



# EEO Quarterly News You Can Use



## Garrison Values

**Respect & Dignity  
Integrity  
Learning  
Excellence  
Yes to Service**

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### Special points of interest:

**National  
Disability  
Employment  
Awareness  
Month (Oct.)**

**National  
American  
Indian Heritage  
Month (Nov.)**

**Fort Riley is the best place to live, train, deploy from, come home to and retire to.**

## Ft Riley Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Staff

**Officer:** Ms. Kathy Bellinder (239-6698)

**Disability Program Manager:** VACANT (239-3263)

**Complaints Manager:** Ms. Cheryl Greathouse (239-2741)

**EEO Specialist (Fellow):** Ms. Kirstie Fuentes (240-0267)

**NEW Location: Kapaun Chapel, 7086 Normandy Drive**

**EEO WEBSITE:** <http://www.riley.army.mil/Units/GarrisonCommand/EqualEmploymentOpportunity>

## Special Observances this Quarter

### National Disability Employment Month— 1 October-31 October 2023

The observance of National Disability Employment Awareness Month is established by Public Law and Presidential Proclamation. National Disability Employment Awareness Month is observed from 1—31 October of each year. The awareness event is observed so that Americans may reaffirm commitment to ensuring equal opportunity for all citizens and so that they may pay tribute to the accomplishments of men and women with disabilities who contributed, continue to contribute, and wish to contribute to making the nation's economy strong.

### National American Indian Heritage—1—30 November 2023

Native American (American Indian and Alaskan Native) Soldiers have served in the Army with great honor, dedication and distinction, building a legacy of courage, professionalism and selfless service that will inspire generations to come. Historically, American Indians have the highest record of military service per capita when compared to other ethnic groups. Today more than 9,000 Native Americans serve in the Total Force.

Every November the Army celebrates National American Indian Heritage Month. During this month, Army leadership encourages the entire Army family to recognize and express appreciation for the past and present contributions of Native American Soldiers, Veterans, civilians and Family members.

## Notable Historical Figures – Wilma Mankiller



“Cows run away from the storm while the buffalo charges toward it—and gets through it quicker. Whenever I’m confronted with a tough challenge, I do not prolong the torment, I become the buffalo.”

**Wilma Mankiller**

In 1985, Wilma Mankiller became the first female principal chief of the Cherokee Nation. She sought to improve the nation’s healthcare, education system, and government.

In the 1960s, Mankiller was greatly inspired by the attempts by Native Americans to reclaim the island of Alcatraz to become more active in Native American issues. After returning to her native state of Oklahoma, she began working for the government of the Cherokee Indian Nation as a tribal planner and program developer.

Mankiller ran for deputy chief of the Cherokee Nation in 1983 and won, and then in 1985 she was named the tribe’s principal chief. Due to ill health, she decided not to seek re-election in 1995.

For more than two decades, Mankiller led her people through difficult times. After leaving office, she continued her activism on behalf of Native Americans and women. For her leadership and activism, Mankiller received numerous honors, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998.

After learning of Mankiller’s passing in 2010, President Barack Obama issued a statement about legendary Cherokee chief: “As the Cherokee Nation’s first female chief, she transformed the nation-to-nation relationship between the Cherokee Nation and the federal government, and served as an inspiration to women in Indian Country and across America. Her legacy will continue to encourage and motivate all who carry on her work.”

**Learn more at** [Wilma Mankiller - Quotes, Death & Early Life \(biography.com\)](https://www.biography.com/wilma-mankiller)



1. IWD stands for what?

2. True or False?

People with disabilities include people with sensory, physical, and mental conditions.

3. True or False?

Increasing disability awareness for all members of the workforce builds a culture that embraces diversity and inclusivity.

4. The provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 require the establishment of what type of programs?



## Resolving Workplace Conflict

When describing the ideal workplace employees rarely list conflict as something that is desirable. Still, even in the best workplace settings, there is bound to be conflict from time to time. Employees have different ideas and perspectives, so it is natural that not everyone in the workplace will agree on everything all the time. In fact, conflict can be beneficial when it is approached in a professional manner and can lead to both professional and personal growth. In contrast it can be extremely harmful when there are heated exchanges and behaviors that disrupt the workplace. In this state conflict can quickly create a hostile work environment.

### *So, what should employees do when conflict needs to be resolved?*

If the conflict has become disruptive, it may be warranted that a supervisor addresses the matter or that a neutral third-party steps in to help. A supervisor may need to intervene and take action to address the conflict, or if parties just need help talking things out and refining their communication skills, the EEO office can facilitate the discussion as a neutral party.

If the conflict is such that the parties are able to attempt to resolve it on their own, here are a few things they may wish to try:

1. **View the conflict as an opportunity to explore new ideas.** People tend to resist change or things that are different because it can be uncomfortable. Taking time to consider other perspectives with an open mind can help to work out differences.
2. **Focus on what lies ahead rather than dwell on what has happened in the past.** Conflict can arise due to negative past experiences or interactions. It can be difficult to let go of past slights or bad outcomes. Sometimes a willingness to put aside past differences or negative outcomes is necessary to work towards future possibilities.
3. **Focus on shared views.** It may be helpful to seek areas where the parties are in agreement and focus on those first. Once shared views are established and hopefully a level of comfort and trust, then there may be a willingness to compromise on the areas of disagreement.
4. **Separate “core” or important ideas from ones that are less important.** Take time to think about the importance of the issues and the impact they have on the workplace. Is the conflict obstructing the organization’s mission? Is it something that needs to be resolved right away? Or is the issue relatively minor and can be put in the category of “agree to disagree” without any impact to mission or coworkers? Taking a step back to put things in perspective can help to place the situation in its proper perspective.

Keep in mind that every situation is unique and resolution may take time and patience. It is unrealistic to expect that there will never be conflict in the workplace. However, employees and supervisors are expected to work together to maintain a professional environment. Keeping up to date with agency policies such as Anti-Harassment, Anti-Discrimination, and Workplace Conduct will assist everyone in doing their part.

For more information and resources, employees are invited to consult their supervisors or contact the EEO office.

**By Cheryl Greathouse, Complaints Manager**

“Peace is not *absence* of conflict, it is the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means.”

**Ronald Reagan**



## What are Management's Rights & Your Rights as an Employee

You may have always wondered what your actual rights are as an employee and what management has the right to do in the workplace.

### Management Rights by law:

According to 5 United States Code (5 USC), Chapter 71, Section 7106, states the following for management rights by the law: (1) to determine the mission, budget, organization, number of employees, and internal security practices of the agency; and (2) in accordance with applicable laws— (A) to hire, assign, direct, layoff, and retain employees in the agency, or to suspend, remove, reduce in grade or pay, or take other disciplinary action against such employees. (B) to assign work, to make determinations with respect to contracting out, and to determine the personnel by which agency operations shall be conducted; (C) with respect to filling positions, to make selections for appointments from— (i) among properly ranked and certified candidates for promotion; or (ii) any other appropriate source; and (D) to take whatever actions may be necessary to carry out the agency mission during emergencies. (b) Nothing in this section shall preclude any agency and any labor organization from negotiating— (1) at the election of the agency, on the numbers, types, and grades of employees or positions assigned to any organizational subdivision, work project, or tour of duty, or on the technology, methods, and means of performing work; (2) procedures which management officials of the agency will observe in exercising any authority under this section; or (3) appropriate arrangements for employees adversely affected by the exercise of any authority under this section by such management officials.



### Employee rights by law:

Employees do not have any specific rights as they are spelled out under 5 USC like management does. The law covers all aspects of employment and employee entitlements that govern how management can run your organizations legally. So what are employees entitled to? Employees are entitled to a workplace free from discrimination and unlawful harassment. What does that look like? As an employee if you are upset with your supervisor because they did not do something you wanted or the way you wanted it done that is not unlawful harassment or a hostile work environment. Petty slights and comments are not either and are not issues considered by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). What would be considered harassment or a hostile work environment would be a racial slur or a sexual comment. That is what is considered unlawful discrimination by the EEOC. An employee running to the EEO office to get your way in the workplace or to spite your supervisor is not the function of the EEO program. These types of issues do nothing but bog down the EEO system to where it literally takes 4 years for an EEOC judge to hear a complaint. Such action prevents those employees/applicants that have a valid need for the EEO program from receiving timely results. As a federal employee you are not entitled to have your supervisor or your co-workers to be your friend or always do things the way you would like or think they should be done but you are entitled for them to act in a professional manner. You are also entitled to have those same individuals treat you with dignity and respect.

“... An employee's motivation is a direct result of the sum of interactions with his or her manager.”

**Bob Nelson**

**By Kathy Bellinder, EEO Officer**



## Executive Order on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) in the Federal Workforce

As the Nation's largest employer, the Federal Government must be a model for DEIA, where all employees are treated with dignity and respect. The above-referenced EO re-establishes a coordinated Government-wide initiative to promote diversity and inclusion in the Federal workforce while expanding its scope to include equity and accessibility. The EO provides federal agencies (to include the Army) with information, resources, and a methodology to assess the current state of DEIA in their workforce. So how can this be accomplished at Fort Riley?

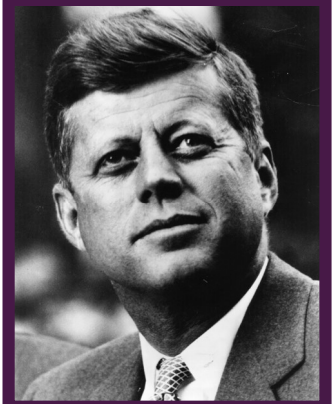
The first step is to review existing policies and improve the collection of workforce demographics. It is vitally important that all employees on Fort Riley either complete the appropriate forms upon being hired or register their race and/or disability in MyBiz. Doing so will greatly improve the data in the Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (DCPDS) from which the EEO Office pulls the demographics used to complete the annual Management Directive 715 report to Army Headquarters which in turn is collected into the sole report the Secretary of the Army signs and sends to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). While encouraging employees to report their racial and disability data in MyBiz is crucial for accurate reporting, Fort Riley does not operate on quotas requiring a specific number of minorities or Individuals with a Disability (IWD) employed on the installation. Nonetheless, for several years, Fort Riley has far exceeded the Army's 12% goal of IWD employed on the installation, with Fort Riley currently boasting a 26% rate which has steadily climbed or remained the same over the past 5 years. Likewise, Fort Riley has been proactive in the number of minorities working on Fort Riley. Not content to rest on our laurels, we continue to move forward with new initiatives to hire and retain IWDs, minorities, and women.

Second, the Special Emphasis Program is working to partner with organizations which serve underrepresented communities to help recruit them for federal positions. Currently, we are reaching out to students at local universities to reach those from underrepresented communities and educate them on job opportunities within the federal government and how to apply for those positions.

Lastly, supervisors should assess hiring practices, evaluate employment opportunities, and try to improve the process for hiring IWDs and for employees to request a reasonable accommodation. Here on Fort Riley, the EEO office holds training on the Reasonable Accommodation process for both employees and supervisors/managers on a regular basis. The EEO office supports both the employee and management during this process to ensure the requests are processed in a timely manner.

While many of the items in the EO were already in place, the EO places more emphasis and focus on these areas of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility for federal employees. As private sector employers are moving away from having a DEIA program and DEIA officers on staff, many of those individuals have left their current organizations looking for other employment, providing opportunities for federal agencies to appeal to those individuals as a prospective employer.

**By Christian Diaz-Centeno, Disability Program Manager**



"If we cannot now end our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity."

**John F. Kennedy**



## Schedule A Hiring Authority

The federal government is committed to being a model employer for people with disabilities. Agencies are required to improve their efforts to recruit, hire, retain and promote individuals with disabilities and targeted disabilities. One way an agency can demonstrate its commitment is to use the streamlined hiring process available through the Schedule A hiring authority for persons with disabilities (eeoc.gov).

### *What is Schedule A?*

The Schedule A Hiring Authority for people with disabilities (Schedule A) is an exception to the traditional hiring process. Schedule A streamlines the hiring process for persons with disabilities and, in some instances, hiring officials may select solely from a list of qualified Schedule A applicants.

You can apply using Schedule A if you are a person with an intellectual disability, a severe physical disability, or a psychiatric disability. In order to be selected you will need to show that you meet the qualifications of the job (with or without reasonable accommodation) (eeoc.gov).

### *How can HR identify and recruit qualified Schedule A eligible candidates?*

Targeted outreach and recruitment to disability organizations and employment service providers can help build a pipeline of qualified Schedule A eligible candidates. HR should work with the individual responsible for the disability and/or diversity recruitment program – such as the Disability Program Manager, Selective Placement Program Coordinator or Special Emphasis Program Coordinator – to develop a Schedule A recruitment strategy.

Below are steps HR Professionals can take to recruit candidates with disabilities:

- Access qualified pre-screened Schedule A eligible candidates from the Workforce Recruitment Program candidate database and the OPM Shared List of People with Disabilities.
- Partner with state Vocational Rehabilitation agencies, Centers for Independent Living (CILs), Department of Veteran Affairs, and Employment Networks. These organizations can disseminate job postings and identify candidates.
- Partner with career centers and disability student services at local colleges and universities to recruit students and recent graduates (eeoc.gov).

### *Obtaining your Schedule A documentation*

To apply for a federal job using Schedule A, you may also be required to submit documentation that proves you have an intellectual disability, severe physical disability, or psychiatric disability. This is often referred to as “Proof of Disability Documentation.” This documentation simply lets the agency know that you are eligible to apply using Schedule A.

You can request this documentation from: your doctor, a licensed medical professional, a licensed rehabilitation professional, or any federal, state, District of Columbia, or US territory agency that issues or provides disability benefits. Most of the time, agencies will accept a letter from one of the above as proof of disability. The proof of disability documentation needs to specify that you are eligible to apply using Schedule A. It does **NOT** need to detail your specific disability, medical history or need for accommodation.

**By Kirstie Fuentes, CP 28 Fellow**

**Ability**  
beyond  
**disability**

*Please be aware  
that some  
agencies may  
request  
additional  
documentation  
as proof of  
disability  
(eeoc.gov).*

## Reasonable Accommodations

Under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, federal agencies are required by law to provide reasonable accommodation to qualified employees and applicants with disabilities so they can enjoy Equal Employment Opportunity. The Federal Government may provide you with a reasonable accommodation based on appropriate requests (unless so doing will result in undue hardship to the agency).

Reasonable accommodations can apply to the duties of the job and/or where and how job tasks are performed. The accommodation should make it easier for the employee to successfully perform the duties of the position. Examples of reasonable accommodations include providing interpreters, readers, or other personal assistance; modifying job duties; restructuring work sites; providing flexible work schedules or work sites (i.e. telework) and providing accessible technology or other workplace adaptive equipment (opm.gov).

*Procedures for providing reasonable accommodation for individuals with disabilities can be found in AR 690-12, Appendix C, or simply talk with your supervisor or the local EEO office.*

1. Employee MUST inform supervisor of need for adjustment/change to job or benefit of employment for reason related to medical condition. Employees and supervisor must engage in the "interactive and flexible discussion" required as part of the RA Interactive Process.
2. Supervisor MUST then contact EEO Disability Program Manager (DPM) within 2 business days of receipt to obtain RA guidance/forms and to obtain RA log number for tracking purposes. Required per AR 690-12, Appendix C.
3. EEO Disability Program Manager (DPM) provides RA guidance/forms to employee and/or supervisor. DPM assigns RA Log Number for tracking purposes.
4. Employee completes "RA Confirmation of Request" form and has his/her medical provider respond in writing to medical verification of medical condition and submit the medical verification to his/her first line supervisor.
5. Supervisor must (without delay) provide the completed RA Forms to the EEO DPM. The DPM will then coordinate as needed with the Reasonable Accommodation Committee to review and provide recommendation to the supervisor in making an accommodation decision.
6. Supervisors will grant, modify or deny the accommodation. If necessary, supplemental documentation may be requested when the information already submitted is insufficient to document the disability and/or the functional limitation.
7. Supervisor issues RA Information Memo to employee granting, modifying or denying the accommodation. Medical Documentation Request letters are issued when supplemental medical documentation is needed in order to make a final accommodation decision.
8. Supervisor implements accommodation for employee and ensures approved accommodation is provided/purchased. Supervisor also submits "Reasonable Accommodation of Information Report" to the EEO DPM for mandatory tracking purposes.

By: Kirstie Fuentes, CP 28 Fellow





## EEO Training Opportunities

Training is one of the many services the Equal Employment Opportunity office offers to organizations. Educating employees and supervisors is a preventive measure to reduce workplace issues and help resolve workplace issues at the lowest possible level. Our trainings are offered virtually or face-to-face. To request a spot in one of the classes below, you just need to send an email letting us know which course and the date. If you want to schedule training for an entire group, you can be scheduled simply by contacting our office at [usarmy.riley.id-readiness.mbx.fort-riley-eeo@army.mil](mailto:usarmy.riley.id-readiness.mbx.fort-riley-eeo@army.mil) or by contacting one of the EEO team members directly. All the trainings below have been updated from FY 23, three (3) are brand new, and most have workbooks to support them.

Date	Time	Training
Weds, 17 Jan	1100-1130	Disability at Work
Tues, 13 Feb	1130-1200	Pregnant Workers Fairness Act
Tues, 5 Mar	1000-1100	EEO Training for EMPLOYEES
Weds, 6 Mar	1100-1200	EEO Training for SUPERVISORS
Tues, 12 Mar	1000-1100	Reasonable Accommodations for EMPLOYEES
Weds, 13 Mar	1100-1200	Reasonable Accommodations for SUPERVISORS
Weds, 10 Apr	1000-1100	Civility in the Workplace
Weds, 17 Apr	1100-1200	Leveraging Diversity in the Workplace
Tues, 14 May	1100-1200	Retaliation Training for SUPERVISORS
Weds, 15 May	1130-1200	Pregnant Workers Fairness Act
Weds, 17 July	1000-1100	Preventing Workplace Harassment
Tues, 6 Aug	1000-1100	Communicating Across Differences
Weds, 14 Aug	1130-1200	Pregnant Workers Fairness Act

A list of the trainings along with a short synopsis of what the topic will cover will be sent out after the newsletter.

Looking for a specific training not listed? Or need to schedule a training for a large group? Our trainings are offered virtually or in-person and can be scheduled simply by contacting our office at [usarmy.riley.id-readiness.mbx.fort-riley-eeo@army.mil](mailto:usarmy.riley.id-readiness.mbx.fort-riley-eeo@army.mil).

By Kathy Bellinder, EEO Officer



### Remember:

If you are leaving your current agency/organization, you are **REQUIRED** to take an exit interview at the EEO Office

The feedback collected from these interviews aid continued progress and improvements to ensure a healthy and productive work environment.

Your feedback is **VALUABLE.**



### Answers to Trivia Questions on Page 2

1. Individuals with Disabilities
2. True
3. True
4. Affirmative Action