



**Hispanic Council on Federal Employment
Twenty Seventh Public Meeting
June 29, 2016**

On June 29, 2016, the Hispanic Council on Federal Employment (HCFE) held its twenty-seventh public meeting at the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) in Washington, D.C.

Participants included:

Name	Title and Organization
Michelle Arias	Deputy Office Director of Recruitment, Examination and Employment, Department of State (State)
Virginia Berry	National Recruiting Advisor, Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
Ivan Carpio	Outreach Coordinator with the Hispanic Employment Council
Stacy Carter	Office of Civil Rights in the Department of Commerce
Beth Cobert	Acting OPM Director
Georgia Coffey	Department of Veterans Affairs
Alicia Diaz	Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU)
Roland Edwards	Deputy Chief Human Capital Officer, Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
Roberto Falkenstein via teleconference	Region III Director, National Image, Inc.
Lisandra Garay-Vega	National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)- National Association of Hispanic Federal Executives (NAHFE)
Melody Gonzalez	
Khalilah Harris	Senior Advisor - OPM
CJ Johnson	Director, Office of Diversity Management and EEO, Department of Defense (DOD)
Frank Lopez via teleconference	Association of Latino Professionals for America (ALPFA)
Charmaine McDaniel via teleconference	National Hispanic Program Managers
Anjali Patel	LRP Publications/ CyberFeds
Jane Rhee	Senior Advisor, National Security Council (NSC)
Hector Sanchez	Chair, National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLE) and HCFE Co-Chair
Veronica Schnotala - via teleconference	Hispanic Employee Council of Foreign Affairs

Name	Title and Organization
	Agencies (HECFAA)
Ethan Starkey	Florida International University (FIU)
Zina B. Sutch	Director of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and Executive Director of HCFE.
Loida Tapia	Senior Advisor
Veronica Villalobos	Principal Deputy Associate Director of Employee Services
Sharon Wong	Deputy, Office of Diversity and Inclusion
Brent Wilkes	National Executive Director, LULAC
Bobbie Jeanquart - via teleconference	CHCO at USDA

The following OPM employees from the Office of Diversity and inclusion staffed the meeting: Sean Hershey, Diversity Manager, Liz Calvo and Anjanette Blunt, PMC detailees, Nicole Lassiter, Diversity Manager.

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Acting Director Cobert called the meeting to order and announced that before starting on the agenda items, she wanted to take a moment to talk about the events in Orlando and the tragedy over the last weeks. She acknowledged that many of the shooting victims were of Hispanic descent and members of the LGBT community. She extended her thoughts and prayers to the affected families as well as the community.

She then announced that Adelante and Pride Alliance (OPM ERGs) have coordinated a remembrance event to remember the victims which will take place right after the Council meeting in Rollins Park diagonal to OPM.

As part of the “Pride” month (June), OPM's Pride Alliance presented programs around family and policies in the workplace. Director Cobert praised the group for their efforts and coming together for the LBGt community.

Before moving to the agenda items, Director Cobert announced that OPM signed a memorandum of understanding this week with the National Society of Hispanic MBAs, one of the Council members. The memorandum formalizes OPM’s work and encourages members to consider federal service careers. She then briefly went over the following agenda items:

- **Barrier Analysis which was discussed during the last Council meeting** –Michelle Arias will provide the status of the recommendations from the barriers work group. Director Cobert briefly reminded everyone about the last Council discussion related to Hispanics onboard (GS-13 through SES).
- **National Security Council (NSC) diversity initiative** – Jane Rhee from NSC will share the diversity events and initiatives they are working. Director Cobert stated that she had attended one of the meetings and this item is at the top of the list for the NSC..
- **Hiring for Excellence Campaign** – Veronica Villalobos will update the Council on the events that were launched nationally in May. OPM has done 16 training sessions in 13 cities with an attendance of 600 employees. Director Cobert added that OPM will be

conducting more training in the coming weeks as OPM is doing more agency-specific programs, including virtual events. Director Cobert voiced her excitement about the initiative as diversity and getting a great pool of candidates is one of the focus points.

- **New Director Zina B. Sutch** – Director Cobert thanked Veronica Villalobos for her hard work on the Council and announced that today was Veronica’s last Council meeting in which she would be presiding. The new Diversity and Inclusion Director Zina Sutch started this week and will be presiding over future meetings. Director Cobert welcomed Zina. Zina came from USDA where she was the Department’s Director of Diversity, Recruitment and Work Life. She also led the secretary’s cultural transformation initiative. Director Cobert stated that USDA is an example of a place that has moved the needle in terms of diversifying the SES candidate development pool and cadre.

Director Cobert then turned the meeting to Hector Sanchez for his remarks.

Hector thanked Director Cobert for starting the meeting with a reflection about the Orlando shooting. He indicated that it was a horrible situation and an attack on the LGBTQ and Latino communities. Hector stated that one of the reasons the NHLA created the LGBTQ task force was to have different policy priority and to be able to do more. He indicated that he feels that there is still a lot to do as a community and in the workplace.

Hector indicated that the fact Latinos are one of the groups most underrepresented has a direct correlation to the quality of life in communities, quality of the schools, quality of public parks, and the way of life in which children engage.

Hector concluded his opening remarks talking about the memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Department of Agriculture and NHLA. He believes that the MOU is the result of deep engagement with USDA leadership. Hector applauded Secretary Vilsack for getting it done.

Introductions:

Veronica Villalobos thanked everyone and before turning the meeting over to Michelle Arias, she asked to go around the room to introduce ourselves.

Meeting Discussion

Barrier analysis update:

Michelle Arias thanked the group and indicated that the work of the subgroup was done. She announced that in May, all subgroup participants had agreed on the final draft. The draft has now been forwarded to OPM and EEOC for their legal team review and approval. Michelle recognized that approvals require time but she hopes that this request takes priority as agencies are starting to plan their MD 715.

Clarence Johnson (CJ) stated that he would assume that there will be discussion about approving the draft and then sharing it with agencies.

Michelle responded that the approval would have to come from EEOC and OPM as the subgroup cannot send it out without the attorneys looking at everything.

Veronica Villalobos addressed CJ and the group by ensuring that OPM will try to get it approved quickly, and work with the Office of the Director and the General Council to complete their review. Veronica indicated that she will find out the status, and make sure it's moving along.

National Security Council (NSC) diversity initiative:

Veronica Villalobos introduced Jane Rhee, Senior Advisor at the National Security Council (NSC) who came to talk about their diversity initiative.

Jane Rhee thanked OPM for inviting her and proceeded to give background information about the NSC initiative. Jane was working for the State Department but returned to NSC in part because of their leadership and diversity initiatives. She acknowledged that her predecessor had done a lot of data analysis, research and worked with OPM. That research led to meetings with other agencies such as State, DOD, USAID, DHS, and the intelligence community. Some of the ideas gathered from the group are in the early stages of drafting.

Jane indicated that NSC is concentrating on four priorities:

1. The first priority is looking at the pipeline, understanding what the issue is. The Florida International University (FIU) is helping NSC with this.
2. The second priority is looking at retention and advancement within the NSC workforce among the employees to determine where they are going and how fast they are getting there.
3. The third priority is the level of leadership engagement. She indicated that NSC has been fortunate to have high degrees of leadership involvement, but their goal is to have more consistent leadership support across the board.
4. The last priority is engaging with external stakeholders such as universities to learn about their diversity communities and identify similar issues. Jane indicated that since diversity is all part of the broader national security community for NSC, they tend to hire from their circles.

Jane closed her presentation by stating that NSC will continue their work by looking at these issues and capturing best practices from the different agencies as well as the Diversity and Inclusion in Government (DIG) Council.

Hector Sanchez asked if NSC had any particular examples specific to the Latino and Hispanic communities and what was the focus of the executive orders that NSC is using.

Jane Rhee responded to the first question stating that NSC's focus on diversity is more broad, and not specific. For the second question, Jane explained that NSC has worked based on previous executive orders such as E.O. 13583 and others.

Hector Sanchez asked if any of those initiatives and the specifics that FIU is focusing on have been shared with Latino organizations. He stated that his assumption is that they are focusing on diversity but wants to know about more specific examples of what's happening so the Council can either help or try to be better advocates for Hispanics.

Jane Rhee explained that agencies chose their own representatives. Some are CHCO; some are diversity and inclusion officers. That allows each agency to focus on their prerogatives and the specific areas they feel they need to work on. Jane indicated that NSC has not done a Hispanic-focused action item.

Khalilah Harris notified the Council that at the last meeting, Jane encouraged members of the group to bring forth ideas on where recruitment can happen collectively for the agencies participating. Some of the ideas mentioned were the Congressional Hispanic Annual Legislative Caucus and the CBC Annual Legislative Conference as they host intelligence community recruitment sessions. She indicated that there were specific recommendations about Hispanic Serving Institutions and places to have targeted events like the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and Legislative conference.

Khalilah commended the NSC's work as they are clarifying their regulations and uniting agencies. She also indicated that NSC is now beginning to bookend with the specific opportunities agencies have identified, like the annual legislative conference and the Hispanic Serving Institutions to open up recruitment opportunities and have clearer conversations about opportunities, particularly for people who speak multiple languages and come from parts of the globe that are not represented.

Veronica Villalobos informed the group that OPM has a large database of many different organizations with specific points of contact that we partner with on diversity and inclusion initiatives. This might be a good way to get people thinking about the different groups.

Michelle stated that one of the groups NSC has been working with is the Consular Fellows Program. It offers recruitment bonuses. One of the critical languages is Spanish. Jane acknowledged that the program brings in a large, albeit limited number of non-career appointments.

Alicia Diaz invited the group to check out the HACU national internship program. The program is a summer program that places highly qualified students in federal agencies. She also offered another program called the USAID network of global development labs. She indicated that many of the Hispanic serving institutions are already represented there.

Hiring for Excellence Campaign

Veronica Villalobos started her presentation by showing the group where to locate the website and how to navigate around it. She stated that the website is mainly for the federal government, but she wanted the Council to know about it because OPM has a focus on diversity and inclusion and Latino underrepresentation.

Veronica explained how Loida Tapia has been traveling for the campaign and how OPM is focusing on applicant flow data. Loida Tapia expressed how fantastic the experience has been for her. She believes the initiative has resonated in the community and that employers want to use these tools as it helps them to have an understanding about what their current workforce looks like. They can also use the applicant flow data to focus their recruitment efforts to various communities.

Veronica continued her presentation by providing the highlights of the initiative:

- Employee Services (ES) has traveled across the country and talked with 600 different HR professionals.
- HR professionals are learning about how to use applicant flow data by going into the workforce at a glance data on the OPM website.
- The report has trend data for a five year period for each of the groups. Special Emphasis Program Managers are getting to see how they can use this data, including the new inclusion quotient and how the agency is doing in terms of inclusion at the agency.

Georgia Coffey asked if there was an actual tab for applicant flow.

Veronica Villalobos clarified that the applicant flow is still something specific through USA staffing. ES can share who the point of contacts are, and help them get the applicant flow data.

Veronica added that there is a phase two for the initiative. OPM is also partnering with specific agencies who asked for OPM to work with them. The initiative covers everything from how agencies can work more closely with the hiring manager to the use of different hiring authorities and how to be more strategic about hiring.

Veronica announced that in September, OPM is going to have a virtual conference and one of the main topics is strategic recruitment for diverse communities. OPM is also going to have monthly sessions on each of the topics so that more people can participate virtually. The tentative date for those sessions is the beginning of October.

Alicia Diaz asked if this would replace network data or fed scope.

Veronica Villalobos responded that it would not. It would simply be an addition to make it easier to use.

Veronica Villalobos indicated that the reason OPM wanted to discuss this with the Council today is because the initiative has four major focus areas. There are areas where ES can collaborate with the Hispanic Council and she wanted to hear their ideas.

Veronica explained that ES took a four-pronged approach for the initiative. ES looked to identify OPM cybersecurity workforce needs. Then they did a gap analysis to figure out which occupations or work roles had the biggest gaps in that cybersecurity role.

ES then looked at the demographic data for this group. OPM could see the underrepresentation for Latinos. ES focused on this underrepresentation as part of the strategic recruitment efforts that OPM is going to undertake.

Veronica mentioned that she heard about centers for Academic Excellence and how some Hispanic-serving institutions are already a part. Another source that was mentioned was the National Science Foundation scholarship for service. She indicated that this is a program not many people know about, but that it needs more Latinos to be aware of the opportunities. The initiative is also looking at how agencies can recruit and hire highly skilled talent for cybersecurity by tapping into sources not previously considered.

OPM is developing a comprehensive recruitment plan to reach underrepresented communities. Veronica indicated that what she found out about cybersecurity agencies is that they have all kinds of individuals. There are individuals who will naturally be inclined towards government such as ex-military. But there are also people who we can reach, and catch their interest, and get them involved.

Alicia Diaz asked how early the outreach would need to be done, ideally.

Veronica Villalobos responded that a good start is grade school.

Roland Edwards thanked OPM for all the help they continuously provide and stated that he is grateful because OPM was very helpful on providing guidance and clarification regarding the use of direct hiring authorities. The clarification helped DHS on their recruitment and hiring process. Roland informed the group about the hiring fair DHS is hosting and how they had reached out to other partners like HACU to get the message out to other networks. The event is set for July 27 and 28, Edward invited everyone to pass the information along and boost participation.

Veronica Villalobos pointed out that another thing OPM is working very hard on is retaining and developing the talent. She explained how OPM is partnering with the National Defense University (NDU) on some of the work they are doing. She also reiterated that the goal is to showcase the government as an employer of choice.

Clarence Johnson stated that the idea is working on the pipeline and using the Hispanic community as a source. Therefore, the more exposure one can get to that community the better, such as tapping cyber capacity among junior colleges.

Alicia provided examples of how HACU had launched pre-conference activities during their annual conference. The event was called K-12 higher-Ed collaboration symposium and their purpose was to showcase for K-12 as well as higher education collaborations from across the country.

Veronica Schonotala introduced herself over the phone and also offered another venue to showcase cybersecurity. She indicated that there is a conference for close to 300 students from the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics achievement program this September, and there's still room for presenters. These are a variety of students from the Albuquerque, New Mexico area that will attend. Veronica offered her contact information if they are interested.

Frank Lopez introduced himself over the phone and shared information about a convention coming up in August with 3,700 people attending. Half of the students will be undergraduate students looking for work.

Michelle Arias agreed with an earlier comment that outreach needed to start earlier. She indicated that although the conversation has been about college kids, kids can come in for an internship as young as 16 years of age. Michelle stated that agencies should be going to high schools and trying to get kids into internships while they are in high school, not waiting until they are in college.

Alicia Diaz responded that unpaid internships keep most of the students away as they are unable to come to DC, or anywhere else for seven or eight weeks and not get paid.

Director Cobert agreed.

Khalilah Harris shared that “My Brother's Keeper” has vast connections at the local level. They are connected with younger children and are able to target communities that agencies may not be able to target directly from the District of Columbia.

Ethan Starkey stated that high schools are having technology and coding challenges now. FIU has a “startup week” where students essentially create some sort of startup business or tech solution to compete and win.

Veronica Villalobos thanked Ethan and everyone and stated it was time to end the meeting. She indicated that everyone had fabulous ideas and it was wonderful to hear them. She encouraged the group to think about new ideas and e-mail them to her. Veronica closed the meeting by saying it had been an honor to work with the Council. She also clarified that she will continue to work with the Council on the Hiring Excellence Campaign.

Meeting adjourned

Certification



Zina Suteh
Executive Director,
Hispanic Council on Federal Employment