
3. Provide training to the district Human Resources manager and district veterans coordinator on Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program policies and procedures and their requirements.

Management's Comments

Management agreed with the findings and recommendations in the report.

Management also stated that the DVAAP is properly aligned under the director of Diversity and Talent Acquisition at the headquarters level. A review of the district coordinators revealed that some districts do not have this position aligned with the recruitment and hiring function in the Human Resources Department. It also revealed that some districts had the program assigned to employees who were not in Human Resources. Management plans to bring the issue to the attention of the area Human Resources managers and they will be asked to update their lists to ensure that the person selected for each district is actively engaged with the recruiting and hiring function.

Regarding recommendation 1, management stated they have transferred the veterans coordinator duties to the field recruiter.

Regarding recommendation 2, management stated they will comply with the recommendation and their target implementation date is October 31, 2015.

Regarding recommendation 3, management stated they will comply with the recommendation and their target implementation date is November 30, 2015.

See [Appendix B](#) for management's comments, in their entirety.

Evaluation of Management's Comments

The OIG considers management's comments responsive to the recommendations and corrective actions should resolve the issues identified in the report. We also appreciate management taking the initiative to realign all Postal Service district veterans coordinator positions to employees who are actively engaged with the recruiting and hiring function

The OIG considers all recommendations significant, and therefore requires OIG concurrence before closure. We concur that management's corrective actions sufficiently addressed recommendation 1 and we consider this recommendation closed with the issuance of this report. Consequently, the OIG requests written confirmation when corrective actions are completed for recommendations 2 and 3. These recommendations should not be closed in the Postal Service's follow-up tracking system until the OIG provides written confirmation that the recommendations can be closed.

Appendices

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Appendix A: Additional Information

Background

The Postal Service is one of the nation's largest employers of veterans and disabled veterans and conducts a continuing affirmative action program to recruit, hire, place, and advance disabled veterans. The Postal Service employs 89,319 veterans, which represents 18.3 percent of its total workforce of 489,198.⁵ As part of the DVAAP, each district has a veterans coordinator with ad hoc duties to assist with issues relating to veterans' employment.

All federal agencies are required to submit an annual report to the OPM detailing that year's DVAAP accomplishments and certifying that they have a plan for the new fiscal year. Agency submissions are due no later than December 1. The Postal Service prepares an annual Accomplishment Report and plan certification for veterans and submits it to the OPM. The Postal Service completed and timely submitted its FY 2012 through FY 2014 Accomplishment Reports to OPM. The Postal Service reported on the number of veterans in its workforce, the number of career accessions, and the number of disabled veterans promoted. The reports included planned methods for recruiting, employing, promoting, and developing the careers of veterans. In its FY 2014 Accomplishment Report, the Postal Service reported on its accomplishments in the recruitment and advancement of disabled veterans. The report noted accomplishments such as:

- Posting vacancy announcements on military sites and print and web-based media
- Providing quarterly workforce profile reports on an automated platform
- Posting national vacancy announcements on the Postal Service's intranet and Internet
- Referring disabled veterans seeking upward mobility to appropriate personnel for career counseling

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to assess the [REDACTED] District's compliance with the DVAAP. To accomplish our objective, we:

- Evaluated the Postal Service's DVAAP to determine whether it contains objectives for recruiting, hiring, and advancing disabled veterans.
- Assessed the Postal Service's compliance with federal regulations for the DVAAP, including timeliness in submitting written accomplishment reports and plan certifications to the OPM.
- Obtained and evaluated the Postal Service's implementation of its DVAAP plan.
- Determined how DVAAP data is collected, validated, and reported to the OPM.
- Reviewed required Accomplishment Reports and plan certifications submitted to OPM for FYs 2012 through 2015.
- Interviewed Postal Service Headquarters, area, and district officials responsible for DVAAP reporting.

⁵ Postal Service Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Fiscal Year 2015 Program Plan and Fiscal Year 2014 *Accomplishments Report*.

- Evaluated DVAAP data from the [REDACTED] District for FYs 2012 through 2015.
- Analyzed the [REDACTED] District's DVAAP recordkeeping forms and other supporting documents.
- Reviewed overall DVAAP statistics in the [REDACTED] District.

We conducted this review from April through September 2015, in accordance with the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation. We discussed our observations and conclusions with management on August 12, 2015, and included their comments where appropriate.

We did not assess the reliability of any computer-generated data for the purposes of this report.

Prior Audit Coverage

The OIG did not identify any audit reports related to our objective in the last 3 years. In addition, there were no GAO audit reports published in the last 3 years related to our audit objective.

Appendix B: Management's Comments



August 31, 2015

TO: Lori Lau Dillard
DIRECTOR, AUDIT OPERATIONS

SUBJECT: **Draft Management Advisory Report – Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program in the [REDACTED] District (Report Number HR-MA-15-DRAFT)**

After a complete review of the Draft Management Advisory Report regarding Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program in the [REDACTED] District provided by the Office of Inspector General (OIG), the [REDACTED] District hereby provides notice that we agree with the findings contained in the report.

Recommendation:

OIG recommended management evaluate transferring the veterans coordinator's duties to a human resources employee who is directly involved with recruitment activities and establish oversight procedures to ensure the human resources manager and veterans coordinator perform their duties to include the entire district. In addition, train the district human resources manager and veterans coordinator on DVAAP policies and procedures.

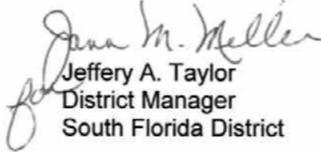
Management Response/Action Plan:

At the Headquarters level the Veterans Program is properly aligned under the Director of Diversity and Talent Acquisition. A review of the District Coordinators revealed that some Districts do not have this position aligned with the Recruitment and Hiring Function in the Human Resources Department. It also revealed that a few Districts had the program assigned to employees who were not in Human Resources. This will be brought to the attention of the Area Human Resources Managers and they will be asked to update their lists to ensure that the person selected for each District is actively engaged with the recruiting and hiring function.

1. Evaluate transferring the veterans coordinator's duties to a Human Resources employee who is directly involved with recruiting.
 - a. This recommendation has been completed. Duties have been transferred to the Field Recruiter position. The [REDACTED] District considers this recommendation closed.

2. Establish oversight procedures to ensure the district's Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program is implemented in accordance with the national program plan. [REDACTED] District will comply with the recommendation.
 - a. Responsible Official: Field Recruiter.
 - b. Target Implementation Date: 10-2015

3. Provide training to the District Human Resources Manager and the District Veterans Coordinator on Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program policies and procedures and their requirements. [REDACTED] District will comply with this recommendation.
 - a. Responsible Official: Manager of Human Resources and Field Recruiter
 - b. Target Implementation Date: 11-2015


Jeffery A. Taylor
District Manager
South Florida District



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1735 North Lynn Street
Arlington, VA 22209-2020
(703) 248-2100