



**Hispanic Council on Federal Employment  
Twenty Six Public Meeting  
March 29, 2016**

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

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title and Organization</b>
Michelle Arias	Deputy Office Director of Recruitment, Examination and Employment, Department of State (State)
Josue Barrera	Hispanic Employee Council of Foreign Affairs Agencies (HECFAA)
Joe Bautista-Jimenez	
Christina Courdey	State Department
Alicia Diaz	Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU)
David Dominguez via teleconference	National President, National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees (NHCFAE)
Roberto Falkenstein via teleconference	Region III Director, National Image, Inc.
Sabrina Ferguson-Ward	
Alma Hughes	
CJ Johnson	Director, Office of Diversity Management and EEO, Department of Defense (DOD)
Jacqueline Padron (Zina Sutch, Ph.D.) via teleconference	Diversity and Inclusion Program Manager, Office of Human Resources Management, Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Anjali Pavel	
Hector Sanchez	Chair, National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLEA) and HCFE Co-Chair
Veronica Schnotala for Josue Barrera	Hispanic Employee Council of Foreign Affairs Agencies (HECFAA)
Dan Solis via teleconference	Chief Executive Officer (CEO), President, National Organization for Mexican American Rights, Inc. (NOMAR)
Ethan Storky	Florida International University
Manuel Trigueros	
Brent Wilkes	National Executive Director, LULAC
Bonita White via teleconference	

The following OPM employees participated in the meeting: Beth Cobert, Acting OPM Director; Khalilah Harris, Chief of Staff; Sean Hershey, Diversity Manager, Office of Diversity and Inclusion; Sharon Wong, Acting Director, Office of Diversity and Inclusion; Loida Tapia, Senior Advisor; Veronica Villalobos, Principal Deputy Associate Director, ES and Executive Director, HCFE.

Two members of the public attended the meeting.

**Introductions, Welcome and Opening Remarks** (start time: 1:05PM)

Veronica Villalobos calls the meeting to order and introduces *Beth Cobert, Acting OPM Director and Co-Chair, HCFE* for the opening remarks and introduction to the agenda.

- Acting OPM Director Cobert mentioned the timing of the Federal Register Notice and that she would need to step-out early for a Women’s History Month Event. She thanked Al Gallegos for the work of the sub-committee and the next steps that will be addressed later in this meeting.

**Agenda:**

- Identifying barriers in order to overcome
    - Acting OPM Director Cobert is committed to working with the HCFE to change underrepresentation of Hispanics in the Federal Government. Barrier analysis is at the root of our work. Promising practices are ongoing in government, particularly at NASA and we can learn and share those in this forum. The subcommittee membership will talk about the plan.
  - Rewording: NASA calls “best practices” “Promising Practices”
    - Acting OPM Director Cobert is a longtime proponent of considering how to create an environment where people from different backgrounds can be included. Geography and employee mobility are important factors to incorporate into our analysis.
  - What is the private sector doing with attracting Latinos in high ranking positions? What can be learned?
    - Private Companies with Hispanic leadership, breadth of development and mentorship programs seemed to offer more promising practices than those in the federal sector. However, when we looked at the private sector that was not the case.
  - Geography when it comes to demographics, how do we adapt this data and incorporate it into an analysis? Are we recruiting from high concentration pockets of Latino communities? How do we think about mobility and community?
- Hector Sanchez, Chair, National Hispanic Leadership Agenda and Co-Chair, HCFE announced the release of the 2016 Hispanic Policy Agenda. Government accountability is key and reflective of our work on this Council.
  - In preparation for the presentation of the sub-committee, Sharon Wong announced that the analysis that will be referenced in the upcoming presentation is data of Hispanics on-board within GS-13 through SES. Sharon reviewed the following data:

- Data for CHCO agencies, as well as, 3 agencies that represent the small agency council were analyzed.
  - Initial review of data showed that Hispanics were the most underrepresented at the GS13 through the SES.
  - The data was broken down into four categories:
    - Agencies with 75k+, largest being VA
    - 10k-75k
    - 1k-10k
    - <1k
  - GS13 Discussion
    - Hispanics make up 7.2% in GS13; government wide representation of Hispanics is 8.4%.
    - Out of largest agencies, DHS leads with the most Hispanics onboard.
      - The discussion drilling down and focused on factors such as: geography, occupations, and hiring rates.
  - GS14 Discussion
    - 5.5% Hispanic representation.
      - EEOC interestingly has a higher rate of women vs. men at this level which is the inverse in the rest of government.
    - DHS leads at this GS level as well.
  - GS15 Discussion
    - 4.2% Hispanics at GS15 level
  - SES Discussion
    - 4.4% Hispanic, males outnumber female 2:1, 2.9% Hispanic men, 1.5% Hispanic Women
- Sharon points out that there seems to be some gender differential, Hispanic women seem to do better at the smaller agencies. States in the south and southwest have better representation. The eastern seaboard and middle of the country have more challenges.
  - Jacqueline Padron asked if the data includes political appointees. Sharon responded that it does not. It was also noted that the data represents non-seasonal, full-time, permanent employees.
  - Veronica and Sharon suggested using this data as starting point to set stage for discussion on barriers.
  - The number of Hispanic employees goes down from GS-13 through GS-15, and this represents the feeder pool to the SES. In fact, there are fewer GS-15's than are SES, which does not bode well for the pipeline. For this reason, many agencies recruit from outside of the government employees.
  - CJ Johnson stated that he believes it is important that we analyze the percent of positions as they decrease. Smaller agencies have fewer SES slots available and that has an impact on data.

- Brent Wilkes commented about the data at US AID. You can see a big bump-up. The larger departments experience more movement internally and higher turnover rates.
- GS-12 is the highest value for Hispanics; there are more than 30,000 Hispanic employees.
- Michelle Arias presented on the sub-committee plan. She thanked Georgia Coffey, David Dominguez, Al Gallegos, and Sharon Wong for their support and proceeded with the following discussion:
  - The sub-committee looked at barrier analysis for Hispanic representation from GS 13 – SES. The sub-committee had concerns about imposing another mandate on agencies who couldn't handle without structure and resources.
  - Michelle stated that because MD715 reporting mechanism is already being used, they want to focus this year's barrier analysis on Hispanic employment. They seek to establish consensus and then to share a model to follow. The NOAA root cause analysis may be a model that could be used.
  - The sub-committee wants to do the drilling down for cases like DHS and their sub-agencies as they believe looking into geography is important.
  - The sub-committee would like to develop a guidance package to help agencies with guidelines/templates on the barrier analysis and send it out as soon as possible.
  - The sub-committee would like EEOC and OPM to lead in sending recommendations to agencies.
  - Members of the HCFE will be needed to volunteer to brief agencies' leaders about the work they are expecting to do, the barrier analysis activities, and deliverables (answer the what, why, and how).
- Michelle opened up the floor to questions
- Veronica Villalobos reiterates using MD17 reporting structure to get OPM in coordination with EEOC to issue a memo asking agencies to do detailed analysis on Hispanic workforce.
- In the future, they would look into GS-1 – 12 levels but right now, those procedures would be cumbersome for agencies to take upon at this time of the year.
- It was suggested that we should look closely at the GS-12 and analyze data about why they may or may not be achieving promotion. Why aren't Latinos getting promoting? Why do they peak at GS-12?
- CJ Johnson suggested that we should look at data by occupations by grade, especially those where employees do move to GS-14, GS-15, and SES. That can indicate how many

of GS-13's or GS-14s/15s came through the GS-12 pool. Maybe the feeder pool dries up after level GS-12.

- Ethan Storky from FIU (an HSU) talked about evaluating job competencies and interview processes and having potentially two faculty researchers that could lend a hand to evaluate employee selection and advancement, and any data collected. He offered FIU psychology department's help to conduct research. In addition, the American University is also available.
- A discussion concerning the appropriate benchmark measurement followed. A caveat was issued to not just rely on data related to occupation, but the measure should include the agency mission. The measure doesn't always have to be the relevant civilian labor force. It can at times include, the number of customers in the community, or the measurement of the country's population.
- One issue noted was the lack of accountability.
- A discussion of GPRA followed. How do we do hold agencies accountable? Performance reviews were cited. The visibility of the data does actually matter. If we continue to publicize the data it describes the results that are lagging and can have the effect of helping an agency to do better. Helpful actions should be shared as well.
- Director Cobert suggested that we must look at the types of jobs that employees have. It may be that employees are in staff jobs that do not have as much leadership potential.
- CJ Johnson noted that RAND Corp. is doing a study (barrier analysis) at DOD looking at the representation of groups by occupations.
- Khalilah Harris suggested that self-identification is an issue for some. Whether a black American chooses to identify as Latino or Latinos identifying as white how people choose to identify affects the integrity of the data. Educating people on what they should choose for race/ethnicity vs. allowing people to self-identify. She noted that because race is not the same thing as ethnicity, different generational viewpoints exist. She wondered if numbers are actually lower or are we not accounting for self-identification.
- Michelle indicated that they chose not to pursue an educational campaign.
- Ethan Storky stated that one of the issues voiced by his faculty members is that statistical data is confidential. He asked what level of access FIU will have to the data. Beth stated that a lot of the data is open to the public via FedScope.
- A new topic was introduced: the issue of high levels of attrition for Hispanics working in the government. OPM Director (Beth) excuses herself and leaves at this portion of the meeting.
- The group discusses how there is no data on contractors. The end goal is retaining and growing of Hispanics in the government.

- The DOL, Office of Federal Contracts Compliance, was mentioned in the context of having data pertaining to the make-up of employees that work for private vendors doing business with/for the Federal government.
- Agencies report data to OPM on a steady stream. Applicant flow is one piece of data that might not be publically available. The group should ask agencies how they hire.
- EEOC is doing the training and is the lead agency as they collect MD-715 reports. OPM can assist on certain aspects. EEOC notes:
  - Training doesn't need to be comprehensive
  - Question phrasing is the most important part
- The group comes to a consensus about how to move forward with this new initiative:
  - The guidance must build on the work of MD-715 barrier analysis of GS-12 – SES of Hispanic workforce. It should include promising practices, could include EEOC training, and needs the participation and communication of the Human Capital staff at each agency.
  - David Dominguez suggested that the guidance/letters should have some teeth.
  - The EEOC will not be responsible for doing the barrier analysis.
- Mr. Sanchez asked how do we put pressure on the agencies if they don't do anything? Ms. Arias encouraged compliance and enforcement to assure that agencies comply with OPM/EEOC guidance.
- Ms. Villalobos stated that doing focus groups, data analysis, and other activities/check-ins to survey compliance will occur.

### **Next Steps**

- The sub-committee needs to develop a series of questions for agencies to focus on. This should take about 30 days.
- Issue a memo in partnership, OPM/EEO

### **Closing Remarks**

- Co-Chair Sanchez again cited the national Hispanic Leadership Agenda. He encouraged the HCFE to check it out and use it for the purpose of government accountability. It includes a report on Federal employment by agency.
- Brent Wilkes thanked the sub-committee.

### **Public Comments**

- None
- Co-chair Sanchez adjourned the meeting at 2:32 PM.

**Certification**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Veronica Villalobos". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Veronica Villalobos  
Executive Director,  
Hispanic Council on Federal Employment