

INTOUCH WITH EEO

Equal Employment Opportunity
Newsletter vol. 3 issue 1

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FROM THE DIRECTOR:

If you have not already heard, the Special Emphasis Program will be kicking off in several weeks, 5 October 2023 to be exact. The kickoff will be with an annual Fun Run/Walk, come out to help bring awareness to APG Garrison and the workforce efforts to build a community of excellence.

The I.D.E.A. Council will help APG Garrison shape the focus by knowing when things are being done correctly, when there is a need to re-adjust or identify new priorities, initiatives, and directions in dealing with workplace concerns, as well as development, and improvements of the workforce. The council will meet monthly to discuss several workplace topics that will review, and or create initiatives that will bring positive culture and raise awareness. If you would like to be a member of the I.D.E.A. Council, please contact me at APGEEO299@army.mil.

Monique N. Moore



Avenues Of Redress

Equal Employment Opportunity Office (EEO)- Contact the servicing EEO Office if you are alleging discrimination with respect to terms, conditions, or privileges of employment due to race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age (40+), disability (physical and /or mental), genetic information and reprisal (for participating in protected EEO activity)

Office of Special Counsel (OSC)- The Office of Special Counsel (OSC) handles disclosures of wrongdoing within the executive branch of the federal government from current federal employees, former federal employees, and applicants for federal employment. (For purposes of this section, former and current employees, and applicants for federal employment are all "employees" or "whistleblowers") The OSC unit responsible for this work is the Disclosure Unit. The Disclosure Unit reviews six types of disclosures: 1) Violation of a law, rule, or regulation; 2) Gross mismanagement; 3) A gross waste of funds; 4) An abuse of authority; 5) A substantial and specific danger to public health or safety; and/or 6) Censorship related to research, analysis, or technical information. Prohibited personnel practices (PPPs) are employment-related activities that are banned in the federal workforce because they violate the merit system through some form of employment discrimination, retaliation, improper hiring practices, or failure to adhere to laws, rules, or regulations that directly concern the merit system principles. The Hatch Act, a federal law passed in 1939, limits certain political activities of federal employees, as well as some state, D.C., and local government employees who work in connection with federally funded programs. The law's purposes are to ensure that federal programs are administered in a nonpartisan fashion, to protect federal employees from political coercion in the workplace, and to ensure that federal employees are advanced based on merit and not based on political affiliation. The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) is a federal law passed in 1994, that protects military service members and veterans from employment discrimination on the basis of their service, and allows them to regain their civilian jobs following a period of uniformed service.

Agency Inspector General (IG) Office- Responsible for possible violations of law, rules or regulations; mismanagement; gross waste of funds; abuse of authority; or danger to the public health and safety.

Human Resources Office (Administrative Grievance)- A grievance procedure for employees whose positions are not included in a bargaining unit. Avenue to address or have reviewed matters of personal concerns or dissatisfaction relating to employment, specifically, most matters that are not subject to review under other appeal procedures.

Union- A grievance procedure for bargaining unit employees. Provides an avenue to address or have reviewed matters of personal concerns or dissatisfaction regarding personnel policies, practices, and or matters affecting working conditions.

Merit System Protection Board (MSPB)- Adjudicates cases for the following prohibited personnel practices: 1) Removals; 2) Suspensions of more than 14 days; 3) Reductions in grade or pay due to reclassification; 4) Furloughs of 30 days or less; 5) Performance based removals or reduction in grade; 6) Denials of within grade increase; 7) Reduction-in-force actions; 8) OPM employment practices; 9) OPM determinations in retirement matters; 10) Denials of restoration or reemployment rights; 11) Terminations of probationary employee under certain circumstances. Includes allegations of discrimination when connected with above personnel actions.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)- Personal concerns, specifically marital, family, financial, emotional, substance abuse, or co-worker and other work-related issue that affect an employee's job performance or conduct in the workplace.

OPM Appeals- Appeals may include Position Classification, Grade or Pay retention benefits, reconsideration of examination ratings, request for reconsideration of retirement, life insurance, or health insurance decision and fair labor standards act decision.

Avenues of Redress | U.S. Department of Commerce

Home | U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ([eeoc.gov](https://www.eeoc.gov))

Neurodivergence

Neurodivergence is a nonmedical term that describes people whose brains develop or work differently for some reason. This means the person has different strengths and struggles from people whose brains develop or work more typically. While some people who are neurodivergent have medical conditions, it also happens to people where a medical condition or diagnosis hasn't been identified. Neurodivergent isn't a medical term. Instead, it's a way to describe people using words other than "normal" and fingerprints, no two brains not even those of identical twins are exactly the same. Because of that, there's no definition of "normal" capabilities for the human brain. Some neurodivergent people struggle because of systems or processes that don't give them a chance to show off their strengths or that create new or more intense challenges for them. Many people who are neurodivergent struggle in social situations, which can make it hard to find work because they struggle during job interviews. However, they can still get the job if the hiring process emphasizes their abilities, such as screening potential hires with a skills test. Once on the job, their attention to detail means they're an outstanding accountant or record-keeper because they can easily process data that others might find more tedious.



Research shows people who know about the idea of being neurodivergent use that knowledge to adapt and help them succeed. Experts' research also shows words and language related to neurodiversity make a difference in how people live. People who are neurodivergent and learn that it means they're different not sick or defective and are more likely to be happier and aim higher in their careers. An example of this is someone who has dyslexia. People with that condition struggle to read because their brain doesn't process written language like the brain of someone without dyslexia. More and more people who are neurodivergent are talking about their experiences. Some examples of famous and successful people who are neurodivergent include: Oscar-winning actor Anthony Hopkins,

Olympic gold medalist Simone Biles, and Climate activist Greta Thunberg to name a few. Experts also believe several accomplished historical figures were neurodivergent based on evidence from their lives. Those include Nobel Prize-winning physicist and chemist Marie Curie, Nobel Prize-winning theoretical physicist Albert Einstein, Artist Vincent Van Gogh, Inventor and engineer Nikola Tesla, and Author F. Scott Fitzgerald.

There are many things' people can do to be supportive of neurodivergent individuals. Some of the most important things you should keep in mind include listening. People who are neurodivergent may feel misunderstood or left out. Be willing to listen to them. Let them know you hear them and respect them and their choices. Communicate in ways that help them. Sometimes, people who are neurodivergent prefer written communication such as instant messaging, texting or emails over a phone call or face-to-face conversation. Give them the time and tools they need to communicate. Avoid value-based labels. Experts recommend against using the terms "high-functioning" and "low-functioning" to describe conditions like autism. They often assume a person's level of function based on how much they behave like someone who's neurotypical. No two neurodivergent people are the same. Don't assume that anyone is incapable or unintelligent. People who are neurodivergent often have conditions or preferences that make them stand out or appear different. Treat everyone with respect. You can "normalize" and provide others with accommodations in a way that honors their human dignity.

References: Armstrong T. The myth of the normal brain: embracing neurodiversity (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25901703/>). AMA J Ethics. 2015;17(4):348-352. Published 2015 Apr 1. Accessed 6/2/2022.

National Conference for Community and Justice | nccj.org. Neurodiversity (<https://www.nccj.org/neurodiversity>).

End of the Year Stress

The last quarter of the year may bring on additional stress for some people. It may signal the end of the fiscal year for some organizations, or prompt other important end of the year obligations we must complete at work. In addition to added responsibilities we have at work; the holiday season may require us to keep track of a greater number of responsibilities than usual, adding to the stress. Unfortunately, the extra end of the year stress can make us less civil than usual and may create more issues for those already having a tough time at work.

Excessive workload, lack of support, and conflicting demands are all common sources of work-related stress, and a stressful environment can contribute to a short temper. When we are stressed, we may not behave in the civil manner we know we should, which can lead to problems in the workplace. We should deal with our stress before it gets out of hand and we create a toxic or harassing workplace for our peers.

The additional stress may have you partaking in behavior you would not normally engage in. You may make a religious joke in honor of the holiday season that may seem funny to you but is offensive to others. Or maybe the stress has you acting temperamental and yelling at others. The inappropriate comments, jokes, and behavior could escalate into harassment and other disruptive behaviors. Harassment includes, but is not limited to, any offensive conduct such as slurs, jokes, or other verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment.

Your actions have the potential to cause conflict in the workplace which can lead to others around you to experience stress. According to National Institutes of Health "incivility and conflict in the workplace can lead to increased stress levels. As stress levels among staff increase, productivity suffers. When staff are stressed, their ability to objectively deal with emotionally charged situations decreases and all of this can fuel existing conflict and lead to even more stress."

Try to offset the additional stress by making sure you manage our time effectively; refresh yourself when the workday is over and prepare for homelife. When you begin to feel overwhelmed during the duty day do not be afraid to ask for help from team members and managers. Be mindful that although you may be experiencing more stress than usual, it does not excuse your behavior. All employees have the right to come to work and experience a toxic free environment.



References: National Stress Awareness Month: Job Stress and Incivility | Office of Human Resources (nih.gov)

EEO Spotlight I.D.E.A. Fun Run/Walk

On October 12, 2023, the EEO Office and Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (I.D.E.A.) The council hosted a Fun Run/Walk. We would like to express our gratitude to the people who came out and supported the event. We had a very successful turnout that included soldiers, civilians, and family members from not only the Garrison but our mission partners as well.

We also want to give a special shoutout to everyone who helped make this occasion happen we couldn't do this without you. Thank you, First Sergeant's BBQ for donating drinks and the Commissary for donating the fruit. Thank you to Health and Wellness, SHARP, Army Substance Abuse Program for all donating swag. Also thank you to the Directorate of Emergency Services (DES) for providing roadblocks and officers to ensure the safety of all participants. We also appreciate FMWR for donating the prizes for 1st and 2nd place walker and runner. Lastly shout out to Amanda Lavis, DEVCOM's Director of Diversity Equity and Inclusion for helping and providing the signs that were posted along the route.

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If you would like to be a member of the I.D.E.A. Council, please contact the EEO office at APGEEO299@army.mil



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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: APGEEO299@army.mil

EEO Website: <https://home.army.mil/apg/index.php/about/Garrison/EEO>

GARRISON EEO NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION

TO ATTEND CONTACT: (410) 306-2432 OR APGEE0299@ARMY.MIL

Inclusion Diversity Equity Accessibility !

Dates:

- December 12, 2023
- January 9, 2024
- February 13, 2024

Location:

6488 Rodman Rd
Suite 111, Conference
Room @ 9am



Please request any accommodation at least 5 days prior