



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access (I*DEA) Council Charter

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REVISION HISTORY

Version	Date	Section#	Page#	Revision history or Review (Author)

I. PURPOSE

This Charter establishes the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access (I*DEA) Council and sets forth its purpose, functions, membership, roles and responsibilities as the primary I*DEA oversight body under the VA Operations Board's (VAOB). The I*DEA Council will enable enterprise action and accountability through planning, advising, monitoring and reviewing activities to guarantee alignment with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (SECVA) strategic goals and priorities.

II. AUTHORITY

In accordance with VA Directive 0214¹, Enterprise Governance Structure and Process, the I*DEA Council was created at the direction of SECVA. The I*DEA Council aligns with the intent of Executive Orders (EO) 13985², 13988³, 14035⁴ and 14091⁵ and subsequent EOs, title IX of P.L. 117-168⁶ and the Government-wide Strategic Plan to Advance Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce⁷ as well as aspirational goals that support VA's vision in creating an inclusive and equitable atmosphere for employees, Veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors.

III. OBJECTIVES

The Charter reflects VA's efforts to center I*DEA principles in support of improved outcomes to all Veterans, caregivers and their families and all VA employees. The Council will establish strategies to 1) eliminate disparities and barriers to health care, benefits and services and create opportunities to enhance access, outcomes and experiences for all Veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors, including those underserved; and 2) eliminate disparities and barriers to recruit, hire, develop, promote and retain employees, including those underserved.

The I*DEA Council serves as the enterprise I*DEA oversight body for Veteran and employee-facing I*DEA programs, policies and initiatives. Additionally, it will account for participation in collaborations, briefings and private/public partnership events with Veterans and stakeholders to enable VA to successfully achieve the I*DEA strategic objectives codified in the VA Strategic Plan⁸. The I*DEA Council will closely coordinate and collaborate with other enterprise governance bodies as appropriate

¹ [Directive 0214 - Department of Veterans Affairs Enterprise Governance Structure and Process.](#)

² [Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government \(2021\).](#)

³ [Executive Order on Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation \(2021\).](#)

⁴ [Executive Order on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce \(2021\).](#)

⁵ [Executive Order on Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government \(2023\).](#)

⁶ [Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2022.](#)

⁷ [Government-Wide Strategic Plan To Advance Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, And Accessibility In The Federal Workforce](#)

⁸ [VA Fiscal Years \(FY\) 2022-28 Strategic Plan](#), Strategic Objectives 2.1, 2.2, 2.3,4.1, 4.2 and 4.4.

and necessary. In addition, the I*DEA Council shall engage with the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) and National Cemetery Administration (NCA) senior leaders in the field and/or the appropriate governance bodies within the Administration and Staff Offices as necessary to accomplish I*DEA-related goals and objectives through the Administrations' Central Office entities. The I*DEA Council will align all efforts to the VA and annual I*DEA Strategic Plans.

The I*DEA Council responsibilities include the following:

- Overseeing the implementation of the I*DEA Action Plan;
- Serving as the Agency Equity Team;
- Directing, as appropriate, the evaluation of enterprise-wide I*DEA-related programs, policies and initiatives;
- Prioritizing and incorporating strategies to advance I*DEA into VA programs, policies and initiatives;
- Integrating I*DEA-related strategies required through various external sources, including ensuring development of annual plans and reports;
- Increasing engagement, education and awareness for underserved communities by identifying and applying innovative approaches to improve the quality, frequency and accessibility of interactions;
- Creating economic opportunity in rural America and advancing urban equitable development through programs, policies and initiatives; and
- Engaging appropriate internal and external governance forums as required.

IV. SCOPE

The I*DEA Council's purview shall include all enterprise interagency I*DEA strategies and goals to ensure they are consistent with SECVA strategic goals, objectives and strategies. I*DEA-related work may be identified through various internal and external forums, including Office of the Secretary (OSVA) Centers, Staff Offices and Administrations, legislation, EOs, other governance entities, Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the Domestic Policy Council and various governance bodies. The I*DEA Council will advise SECVA and Deputy Secretary (DEPSECVA) on I*DEA-related issues through the VAOB and VA Executive Board (VAEB), as appropriate (see Appendix B for the I*DEA Council's relationship to VA enterprise governance bodies). The recommendations, initiatives and goals introduced by the I*DEA Council will not impact ongoing mission and work of the Administrations, Program Offices or Centers. Rather, when such potential equity and/or disparity issues arise, these offices will be made aware and develop action plans to address the matters that have been presented from the I*DEA Council.

The I*DEA Council is the main forum for enterprise-wide coordination, collaborative analysis and I*DEA oversight and accountability. The I*DEA Council validates that proposed decision briefs meet evidence-based thresholds, makes decisions within its purview as outlined in the enterprise decisions rights model and advises SECVA and DEPSECVA on I*DEA-related issues and enable cross-

Administration and Staff Office coordination, prior to raising related issues through VAOB and VAEB.

The I*DEA Council voting members are authorized to charter integrated project teams (IPT), workstreams or Sub-Councils (SC) to address I*DEA-related issues not managed within an existing program office. The SCs will focus on specific I*DEA areas that require ongoing attention. The IPTs or workstreams are temporary working groups focused on addressing short-to-intermediate term issues or SECVA priorities. Membership of SCs, workstreams and the IPTs includes subject matter experts and senior officials. Oversight of and reporting on the execution and implementation of the final decisions will be identified during the decision process. The I*DEA Council is responsible for directing the work of the IPTs and SCs. Recommendations to establish an SC or an IPT under the I*DEA Council must be submitted through the Governance Executive Secretary for consideration by the I*DEA Council and final approval from the Co-Chairs. Each proposal to establish an SC, workstream or an IPT under the I*DEA Council will be reported to the VAOB on a recurring basis, as needed.

V. COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Council Member Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
<p>Co-Chairs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides executive leadership and direction for the I*DEA Council. • Specifies procedures and protocol for I*DEA Council meetings. • Delegates duties to a Vice Co-Chair(s), associated members or other parties as required. • Authorizes the establishment of workstreams as necessary to address specific strategic priorities and policy areas. • Elevates decisions to the enterprise governance bodies, as appropriate. • Synchronizes the day-to-day activities of the I*DEA Council. • Each Co-Chair provides one vote for decisions. • Has veto authority.

Role	Responsibilities
Vice Co-Chairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumes responsibilities of the Co-Chair in their absence. • Supports the Co-Chair in the effective leadership of the I*DEA Council to include, but not limited to: liaison, facilitation, coordination and communication to ensure Council members and subject matter experts are actively engaged in the achievement of the I*DEA Council's goals and objectives. • Synchronizes the day-to-day activities and advises Co-Chairs on strategy and direction of the I*DEA Council. • Elevates decisions to the enterprise governance bodies, as appropriate. • Each Vice Co-Chair provides one vote for decisions.
Executive Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calendar meetings, deadlines, action item trackers and other administrative matters. • Prepares agendas. • Prepare and submit materials, as required, to the I*DEA Council. • Review, prepare and distribute materials containing background information to assist with meeting preparation. • Prepare minutes of meetings. • The Office of Human Resources and Administration/ Operations, Security and Preparedness shall create and maintain records.
Voting Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The voting members shall be the decision-making body on decisions related to I*DEA outcomes and prioritization. • The voting members also make decisions in the execution of the I*DEA Council's responsibilities for implementation of the Agency Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access Strategic Plan 2022, the I*DEA Action Plan and other existing or future plans for which the I*DEA Council has overarching responsibilities. Voting members shall focus on decisions related to risk, urgency and scope. • The voting members shall follow the guidelines contained within the Voting and Decision-Making Standard Operating Procedure when seeking input from the I*DEA Council non-voting members and other key stakeholders. All decisions shall be documented in the I*DEA Council Decision Log maintained by the Executive Secretariat.

Role	Responsibilities
<p>Non-Voting Members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A non-voting member shall vote only on procedural matters such as approval of minutes and future meeting dates, etc. • A non-voting member shall abide by all rules and procedures of the I*DEA Council. • A non-voting member shall participate in all I*DEA Council meetings, engage in discussion and provide important information. • A non-voting member reviews all official I*DEA Council minutes to assure their completeness and accuracy. • A non-voting member acts as a liaison between I*DEA Council and their respective program offices. The non-voting member takes the initiative in contacting interested persons whom the member represents to seek out relevant information and views and to relate the progress of the I*DEA initiatives. • A non-voting member represents their respective Administration/Staff Office/Center/Workstream in deliberations and discussions to the I*DEA Council.

VI. COUNCIL STAFFING AND PROCEDURES

A. Council Meetings

The I*DEA Council meets on a regular basis (at least monthly) to strategize on current and emerging issues, review and approve recommendations developed by workstreams or other program offices and give direction for implementation or follow-up analyses.

B. Council Quorum

The I*DEA Council requires a quorum for all VA Council decisional meetings, which consists of at least the Co-Chairs, Vice Co-Chairs as well as a two-thirds majority of the voting members or their designated representatives. Attendance will be taken prior to decisional meetings.

The I*DEA Council shall deem the member “present” for purposes of establishing a quorum if participating virtually.

C. Decision-Making Process

The I*DEA Council shall make decisions as authorized by the VAOB or as outlined in the enterprise governance decision rights.

Not all recommendations require a formal meeting/deliberation. Co-Chairs shall elevate decisions that are not within the authority or scope of the I*DEA Council. For situations of disagreements or decisions requiring the SECVA or DEPSECVA, decisions will be escalated through VA's enterprise governance structure. (See [Appendix B](#))

Nothing in this Charter shall preclude the SECVA or DEPSECVA's involvement or decision in any matter related to or coming before the I*DEA Council.

VII. COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

A. Council Leadership

I*DEA Council leadership will, at a minimum, include the Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration/Operations, Security and Preparedness and on a rotating basis the Under Secretary for Benefits and Under Secretary for Health as Co-Chairs. The rotating Co-Chairs will serve for a 1-year term. While serving as a Co-Chair, that Administration shall only have one vote. The Council leadership will also, at a minimum, include the Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of Resolution Management, Diversity and Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer as Vice Co-Chairs. Co-Chairs will have voting authority and veto power. Vice Co-Chairs will have voting authority.

The Co-Chairs will convene and preside over the I*DEA Council meetings.

B. Voting Members

The I*DEA Council voting members or their designees (with voting rights and responsibilities) must have decision-making authority and be able to speak for their Administration or Office and are charged to ensure that all respective equities have been heard; and all opinions and decisions are transparent and documented. I*DEA Council voting members shall include the following:

- I*DEA Council Co-Chairs;
- I*DEA Council Vice Co-Chairs;
- Deputy Under Secretary from VHA, or Designee;
- Principal Deputy Under Secretary from VBA, or Designee;
- Principal Deputy Under Secretary from NCA, or Designee;
- Director, Center for Women Veterans;
- Director, Center for Minority Veterans;
- Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization; and
- Office of Enterprise Integration.

Non-Voting Members

I*DEA Council members include senior-level representatives or their designees and other subject matter experts who provide insight, context and recommendations to the voting members. I*DEA Council members shall include representatives from the following organizations:

- VHA;
- VBA;
- NCA;
- Office of Human Resources and Administration/Operations, Security and Preparedness;
- Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs;
- Office of General Counsel;
- Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs;
- Office of Resolution Management, Diversity and Inclusion;
- Office of Management;
- Office of Acquisition, Logistics and Construction;
- Environmental Justice Officer;
- Veterans Experience Office;
- Senior Agency Official Designated to coordinate with the Gender Policy Council;
- Senior Agency Official Designated to assist with Public Engagement;
- Office of Information and Technology;
- Senior Advisor for Pacific Strategy;
- Council Workstream Leads, as identified; and
- Council Workstream Executive Sponsors, as identified.

C. Council Reporting

All VA Council decisions and actions must be recorded and published on the VA enterprise governance knowledge management system for VA stakeholder awareness. The Council Co-Chair will designate an individual(s) to take notes and publish minutes for Council meetings. The Council Co-Chairs will ensure timely publication of VA Council actions in coordination with the OEI Governance Executive Secretary.

D. Council Charter Amendment

The I*DEA Council may amend the Charter annually or as appropriate, subject to the Deputy Secretary's approval.

VIII. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Charter and other supporting documents will become effective upon signature. It shall be reviewed annually to ensure its relevance and utility. It shall remain in effect until modified or rescinded by the VAOB.

IX. SIGNATURE



Guy T. Kiyokawa
Acting Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs

22 JUNE 2023

APPENDIX A: STANDARDIZED TERMINOLOGY

Resources below provide additional context through reference documentation, acronyms and definitions of terms used throughout the charter.

References

- Executive Order 13985 on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government
- Executive Order 13988 on Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation
- Executive Order 14020 on Establishment of the White House Gender Policy Council
- Executive Order 14031 on Advancing Equity, Justice and Opportunity for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders
- Executive Order 14035 on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) in the Federal Workplace
- Executive Order 14041 on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence and Economic Opportunity Through Historically Black Colleges and Universities
- Executive order 14045 on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence and Economic Opportunity for Hispanics
- Executive Order 14049 on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence and Economic Opportunity for Native Americans and Strengthening Tribal Colleges and Universities
- Executive Order 14050 on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence and Economic Opportunity for Black Americans
- Executive order 14058 on Transforming Federal Customer Experience and Service Delivery to Rebuild Trust in Government
- Executive Order 14075 on Advancing Equality for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Individuals
- Executive Order 14091 on Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government
- Presidential Memorandum on Condemning and Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Intolerance Against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the United States

Acronyms

Name	Acronym
Evidence-Based Policy Council	EBPC
Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs	OCLA
Office of Enterprise Integration	OEI
Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access	I*DEA
Subject Matter Experts	SMEs
Department of Veterans Affairs	VA
VA Executive Board	VAEB
VA Operations Board	VAOB

Definitions

Term	Definition	Reference
Enterprise	An organization (or cross organizational entity) supporting a defined business scope and mission that includes interdependent resources (people, organizations and technologies) that must coordinate their functions and share information in support of a common mission (or set of related missions).	Chief Information Officer Council and Treasury Enterprise Architecture Framework
Enterprise Governance	The set of responsibilities and practices exercised by OSVA and VA Executive Leadership to provide strategic direction, ensure objectives are achieved, determine risks are managed appropriately and verify VA's resources are allocated and used responsibly.	VA Defined
Framework	A set of integrating structural elements around or over which something is built.	VA Office of Information and Technology Glossary
Governance	A group of policies, decision-making procedures and management processes that work together to enable the effective planning and oversight of activities and resources.	Common Approach for Federal Enterprise Architecture
Methodology	A documented approach for performing activities in a coherent, consistent, accountable and repeatable manner.	Treasury Enterprise Architecture Framework
Mission	A written declaration of an organization's core purpose and focus that normally remains unchanged over time. Note: Properly crafted mission statements (1) serve as filters to separate what is important from what is not, (2) clearly	Enterprise Business Motivation Model

Term	Definition	Reference
	state the common threads that bind the business models and (3) communicate a sense of intended direction to the entire organization.	
SECVA Priority	A Secretary-designated effort that results in a measurable impact to advance one or more of the Secretary's four fundamental principles; and which receives the leadership, attention and resources necessary to achieve that impact.	VA Defined
Values	Articulates the beliefs that undergird the organization's culture or framework for decision making.	VA Defined
Vision	Expresses what the organization wants to become and how it wants the world to be in the future.	Office of Management and Budget Circular A-11

APPENDIX B: VA ENTERPRISE GOVERNANCE BODIES

Reference provides a visual representation of the VA Enterprise Governance Bodies in relationship to the I*DEA Council.

(As of May 2023)

