

INTOUCH WITH EEO

*Equal Employment Opportunity
Newsletter vol. 2 issue 1*

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FROM THE DIRECTOR:

It is our hope that by increasing communication with the Garrison workforce, we will increase visibility and awareness of EEO principles in the workplace and provide you with an opportunity to learn about upcoming EEO-related trainings, initiatives, and updates to EEO laws.

The Garrison EEO office is excited about a few initiatives that will be launching within FY23, that include the Special Emphasis Program (or affinity groups), a Barrier Analysis committee, EEO Bi-Annual Award, and New Employee Orientation Briefings (NEO). In the next few months, you will see more communication about each program and ways to join the different committees (SEP and Barrier Analysis).

By establishing and utilizing Special Emphasis Programs (SEP) and engaging with affinity groups, raises employee awareness of the importance of diversity and demonstrates the Garrison's commitment to a model Equal Employment Opportunity workplace (More about SEP within the newsletter).

The goal of barrier analysis committee is to identify the root causes of disparities in equal employment opportunities so the agency can take action to remedy the causes that led to such disparities.

Monique N. Moore



SPECIAL EMPHASIS PROGRAM

In promoting Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility, the Garrison EEO Office will be establishing the EEO Special Emphasis Program (SEP) or Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) (also called Affinity Groups). Special Emphasis Programs are an integral part of the Equal Employment Opportunity and DEIA Program. The primary objective is to take affirmative steps to provide equal opportunity to everyone in all areas of employment and eliminate discriminatory practices and policies. SEPs are comprised of collateral duty federal employees who collaborate with the Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPMs) through various initiatives. The program will address the unique concerns of the specific groups via monthly educational workshops/seminars, “lunch and learns”, and more to move closer to achieving diversity, inclusion, and equality of opportunity in recruitment, hiring, development, training, and advancement.

Goals of the Special Emphasis Programs are to:

- Analyzing workforce data and identifying barriers in the areas of recruitment, hiring, promotions, career development, reasonable accommodation and retention affecting the full representation of all groups (i.e. minorities, women and individuals with disabilities).
- Compiling, developing, and disseminating information and documents for managers, supervisors, and employees to provide knowledge in all facts or issues of accessibility and reasonable accommodation of individuals with disabilities.
- Developing and conducting programs such as training, workshops, job fairs, conferences, and to provide awareness, sensitivity and understanding of the special issues affecting employment of that group.
- Advising the SEPM on matters affecting the employment, retention, and advancement of special emphasis groups. Serving as a communication link between employees and SEPM, keeping employees aware of SEP activities and developmental opportunities through email, memos, broadcast, newsletters, and other appropriate means.
- Performing other duties related to the SEP as identified by the SEPM.

THE HISTORY OF SPECIAL EMPHASIS PROGRAMS

Special Emphasis Programs (SEP) were established in the Federal Government to remove barriers to equal employment opportunity for groups that were traditionally not represented or subjected to discrimination in the workforce. In 1969, Executive Order 11478, Equal Employment Opportunity in the Federal Government, established the Equal Employment Opportunity Program, and implemented the policy of the Federal government to provide equal opportunity in employment to all individuals regardless of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or age. In 2011, Executive Order 13583, Establishing a Coordinated Government-wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in the Federal Workforce, enhanced several Executive Orders, including EO 11478, by establishing that the Federal Government has a special obligation to lead by example in attaining a diverse, qualified workforce. Then in 2021, Executive Order 13985 Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility in the federal workforce to further advance equity within the federal workforce. A commitment to equal opportunity, diversity, and inclusion is critical for the Federal Government as an employer.

UNCONSCIOUS BIASES

Unconscious biases are learned assumptions, beliefs, or attitudes that we may not be aware of. Unconscious biases may exist toward any social group; age, gender, religion, and other characteristics are subject to bias. While these biases are a normal function of the human brain, unfortunately they can reinforce stereotypes. To have an inclusive and diverse workplace it is important to know how these biases may present themselves at work.

Two people may behave the same at work and be treated differently while also having their behaviors perceived differently as well. An example of a gender bias is as follows: a man and woman speaking up for themselves in an office meeting may have a woman deemed as being aggressive and argumentative while a man speaking up for himself may be seen as being assertive. While those acting on an unconscious bias may not be aware they are doing so, the person on the receiving end of an unconscious bias is often aware they are being discriminated against.

While unconscious biases happen without our conscious awareness, they are not permanent, and steps can be taken to limit their impact on your thoughts and behaviors. The first step in combating unconscious bias is promoting self-awareness. Recognizing your biases is the first step because you cannot fix something if you do not admit there is a problem. The next step in this process is to understand the biases are categorization and this is a normal aspect of being human. Understanding this will allow you to approach your biases in a more informed and open way. Finally, having discussions and training sessions and promoting bias literacy can help reduce the impact these biases have in the workplace.

As mentioned previously, unconscious biases can reinforce stereotypes and as a result have a negative impact on the workplace and team dynamic. In a workplace setting biases may also have an impact on hiring, mentoring, and day to day interaction with coworkers. Unconscious biases can lead to unfair outcomes at work therefore, supervisors must ensure their decisions are nonbiased and instead follow structured decision-making protocols.

We may not be able to eliminate unconscious biases completely from our thinking, but we can actively take steps to interrupt the bias when they come to mind. Understanding and addressing biases are a main part in preventing them from having a negative effect in workplace diversity and create a more inclusive one. Becoming aware of your biases will allow you to know when these biases may show up, that way you can take steps to make sure those biases do not have an impact on your decision making or how you interact with your coworkers. It is up to the individual to create an awareness of their bias so they can be sure not to inflict harm.

References:

Team Asana. (2022 May 15). 19 unconscious biases to overcome and help promote inclusivity. Retrieved November 14, 2022, from <https://asana.com/resources/unconscious-bias-examples>.
Lattice Team. (2022, July 29). How to Reduce Unconscious bias in the Workplace. Retrieved November 14, 2022, from <https://lattice.com/library/how-to-reduce-unconscious-bias-at-work>.
Office of Diversity and Outreach UCSF. (2022). Unconscious Bias Training. Retrieved November 14, 2022, from <https://diversit.ucsf.edu/programs-resources/training/unconscious-bias-training>

Di·ver·si·ty (noun):

1. The state of being diverse; variety.
2. The practice or quality of including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders, sexual orientations, etc.

Today, it is not uncommon to hear words such as diversity, equity, inclusion and many more. These have become buzz words in manner areas however it is important to understand their meaning and benefit. Captioned above you see the dictionary versions of the definitions for the term “diversity.” What does the word diversity mean to you? Does it mean choices, or does it mean looking different? While both could be considered true, they are driven by the overarching perspective of the term. The inability to recognize diversity or its benefits leave us lacking in idea generation, innovation, or achieving team cohesion.

Diversity doesn’t just apply to a person’s skin tone or where someone is from. In fact, two people who look very similar can have very different ideas and problem-solving abilities. In the academic world they call this thought diversity which according to many of today’s researchers is something that we are lacking here in the United States. According to a study conducted by Schweiger, Oerberst, & Cress, (2014) some 36% of people spend their time searching for and consuming information that confirms what they already think or believe they know. Researchers call this confirmation bias, meaning you seek to support those opinions or ideas you already have. If everyone follows this pattern, we will be segmented into distinct ideological groups and suffer from what is called groupthink.

I challenge each of you to help prevent confirmation bias and groupthink. You can do this by beginning each day anew with an open mind and seeking out those things that differ from your norm. Sure, it’s comforting to do the same thing you already know because you know what to expect and what outcomes will occur, but you should also be prepared to remain stagnant and only achieve mediocrity. Thomas Jefferson once said, “If you want something you have never had; you must be willing to do something you have never done.”



References:

Schweiger S, Oeberst A, Cress U, (2014). Confirmation Bias in Web-Based Search: A Randomized Online Study on the Effects of Expert Information and Social Tags on Information Search and Evaluation J Med Internet Res 2014;16(3):e94 URL: <https://www.jmir.org/2014/3/e94> DOI: 10.2196/jmir.3044
Jefferson, T., (UNK).

E.O. 14003 and The Clean-Record Agreement

Revision of 5 CFR Parts 315, 432, and 752 (Probation on Initial Appointment to a Competitive Position, Performance-Based Reduction in Grade and Removal Actions and Adverse Actions)

SUMMARY: The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is issuing final regulations governing probation on initial appointment to a competitive position, performance-based reduction in grade and removal actions, and adverse actions. The final rule rescinds certain regulatory changes made effective on November 16, 2020, and implements new statutory requirements for certain adverse actions with an effective 12 December 2022.

The proposed regulations provide agencies the necessary tools and flexibility to address matters consistent with the policies of E.O. 14003.

What Are Clean Record Agreements?

A clean record agreement (CRA) is a contract between an agency and a current or former employee in the federal government. The federal agency agrees to remove the potentially damaging personnel action or performance record from the employee's personnel record during a settlement. The employee agrees to resolve a claim in exchange.

The objective is to limit or eliminate the influence an employee's record could have on their ability to seek other federal employment. A federal employer can include various provisions in the settlement agreement depending on the procedures they use. Some remove the personnel action from the employee file entirely, while others disclose how they will use information in the record when contacted by a prospective employer.

In conclusion, OPM believes that the prohibition of clean-record agreements hampers agencies' ability to resolve informal and formal complaints at an early stage and with minimal costs to the agency. The removal of the prohibition on clean-record agreements will allow agencies discretion to resolve informal and formal complaints and settle administrative challenges in a manner that balances the needs of the agency and fairness to the employee. In doing so, agencies should still adhere to the principles of promoting high standards of integrity and accountability within the Federal workforce.



OPM reminds agencies that supervisors are responsible for ensuring that a disciplinary penalty is fair, reasonable, and appropriate to the facts and circumstances. In doing so, supervisors will address misconduct in a manner that has the greatest potential to avert harm to the efficiency of the service.

Reference and for additional information: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/11/10/2022-24309/probation-on-initial-appointment-to-a-competitive-position-performance-based-reduction-in-grade-and>
<https://thevaughnlawfirm.com/2022/04/26/clean-record-agreements-and-federal-employees/>

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

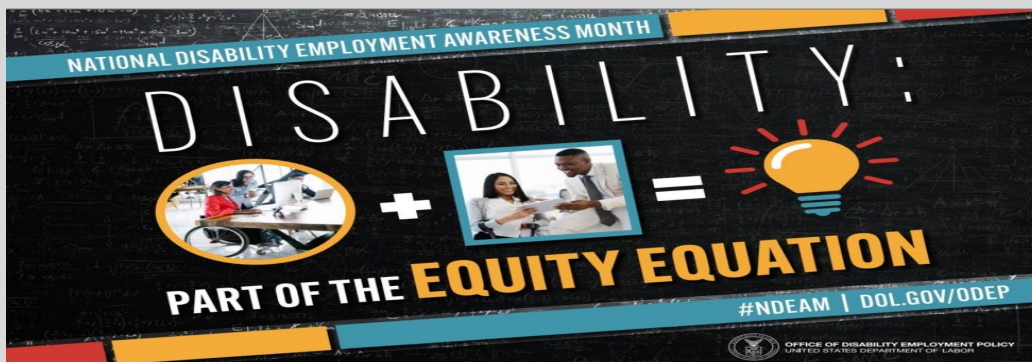
October 2022 marked the 77th anniversary of National Disability Employment Awareness Month; and this year's Theme was "Disability: Part of the Equity Equation." Observed annually in October, NDEAM celebrates the contributions of America's workers with disabilities past and present and showcases supportive, inclusive employment policies and practices.

The history of National Disability Employment Awareness Month traces back to 1945 when Congress declared the first week of October to be "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week." In 1962 Congress removed "Physically" to include people with all types of disabilities. In 1988, the federal legislature expanded the week to a month and changed the name to National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

On 6 October 2022, the APG EEO Office hosted the Disability Awareness event at the Mallette Auditorium and our guest speaker was Mr. Jeffrey Dallos, Mr. Dallos serves as a Program Analyst for the Department of Defense (DoD) Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program (CAP), a centrally funded program which provides free assistive technology and training to wounded, ill and injured Service members and federal employees with disabilities at 69 partnering federal agencies. With over 16 years of federal service, CAP has benefitted greatly from Mr. Dallos' contributions since he joined the program in 2008.

Mr. Dallos currently serves as CAP's subject matter expert on technology for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, as well as individuals with disabilities that affect communication. In this role, he is responsible for identifying appropriate assistive technology and services to allow individuals to perform their job responsibilities. Jeffrey has been the caseworker on over 18,300 individual accommodation requests. These have resulted in the provision of more than 25,000 accommodations for civilian employees with disabilities and to wounded, ill and injured Service members. As an Assessment Specialist, Mr. Dallos has conducted more than 650 comprehensive needs assessments to ensure individuals receive the most appropriate assistive technology based on their needs.

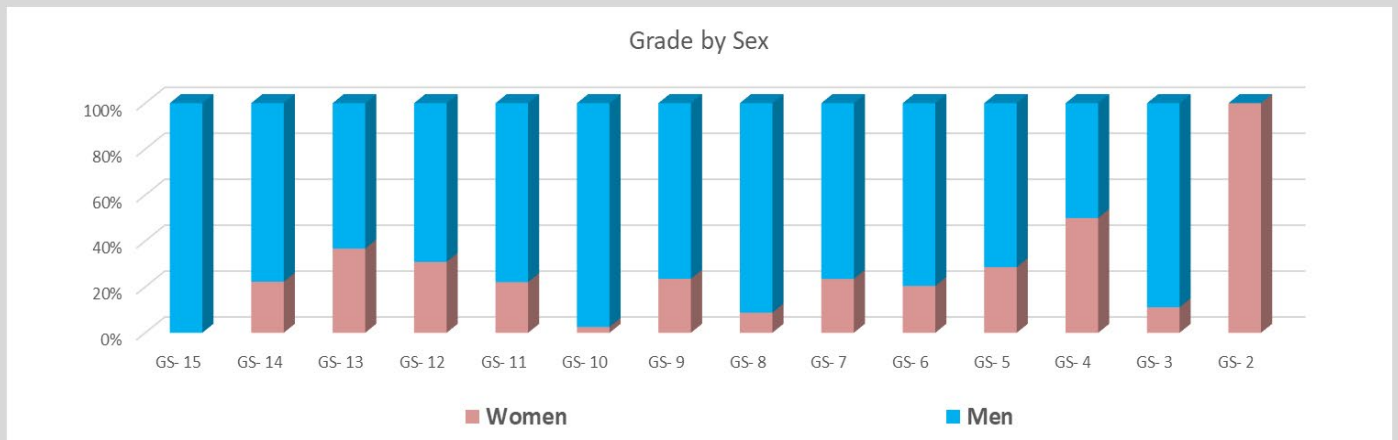
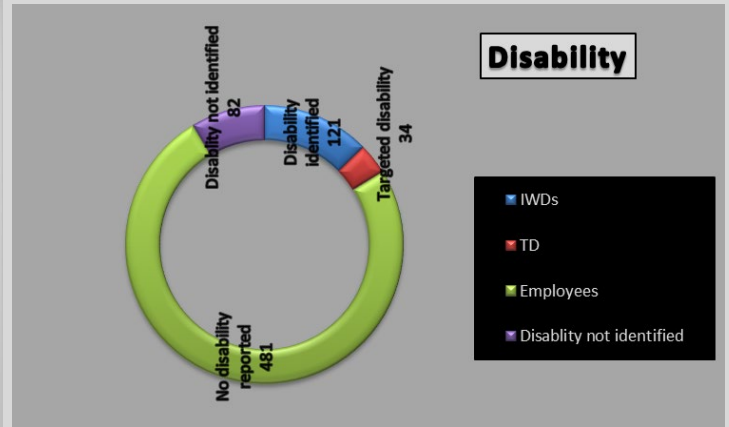
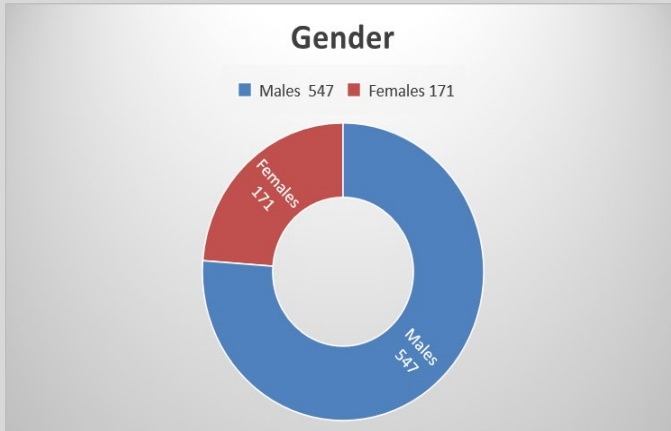
The National Anthem was sung by SFC German Sanchez, and the Invocation was given by Chaplain Douglas Yoder. The Mistress of ceremony was Antoinette Brown, EEO Specialist Fellow, the Host was Jamie Gallentine, EEO Specialist. The interpreters were Pat McKenny-Benjamin and Anessa Hughes. The closing remarks was given by the Garrison Commander, COL John Casiano and there was a total of 135 attendees on-line for the event.



Contact: Disability Program Manager, Lavon Forbes:
Email: Lavon.forbes.civ@army.mil
Phone: 410-306-2432

Snapshot: 2022 APG Garrison Demographics

The graphs below depict the Garrison Workforce as of 30 September 2022 by gender, disability and grade.



Workforce Analysis Summary:

As of 30 September 2022, the data enclosed in this report shows APG's Garrison data. The Garrison has direct command and control of 926 civilian employees (includes NAF personnel). There are 718 appropriated personnel and 208 non-appropriated personnel an increase of 89 personnel from 2021 of that 8 are temporary personnel.

The civilian workforce on APG (Garrison Employee's only) is compared to the National Civilian Labor Force 2014-2018 (NCLF-Harford County). Data showed that overall civilian workforce was comprised of 547; 76.18% male employees, and 171; 23.81% female employees. Compared to the National Civilian Labor Force, males are above by 24.38% while females are below by 24.39%. Females have remained below the NCLF for the past 5 years.

Source: FY22 MD715

Collateral Duty Spotlight:

Collateral Duty EEO Counselors:

Helen Mearns
William Schwartz
George Dorbert
Depree Hugh
James Matthews
Young Lee
Berdens Manace
Steven Presser
Jamia Hocog
Kyle Madden
Dawn Valdivia



Khamara Harris
Trina Taliaferro
Tammy Carcirieri
Ronnetta Church
Joseph Geagea
Emily Myers
Desmund Watson
Shaquon Berry
Valerie McCarty
Megan Beyer
Jerrina McLaughlin

***Bold- Personnel that have counseled EEO complaints since becoming Collateral Duty Counselors.**

Spotlight:

Tammy Carcirieri:

My first experience as an EEO Counselor was challenging, but Ms. Forbes provided valuable support, guidance, and assistance each step of the way.

I chose to become an EEO Counselor because the volunteer position provides me the opportunity to perform the vital civic duty of helping others resolve conflict(s) in healthy, meaningful, respectful ways.

Joseph Geagea:

My experience was a good one, getting to see an actual complaint from start to finish in regard to the portion that the EEO Counselors are involved with. It provided me with a great amount of knowledge and familiarity with the process, and I was assisted at every step at the way while I was learning.

Intouch with EEO will be published quarterly by the EEO Office. The purpose is to share information and increase your knowledge and awareness of EEO and EEO related topics.

The EEO Team

Ms. Monique Moore
Director

monique.n.moore.civ@army.mil

(410) 306-2432

Mr. Jamie Gallentine
Complaints Manager

Jamie.s.gallentine.civ@army.mil

(410) 306-2432

Ms. Lavon Forbes
Disability Program Manager

lavon.forbes.civ@army.mil

(410) 306-2432

Ms. Antoinette Brown
EEO Specialist/Fellow

antoinette.h.brown3.civ@army.mil

(410) 306-2432

Ms. Crystal Gant
EEO Specialist/Pre-Complaint Manager

crystal.y.gant.civ@army.mil

(410) 306-2432

DISCRIMINATION IS PROHIBITED ON THE BASIS OF RACE, COLOR, RELIGION, SEX, (Gender and Pregnancy), NATIONAL ORIGIN, AGE (40+), PHYSICAL/MENTAL DISABILITY, REPRISAL (for Opposition and Participation) AND GENETIC (GINA) INFORMATION

Employees, former employees or applicants for employment and possible contractors at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland who believe they have been discriminated against, may initiate an informal complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Office.

Complaints must be initiated within **45 calendar days** of:

- The date of the incident giving rise to the complaint.
- The effective date of the personnel action giving rise to the complaint.
- The date the aggrieved became aware of or should reasonably become aware of the alleged discriminatory action or practice.

There are two stages to an EEO discrimination complaint: pre-complaint and formal. All complaints must begin at the pre-complaint stage before progressing to the formal stage of the EEO process.

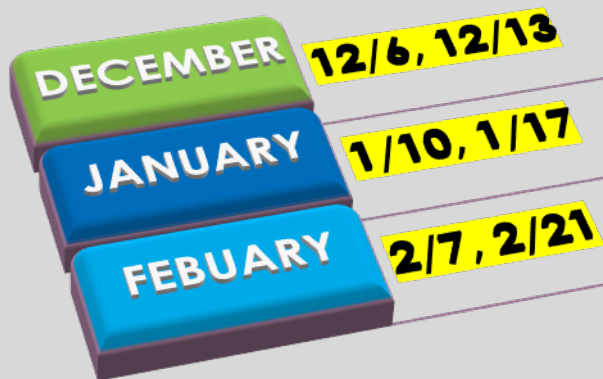
The aggrieved individual may be offered an opportunity to participate in Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). The Army's preferred method of ADR is mediation. A mediator (neutral, objective third party) brings the aggrieved and management together in an attempt to reach a mutually satisfactory solution to the employment matter.

EEO Email: usarmy.apg.id-sustainment.mbx.eeo@army.mil
EEO Website: <https://home.army.mil/apg/index.php/about/Garrison/EEO>

Garrison EEO New Employee Orientation

To attend: Email or Call

Email: usarmy.apg.id-sistainment.mbx.eeo@army.mil or 410-306-2432



**LOCATION: 6488 RODMAN ROAD 1ST FLOOR, STE 111,
CONFERENCE ROOM @ 9AM**