



**Hispanic Council on Federal Employment
Twenty-Fifth Public Meeting
December 10, 2015**

On December 10, 2015, the Hispanic Council on Federal Employment (HCFE) held its twenty-fifth public meeting at the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) in Washington, D.C. Participants included:

Name	Title and Organization
Tinisha Agramonte (via teleconference)	Director, Office of Civil Rights, Department of Commerce (Commerce)
Michelle Arias	Deputy Office Director of Recruitment, Examination, and Employment, Department of State
Josue Barrera	Hispanic Employees Council of Foreign Affairs Agencies (HECFAA)
Carlos Becerra	Director of Federal Relations, Florida International University (FIU)
Beth F. Cobert	Acting OPM Director and Co-Chair
Georgia Coffey	Deputy Assistant Secretary for Diversity and Inclusion, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
Andrea Dhamer (alternate for Tinisha Agramonte)	Department of Commerce
David Dominguez	National President, National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees (NHCFAE)
Iliana Estevez	Federal Programs Director, Hispanic Scholarship Fund Institute (HSF)
Roberto Falkenstein (alternate for Veronica Vasquez)	Region III Director, National Image, Inc. (Image)
JuanCarlos Hunt	Director, Office of Civil Rights and Diversity, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
Colonel Clarence "CJ" Johnson	Director, Office of Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity OUSD/Personnel & Readiness, Department of Defense (DOD)
Frank Lopez	Association of Latino Professionals For America (ALPFA)

Name	Title and Organization
Jacqueline Padron (alternate for Zina Sutch)	Diversity and Inclusion Program Manager, Diversity, Recruitment, and Work/Life Division, Office of Human Resources Management, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Nimesh Patel	Executive Director, Diversity & Inclusion, Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer
Hector Sanchez	Chair, National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA); Executive Director, Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA); and Co-Chair
Geraldine Zilleruelo (alternate for Jimmy Ortiz via teleconference)	National Society of Hispanic MBAs (NSHMBA)

The following OPM employees participated in the meeting: Beth F. Cobert, Acting OPM Director; Bridget Dongarra, Manager, Product Development Section, USASTAFFING, Human Resource Solutions; Kim Holden, Deputy Associate Director, Recruitment and Hiring, Employee Services (ES); Bruce Stewart, Acting Director, Office of Diversity and Inclusion; Veronica Villalobos, Principal Deputy Associate Director, ES and Executive Director, HCFE; Sharon M. Wong, Deputy Director, Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Staff from the OPM Office of Communications also attended the meeting. Roland Umipeg, Branch Chief, Department of Defense and Roberto Salazar, Library of Congress also participated in the meeting. About three members of the public attended the meeting.

Welcome, Introductions, and Opening Remarks (start time: 1:44 PM)

Beth F. Cobert, Acting OPM Director and Co-Chair

Hector Sanchez, Chair, National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA); Executive Director, Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA); and Co-Chair

- Acting Director Cobert said, that at the last meeting OPM shared OPM Hispanic report data. There is progress, but there is more work to do and more opportunity to bring in, retain, and fully use talent. Moving into 2016, OPM would like to hear about the focus for the next year, as well as keep things moving forward, and work on elements to add to help agencies with inclusive diversity. The Asian American Government Executives Network (AAGEN) Senior Executive Service (SES) development program has been successful. The AAGEN program had four groups and 85 people, 24 of whom received SES appointments. OPM and outside organizations are considering that model and the possibility of replicating that for the Latino, and disability community. OPM is partnering with NHLA in hopes to have a draft after the holidays about a model.
- Ms. Kim Holden, Deputy Associate Director of Employee Services, Recruitment and Hiring Office, is leading an effort between the Office of Management and Budget, OPM, Presidential Personnel Office, and other agencies about hiring excellence. That is part of the work on the President’s Management Agenda’s goal on people and culture. It is important to ensure the Federal Government gets a diverse talent pipeline; the Hiring Excellence

Campaign will work with human resources managers and hiring managers across the country to train on hiring tools and resources.

Discussion on Council Goals

Veronica Villalobos, Principal Deputy Associate Director for Employee Services, OPM

- Ms. Villalobos said, in 2015 the council wanted to focus on overall representation of Latinos in the Federal Government, which has gone up by .1 each year. OPM and the council also want to increase Latino representation in the SES which has shown promise with increase. Ms. Villalobos raised the question about whether the council wants to keep focusing on these issues or look at programmatic aspects and focus on outreach or marketing. At the last meeting, OPM found a consensus between agencies that have shown strides in recruitment of Hispanics and the recruitment strategies they have used. These strategies include: working closely with employee resource groups and Hispanic employment program managers (HEPMs), conducting targeted recruitment in specific parts of the country, working with professional organizations, and working with Hispanic colleagues and universities for talent in certain occupational categories. The four agencies that were very successful used these strategies with a strong cadence. Ms. Villalobos raised the question about what the HCFE would you like to do in 2016. It could work on representation or on government-wide scaling of agency success by geographic regions. In previous years the council focused on getting HEPMs plugged in with agencies, and most recently the council has worked a lot on applicant flow data.
- DOD said, Ms. Villalobos mentioned marketing. DOD asked about branding of federal employment within the target areas. Data suggested that one fourth of the nation's undergraduates were aware of civil service. DOD also noted that Ms. Villalobos mentioned targeted recruiting. DOD and Roland Umipeg went to San Antonio for a diversity outreach event, to meet with high school and college students. 15 schools were invited and hundreds of students attended. Human resources created a map of jobs that were available to apply to in San Antonio, included in the document was a job description, salary, and location. These opportunities are good in partnering with minority colleges, universities, and professional organizations.
- Mr. Umipeg said that they have a good partnership with the University of Texas in San Antonio, and they've been able to piggyback on career fairs and had booths. In September, they will have 24 recruiting booths at an event. A few years ago, OPM sponsored federal career fairs, e.g., at the University of New Mexico targeting certain geographic locations and demographics, he raised the question on whether they can discuss a federal-wide outreach to the underrepresented community.
- Ms. Villalobos said, something difficult about fairs was that they did not just want people to hear them say to go apply but rather we must be more strategic. She raised the question about how they can offer jobs on the spot, by maybe do postings beforehand and do interviews at fairs.
- FIU said, there are many examples where agencies are spot on about bringing innovative approaches. USDA went to Miami and was hosted at FIU with 40-60 live jobs. They spent the day interviewing, and 12-15 students got hired on the spot. A strategic approach can be to look at projections by agency needs and geographic areas. The State Department Diplomats

in Residence is innovative and sustainable. FIU raised the question on how the council will impact long-term improvement, when looking at agency demographics.

- The Image representative and Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) employee, said some agencies do not have the money for recruitment. He said that if one wants to work on all agencies, big and small, it would help to have a central point of OPM conducting regional recruitment fairs where each agency picks up booth(s) and recruits based on their current needs. DOD recruits a lot and perhaps agencies can partner, such as HUD and the Department of Education, which have under representation.
- VA said that harnessing the energy of working with Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs), can create good models, including the launch of student outreach with a few HSIs, limited or larger, depending on resources. VA has the Student Outreach and Retention Program (SOAR) launched with Valencia College in Orlando, which has conducted targeted outreach at Valencia. OPM did something similar with Cal State Fullerton. VA has a working model, that can be replicated, and they are looking to do the same with FIU. VA said perhaps OPM and VA could provide all of their strategies and there could be a federal-wide SOAR initiative. On the other end of the spectrum, there is the leadership component; AAGEN has been successful in development. Ms. Villalobos said that NHLA wants to do a year-long effort, which they are currently in the document signing/preparation stage. Ms. Wong said that OPM is going to provide a draft, which is very much based on the AAGEN model, to NHLA after the holidays. VA said that as soon as it's ready, VA will offer help. VA would like to sign a partnership agreement to funnel those candidates into, e.g., the VA SES Candidate Development Program (CDP). VA can share leadership development programs with this group.
- HSF said it works with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the National Nuclear Security Administration to support recruitment and outreach. HSF worked with FIU and NASA, which they have found it to be very successful in building the pipeline for NASA. They have found a strong need from students to understand what the job descriptions mean and what the requirements are. HSF teaches and trains students about how to complete the application, which is the gateway to the opportunity. HSF conducts NASA awareness days with information about how to apply for NASA opportunities. HSF finds that while the system is accessible online, there are many barriers to students' progress, and helping students understand the process helps them overcome these barriers. HSF visits about 60 schools throughout the year, it is important to find innovative ways to reach that audience and demographic. Through the grants, HSF hosted online career fairs, which are cost effective in reaching students from different academic levels and giving them access to department representatives. Those strategies have helped HSF reach a high number of students, specifically in science, technology, engineering, and math.
- DHS said one thing they have done over last few years is sending out D.C. recruiters into the field as 85 percent of the federal workforce is in the field. DHS sends local people to recruiting venues, which cuts down on the cost and have representation of people doing actual jobs talk to students. To make it more effective, DHS designed a web-based recruiter training. Over 400 DHS employees throughout the country have gone through this training, after the training, they can recruit at, e.g., the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Customs and Border Patrol, or other offices. DHS said that the DHS SES CDP has been outstanding; they have closed another round of selections. They are looking at applicant flow data and Hispanics comprised 14 percent of the applicant pool and were close to that in final

selections. DHS raised the question about whether it makes sense to compile best practices for smaller and larger agencies. Ms. Villalobos said OPM would do that and make it searchable, OPM will make a list of major themes and share.

- NSHMBA has a conference every year, which attracts Hispanic professionals from across the nation, it offers professional development opportunities and a career fair. A few agencies came with recruiters with job openings. The conference targets mid-level people and undergraduates, and we help with creating a pipeline.
- Acting Director Cobert said the council has talked a lot about hiring; it is a big deal, including campus hiring. She asked if there were other ideas.
- State thinks that soon there will be a move away of the SES in regards to the huge and draconian way of applying for the SES; it can be a barrier having to submit a 15 page package. It would be good once changes are implemented to reeducate applicants and organizations, which will help with recruitment at the SES level. On any day, the number of jobs open to all U.S. citizens is small, because agencies post them internally. She suggested looking at the number of outside postings versus internal in 2016.
- NHCFAE said the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is hiring air traffic controllers and others for 8,000 positions in the next four years. FAA coordinated with NHCFAE and was able to hire 1,700 air traffic controllers, with 18 percent were Hispanic hires. Retention continues to be a problem, although minorities are being hired at high rates, they are leaving at much higher rates. He asked for an evaluation through civil rights and technical reviews on barrier analysis. He went to the union and asked for their feedback from employees in the field, he asked civil rights to create the environment check survey. Three managers from different parts of the country evaluated the program; they found there was issues with the environment not making minorities feel welcome. NHCFAE hosts a conference with about 200 federal employees; OPM could have a booth for GS-4 through SES job opportunities. NHCFAE has not heard of OPM reaching out to unions to inform them about what OPM tries to do in the hiring process. NHCFAE said that would help human resources to communicate. Ms. Villalobos said when they first started the office, they met with unions. They have not been back, that is a good point.
- ALPFA suggested seeing if ALPFA can align with knowing earlier and more concretely what opportunities exist. ALPFA asked OPM to have centralized, coordinated regional career fairs; ALPFA conducts fairs in five regions every year. They could align those to where the opportunities are and with agencies that are active, having more information sharing could help. The geographic dispersion is important; it would help to have projections as early as possible about what hiring opportunities exist and what agencies are having major hiring opportunities.
- Acting Director Cobert said that doing what they can around projections is great, there is a bit that is imprecise, as hiring is done by agencies, there is a need for that input from them. An agency knows roughly what they have hired in the past, but with budget uncertainty projections may be difficult to determine. They have a lot more data that is accessible about where jobs are, and OPM built data visualization tools, e.g., there is a map on USAJOBS that is available to individuals and institutions, they cannot have precise numbers, but the magnitude can be determined, which can help them coordinate on that front. ALPFA said that as imprecise as it is, it is better than what people in the community can do. Otherwise, they are just relying on agencies that reach out to them directly. ALPFA had 3,700 people in

the convention in New York City, half were undergraduates. Acting Director Cobert said that she is a big believer that some data is better than no data, even if it is imprecise.

- FIU said that the projection issue is very important. It came up in their initial conversations with the VA. From a research university perspective, many agencies provide research dollars for instance, The Department of Energy (DOE) funds the FIU applied research center with four to five million dollars. DOE built in certain stipends where students in Miami are getting research experience, in the summer they are dispersed through the DOE fellows program, 100 percent of those students are now working in the energy sector. That allows the community to better tailor strategies. Ms. Villalobos said that even 15 years ago, agencies with research grants with schools were doing much better in terms of Hispanic representation.
- Commerce said moving forward, hiring authorities will be a key component to consider, at the last meeting, the agencies that presented used direct hiring authority. Commerce is analyzing all hires by hiring authority so they can determine if they leveraged the Pathways Program (Pathways), Schedule A, and Veterans authorities to its full potential and to identify where the most Hispanics are recruited from. If they do not use the delegated examining authorities units to its highest potential, this may be a solution to hiring needs. Commerce raised the question whether the Federal Government is recycling Hispanic federal employees. Commerce suggested that the council analyze how federal agencies bring in new federal employees. Ms. Villalobos said OPM has data, SSA did well last year and did not use direct hire authority and both SSA and Commerce look very similar in hiring numbers. When agencies really focus, us strategic hiring and recruitment, they get results. Acting Director Cobert said OPM sees that what is actually allowable in specific hiring authorities and the perceived common wisdom are not the same. She said that Ms. Holden would discuss myth-busting. One key misperception is the ability to be more targeted in reaching out to people; agencies can do that in a way consistent with merit system principles and Title 5. Some people think they can just post on USAJOBS as opposed to working with universities; there is a perception that using these networks is against the rules and that is not the case. The Hiring Excellence Campaign explains that agencies can go out into the field and recruit great people, but agencies must be fair and balanced when they evaluate potential employees.
- Commerce asked, regarding data, whether agencies are hiring people from Hispanic-serving institutions through Pathways or another authority. Ms. Villalobos said OPM will look into that. Ms. Villalobos said they discussed how to appeal to students, e.g., have a branding campaign or leverage affinity groups and their networks, conferences, hiring fairs, considering virtual fairs and leveraging unions. Commerce mentioned that considering the SES and examining how long executive core qualifications currently are could be a barrier. Ms. Villalobos raised questions about how OPM can best engage with the HCFE throughout the year, best use the council's network, and better work cohesively as a council.
- State Department raised a question about whether it would be possible to have a subcommittee where people share recruitment strategies. They are at the same recruitment fairs, and collaborating at the fairs to multiply resources amongst themselves. She also raised a question about how they leverage all of their resources to better recruit for the Federal Government, not just individual organizations.
- USDA said that the HCFE had a 12 month action plan, which included a communication plan and an accountability plan. There were committees that developed action plans for a lot of the topics currently being discussed. USDA asked how they can resume the committees again

and see what is relevant and what is not. Ms. Villalobos said that looking back at those plans, people were active in planning, but when it came to execution, it was just OPM trying to execute, they had ideas but did not get beyond the vision of them. Ms. Villalobos would love the HCFE to pick up those old plans and engage with the group and make it sustainable.

- Mr. Hector Sanchez said he wanted to make sure to discuss the new numbers on employment, which should help them reflect on what they are doing as a council. He raised the question on next steps for the council. He referenced going from 8.3 to 8.4 percent and the Hispanic population growth, the gap will increase as the population increases. He spoke about a presidential executive order and the fact that NHLA will mobilize around that issue. They need to converse as a council about what their goals are for 2016. If the data does not show progress, closing the gap in a positive direction should be a priority. Mr. Sanchez raised a question about what is missing in these conversations and actions they need to propose. NHLA will move forward on a public campaign on a presidential executive order.
- VA said that while they are going in the right direction, the gap is increasing. VA raised the question about whether the HCFE or OPM have done a true barrier analysis related to Hispanics, drilling down into recruitment and the selection process to find out exactly where the barrier is. Applicant flow data in the VA has yielded a different answer than in other agencies. VA is getting three times the Hispanic applicants in recruitments than in the civilian labor force, their problem is not with outreach, and the problem is with why Hispanics are not being selected. VA asked whether they have conducted a real barrier analysis using applicant flow data, if not, VA suggested creating a subcommittee to analyze. Ms. Villalobos said that needs to happen, although some things get hidden at the aggregate level. This is work that has to happen at the department and agency level. VA said maybe the council can mandate that every agency do this and report out. Ms. Villalobos said agencies do report in the MD-715, but it may not be transparent. Mr. Sanchez said that, this is an important proposal. If they want to look at barriers, they could make a council motion to move forward on this.
- DOD has 27 components and they look at all MD-715 reports. They have the RAND Corporation conducting research. DOD will share that with the council.
- ALPFA commended Mr. Sanchez and Ms. Coffey for suggesting doing a more strategic analysis. The Federal government is regressing in terms of numbers and the population. Mr. Sanchez and Ms. Coffey offered a motion to set up a committee to review a barrier analysis study.
- USAID agreed with VA. USAID thought there was an issue with recruiting and outreach, but they found that they recruited a lot of African American people, but not Hispanics. USAID raised a question about what they were doing well with one group and not others. They could find out what USAID does well and what it is doing poorly. USAID does not have the same resources as other larger agencies. Agencies would like to provide what they are doing that is successful and that would be helpful. They need to think about radical solutions.
- Commerce concurred. Look at analysis of hiring authorities used and who is being recruited and hired. Agencies are required to do barrier analysis but deep analysis does not occur. Some agencies contract that out the analysis, it would help to have a subcommittee that shares results of their barrier analysis to discuss systemic, shared issues and possible solutions.
- NHCFAE hired 7,000 air traffic controllers. As an ERG, they brought suggestions to the agency and reached out to Congress. There is an Executive Order signed by President Obama

about Hispanic employment. They asked Congress to make it part of the FAA budget when they did barrier analysis for 42,000 air traffic controllers, which cost 5,000 dollars. The NHCFAE said the MD-715 talks about barrier analysis, but that is checking boxes and not deep analysis. Looking at the history of the agency many Hispanic employees felt that little support was provided for them. You must have confidence in the system and have employees not feel as though they will be reprimanded for giving insight. The NHCFAE representative said that he has worked for six years to get diversity and inclusion language in executives' performance appraisals. It went through legal, but FAA rejected it for a while. Until someone is held accountable for what an executive does, the needle will not move.

- NSHMBA raised the question of what the target percentage is in terms of growth in Hispanics in the Federal Government. Ms. Villalobos said legally, they cannot set targets. They can look at what the civilian labor force looks like and take into account citizenship and figure out what they would expect it should be. It should be in double digits and at least ten percent in terms of the census. In looking at the Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program reports, they look back at the 2010 census number. Mr. Sanchez raised the question about what the recommendations are for growth. The council should have a vision and goal in mind. Hispanics are the most underrepresented group in the cabinet.
- NHCFAE raised the question about what happens if they create the number and do not reach it. Mr. Sanchez said they need to have realistic strategies and goals. He said that .1 percent is a failure. ALPFA said that FAA achieved 18 percent new hires, yet sees a drain, which is something happening across agencies. Agencies are recycling and not bringing people in. Having specific numbers gives them something to measure and an opportunity to focus advocacy. They should get experts to guide them and give them some lay of the land as to where they go. VA appreciated that Mr. Sanchez brought up this issue. They would never get away with establishing a target goal. They need a benchmark. The benchmark is in the neighborhood of 10 percent. The civilian labor force with Puerto Rico is there. They can say that is the benchmark that they should reasonably expect to reach. VA said that when they talk about things that are not legally defensible, they hurt themselves. VA proposed that they have a subcommittee that focuses on a comprehensive barrier analysis of Hispanics in the Federal Government. Maybe it should not be at the macro level and the proposal should be that they require every agency to do an analysis and report out. Few agencies do an accurate barrier analysis for the MD-715. Before they attack the problem, they must know where the problem is. They know at VA, but that is just at the VA. Mr. Sanchez said there was a motion and they did not follow process.
- ALPFA raised a motion to establish a workgroup or committee to explore strategies and to have a report back with a specific actionable plan around these kinds of efforts. Image seconded the motion.
- Acting Director Cobert said she understood that the motion is to establish a working group/subcommittee to come back with a proposal to do a comprehensive barrier analysis to help them understand where they are and what their expectations are in terms of the benchmark.
- NHCFAE said that the VA language seemed to be a bit stronger.
- Acting Director Cobert said that having a workgroup is something they can do. There is a question about what their authorities are with respect to telling agencies what to do. She suggested creating the workgroup and figuring out what is doable within constraints.

- VA said that the end result of this subcommittee is that something has to happen. Perhaps at the end, they get bolder. Acting Director Cobert suggested getting the analysis.
- Mr. Villalobos reiterated that the motion was for a subcommittee to be created to prepare a plan to do comprehensive action on applicant flow data in terms of Hispanics.
- The motion carried.
- Acting Director Cobert said that anyone who would like to volunteer to be on the group could talk to Ms. Villalobos. They may later voluntell people.

Updates from OPM

Hiring Excellence Campaign

Kim Holden, Deputy Associate Director, Recruitment and Hiring, ES

- OPM is starting a new campaign in January to promote hiring excellence. The campaign is a follow-up to what OPM did in 2010 to ensure agencies have tools to hire the right talent with highly skilled human resources staff and engaged hiring managers. They have worked with agencies and updated the tools. OPM has support from Deputy Secretaries on down about the plan. The campaign will focus on more collaboration between human resources and hiring managers, using the full range of assessment tools, understanding hiring authorities, using data to inform recruitment, and outcomes to ensure they have diversity.
- Acting Director Cobert said a core focus is around Pathways. That relates to their discussion about minority-serving institutions. They need to copy and replicate.

Applicant Flow Data

Bridget Dongarra, Manager, Product Development Section, USA Staffing, Human Resource Solutions

- Ms. Dongarra discussed best practices and how to get more impact from a tool.
- They provide applicant flow data to agencies that use USA Staffing. 75 percent are now working with their applicant flow data. That is a big increase from a couple years ago. Ms. Dongarra was very interested in the discussion about barrier analysis. For the first time, agencies are doing proper barrier analysis. Last Wednesday, nine large and small agencies (including the Securities and Exchange Commission, Department of the Navy, and others) gave samples of their data analysis. They can zero in on their individual barriers. They have about 70 agencies in their work group of data analysis. They are going to have analysts demonstrate techniques to other agencies. They are beyond getting applicant flow data and are now providing support across agencies so they can get knowledge.
- Acting Director Cobert said the work group will reach out to them. Ms. Dongarra's group is working on making this data more usable to managers. The availability of the data fits well with this. They now have more data accessible in an easier way.
- ALPFA asked how external entities work with Ms. Dongarra to have her look at data they think is important. Ms. Villalobos said if they engage in the subcommittee, they will work with them to get the data. Part of the plan can include the specific kinds of data they would like to look at. Ms. Dongarra's data is part of a different office and that data is not public.

Closing Remarks, Public Comments, and Adjournment

- Roberto Salazar, with the Library of Congress reiterated the importance of accountability. 12 years ago, an administrator at USDA said he expected to see greater representation of Hispanics in the SES at the Food and Nutrition Service. Mr. Salazar said that the administrator reminded them that he would look at the Hispanic representation when looking into giving out bonuses. Hispanic representation increased at that agency. Mr. Salazar raised the question about how often Secretaries say they want to see results and how they hold them accountable.
- Image wants to make sure the HCFE pursues engaging other agencies. Most agencies have Hispanic employment program managers (HEPMs). Image would like to see more engagement with the HCFE and HEPMs. HEPMs can advise the HCFE.
- The meeting adjourned at 3:07 PM.

Certification



Veronica Villalobos
Executive Director,
Hispanic Council on Federal Employment