



**Ms. Michelle LoweSolis**  
Human Resources Functional  
Community Manager

## Message from the Human Resources Functional Community Manager

*“Excellence must be achieved through the eyes of those who judge us; once achieved, it can only be maintained with constant innovation.”*

— Tom Collins, Author, *The Language of Excellence*

As a leader, there is no greater privilege or responsibility than developing the workforce to take our places when we leave. As your Department of Defense (DoD) Human Resources (HR) Functional Community Manager, it's one I

take seriously. The business we are in is extremely complex and becomes more so every year. As such, I am committed to deliberately developing you and this community. This bi-monthly newsletter will be the primary vehicle to communicate to you the status of ongoing HR training and development efforts and spotlight employee success stories.

We recently established an HR Functional Community Executive Council with membership that includes the senior civilian HR leaders from the Services, Diversity Management Operations Center (DMOC), Defense Finance and Accounting Services (DFAS), Defense Logistics Agency (DLA), and Washington Headquarters Services (WHS). Our vision for the DoD's HR Functional Community remains a community of HR experts respected as business partners, with an emphasis on balancing the requirement to support the mission with the need for compliance. We must continue to posture our HR community to deliver the best advice and service to our 900,000 DoD Civilians and their commanders and supervisors, and, ultimately, strengthen the Department's readiness to meet all challenges.

The concept for deliberate HR workforce development is two-fold and outlined in the [memo](#), “Human Resources Functional Community Development,” dated 18 November 2019; that is, to first build the foundation (technical expertise) and then build the breadth necessary to develop civilian HR leaders and strategic advisors. This concept will be implemented through building competency models, assessing existing skillsets, developing curriculum, and establishing technical credentialing programs. Each community of practice has been and will be involved in each step to ensure we have a community-based approach.

To date, we have deployed the highly successful DoD Employee Benefits Advisor credentialing program, and are currently working on developing and implementing credentialing programs for Injury Compensation, Labor Relations, and Staffing. These are the first four communities of practice, with the remainder to follow. Please see the article on the DoD Employee Benefits Advisor credentialing program which is explained later in this newsletter.

I look forward to sharing the HR Functional Community's progress in future newsletters.

**Welcome to our inaugural edition!**

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Human Resources Functional  
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**Ms. Taiwana Smith**  
Benefits Community of Practice Leader

## HR Benefits Credentialing: *Setting New Standards Across the DoD Enterprise*

Within the Department of Defense, more than 900,000 employees worldwide receive valuable benefits advice and recommendations from Employee Benefits Advisors (EBAs). For EBAs to be successful advisors, they must stay abreast of industry-leading benefits information.

“It is very critical that benefits advisors are properly trained to provide the right information at the right time to DoD employees,” states Taiwana Smith, Benefits Community of Practice Leader.

To understand the value of a certification, think in terms of auto repairs. When automobile owners take their cars in for repairs, they want the assurance that auto technicians know exactly what they’re doing. Cars may be a luxury item for some, while an expensive

necessity for many. Certified automotive professionals are recognized as experts in their field and considered highly professional, properly trained, and committed to continuing their automotive education.

In 2017, the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service (DCPAS) launched the DoD Employee Benefits Advisor (EBA) Credentialing Program. The program is designed to enable benefits advisors to expand their technical knowledge in the employee benefits area.

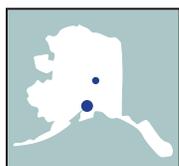
Smith believes the EBA Credentialing Program not only provides substantial value to the team, it is an asset across the DoD enterprise. Credentialed advisors are regarded as experts, possessing the knowledge that is equivalent to or surpasses private industry standards; thus, minimizing mistakes as they guide employees through important benefits transactions.

How valuable is EBA certification? Thanks in large part to the skills of the EBA-credentialed staff, the Army currently leads DoD with a 91 percent accuracy rate for processing retirement packages.

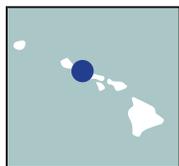
“The opportunities are endless. This credentialing program equips HR specialists with skills that are transferrable within DoD and makes a significantly impactful statement of qualification that truly gives professionals a sense of accomplishment,” said Smith.

This comprehensive credentialing program has gained broad acceptance by the workforce. Today, 517 of 591 DoD benefits advisors, approximately 87.5 percent, are EBA credentialed. ■

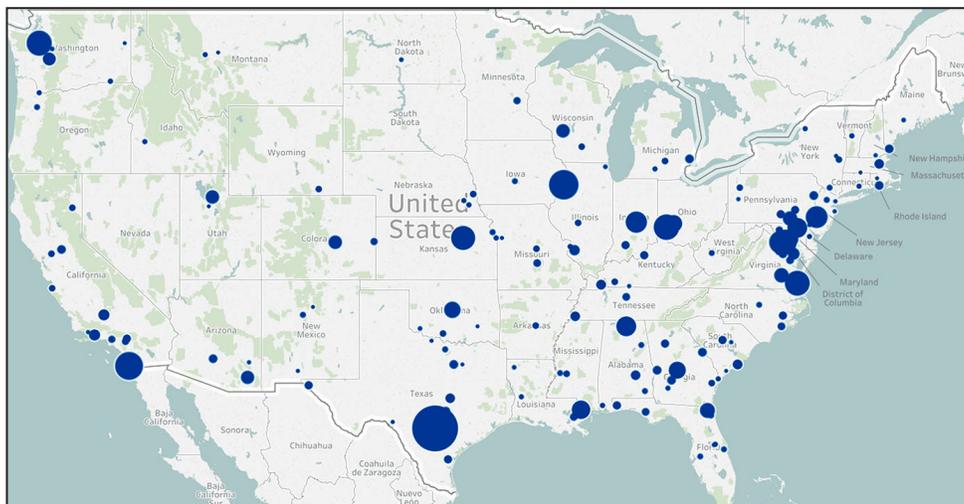
## DoD Civilian HR Professionals *Serving Worldwide\**



Alaska



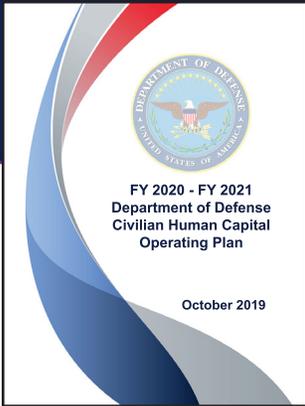
Hawaii



Country	Civilian HR
Germany	203
Japan	106
South Korea	69
Italy	28
Guam	27

Civilian HR
500-1000+
100-499
20-99
1-19

\*DoD Civilian HR population = 13,849 and includes series 0203, 0201, 0299, 0260, 0360, 0361. Note: The mission of the DoD HR civilian workforce directly supporting the military (e.g., HR Specialist (Military)) is specific to each Service Component and as such is not included in this total.



## Department of Defense

### Human Capital Operating Plan, *Fiscal Year 2020-2021: Delivering Ready, Highly Skilled Department of Defense Civilians*

Department of Defense (DoD) civilians play a critical role as a part of the DoD’s mission to deter war and protect the security of our Nation. A well-managed civilian workforce is indispensable to accomplishing DoD’s mission and goals. The DoD Human Capital Operating Plan (HCOP) describes how DoD is executing strategic human capital management priorities over the next two years to carry out DoD’s vital security mission effectively.

“Development of this HCOP has been a team sport,” said Ms. Anita Blair, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Civilian Personnel Policy. “I am grateful for the support we received

from the members of the Civilian Personnel Policy Council and the HR professionals across DoD who helped with the development and implementation of this comprehensive civilian human capital plan.”

DoD’s HCOP enables DoD leadership to set a clear path for achieving stated human capital strategies. “The HCOP is reviewed regularly,” said Ms. Blair, “We assess progress of milestones and metrics in quarterly reviews to senior leadership through DoD’s HRStat program where we discuss successes, challenges and risks – ensuring we’re holding ourselves accountable.”

The FY 2020-2021 HCOP is organized around three over-arching human capital objectives:

- Deliver Talent
- Maximize Employee Performance
- Transform Human Resources (HR)

These objectives support several human capital strategies aimed at increasing effectiveness and efficiencies at both the enterprise and organizational levels in meeting the Department’s emerging mission requirements.

The DoD HCOP seeks hiring authorities to recruit skilled talent, aligns individual performance with strategic organizational objectives, facilitates a high-performing inclusive culture, and integrates end-to-end HR processes through technology. It is an essential keystone necessary to deliver ready, highly skilled DoD Civilians for today’s and tomorrow’s operational and strategic mission needs. ■

## HR Functional Community Executive Council: Strengthening the Community



Human Resources Functional Community Manager Michelle LoweSolis and DCPAS Deputy Director Daniel Hester listen to discussions focused on expanding the expertise of DoD HR professionals.

## Spotlight on Success



### Julie Petruccelli-Treen

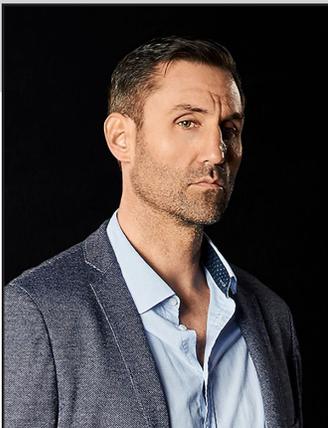
*Seeks Trailblazing Opportunities and Embraces Leadership by Example*

Julie Petruccelli-Treen is one of the first Army Civilians to achieve Employee Benefits Advisor (EBA) Credentialing under the DoD EBA Credentialing Program. As an early adopter, Julie leveraged the opportunity to advance to her lead role as Lead Human Resources Specialist for the Army Benefits Center-Civilian at Fort Riley, Kansas, where she now trains her team and other agency leads.

Recognizing the advantages she gained after becoming EBA-certified, Julie pursued participation in the Advanced Benefits Workshop in order to attain her Advanced EBA Advisor credential. “I’ve been able to gain further knowledge and be more of an expert in my role,” she said.

Continuing her pursuit of innovative opportunities, Julie again stepped outside her comfort zone, applied, and was selected for one of 15 highly sought-after Army Civilian Human Resources developmental assignments. These competitive opportunities, offered by the Army Career Program 10 Civilian Human Resources Office, afford the top performing HR professionals with assignments outside their normal duties in order to broaden their skill sets and their professional network.

Julie is currently completing a three-month temporary duty assignment with the Assistant G-1 for Civilian Personnel, Headquarters, Department of the Army, in the National Capital Region. During her developmental assignment, Julie strengthened her business acumen skills – collaboration, communication, project management, problem identification, and financial management. She is also serving as a selection board member for the Preparing to Lead Program sponsored by Partnership for Public Service. [\(continued on page 5\)](#)



### Nathan Dehnke

*Leverages His “Non-HR” Experiences to Excel in DoD HR*

*A profile of Nathan Dehnke on how his professional background influenced his insights on the human resources profession.*

#### **How is the Human Resources Functional Community different now compared with the past?**

*A driving principle, led by the HR Functional Community Manager, Michelle LoweSolis, is that we are now taking a community or team-based approach to building the HR Functional Community. Unlike the past, no single office, no single team, no single person is, or is expected to be, the expert of the diverse and unique technical and functional areas within the HR Functional Community. We, the DoD HR Functional Community, are serving as a facilitator, coordinator, and integrator in synthesizing all lessons learned and best practices from across the DoD enterprise for the benefit of every DoD HR professional.*

#### **How has your diverse experiences, from teaching to Military service to non-traditional HR roles, helped you see perspectives that may be unique from traditional HR professionals?**

*Steve Jobs once said, “The broader one’s understanding of the human experience, the better design we will have.” I firmly believe this philosophy applies to many different professions, including Human Resources. Achieving a broad understanding of the human experience can be accomplished in many ways. In my case, I have been fortunate to work in several different career fields, and on disparate teams. This has forced me to develop and utilize different skills to accomplish the goals and missions in each case. A few of my developed skills range from communication (a teacher is always communicating, even when silent) to collaboration (Airborne Infantry teams are only successful if all teammates work together) to advising (providing guidance on how to structure the J6 while at U.S. Africa Command required compromise and persistence), to critical thinking (trying to “reach” an uninterested student, figuring out the best way to navigate a river in hostile territory, analyzing mission essential tasks to functions and to specific billets). I continue to hone these skills as I advance in my HR career. [\(continued on page 5\)](#)*

## Spotlight on Success

### Julie Petruccelli-Treen *(Continued)*

Credentialing, coupled with the resulting career broadening experiences, positions Julie as a valued business partner for the current and future needs of DoD HR. Her advice for colleagues who are considering participation in a DoD career advancement program: "Take the challenge. Increasing your knowledge and expertise makes you more marketable and reinforces that the DoD is moving in a progressive direction."

A native of Pittsburgh, Ms. Julie Petruccelli-Treen has spent nearly 20 years in the Fort Riley, Kansas, area serving the Army in the field of human resources (HR). Currently, she is Lead Human Resource Specialist, Army Benefits Center-Civilian. Previous Federal roles have included HR Specialist, HR Assistant, and Family Readiness Support Assistant at Fort Riley and Fort Polk, Louisiana. Spouse of Retired Army and current federal employee, Julie holds a Master of Science degree in Public Administration from Central Michigan University and a bachelor's degree in Human Resource Development. She has earned a Professional of Human Resources and DoD Employee Benefits Advisor certifications. Her son is a Corporal in the Army Reserve. ■

### Nathan Dehnke *(Continued)*

#### What competencies do you currently possess that lend to the future of HR?

*I possess competencies in the areas of critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and advising. I also have more "concrete" skills in areas such as technological literacy, statistical analysis, policy writing, research capabilities, manpower, and some rudimentary budgeting capabilities. These competencies, while not traditionally associated with the HR profession, have aided me considerably throughout my career, and will only become more critical in the future.*

Mr. Nathan Dehnke grew up in the Midwest. He spent five years teaching after receiving his bachelor's degree in elementary education from the University of Missouri. Two years after 9/11, Nathan joined the Army as an Airborne Infantryman and served two tours in Iraq. He entered Federal service in 2009 as an Army Wounded Warrior Education Initiative student trainee, earning a Masters of Political Science from the University of Kansas. His previous Federal assignments include Assistant G-1 for Civilian Personnel, Headquarters, Department of the Army, and United States Africa Command. He currently serves as an Action Officer with the DoD Human Resources Functional Community team. ■

## Stay in the Know



### Looking for the latest news impacting the Human Resources Functional Community?

Look no further than the HR Functional Community milSuite page! Interested in data about the HR Functional Community population? Check out the data decks! Want to share a great lesson learned? Start a blog post! Found a particularly interesting professional article? Share your document or link! Have a question for the entire community? Start a discussion! Are you curious about the latest messages from DCPAS? Check out our content! While our page is still in its infancy, your participation will help make it great. Come and join the conversation today! ■

<https://www.milsuite.mil/book/community/spaces/dodhrfc>