

WHAT ARE THE FEDERAL SPECIAL EMPHASIS PROGRAMS?

The Special Emphasis Programs are an integral part of the overall equal opportunity program in NRCS. These programs are coordinated through the national Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPMs), who are assigned to the Outreach and Advocacy Division and serve as the principal staff advisors to the director of the Outreach and Advocacy Division on legislation, policies, employment, and program issues impacting:

- African Americans;
- American Indians/Alaska Natives;
- Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders;
- Persons with disabilities;
- Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender individuals;
- Hispanics;
- Veterans; and
- Women.

The Special Emphasis Programs address the unique concerns of these groups in achieving diversity, inclusion, and equal opportunity.*

Civil Rights Complaints

SEPMs **do not** handle Civil Rights Complaints. Civil Rights information and links for EEO and Program Complaint processes may be found at <http://www.pia.nrcs.usda.gov/about/civilrights.html>

*Excerpted from: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/people/outreach/sep>

THE PEOPLE'S DEPARTMENT USDA AND NRCS ARE COMMITTED TO EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL

"We must all strive to create an inclusive environment in which every employee is respected, trusted, and valued."

Let us continue to cultivate and reap the benefits of a diverse USDA workforce that is rich in talent, ideas, background, and experience.

The USDA mission depends on it."

*-USDA Secretary, Thomas Vilsack
From: USDA Civil Rights Policy Statement
June 2, 2011*

"NRCS can achieve and maintain a diverse workforce with an abundance of opportunities for every employee to reach his or her full potential."

*-NRCS Chief, Dave White
From: NRCS Civil Rights Policy Statement
January 20, 2012*

WHAT DO SPECIAL EMPHASIS PROGRAMS MEAN TO A POTENTIAL EMPLOYEE?

These programs represent a commitment on the part of the United States Department of Agriculture that is based on statute, Presidential Executive Orders, Office of Personnel Management regulations, and departmental policy. USDA commits to creating a workplace that is open and accepting to the diversity of cultures and sub-cultures that reflect the make-up of the United States.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service in the Pacific Islands Area is fortunate to have a built-in diversity of people. These programs provide a means to make a good situation even better. You will be valued as an employee who reflects a uniqueness that can contribute to the whole of USDA-NRCS.

SPECIAL AWARENESS MONTHS

February: African American History

March: Women's History

May: Asian American & Pacific Islander Heritage

June: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Pride

September/October: Hispanic Heritage

October: Disability Awareness

November: Native American Heritage

November: Veterans

SPECIAL EMPHASIS PROGRAMS SERVE YOU BY:

- Encouraging and promoting tolerance and acceptance in a diverse workplace that translates to valuing every employee's unique contributions
- Identifying and helping remove cultural and sub-cultural biases that limit employees' success within the agency
- Providing a means for employees to participate in the processes related to creating and maintaining equal employment opportunity
- Keeping another channel of communication open to leadership regarding Equal Employment Opportunity concerns and successes
- Encouraging creativity and activity through Spot Awards for work done "above and beyond" the usual duties in creating diverse and accepting work environments
- Promulgating and sponsoring a range of information about, experiences in, and activities relating to multiple cultures and sub-cultures
- Encouraging and assisting the improvement of employee opportunities through fact-based research and analyses

FOR MORE INFORMATION

**NRCS Outreach and Advocacy Division
Special Emphasis Programs**
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/people/outreach/sep>

PIA NRCS Civil Rights
<http://www.pia.nrcs.usda.gov/about/civilrights.html>

NRCS National Civil Rights Division
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/about/civilrights>

NRCS General Manual Online at eDirectives
Title 230 – Part 403
<http://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/RollupViewer.aspx?hid=17023>

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers. If you believe you experienced discrimination when obtaining services from USDA, participating in a USDA program, or participating in a program that receives financial assistance from USDA, you may file a complaint with USDA. Information about how to file a discrimination complaint is available from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights. USDA prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex (including gender identity and expression), marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, genetic information, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) To file a complaint of discrimination, complete, sign, and mail a program discrimination complaint form, available at any USDA office location or online at www.ascr.usda.gov, or write to: USDA Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW.; Washington, DC 20250-9410. Or call toll free at (866) 632-9992 (voice) to obtain additional information, the appropriate office or to request documents. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay service at (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

SPECIAL EMPHASIS PROGRAMS

Information for a
Prospective Employee

USDA - NRCS



Pacific Islands Area