



**United States Department of Agriculture**  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

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**Federal Agency Annual EEO Program Report**  
**Management Directive – 715**  
**Fiscal Year 2013**

*The purpose of the MD-715 is to provide policy guidance and standards for establishing and maintaining effective affirmative programs of Equal Employment Opportunity programs and activities in compliance with civil rights laws and USDA regulations, policies, and goals.*

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## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF NRCS CIVIL RIGHTS DIVISION

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is proud to present its Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Program Status Report for Fiscal Year (FY) 2013, as required by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's Management Directive 715 (MD-715). NRCS promotes the highest level of organizational performance in order to achieve its mission of "*Helping People Help the Land.*"

NRCS works to create and maintain a highly skilled work environment in which individual differences are valued, and where employees are empowered to reach their potential and maximize their contributions to NRCS' vital objectives. NRCS is committed to equal employment opportunities for all employees and applicants, and to effective diversity management. NRCS succeeds in part by ensuring that our workplace decisions are equitable and based upon merit, and by employing a workforce that reflects one of our nation's greatest strengths—the diversity of America's citizens. This diversity extends not only to the variety of races and ethnicities but also to the multitude of backgrounds, talents, skills, education, experiences, beliefs, and perspectives of our employees. Maintaining a fair workplace and recruiting, developing, and retaining a diverse workforce affords NRCS ability to have a workforce that has a unique range of competencies, ideas, and solutions.

NRCS' Civil Rights Division provides policy and technical advice to the Chief and to senior NRCS leadership on civil rights, including guidance and standards for establishing and maintaining effective programs for EEO and diversity management. The Civil Rights Director leads the EEO program, and is responsible for developing EEO and diversity plans, monitoring implementation, and submitting annual progress reports including this MD-715 Report.

During FY 2013, NRCS continued to make noteworthy progress toward building a model EEO and diversity program. Chief Jason Weller signed a new Anti-Discrimination Policy Statement, accompanied by an Information Sheet on employee rights, responsibilities, and remedies. NRCS demonstrated increased personnel diversity. For example:

- To date, a total of 56 veterans were hired. Of the 56 veterans hired 66.1% (37) were male and 33.9% (19) were female.
- Also 101 persons with disabilities were hired. Of the 101 employees with targeted disabilities, 68.32% (69) are men and 31.68% (32) are women

Simply put, NRCS realizes that a diverse workforce is vital to its mission and has taken steps to ensure that diversity is the rule and not the exception.

|  |   |              |   |                  |
|--|---|--------------|---|------------------|
| <b>EEOC FORM<br/>715-01<br/>PART A - D</b>   | <b>U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission<br/>FEDERAL AGENCY ANNUAL<br/>EEO PROGRAM STATUS REPORT</b> |              |   |                  |
| <b>For period covering October 1, 2012 to September 30, 2013.</b>                              |   |              |   |                  |
| <b>PART A</b><br>Department<br>or Agency<br>Identifying<br>Information                         | <b>1. Agency</b>  |              | <b>1. U.S. Department of Agriculture</b>                              |                  |
|  | 1.a. 2 <sup>nd</sup> level reporting component  |              | <b>Natural Resources Conservation Service</b>                         |                  |
|  | 1.b. 3 <sup>rd</sup> level reporting component  |              |   |                  |
|  | 1.c. 4 <sup>th</sup> level reporting component  |              |   |                  |
|  | <b>2. Address</b>   |              | <b>2. 1400 Independence Avenue, SW</b>                                |                  |
|  | <b>3. City, State, Zip Code</b>   |              | <b>3. Washington, DC 20020</b>  |                  |
|  | 4. CPDF Code  | <b>4. DA</b> | <b>5. 16</b>  | <b>5.</b>        |
| <b>PART B</b><br>Total<br>Employment   | 1. Enter total number of permanent full-time and part-time employees  |              |   | <b>1. 12,032</b> |
|  | 2. Enter total number of temporary employees  |              |   | <b>2. 531</b>    |
|  | 3. Enter total number employees paid from non-appropriated funds  |              |   | <b>3. 0</b>      |
|  | <b>4. TOTAL EMPLOYMENT [add lines B 1 through 3]</b>  |              |   | <b>4. 12,563</b> |
| <b>PART C</b><br>Agency<br>Official(s)<br>Responsible<br>For Oversight<br>of EEO<br>Program(s) | 1. Head of Agency<br>Official Title   |              | <b>Jason Weller<br/>Chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service</b> |                  |
|  | 2. Agency Head Designee   |              | <b>Fred Reaves<br/>Acting Director, Civil Rights Division</b>         |                  |
|  | 3. Principal EEO Director/Official<br>Official Title/series/grade   |              | <b>Fred Reaves<br/>Acting Director, Civil Rights Division</b>         |                  |
|  | 4. Title VII Affirmative EEO<br>Program Official  |              | <b>Sandra McWhirter<br/>Chief, Employment Compliance Branch</b>       |                  |
|  | 5. Section 501 Affirmative Action<br>Program Official   |              | <b>Brianne Burger, Talent Management</b>                              |                  |
|  | 6. Complaint Processing Program<br>Manager  |              | <b>Anita Holland-Spears<br/>MD-715 Program Manager</b>                |                  |
|  | 7. Other Responsible EEO Staff  |              | <b>Sharyn Alvarez, National Federal Women's Program Manager</b>       |                  |
| <b>Rebekah Lauster, Talent Management</b>  |   |              |   |                  |
|  |   |              |   |                  |

| EEOC FORM<br>715-01<br>PART A - D   | <i>U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission</i><br>FEDERAL AGENCY ANNUAL<br>EEO PROGRAM STATUS REPORT |                           |
|---|---|---------------------------|
| PART D<br>List of<br>Subordinate<br>Components<br>Covered in This<br>Report | Subordinate Component and Location (City/State)   | CPDF<br>and FIPS<br>codes |
|   |   |                           |
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|   |          |   |          |
|---|----------|---|----------|
| EEOC FORMS and Documents Included With This Report  |          |   | <b>X</b> |
| *Executive Summary [FORM 715-01 PART E], that includes:   | <b>X</b> | *Optional Annual Self-Assessment Checklist Against Essential Elements [FORM 715-01PART G]   | <b>X</b> |
| Brief paragraph describing the agency's mission and mission-related functions                           | <b>X</b> | *EEO Plan To Attain the Essential Elements of a Model EEO Program [FORM 715-01PART H] for each programmatic essential element requiring improvement                         | <b>X</b> |
| Summary of results of agency's annual self-assessment against MD-715 "Essential Elements"               | <b>X</b> | *EEO Plan To Eliminate Identified Barrier [FORM 715-01 PART I] for each identified barrier  | <b>X</b> |
| Summary of Analysis of Work Force Profiles including net change analysis and comparison to RCLF         | <b>X</b> | *Special Program Plan for the Recruitment, Hiring, and Advancement of Individuals With Targeted Disabilities for agencies with 1,000 or more employees [FORM 715-01 PART J] | <b>X</b> |
| Summary of EEO Plan objectives planned to eliminate identified barriers or correct program deficiencies | <b>X</b> | *Copy of Workforce Data Tables as necessary to support Executive Summary and/or EEO Plans   | <b>X</b> |
| Summary of EEO Plan action items implemented or accomplished  | <b>X</b> | *Copy of data from 462 Report as necessary to support action items related to Complaint Processing Program deficiencies, ADR effectiveness, or other compliance issues      | <b>X</b> |
| *Statement of Establishment of Continuing Equal Employment Opportunity Programs [FORM 715-01 PART F]    | <b>X</b> | *Copy of Facility Accessibility Survey results as necessary to support EEO Action Plan for building renovation projects   | <b>X</b> |
| *Copies of relevant EEO Policy Statement(s) and/or excerpts from revisions made to EEO                  | <b>X</b> | *Organizational Chart   | <b>X</b> |

|   |            |   |                  |                  |                  |
|---|------------|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Policy Statements   |            |   |                  |                  |                  |
| <b>EEOC FORM<br/>715-01<br/>PART E</b>  |            | <b>U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission<br/>FEDERAL AGENCY ANNUAL<br/>EEO PROGRAM STATUS REPORT</b> |                  |                  |                  |
| [Natural Resources Conservation Service<br>(NRCS)]  |            | <b>For period covering October 1, 2012 to September 30, 2013.</b>   |                  |                  |                  |
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY   |            |   |                  |                  |                  |
| <p>NRCS is one of the largest Agencies in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) with 11,162 civilian employees. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2013, NRCS hired 240 employees, compared to 892 hired in FY 2012.</p> <p>In conducting the analysis for this report, NRCS reviewed other NRCS diversity reports, including but not limited to: The Annual Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Statistical Report of Discrimination Complaints; the No Fear Act report; the Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program (FEORP) report; Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP).</p> <p>In Table 1, red numbers indicate those areas in which NRCS is below the National Civilian Labor Force (CLF)</p> <p>(See Tables A-1 and B-1 for Total Workforce)</p> |            |   |                  |                  |                  |
| <b>Table 1: Total Workforce From FY2012-2013</b>  |            |   |                  |                  |                  |
| <b>Race</b>   | <b>CLF</b> | <b>FY 2012#</b>   | <b>FY 2012 %</b> | <b>FY 2013 #</b> | <b>FY 2013 %</b> |
| HM  | 6.20       | 404   | 3.4%<br>%%       | 362              | 3.4%             |
| HF  | 4.50       | 220   | 1.8%             | 179              | 1.7%             |
| WM  | 39.0       | 6271  | 53.05%           | 5741             | 53.7%            |
| WF  | 33.70      | 3322  | 28.1%            | 2924             | 27.3%            |
| BM  | 4.80       | 523   | 4.4%             | 468              | 4.4%             |
| BF  | 5.70       | 430   | 3.6%             | 388              | 3.6%             |
| AM  | 1.90       | 86  | 0.7%             | 87               | 0.81%            |
| AF  | 1.70       | 72  | 0.6%             | 60               | 0.56%            |
| NHPIM   | 0.10       | 20  | 0.1%             | 21               | 0.20%            |
| NHPIF   | 0.10       | 16  | 0.1%             | 19               | 0.18%            |
| AIANM   | 0.30       | 173   | 1.4%             | 250              | 2.4%             |
| AIANF   | 0.30       | 88  | 0.7%             | 127              | 1.2%             |
| TMRM  | 0.80       | 11  | 0.9%             | 27               | 0.25%            |
| TMRF  | 0.80       | 82  | 0.6%             | 37               | 0.35%            |
| <p>Individuals with disabilities decreased from 1285 (10.87%) in FY 2012 to 1133 (10.15%) in 2013. Targeted Disabilities decreased from 115 (0.97%) in 2012 to 102 (0.93%) in 2013. NRCS remains below the EEOC Federal Goal of 2% for individuals with targeted disabilities.</p>  |            |   |                  |                  |                  |

NRCS' workforce trend for FY 2013, showed a decrease in the total workforce numbers but an increase in American Indian/Alaskan Native Male and Female and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander males and female.

NRCS' Senior Executive Service (SES) increased this fiscal year from 21 to 23 employees. Men increased from 14 to 16 (69.6%) SES employees, women remained the same 7 (30.4%) employees. Of the 16 male SES employees 8 (34.8%) are White male, 2 (8.7%) are Hispanic male; 4(17.4%) are Black male and 2 (8.7%)are American Indian/Alaska Male. There are no SES employees that are Asian/Pacific Islander male. Of the 23 NRCS SES employees, 7 are female. This number has not changed from 2012. Of the 7 female, 6 are White female. There is one Black female. There are no SES employees that are Hispanic female, American Indian/Alaska Native female or Asian American/Pacific Islander female.

Table 2 below shows the feeding pool to the SES level of NRCS employees at the GS 14 and GS 15 level. The chart shows which groups are under representation (shown in red).

|                        | GS-14       |              | GS-15      |             |
|------------------------|-------------|--------------|------------|-------------|
|                        | 2012        | 2013         | 2012       | 2013        |
| Hispanic Male          | 12 (4.0%)   | 09 (3.04%)   | 10 (6.5%)  | 10 (6.94%)  |
| Hispanic Female        | 05 (1.6%)   | 04 (1.35%)   | 02 (1.3%)  | 02 (1.39%)  |
| White Male             | 135 (45.4%) | 132 (44.59%) | 70 (46.0%) | 66 (45.83%) |
| White Female           | 64 (21.5%)  | 69 (23.31%)  | 36 (23.6%) | 30 (20.83%) |
| Black Male             | 31(10.4%)   | 25 (8.45%)   | 23 (15.1%) | 21 (14.58%) |
| Black Female           | 30 (10.1%)  | 33 (11.15%)  | 07 (4.6%)  | 09 (6.25%)  |
| Asian Amer. Male       | 10 (3.3%)   | 10 (3.38%)   | 01 (0.66%) | 01 (0.69%)  |
| Asian Amer. Female     | 04 (1.3%)   | 04 (1.35%)   | 01 (0.66%) | 01 (0.69%)  |
| Nat. Hawaiian Male     | 00 (0%)     | 0 (0%)       | 00 (0%)    | 00 (0%)     |
| Nat. Hawaiian Female   | 00 (0%)     | 0 (0%)       | 00 (0%)    | 00 (0%)     |
| AI/AN Male             | 02 (0.67%)  | 04 (1.35%)   | 01 (0.66%) | 03 (2.08%)  |
| AI/AN Female           | 02 (0.67%)  | 03 (1.01%)   | 01 (0.66%) | 10 (0.69%)  |
| 2 or more races Male   | 02 (0.67%)  | 02 (0.68%)   | 00 (0%)    | 00 (0%)     |
| 2 or more races Female | 00 (0%)     | 01 (0.34%)   | 00 (0%)    | 00 (0%)     |

NRCS employed 7419 (in 2012) and 7191 (in 2013) civilian employees in highly specialized occupations with emphasis in General Biologist Scientist, Soil Conservation, Soil Conservation Technician, Soil Scientist, Engineering Technician, and Civil Engineering. Table 3 lists the top five of NRCS' Participation Rates for Major Occupational Series. It highlights NRCS and the Occupational Civilian Labor Force representation of all the affinity groups. The data used in the workforce tables is used as the basis for NRCS targeted recruitment efforts.

An analysis of Table 3 reveals that women and minorities have a lower participation rate when compared to white males.

**Table 3: NRCS Major Occupation Series (MOS) 2012 and 2013**

| MOS            | Total | HM  | HF  | WM    | WF    | BM  | BF  | AM  | AF  | NH/PIM | NH/PIF | AI/ANM | AI/ANF | TMM  | TMF |
|----------------|-------|-----|-----|-------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------|--------|--------|--------|------|-----|
| Bio/soil       | 571   | 30  | 8   | 321   | 138   | 33  | 12  | 3   | 2   | 2      | 0      | 8      | 8      | 2    | 4   |
| NRCS %         | 100   | 5.2 | 1.4 | 56.2  | 24.1  | 5.7 | 2.1 | 0.5 | 0.3 | 0.3    | 0.0    | 1.4    | 1.4    | 0.3  | 0.7 |
| Soil CNSV      | 4,289 | 147 | 77  | 2,426 | 1,118 | 213 | 84  | 17  | 14  | 6      | 13     | 69     | 34     | 43   | 28  |
| NRCS%          | 100   | 3.4 | 1.8 | 56.5  | 26.0  | 4.9 | 1.6 | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.1    | 0.3    | 1.6    | 0.7    | 1.0  | 0.6 |
| Soil CNSV TECH | 1,333 | 30  | 12  | 893   | 304   | 35  | 5   | 2   | 0   | 5      | 0      | 27     | 4      | 12   | 4   |
| NRCS%          | 100   | 2.2 | .90 | 67.   | 22.8  | 2.6 | 0.4 | 0.1 | 0.0 | .38    | 0      | 2.0    | 0.3    | 0.90 | 0.3 |
| Soil Scientist | 698   | 30  | 8   | 477   | 177   | 34  | 5   | 7   | 1   | 0      | 0      | 4      | 1      | 12   | 2   |
| NRCS%          | 100   | 4.3 | 1.1 | 68.3  | 16.7  | 4.8 | 0.7 | 1.0 | 0.1 | 0      | 0      | 0.5    | 0.1    | 1.7  | 0.2 |
| Civil ENG      | 528   | 26  | 11  | 361   | 75    | 10  | 5   | 12  | 3   | 0      | 0      | 11     | 3      | 9    | 2   |
| NRCS%          | 100   | 4.9 | 2.0 | 68.3  | 14.2  | 1.8 | 0.9 | 2.2 | 0.6 | 0      | 0      | 2.8    | 0.6    | 1.7  | 0.3 |

| MOS            | Total | HM  | HF  | WM    | WF    | BM  | BF  | AM  | AF  | NH/PIM | NH/PIF | AI/ANM | AI/ANF | TMM  | TMF |
|----------------|-------|-----|-----|-------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------|--------|--------|--------|------|-----|
| Bio/soil       | 571   | 30  | 8   | 321   | 138   | 33  | 12  | 3   | 2   | 2      | 0      | 8      | 8      | 2    | 4   |
| NRCS %         | 100   | 5.2 | 1.4 | 56.2  | 24.1  | 5.7 | 2.1 | 0.5 | 0.3 | 0.3    | 0.0    | 1.4    | 1.4    | 0.3  | 0.7 |
| Soil CNSV      | 4,289 | 147 | 77  | 2,426 | 1,118 | 213 | 84  | 17  | 14  | 6      | 13     | 69     | 34     | 43   | 28  |
| NRCS%          | 100   | 3.4 | 1.8 | 56.5  | 26.0  | 4.9 | 1.6 | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.1    | 0.3    | 1.6    | 0.7    | 1.0  | 0.6 |
| Soil CNSV TECH | 1,333 | 30  | 12  | 893   | 304   | 35  | 5   | 2   | 0   | 5      | 0      | 27     | 4      | 12   | 4   |
| NRCS%          | 100   | 2.2 | .90 | 67.   | 22.8  | 2.6 | 0.4 | 0.1 | 0.0 | .38    | 0      | 2.0    | 0.3    | 0.90 | 0.3 |
| Soil Scientist | 698   | 30  | 8   | 477   | 177   | 34  | 5   | 7   | 1   | 0      | 0      | 4      | 1      | 12   | 2   |
| NRCS%          | 100   | 4.3 | 1.1 | 68.3  | 16.7  | 4.8 | 0.7 | 1.0 | 0.1 | 0      | 0      | 0.5    | 0.1    | 1.7  | 0.2 |
| Civil ENG      | 528   | 26  | 11  | 361   | 75    | 10  | 5   | 12  | 3   | 0      | 0      | 11     | 3      | 9    | 2   |
| NRCS%          | 100   | 4.9 | 2.0 | 68.3  | 14.2  | 1.8 | 0.9 | 2.2 | 0.6 | 0      | 0      | 2.8    | 0.6    | 1.7  | 0.3 |

## Summary of EEO Statistics in NRCS

### **Section A- Demonstrated commitment from agency leadership**

As the federal government continues down the path of constant improvement with hiring reform and pay system conversions, federal agencies must be forward thinking in positioning themselves as the nation's employer of choice. Reaching all segments of our diverse population only strengthens an agency's ability to achieve its service related mission. EEOC's Management Directive 715 sets forth policy guidance and standards for establishing and maintaining effective affirmative programs of equal employment opportunity under Section 717 of Title VII and effective affirmative action programs under Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act.

The MD-715 requires agency heads and other senior management officials to demonstrate a firm commitment to equality of opportunity for all employees and applicants of employment. Agencies must promote and safeguard equal employment opportunity into everyday practice and make principles a fundamental part of agency culture. Agency leaders need to take ownership of their agencies EEO program including activities that demonstrate the importance of developed action plans.

**Strengths:** In an effort to move forward and transform NRCS into a model Title VII and Rehabilitation Act program, NRCS continues to hold directors, high-level employees, EEO officials and personnel officers accountable for the effective implementation and management of NRCS' Affirmative Employment Program. NRCS reaffirms EEO for all employees and applicants for employment regardless of race, religion, color, sex, national origin, age, or disability. NRCS ensured all employees were able to compete on a fair and level playing field with equal opportunity for competition.

On March 13 2013, Jason Weller, Chief of NRCS issued a new Anti-Discrimination Policy Statement, reinforcing the Department's commitment to a work environment free from unlawful discrimination and emphasizing NRCS' obligation to prevent and promptly correct harassment in the workplace.

The OASCR evaluated the Agency Heads and Staff Office Directors on their overall performance in promoting civil rights and equal opportunity. The Chief's Civil Rights Performance Plan and Accomplishment Report addresses the following goal indicators:

- 1) *Commitment of Agency Leadership/Strategic Plan Integration;*
- 2) *Program Delivery: Proactive management and legal compliance;*
- 3) *EEO program: Proactive management and legal compliance; and*
- 4) *Utilization of Alternative Dispute Resolution*
- 5) *Procurement.*
- 6) *Secretary's Commitment*
- 7) *Implementation of the Secretary's Commitment to Diversity*
- 8) *Establishment and Implementation of a Special Emphasis Program to Expand Diversity:*

NRCS ensured policies were prominently posted in all personnel offices, EEO offices and on the Agency's Web site. Reasonable accommodations procedures were disseminated on NRCS' public Web site.

The NRCS Civil Rights Division (CRD) provided Introduction to EEO-101, Civil Rights Compliance and Program Delivery Update, ADR, Special Emphasis Programs, Civil Rights Impact Analysis, Redirecting Highly Charged Conversations, and Management Directive 715 training to supervisors, managers, and employees to ensure that they communicate and support all the civil rights policies throughout the ranks. State offices provided various civil rights training during all-employees' meetings to inform their employees about penalties for unacceptable behavior. NRCS' employees completed the USDA mandatory training on NO FEAR Act through AgLearn with a completion rate of 95%.

Materials are made available to all employees, applicants, and customers; information is available via the CRD Web site informing them of the availability of a process of its information on the EEO complaint process and civil rights programs. CRD conducted 10 Civil Rights (CR) Compliance reviews during FY 2010, wherein compliance was noted regarding NRCS policy for prominently displaying civil rights policies and posters.

NRCS requires that annual performance appraisals for managers and supervisors include an evaluation of their contributions to USDA's commitment to CR and equal opportunity (EO) and adherence to its CR policy. Annual performance appraisals for all SES-level supervisors and managers include an element evaluating their compliance and commitment to CR and EEO.

All NRCS' employees have a stand-alone CR critical performance element, which incorporates the Agency's CR policies, and provides the accountability necessary to ensure that customers and employees are treated fairly and equitably. Performance standards for new employees are put in place within 30 days of entering duty; and current employee performance plans are effective within 30 days of the last performance cycle.

All Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPM) and members of Civil Rights Advisory Committees (CRACs) who have CR as a collateral duty, have an addendum to their position descriptions to include CR collateral assignments. All collateral SEPMs and the CRAC Chairperson in each organizational unit report directly to the Deputy Equal Employment Officer for that unit.

The Agency's CRD program has allocated sufficient resources and funding to ensure success of its operation. The CRD's Director has the authority to ensure implementation of Agency EEO action plans to improve EEO program efficiency and/or eliminate identified barriers to the realization of equality of opportunity.

**Deficiencies:** There were no deficiencies in this essential element.

## **Section B- Integration of EEO into Agency's Mission**

In order to achieve its strategic mission, an agency must integrate equality of opportunity into attracting, hiring, developing, and retaining the most qualified work force. The success of an agency's EEO program ultimately depends upon decisions made by individual agency managers. Therefore, agency managers constitute an integral part of the agency's EEO program. The EEO office serves as a resource to these managers by providing direction, guidance, and monitoring of key activities to achieve a diverse workplace free of barriers to equal opportunity.

As part of integrating EEO into the strategic mission Section II(B) of MD-715 instructs agencies to ensure that: (1) the EEO Director has access to the agency head; (2) the EEO office coordinates with Human Resources; (3) sufficient resources are allocated to the EEO program; (4) the EEO office retains a competent staff; (5) all managers receive management training; (6) all managers and employees are involved in implementing the EEO program; and (7) all employees are informed of the EEO program.

**Strengths:** During FY 2010, the Agency began drafting the FY 2011-2015 Strategic Plan. Amidst Agency reorganization, the Agency produced an accompanying Strategic Plan Progress Report and Update Plan. Anticipated release of the FY 2011-2015 Strategic Plan was postponed due to delayed FY 2010 funding and congressional modification of the NRCS program budget. Elimination of several NRCS programs is requiring modification of the FY 2011-2015 Strategic Plan. Despite the delay in issuing the FY 2011-2015 Agency Strategic Plan, the Strategic Plan Progress Report and Update issued in FY 2010 incorporates the Agency's assurance of fair and equitable service delivery to all program customers; and goals of increasing diversity in employment. The FY 2011-2015 Strategic Plan will also include assurance of CR/EEO goals and objectives relative to the Secretary's new Civil Rights Era and Cultural Transformation initiatives.

In addition to the Agency's Strategic Plan, the NRCS Human Capital Plan serves as a companion document to the Strategic Plan. More specifically, the Human Capital Plan emphasizes outreach, workforce diversity, upward mobility, and staff development; and outlines a variety of strategies designed to ensure that the Agency can continue to serve the public, build and maintain partnerships, and provide healthy and productive natural resources through a highly skilled and diverse workforce. NRCS' Human Capital Vision of "Conservation First, People Always," is driven by a business and human capital driver paradigm, which focuses on five key human capital strategic goals:

- Leadership;
- Recruitment and Retention;
- Performance Culture;
- Talent Development; and
- Human Capital Effectiveness.

NRCS' Human Capital Plan also seeks to develop a leadership cadre that represents the diverse communities and customers we serve. The assessments of current and future needs are being accomplished through a series of leadership competency models, which are accessible to all employees.

The Agency Head demonstrated further commitment to the USDA Civil Rights goals and obligations by issuing: Special Emphasis observance notices; and a new Civil Rights Policy Statement and Anti-Harassment Statement at the beginning of the calendar year.

**Deficiencies:** There were no deficiencies in this essential element.

### **Section C-Management and Program Accountability**

A model EEO program will hold managers, supervisors, EEO officials, and personnel officers accountable for the effective implementation and management of the agency's program. As part of management and program accountability, MD-715 provides that agencies should ensure that: (1) regular internal audits are conducted of the EEO program; (2) EEO procedures are established; (3) managers and supervisors are evaluated on EEO; (4) personnel policies are clear and consistently implemented; (5) a comprehensive anti-harassment policy has been issued; (6) an effective reasonable accommodation policy has been issued; and (7) findings of discrimination are reviewed.

**Strengths:** NRCS incorporated the requirements of DR 4300-010, "Civil Rights Accountability Policy and Procedures", which requires that annual performance appraisals for managers and supervisors include an evaluation of their contributions to USDA's commitment to civil rights and equal opportunity (EO) and adherence to its civil rights policy. Annual performance appraisals for all SES-level supervisors and managers now include an element evaluating them on their compliance and commitment to CR/EEO.

All NRCS managers and supervisors have a stand-alone civil rights critical performance element. Either non-supervisory employees have a stand-alone civil rights performance element or civil rights standards are included in another critical performance element. The elements incorporate the Agency's civil rights policies and provide the accountability necessary to ensure that customers and employees are treated fairly and equitably. Performance standards for new employees are put in place within 30 days of them entering duty.

**Deficiencies:** There were no deficiencies in this essential element.

### **Section D- Proactive Prevention of Unlawful Discrimination**

Part 1614 of EEOC's regulation provides that each agency shall "establish a system for periodically evaluating the effectiveness of the agency's overall equal employment opportunity effort." See 29 C.F.R. Part 1614.102(a) (11). In particular, "each agency shall maintain a continuing affirmative program to promote equal opportunity and to identify and eliminate discriminatory practices and policies." See 29 C.F.R. Part 1614.102(a).

**Strengths:** “Equal Employment Opportunity” is the pathway to organizational cohesion. A benefit of having a highly effective and efficient workforce is to assure all employees of a discrimination free work environment support and adheres to the spirit and intent of EEO.

In order to develop a competitive, highly qualified, diverse workforce that reflects the makeup of the nations labor force, NRCS strives to fully utilize all employees’ talents, without regard to race, color, age, sex, national origin, disability, or religion at all levels of the organization. NRCS used various recruitment plans to assess workforce demographics, recruitment, promotion, retention, and employment trends. These plans included, but were not limited to, Management Directive (MD)-715 Program Status Report, the Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Plan (FEORP), And Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Plan (DVAAP), and the Hispanic Employment Program (HEP) report.

Target hiring veterans and persons with targeted Disabilities: In FY 2013, To date, a total of 56 veterans were hired. Of the 56 veterans hired 66.1% (37) were male and 33.9% (19) were female. Also in FY 2013, 101 persons with disabilities were hired. Of the 101 employees with targeted disabilities, 68.32% (69) are men and 31.68% (32) are women.

NRCS has a cadre of eight national Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPMs) (i.e., American Indian/Alaska Native Emphasis Program; Asian American/Pacific Islander Emphasis Program; Black Emphasis Program; Disability Emphasis Program; Federal Women’s Program (FWP); Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender (GLBT) Emphasis Program; Hispanic Emphasis Program (HEP); and Veterans Emphasis Program), the national FWP and HEP are full-time and the other five national program managers are collateral duty assignments. However, the national FWPM is also the acting national HEPM. The national DEPM was made a collateral-duty position. Additionally, NRCS has collateral duty SEPMs in each State and Center, one for each of the eight Special Emphasis programs listed above; over 300 SEPMs nationally.

In FY 2013, National SEPMs developed and provided data and barrier analysis and compared it to the results of the 2011 survey. They submitted a report to agency leadership showing barriers and recommendations for overcoming them.

National SEPMs developed an online Quarterly report survey that was completed by 313 State SEPMs, an 80% response rate. The SEPMs responded to 28 questions, including questions asking them to identify triggers, barriers and recommendations to eliminate barriers related to recruitment, hiring, retention, and career development. The individual reports were consolidate into one report with a summary of barriers and recommendations and distributed to agency deputy chief for management.

In 2013, the female, Hispanic and Black special emphasis program groups continued the developed sub-teams that focused on the following issues: barrier analysis, employee career development and retention; student recruitment and retention; information and education and employee historical research. These groups will develop practical strategies for overcoming barriers of their respective groups that were noted in the 2013 survey.

SEPMs strengthened partnerships with groups that can assist in improving diversity in the agency.

Special Emphasis Program Managers and the Talent Management Division continue to work together to strengthen partnerships with groups that can assist in improving diversity in the agency.

## **Results Survey of SEPMs – Barriers or Potential Barriers 2013 And Recommendations to NRCS**

The National Special Emphasis Program Managers polled the SEPMs in the states and asked them to state what they see as barriers to the groups they represent. This request was made by survey monkey and the following pages show a summary of findings of barriers. This report also states suggested solutions for dealing with the barrier findings.

**Recommendations** for overcoming barriers to women, minorities, employees with disabilities and veterans

### **Education of Agency Leaders and Employees**

1. Educate employees through training to recognize their biases and their impact on a inclusive workplace.
2. Educate supervisors on reasonable accommodations process and encourage them to provide support for employees who need them
3. Educate state hiring officials on the President's and Secretary's Goal for hiring Hispanic employees, veterans and persons with disabilities.
4. Educate supervisors and managers to support mentoring for the employees in their offices.
5. Educate supervisors and managers on effective ways to supervise a diverse workforce.

### **SEPM Training**

1. Teach HEPMs on how to effectively outreach to the communities they represent in their state

### **Retention**

1. Determine ways to provide support to employees with disabilities when they are required to relocate.
2. Develop ways that job sharing or part time work can be available to employees.
3. Develop ways to support families with children when they move to communities with limited day care options.

### **Career Development**

1. Develop strategies to encourage employees to seek informal mentoring options when formal mentoring is not available.
2. Inform and education employees on the benefits of seeking opportunities in other states
3. Open detail opportunities outside of states.

4. Open student internship opportunities outside of states.

### **Outreach**

1. Work on strategies that SEPMs can use to improve outreach to the communities they represent and improve partnerships with them.

### **Policy Development**

2. Develop our LEP policy to provide a fair and consistent way to create NRCS information in other languages.
3. Explore ways to improve the self-identification of disability form to include a way for employees to list more than one disability
4. Develop a NRCS lactation support program.
5. Define what benefits are available for women contemplating maternity leave and make sure this information widely distributed.
6. Ensure that NRCS lists LGBT males and females as a demographic option on all is forms, surveys, etc.

### **Recruitment**

1. Educate employees, supervisors, managers and hiring officials on how to hire in spite of “low population rates” of minorities in their state.”
2. Develop information specifically for veterans, minorities, women and persons with disabilities about NRCS, its programs, services and hiring qualifications and encourage them to earn degrees that will allow us to hire them.

### **Students**

1. NRCS needs to replace the student program coordinator
2. Hiring officials and SEPMs need to be educated on the specifics of the Pathway Program
3. Develop ways to help students and potential applicants become proficient in navigating through the Pathways Program.

## **Barriers report by Veteran SEPMs**

**BARRIER OR POTENTIAL BARRIERS:** • Identify and list any internal or external barriers or potential barriers to recruitment/hiring, career development, promotions, and retention in your state/area/center/lab.

1. Current barriers for Veterans employment with NRCS are mainly related to education and experience with science based positions. Many Veterans that do not have college credits or college science credits do not meet the basic qualifications for the open positions.
2. Budget
3. Identifying veterans is a barrier
4. Not a large push within the state to hire veterans
5. Not enough vacant positions that veterans qualify for
6. Lack of awareness by veterans of who we are and what we do
7. Isolation of some communities and distance to shopping, cultural events, etc make it difficult to retain people in some locations.
8. Mobility Agreements are a barrier for service members in the Reserves or the National Guard. These service members need to remain within a reasonable distance to their unit.
9. Also programs to encourage the employees we have to attain their higher education. We need to start promoting our experienced employees to management positions

### **Recommendations overcoming barriers for Veteran employees**

1. Educate state hiring officials on the President's and Secretary's Goal for hiring veterans.
2. Train VEPMs on effective ways to outreach to veterans in their state.
3. Develop information specifically for veterans about NRCS, its programs, services and hiring qualifications and encourage them to use their college benefits to earn degrees that will allow us to hire them.

## **Barriers report by LGBT SEPMs**

**BARRIER OR POTENTIAL BARRIERS:** • Identify and list any internal or external barriers or potential barriers to recruitment/hiring, career development, promotions, and retention in your state/area/center/lab.

1. Lack of methods to identify LGBT employees or prospective employees such as ways for them to self-identify
2. There are less employees benefits for LGBT employees and their families than for their heterosexual co-workers
3. LGBT persons are largely invisible and there is no national or state census data base to populate for LGBT persons so recruiting/hiring is problematic.
4. There are a few employees in my state who are open about their sexual orientation, including myself. I'm hoping to sit down w/a couple of them and discuss this IF the CRC Chair approves it at our next CRC meeting.
5. GLBT is not one of those "tracked" categories so we really have no idea who we already employee or who we hire.
6. We have folks who have trouble setting aside their religious feelings on GLBT so they can accept differences in the work place.

## **Recommendations overcoming barriers for LGBT employees**

1. Educate state hiring officials agency leaders and staff about LGBT people and why they must accept them in the workplace
2. Develop information specifically for veterans about NRCS, its programs, services and hiring qualifications and encourage them to use their college benefits to earn degrees that will allow us to hire them.
3. Ensure that NRCS lists LGBT males and females as a demographic option on all is forms, surveys, etc.
4. Teach LGBT SEPMs on how to effectively outreach to the LGBT community in their state.

### **Barriers reported by HEPMS**

**BARRIER OR POTENTIAL BARRIERS:** • Identify and list any internal or external barriers or potential barriers to recruitment/hiring, career development, promotions, and retention in your state/area/center/lab.

1. The Pathways Program
2. Hispanics lack of desire to move away from family, community and comfort zone for jobs and or an education.
3. Not interested in moving to areas that have cold winters
4. NRCS Staff not willing to spend the time and effort to train students.
5. Budget Workload
6. We do not very actively recruit Hispanics by visiting colleges in area with high Hispanic populations in the Ag related fields.
7. Another barrier to recruitment is family pressure for Hispanic students to major in areas that are viewed by society as successful such as teaching or business related fields.
8. Cost of Living
9. I think we need to promote the mentoring program even more, so new employees can have that support on their 1st months in the agency.
10. Provide resume training to Hispanic students and employees.

### **Recommendations overcoming barriers for HEPMS employees**

1. Educate state hiring officials on the President's and Secretary's Goal for hiring Hispanics.
2. Open detail opportunities outside of states.
3. Open student internship opportunities outside of states
4. Encourage Hispanic employees to seek opportunities in other sta
5. Encourage mentoring of Hispanic employees.
6. Teach HEPMS on how to effectively outreach to the Hispanic community in their state

### **Barriers reported by FWPMs**

**BARRIER OR POTENTIAL BARRIERS:** • Identify and list any internal or external barriers or potential barriers to recruitment/hiring, career development, promotions, and retention in your state/area/center/lab.

1. Family (dual-careers and children) and work conflict or lack of balance.
2. Mobility (mobile in the early career but as family grows mobility becomes an issue also limited employment opportunities for spouses.)
3. Our offices are in rural areas where there is limited day care options and extended family not available to help.
4. With the implementation of Pathways, opportunities for recruitment based on diversity have lessened.
5. Lack of funding to hire a few student positions in the summer.
6. High cost of living in some areas.
7. Not enough training/detail opportunities
8. Mentor program not used in every state or limited to new employees only.
9. No clear maternity leave program or lactation support program at work.

### **Recommendations overcoming barriers for FWPMs employees**

1. Educate supervisors on effective ways to supervise female employees.
2. Develop ways that job sharing or part time work can be available to employees.
3. Develop ways to support families with children when they move to communities with limited day care options.
4. Encourage agency leaders at state level to invest in mentoring for female employees.
5. Develop a NRCS lactation support program.
6. Define what benefits are available for women contemplating maternity leave and make sure this information widely distributed.

### **Barriers reported by DEPMS**

**BARRIER OR POTENTIAL BARRIERS:** • Identify and list any internal or external barriers or potential barriers to recruitment/hiring, career development, promotions, and retention in your state/area/center/lab.

1. Budget.
2. Some of the positions require mobility over rough, unstable ground, physical work (in sometimes "awkward" positions, and manually transporting tools, materials, samples.
3. Lack of support from leadership to hire candidates from WRP database or other options available to hire persons with disabilities.
4. Limited outreach time available and limited training.
5. It is difficult to locate people with disabilities that have college degrees in the agriculture field.
6. Mobility tradition difficult for people with disabilities who need support from family.
7. If a person with a disability loses their disability benefits (Social Security, Medicaid, Medicare) once they are employed, so the job they get must pay very well.
8. Right now the "Self-Identification of Disability" form (Standard Form 256) both in its paper version and online on the Employee Personnel Page website only allows for the selection of one disability. There are employees with multiple disabilities and they have to choose only one to declare.
9. Among some employees and leaders there is cultural based skepticism about persons with disabilities and their abilities, especially for navigating field work.
10. Among some employees and leaders there is some resistance to approving reasonable accommodation to employees.
11. Students with disabilities don't have agriculture related degrees.

### **Recommendations overcoming barriers for Employees with Disabilities**

1. Educate employees to recognize their biases against persons with disabilities and help them understand that there is no place for it in the workplace.
2. Educate supervisors on reasonable accommodations process and encourage them to provide support for employees who need them.
3. Explore ways to improve the self-identification of disability form to include a way for employees to list more than one disability
4. Determine ways to provide support to employees with disabilities when they are required to relocate.
5. Encourage agency leaders at state level to invest in mentoring for employees with disabilities

### **Barriers reported by BEPMs**

**BARRIER OR POTENTIAL BARRIERS:** • Identify and list any internal or external barriers or potential barriers to recruitment/hiring, career development, promotions, and retention in your state/area/center/lab.

1. Budgetary Restraints
2. There are employees who have a bias against working with Black people
3. Applicants don't want to work in cold states
4. Applicants don't want to work in rural areas with limited amenities.
5. High cost of living for employees with low grade position.
6. The Pathways Program

### **Recommendations overcoming barriers for Black employees**

1. Educate employees to recognize their biases against persons with disabilities and help them understand that there is no place for it in the workplace.
2. Encourage agency leaders at state level to invest in mentoring for Black employees.
3. Develop ways to help Black applicants become proficient in navigating through the Pathways Program.

## **Barriers reported by American Indian/Alaska Native SEPMS**

**BARRIER OR POTENTIAL BARRIERS:** • Identify and list any internal or external barriers or potential barriers to recruitment/hiring, career development, promotions, and retention in your state/area/center/lab.

1. Limited number of AIAN students earning degrees in agriculturally related majors.
2. We need to encourage AI/AN applicants/employees to apply for a wider field of occupations, i.e. GIS, administrative positions.
3. Funding limits and budget constraints
4. Lack of effective outreach to AIAN communities and consistent partnerships with tribes.
5. Mobility- many of our tribal employees also have important roles within their tribal governments. They do not want to move to several locations as soil conservationists.
6. Potential applicants who live on reservations are reluctant to leave the reservation for employment/education. Many have children and family obligations and don't have access to reliable transportation or telephones.
7. Lack of funds to fill vacancies.
8. High work demands leave little time to do SEPM work.
9. Deep bias against any applicant that is not from our state

### **Recommendations overcoming barriers for American Indian/Alaska Native employees**

1. Educate employees through training to recognize their biases and help them understand that there is no place for it in the workplace.
2. Work on strategies to improve outreach to the AI/AN communities and improve partnerships with them.
3. Encourage agency leaders at state level to invest in mentoring for AI/AN employees.
4. Develop ways to help AI/AN applicants become proficient in navigating through the Pathways Program.

## **Barriers reported by Asian American/Pacific Islander**

**BARRIER OR POTENTIAL BARRIERS:** • Identify and list any internal or external barriers or potential barriers to recruitment/hiring, career development, promotions, and retention in your state/area/center/lab.

1. Need help translating many of the NRCS documents and brochures into Vietnamese so that Vietnamese parents and farmers can understand more about our agency and what we can do to help them.
2. Need the financial assistance to help pay for having an NRCS booth at community events and college fairs.
3. Need to outreach more to high school students so that they can understand what we do and have NRCS professionals mentoring the students so that they know what it is like working for NRCS.
4. Low population rate of AA/PI in the state
5. The application process may seem overly burdensome and bureaucratic to potential new hires. Not using the mentor program to mentor AAPI employees
6. Pathways Program
7. Lack of student population studying agriculture.

### **Recommendations overcoming barriers for Asian American /Pacific Islander employees:**

1. Educate employees to recognize their biases against persons with disabilities and help them understand that there is no place for it in the workplace.
2. Educate employees not to use low population rates as a reason why they cannot hire AA/PI employees.
3. Encourage the use of the mentoring program to help AA/PI employees develop in their career.
4. Encourage agency leaders at state level to invest in mentoring for AA/PI employees.
5. Develop ways to help AA/PI applicants become proficient in navigating through the Pathways Program.

Develop our LEP to provide a fair and consistent way to create NRCS information in other languages.

## Recruitment accomplishments:

NRCS has updated a national recruitment framework which was approved in FY 2012 by NRCS leadership. This strategic document has been the foundation of the recruitment events at NRCS for FY 13 and will continue through FY 17 . This strategic plan aligns with the USDA Strategic Plan, the NRCS Strategic Plan and the NRCS Human Capital Strategic Plan.

During FY 2013, the following initiatives identified in the Recruitment Strategy have been implemented:

- Increasing identification of partnerships that will support diverse candidate pools. NRCS has added one additional partnership as well as working to enhance the to our previous efforts and currently have partnerships with the following:
  - Thurgood Marshall College Fund
  - Minorities in Agriculture and Natural Resources Related Sciences (MANRRS)
  - American Indians Science and Engineering Society (AISES)
  - Hmong National Development
  - FFA Career Development Experience
  - California State Polytechnic University – Pomona
- Increase number of Presentations to Diversity Groups
  - MANRRS National Conference
  - Thurgood Marshall Leadership Institute
  - Five AISES regional conferences
  - FFA National and Regional conferences (5)
- Recruited diverse candidates at the following Career Events:
  - MANRRS National Conference
  - MANRRS Regional Conferences (3)
  - Thurgood Marshall Leadership Institute
  - AISES Conferences
  - FFA National Conferences

Onboarding system was another initiative identified by the Recruitment Strategy Design Team. In FY 13, the onboarding system was launched and an implementation date of April 30, 2013 was set for all states to begin utilizing the new system.

A National Recruitment Cadre is in the early stages of planning for helping to implement the National Recruitment Framework and will continue working with these individuals through FY 13 and into FY 14. Oversight for recruitment, will begin to be implemented from a National perspective for FY 13 and beyond and this will allow for a broader reach of all targeted populations, including race, ethnicity, disability, and veterans.

- NRCS' Federal Women's Program developed a guide for breast feeding mothers who work in the field. It was distributed to all employees by national bulletin in March, 2011. This guide became agency policy in 2012. It provides information to employees and supervisors on how to create an effective space for women to pump and preserve breast milk during work hours. Also a Nursing Mothers' Group of employees and supervisors

who are nursing mothers have been established to develop realistic practices that field employees can employ to successfully provide breast milk nourishment for their child and still perform their professional duties.

- NRCS sent out a national bulletin providing guidance for employees who are nursing mothers. This year the NRCS Lactation Support Team is creating a handbook guide for employees. It should be completed by the end of the calendar year. National FWPM hosts monthly meetings with this group and is working on updating the Lactation Support Policy.
- NRCS approved the establishment of the *National Organization of Professional Women of NRCS*, a new employee resource group for women. The Chief of NRCS sent an email to all employees supporting the establishment of the organization and encouraged interested employees to join.

### **The Project GROW initiatives**

The Project GROW initiatives in both Minnesota and Florida have wrapped up for the year and will resume again in the Fall 2013 with a new group of students.

#### Accomplishments for the MN Project GROW-

- 8 students were able to continually participate in the entire program.
- Mentor/Protégé relationships were established for these 8 students
- NRCS speakers came in once a month to work with the students on exposure of different careers in NRCS and work with them on the principles of NRCS Conservation Practices
- Of the 8 students, all identified that they would be interested in coming to work for NRCS in the future and 1 of the students applied for the Pathways Internship opportunities in MN

#### Accomplishments for the FL Project GROW-

- 8 students were able to continually participate in the entire program with participation ranging from 11-34 students on a weekly basis
- NRCS speakers came in once a month to work with the students on exposure of different careers in NRCS and work with them on the principles of NRCS Conservation Practices
- All of the students expressed particular interest in applying for Pathways Internships in the future

In total, NRCS has reached out to 16 continuous students and exposed over 60 students to NRCS, who we are, what we do, and potential careers for this FY.

### **NRCS Hmong Initiative: A Partnership between NRCS and the Hmong American Partnership/Hmong National Development, Inc.**

In FY 2011, NRCS began working with the Hmong National Development (HND) and its subsidiary Hmong American Partnership (HAP). This partnership resulted in the formation of an agreement which is structured as follows:

- HAP office in St. Paul, MN selected 15 secondary students who have an interest in

science based curriculum. Most are juniors and seniors in High School with a small number in first year of college.

- The students will meet on a weekly basis for a period of seven months for a two hour learning session. NRCS has supplied curriculum based on natural resources and environmental issues which will be used during those sessions.
- Each student has a local mentor assigned from NRCS. It is anticipated that the mentors or other local staff will be speaking with the students to share real life NRCS experiences that correspond to the curriculum they are being taught
- Training related to the Hmong culture was presented this week by the HAP staff to the 15 Minnesota staff members who volunteered to be mentors. Mentoring training was also conducted with all of the NRCS mentors.
- Special events are being planned to include the NRCS mentors and the students such as field trips to NRCS and social gatherings with the student's families.
- A capstone project will be completed by the students and presented to NRCS at the end of the seven month timeframe. This capstone project will be collaboration between NRCS mentors and staff and the students to improve NRCS efforts in recruitment; this will include identifying cultural barriers and ways to overcome them, cultural information to share with NRCS employees, and what experiences students would like to have when learning about NRCS and what we do.

**Benefits to this effort:**

- Provide NRCS the opportunity to establish relationships for a targeted area of Asian American students to participate in the internship program Expand our visibility and allow us to utilize our partnership with HAP and HND to increase the student recruitment at a Middle School/High School level and prepare these students for future careers within NRCS.
- Offers the potential to increase Farm Bill Program Participation through this partnership.
- Allows NRCS to help influence minority students' career decisions to ensure there is an adequate supply of well trained, highly motivated individuals who seek a career in conservation and natural resources management.

**Persons with Disability Accomplishments:**

NRCS Disabilities Emphasis Program Managers (DEPM) work continuously to break down barriers in hiring and retaining persons with disabilities. These efforts include:

- NRCS continues to recognize that employees hired 20-30 years ago could have become employees with disabilities. Employees are encouraged to review SF-256 and update on line. This enabled the agency to recertify employees and obtain a more accurate count of employees with disabilities.

- Across the U.S. NRCS DEPMs forward and carry job vacancies to local hiring authorities, job fairs, vocational organizations and agencies that support the employment of persons with disabilities to ensure those job opportunities are seen by as wide a population as possible..
- Organizing and participating in “Diversity Days” where triggers, barriers, and success stories regarding persons with disabilities are discussed and presented to supervisors and workers.
- Coordinating with leadership to reserve some student positions for students with disabilities, and then finding those students and hiring them.
- A comprehensive sharing within NRCS employees nationwide the Presidential Proclamation promoting hiring persons with disabilities, and wide participation in the White House Disability teleconferences.
- Spreading awareness through the NRCS National Disabilities poster contest, highlighting the benefits and profitability of hiring persons with disabilities.
- Participation of all state DEPMs in Civil Rights Action Committees to ensure persons with disabilities remain high up in consideration in Civil Rights programs.
- NRCS hired a new Reasonable Accommodation Manager due to the retirement of the previous manager. The program manager is a person with a targeted disability.
- Quarterly DEPM teleconferences are organized to share USDA guidance, provide training, and to assess the state DEPM's concerns and questions regarding issues affecting the hiring and retention of persons with disabilities.
- Coordination has been made with other federal agencies including the Federal Disabilities Workforce Consortium, to share information and coordinate efforts of DEPMs.
- Quarterly teleconferences hosted by all National SEPMS to provide centralized information, guidance, training, and direction to the State and Center SEPMS. Through these teleconferences SEPMS share ideas, concerns, and best practices.
- The major training sources for field SEPMS are the quarterly teleconferences. Since new collateral duty SEPMS are selected in a staggered fashion throughout the year, the National SEPMS conducts four two-hour New SEPMS Orientation Training sessions. The National SEPMS will continue to provide this training in FY 2013.
- NRCS SEPMS maintain a SharePoint site where SEPMS can find helpful program-related

information. For example: SEPM training materials; recruitment materials; teleconference agendas and minutes; business plan examples; quarterly report template; Heritage Month information; data reports; translations; event pictures and website links. The SharePoint site is instrumental in helping SEPMS work more efficiently on many of our state and national initiatives and projects. Additionally, national SEPMS have a designated internet web page with contact information.

- Employee Organizations: NRCS has a long history of supporting and working with our four employee organizations: American Indian/Alaskan Native Association for NRCS, Asian Pacific Islander Organization, National Organization of Professional Black NRCS Employees and National Organization of Professional Hispanic NRCS Employees. In FY 2011, an additional professional organization was established for Women of NRCS.
- NRCS sponsored the annual Heritage Month Poster Contests for all SEP groups. NRCS encourages all employees to submit entrees. The winner receives a \$300 spot award and the poster becomes the heritage month poster for the agency. The poster contests serve as a means of engaging our employees and increasing awareness of the Heritage Months. The posters are also distributed to employees who attend the USDA Kick-off Events for heritage months held in the Jefferson Auditorium.

**Deficiencies:** There were no deficiencies in this essential element.

### **Section E- Efficiency in the EEO Process**

EEOC's regulations provide that each agency shall assure that individual complaints are fairly and thoroughly investigated and that final action is taken in a timely manner. 29 C.F.R. Part 1614.102(c) (5). Section II (E) of MD-715 establishes that a model EEO program must have an efficient and fair dispute resolution process and effective systems for evaluating the impact and effectiveness of its EEO programs. In this regard, Section II (E) recommends that agencies "benchmark against EEOC regulations at 29 C.F.R. Part 1614 and other federal agencies of similar size which are highly ranked in the EEOC's Annual Report on the federal sector complaints process."

#### **Strengths:**

- NRCS prepared the State Conservationist's Civil Rights Performance (Appraisals) Report which is a management tool used to evaluate all fifty States and US Territories on their performance on Civil Rights.
- NRCS continued improvements in the area of complaints management to streamline workflow, enhance process efficiencies, improve customer service, and incorporate accountability.

- NRCS continued working with enhanced performance metrics and process improvement by revising standard operating procedures and providing internal training on work process.
- NRCS utilizes the Department's enterprise system, iComplaints, for complaint tracking and monitoring which identifies and tracks the status of the EEO complaint process stages.
- iComplaints permitted the Complaints Manager to identify/analyze the location, status, and length of time elapsed at each stage of the Agency's complaints resolution process; the issues and the bases of the complaints; the aggrieved individuals/complainants that involved management officials; and other information necessary to analyze complaint activity aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the agency's EEO program.
- In accordance with EEO Management Directive MD-110, NRCS ensured that experienced counselors and contract investigators received the required 32 hours of training and the annual 8-hour refresher training.

**Deficiencies:** The Agency does not exercise total control over the Dismiss/Acceptance stage or the Final Agency Decision stage of the EEO process. Both cited stages are under the purview of the Department's OAC.

### **Section F- Responsiveness and Legal Compliance**

The six MD-715 elements, "Responsiveness and Legal Compliance," encompasses agencies' timely filing of required reports with EEOC and timely compliance with EEOC's issued orders.

**Strengths:**

- NRCS complied with federal EEO statues and regulations, policy guidance, and other applicable written instructions with respect to our responsiveness and legal compliance. NRCS follows USDA and EEOC reporting requirements and complies with EEO orders and directives. The Agency ensures completion of ordered corrective actions and timely submits its compliance reports to EEOC.
- NRCS timely submitted the annual Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Statistical Report of Discrimination Complaints (EEOC Form 462) to EEOC Office of Federal Operations (OFO). The report is an annual assessment of NRCS' formal and informal complaints, and of avenues used to resolve potential complaints prior to and during the complaint process.
- NRCS timely submitted the annual "No FEAR ACT" which is an Equal Employment Opportunity statistical report on complaints which provides information about the basic provisions of the Notification and Federal Employee Anti-discrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002. The main components of this training will focus on what anti-discrimination and

whistleblower protection laws protect employees, how to file a complaint alleging discrimination, retaliation, or a violation of the laws.

- NRCS timely submitted The MD 715 is an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) directive which reflects recent and significant changes in the law, including recent Supreme Court decisions, supersedes earlier EEOC management directives and related interpretative memoranda on this subject and provides new guidance on the elements of legally compliant Title VII (of the Civil Rights Act of 1964) and Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This Directive requires agencies to take appropriate steps to ensure that all employment decisions are free from discrimination. It also sets forth the standards by which EEOC will review the sufficiency of agency Title VII and Rehabilitation Act programs, which include periodic agency self-assessments and the removal of barriers to free and open workplace competition.

Processing of monetary agreements is processed by the responsible NHQ and/or State Official. Documentation for completing compliance is promptly provided and reviewed by CRD.

**Deficiencies:** There are no deficiencies to this element.

## **SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF WORK FORCE PROFILES**

### ***Data Base Information***

a. In accordance with the instructions received from the USDA, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Diversity, unless otherwise noted, NRCS utilized the data tables provided by the National Finance Center Reporting Center. The Macro Pac icomplaints data system provides all of the analysis, tracking, management, reporting, and document generation functionality required by Federal departments and agencies to develop and manage EEO plans.

b. This report used the National Civilian Labor Force (NCLF), Relevant/Occupational Civilian Labor Force (RCLF), and the NRCS workforce as the comparison tools.

c. Appendix: **A.** Acronyms **B.** Definitions **C.** Form 462 **D.** FY 2010 Disability Veterans Affirmative Action Program Plan and Accomplishments Report **E.** NRCS EEO Policy statements and **F.** Organizational Chart

**EEOC FORM  
715-01  
PART F**

**U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission  
FEDERAL AGENCY ANNUAL EEO PROGRAM STATUS REPORT**

**CERTIFICATION of ESTABLISHMENT of CONTINUING EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY  
PROGRAMS**

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|

Fred Reaves, Acting Director, Civil Rights Division, GS-401-15  
am the

Principal EEO U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Director/Official for

The agency has conducted an annual self-assessment of Section 717 and Section 501 programs against the essential elements as prescribed by EEO MD-715. If an essential element was not fully compliant with the standards of EEO MD-715, a further evaluation was conducted and, as appropriate, EEO Plans for Attaining the Essential Elements of a Model EEO Program, are included with this Federal Agency Annual EEO Program Status Report.

The agency has also analyzed its work force profiles and conducted barrier analyses aimed at detecting whether any management or personnel policy, procedure or practice is operating to disadvantage any group based on race, national origin, gender or disability. EEO Plans to Eliminate Identified Barriers, as appropriate, are included with this Federal Agency Annual EEO Program Status Report.

I certify that proper documentation of this assessment is in place and is being maintained for EEOC review upon request.

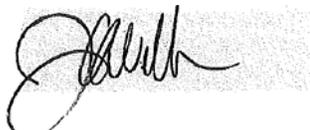
Signature of Principal EEO Director/Official



2/20/2014

Date

Certifies that this Federal Agency Annual EEO Program Status Report is in compliance with EEO MD-715.



2/21/2014

Date

Signature of Agency Head or Agency Head Designee

Date

|   |   |                               |  |
|---|---|-------------------------------|--|
| EEOC<br>FORM<br>715-01<br>PART G  | <i>U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission</i><br><b>FEDERAL AGENCY ANNUAL<br/>EEO PROGRAM STATUS REPORT</b> |                               |  |
| Natural Resource Conservation<br>Service (NRCS)   | For period covering October 1, 2012, to September 30, 2013  |                               |  |
| <b>AGENCY SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST MEASURING ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS</b>  |   |                               |  |
| <b>Essential Element A: DEMONSTRATED COMMITMENT FROM AGENCY LEADERSHIP</b><br>Requires the agency head to issue written policy statements ensuring a workplace free of<br>discriminatory harassment and a commitment to equal employment opportunity. |   |                               |  |
|  Compliance<br>Indicator   | EEO policy statements<br>are up-to-date.  | Measure<br>has<br>been<br>met | For all unmet measures, provide a brief<br>explanation in the space below or<br>complete and attach an EEOC FORM<br>715-01 PART H to the agency's status<br>report |
|  Measures  |   | Yes                           | No   |
|   | <b>X</b>  |                               |  |
|  Compliance<br>Indicator   | EEO policy statements<br>have been<br>communicated to all<br>employees.   | Measure<br>has<br>been<br>met | For all unmet measures, provide a brief<br>explanation in the space below or<br>complete and attach an EEOC FORM<br>715-01 PART H to the agency's status<br>report |

| ↓ Measures  |   | Yes                  | No   |  |
|---|---|----------------------|--|--|
| Have the heads of subordinate reporting components communicated support of all agency EEO policies through the ranks?   |   | X                    |  |  |
| Has the agency made written materials available to all employees and applicants, informing them of the variety of EEO programs and administrative and judicial remedial procedures available to them? |   | X                    |  |  |
| Has the agency prominently posted such written materials in all personnel offices, EEO offices, and on the agency's internal website? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(b)(5)]                                    |   | X                    |  |  |
| → Compliance Indicator  | X | Measure has been met | For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report |  |
| ↓ Measures  |   | Yes                  | No   |  |
| Are managers and supervisors evaluated on their commitment to agency EEO policies and principles, including their efforts to:   |   | X                    |  |  |
| resolve problems/disagreements and other conflicts in their respective work environments as they arise?   |   | X                    |  |  |
| address concerns, whether perceived or real, raised by employees and following-up with appropriate action to correct or eliminate tension in the workplace?   |   | X                    |  |  |
| support the agency's EEO program through allocation of mission personnel to participate in community out-reach and recruitment programs with private employers, public schools and universities?      |   | X                    |  |  |
| ensure full cooperation of employees under his/her supervision with EEO office officials such as EEO Counselors, EEO Investigators, etc.?   |   | X                    |  |  |

|  |          |  |   |
|--|----------|--|---|
| ensure a workplace that is free from all forms of discrimination, harassment and retaliation?  | <b>X</b> |  |   |
| ensure that subordinate supervisors have effective managerial, communication and interpersonal skills in order to supervise most effectively in a workplace with diverse employees and avoid disputes arising from ineffective communications?   | <b>X</b> |  |   |
| ensure the provision of requested religious accommodations when such accommodations do not cause an undue hardship?  | <b>X</b> |  |   |
| ensure the provision of requested disability accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities when such accommodations do not cause an undue hardship?  | <b>X</b> |  |   |
| Have all employees been informed about what behaviors are inappropriate in the workplace and that this behavior may result in disciplinary actions?  | <b>X</b> |  | Employees are informed by various methods such as training; staff meetings; NRCS Standards of Conduct; EEO policies; and Employee Relations policies – all policies published and posted on the Agency’s website. Ethics training was provided and completion required by all employees during <b>FY 2008</b> . |
| Describe what means were utilized by the agency to so inform its workforce about the penalties for unacceptable behavior.  |          |  |   |
| Have the procedures for reasonable accommodation for individuals with disabilities been made readily available/accessible to all employees by disseminating such procedures during orientation of new employees and by making such procedures available on the World Wide Web or Internet? | <b>X</b> |  |   |
| Have managers and supervisor been trained on their responsibilities under the procedures for reasonable accommodation?   | <b>X</b> |  |   |

**Essential Element B: INTEGRATION OF EEO INTO THE AGENCY'S STRATEGIC MISSION**

| Requires that the agency's EEO programs be organized and structured to maintain a workplace that is free from discrimination in any of the agency's policies, procedures or practices and supports the agency's strategic mission. |   |                      |    |  |
|--|---|----------------------|----|--|
|  Compliance Indicator   | The reporting structure for the EEO Program provides the Principal EEO Official with appropriate authority and resources to effectively carry out a successful EEO Program.   | Measure has been met |    | For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report |
|  |   | Yes                  | No |  |
|  Measures   |   |                      |    |  |
|  | Is the EEO Director under the direct supervision of the agency head? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(b)(4)]<br>For subordinate level reporting components, is the EEO Director/Officer under the immediate supervision of the lower level component's head official? (For example, does the Regional EEO Officer report to the Regional Administrator?) | X                    |    |  |
|  | Are the duties and responsibilities of EEO officials clearly defined?   | X                    |    |  |
|  | Do the EEO officials have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to carry out the duties and responsibilities of their positions?   | X                    |    |  |
|  | If the agency has 2 <sup>nd</sup> level reporting components, are there organizational charts that clearly define the reporting structure for EEO programs?   | X                    |    |  |
|  | If the agency has 2 <sup>nd</sup> level reporting components, does the agency-wide EEO Director have authority for the EEO programs within the subordinate reporting components?  | X                    |    |  |
|  | If not, please describe how EEO program authority is delegated to subordinate reporting components.   |                      |    |  |
|  Compliance Indicator   | The EEO Director and other EEO professional staff responsible for EEO programs have regular and effective means of informing the agency head and senior   | Measure has been met |    | For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC  |
|  |   | Yes                  | No |  |
|  Measures   |   |                      |    |  |

|   |   |                      |    |  |
|---|---|----------------------|----|--|
|   | management officials of the status of EEO programs and are involved in, and consulted on, management/personnel actions. |                      |    | FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report           |
| Does the EEO Director/Officer have a regular and effective means of informing the agency head and other top management officials of the effectiveness, efficiency and legal compliance of the agency's EEO program?   |   | X                    |    |  |
| Following the submission of the immediately preceding FORM 715-01, did the EEO Director/Officer present to the head of the agency and other senior officials the "State of the Agency" briefing covering all components of the EEO report, including an assessment of the performance of the agency in each of the six elements of the Model EEO Program and a report on the progress of the agency in completing its barrier analysis including any barriers it identified and/or eliminated or reduced the impact of? |   | X                    |    |  |
| Are EEO program officials present during agency deliberations prior to decisions regarding recruitment strategies, vacancy projections, succession planning, selections for training/career development opportunities, and other workforce changes?   |   | X                    |    |  |
| Does the agency consider whether any group of employees or applicants might be negatively impacted prior to making human resource decisions such as re-organizations and re-alignments?   |   | X                    |    |  |
| Are management/personnel policies, procedures and practices examined at regular intervals to assess whether there are hidden impediments to the realization of equality of opportunity for any group(s) of employees or applicants? [see 29 C.F.R. § 1614.102(b)(3)]  |   | X                    |    |  |
| Is the EEO Director included in the agency's strategic planning, especially the agency's human capital plan, regarding succession planning, training, etc., to ensure that EEO concerns are integrated into the agency's strategic mission?   |   | X                    |    |  |
|  Compliance Indicator  | The agency has committed sufficient human resources and budget allocations to its                                       | Measure has been met |    | For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the |
|  Measures  |   | Yes                  | No |  |

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|--|--|----------------------|----|---|
|  | EEO programs to ensure successful operation.   |                      |    | space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report                       |
| Does the EEO Director have the authority and funding to ensure implementation of agency EEO action plans to improve EEO program efficiency and/or eliminate identified barriers to the realization of equality of opportunity?   |  | X                    |    |   |
| Are sufficient personnel resources allocated to the EEO Program to ensure that agency self-assessments and self-analyses prescribed by EEO MD-715 are conducted annually and to maintain an effective complaint processing system?   |  | X                    |    |   |
| Are statutory/regulatory EEO related Special Emphasis Programs sufficiently staffed?   |  | X                    |    |   |
| Federal Women's Program - 5 U.S.C. 7201; 38 U.S.C. 4214; Title 5 CFR, Subpart B, 720.204   |  | X                    |    |   |
| Hispanic Employment Program - Title 5 CFR, Subpart B, 720.204  |  | X                    |    |   |
| People With Disabilities Program Manager; Selective Placement Program for Individuals With Disabilities - Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act; Title 5 U.S.C. Subpart B, Chapter 31, Subchapter I-3102; 5 CFR 213.3102(t) and (u); 5 CFR 315.709   |  | X                    |    |   |
| Are other agency special emphasis programs monitored by the EEO Office for coordination and compliance with EEO guidelines and principles, such as FEORP - 5 CFR 720; Veterans Employment Programs; and Black/African American; American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian American/Pacific Islander programs? |  | X                    |    |   |
|  Compliance Indicator   | The agency has committed sufficient budget to support the success of its EEO Programs. | Measure has been met |    | For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 |
|  Measures   |  | Yes                  | No |   |

|   |          |  |  | PART H to the agency's status report |
|---|----------|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| Are there sufficient resources to enable the agency to conduct a thorough barrier analysis of its workforce, including the provision of adequate data collection and tracking systems   | <b>X</b> |  |  |                                      |
| Is there sufficient budget allocated to all employees to utilize, when desired, all EEO programs, including the complaint processing program and ADR, and to make a request for reasonable accommodation? (Including subordinate level reporting components?) | <b>X</b> |  |  |                                      |
| Has funding been secured for publication and distribution of EEO materials (e.g. harassment policies, EEO posters, reasonable accommodations procedures, etc.)?   | <b>X</b> |  |  |                                      |
| Is there a central fund or other mechanism for funding supplies, equipment and services necessary to provide disability accommodations?   | <b>X</b> |  |  |                                      |
| Does the agency fund major renovation projects to ensure timely compliance with Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards?  | <b>X</b> |  |  |                                      |
| Is the EEO Program allocated sufficient resources to train all employees on EEO Programs, including administrative and judicial remedial procedures available to employees?   | <b>X</b> |  |  |                                      |
| Is there sufficient funding to ensure the prominent posting of written materials in all personnel and EEO offices? [see 29 C.F.R. § 1614.102(b)(5)]   | <b>X</b> |  |  |                                      |
| Is there sufficient funding to ensure that all employees have access to this training and information?  | <b>X</b> |  |  |                                      |
| Is there sufficient funding to provide all managers and supervisors with training and periodic up-dates on their EEO responsibilities:  | <b>X</b> |  |  |                                      |
| for ensuring a workplace that is free from all forms of discrimination, including harassment and retaliation?   | <b>X</b> |  |  |                                      |
| to provide religious accommodations?  | <b>X</b> |  |  |                                      |
| to provide disability accommodations in accordance with the agency's written procedures?  | <b>X</b> |  |  |                                      |

|  |          |  |  |
|--|----------|--|--|
| in the EEO discrimination complaint process? | <b>X</b> |  |  |
| to participate in ADR?                       | <b>X</b> |  |  |

**Essential Element C: MANAGEMENT AND PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY**  
This element requires the Agency Head to hold all managers, supervisors, and EEO Officials responsible for the effective implementation of the agency's EEO Program and Plan.

|  |  |                      |    |  |
|--|--|----------------------|----|--|
|  Compliance Indicator | EEO program officials advise and provide appropriate assistance to managers/supervisors about the status of EEO programs within each manager's or supervisor's area or responsibility. | Measure has been met |    | For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report |
|  Measures             |  | Yes                  | No |  |

|  |          |  |  |
|--|----------|--|--|
| Are regular (monthly/quarterly/semi-annually) EEO updates provided to management/supervisory officials by EEO program officials? | <b>X</b> |  |  |
|--|----------|--|--|

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|---|----------|--|--|
| Do EEO program officials coordinate the development and implementation of EEO Plans with all appropriate agency managers to include Agency Counsel, Human Resource Officials, Finance, and the Chief information Officer? | <b>X</b> |  |  |
|---|----------|--|--|

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|--|--|----------------------|----|--|
|  Compliance Indicator | The Human Resources Director and the EEO Director meet regularly to assess whether personnel programs, policies, and procedures are in conformity with instructions contained in EEOC management directives. [see 29 CFR § 1614.102(b)(3)] | Measure has been met |    | For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report |
|  Measures             |  | Yes                  | No |  |

|   |          |                             |           |   |
|---|----------|-----------------------------|-----------|---|
| Have time-tables or schedules been established for the agency to review its Merit Promotion Program Policy and Procedures for systemic barriers that may be impeding full participation in promotion opportunities by all groups? |          | <b>X</b>                    |           |   |
| Have time-tables or schedules been established for the agency to review its Employee Recognition Awards Program and Procedures for systemic barriers that may be impeding full participation in the program by all groups?        |          | <b>X</b>                    |           |   |
| Have time-tables or schedules been established for the agency to review its Employee Development/Training Programs for systemic barriers that may be impeding full participation in training opportunities by all groups?         |          | <b>X</b>                    |           |   |
| <b>Compliance</b><br> <b>Indicator</b>   | <b>X</b> | <b>Measure has been met</b> |           | <b>For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report</b> |
|  <b>Measures</b>   |          | <b>Yes</b>                  | <b>No</b> |   |
| Does the agency have a disciplinary policy and/or a table of penalties that covers employees found to have committed discrimination?  |          | <b>X</b>                    |           |   |
| Have all employees, supervisors, and managers been informed as to the penalties for being found to perpetrate discriminatory behavior or for taking personnel actions based upon a prohibited basis?                              |          | <b>X</b>                    |           |   |
| Has the agency, when appropriate, disciplined or sanctioned managers/supervisors or employees found to have discriminated over the past two years?  |          | <b>X</b>                    |           |   |
| If so, cite number found to have discriminated and list penalty /disciplinary action for each type of violation.  |          |                             |           |   |
| Does the agency promptly (within the established time frame) comply with EEOC, Merit Systems Protection Board, Federal Labor Relations Authority, labor arbitrators, and District Court orders?                                   |          | <b>X</b>                    |           |   |
| Does the agency review disability accommodation   |          | <b>X</b>                    |           |   |

|  |   |                      |    |  |
|--|---|----------------------|----|--|
| decisions/actions to ensure compliance with its written procedures and analyze the information tracked for trends, problems, etc.?   |   |                      |    |  |
| <p><b>Essential Element D: PROACTIVE PREVENTION</b><br/> <b>Requires that the agency head makes early efforts to prevent discriminatory actions and eliminate barriers to equal employment opportunity in the workplace.</b></p> |   |                      |    |  |
| Compliance Indicator   | X | Measure has been met |    | For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report |
| Measures   |   | Yes                  | No |  |
| Do senior managers meet with and assist the EEO Director and/or other EEO Program Officials in the identification of barriers that may be impeding the realization of equal employment opportunity?                              |   | <b>X</b>             |    |  |
| When barriers are identified, do senior managers develop and implement, with the assistance of the agency EEO office, agency EEO Action Plans to eliminate said barriers?  |   | <b>X</b>             |    |  |
| Do senior managers successfully implement EEO Action Plans and incorporate the EEO Action Plan Objectives into agency strategic plans?   |   | <b>X</b>             |    |  |
| Are trend analyses of workforce profiles conducted by race, national origin, sex and disability?   |   | <b>X</b>             |    |  |
| Are trend analyses of the workforce's major occupations conducted by race, national origin, sex and disability?  |   | <b>X</b>             |    |  |
| Are trends analyses of the workforce's grade level distribution  |   | <b>X</b>             |    |  |

|   |   |                      |    |  |
|---|---|----------------------|----|--|
| conducted by race, national origin, sex and disability?   |   |                      |    |  |
| Are trend analyses of the workforce's compensation and reward system conducted by race, national origin, sex and disability?  |   | <b>X</b>             |    |  |
| Are trend analyses of the effects of management/personnel policies, procedures and practices conducted by race, national origin, sex and disability?  |   | <b>X</b>             |    |  |
|  Compliance Indicator  | The use of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) is encouraged by senior management.                           | Measure has been met |    | For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the X space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report |
|  Measures  |   | Yes                  | No |  |
| Are all employees encouraged to use ADR?  |   | <b>X</b>             |    |  |
| Is the participation of supervisors and managers in the ADR process required?   |   | <b>X</b>             |    |  |
| <p><b>Essential Element E: EFFICIENCY</b></p> <p>Requires that the agency head ensure that there are effective systems in place for evaluating the impact and effectiveness of the agency's EEO Programs as well as an efficient and fair dispute resolution process.</p> |   |                      |    |  |
|  Compliance Indicator  | The agency has sufficient staffing, funding, and authority to achieve the elimination of identified barriers. | Measure has been met |    | For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report   |
|  Measures  |   | Yes                  | No |  |
| Does the EEO Office employ personnel with adequate training and experience to conduct the analyses required by MD-715 and these instructions?   |   | <b>X</b>             |    |  |

|  |   |                      |    |  |
|--|---|----------------------|----|--|
| Has the agency implemented an adequate data collection and analysis systems that permit tracking of the information required by MD-715 and these instructions?   |   | X                    |    |  |
| Have sufficient resources been provided to conduct effective audits of field facilities' efforts to achieve a model EEO program and eliminate discrimination under Title VII and the Rehabilitation Act?                     |   | X                    |    |  |
| Is there a designated agency official or other mechanism in place to coordinate or assist with processing requests for disability accommodations in all major components of the agency?                                      |   | X                    |    |  |
| Are 90% of accommodation requests processed within the time frame set forth in the agency procedures for reasonable accommodation?   |   | X                    |    |  |
|  Compliance Indicator   | The agency has an effective complaint tracking and monitoring system in place to increase the effectiveness of the agency's EEO Programs. | Measure has been met |    | For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report |
|  Measures   |   | Yes                  | No |  |
| Does the agency use a complaint tracking and monitoring system that allows identification of the location and status of complaints and length of time elapsed at each stage of the agency's complaint resolution process?    |   | X                    |    |  |
| Does the agency's tracking system identify the issues and bases of the complaints, the aggrieved individuals/complainants, the involved management officials and other information to analyze complaint activity and trends? |   | X                    |    |  |
| Does the agency hold contractors accountable for delay in counseling and investigation processing times?   |   | X                    |    |  |
| If yes, briefly describe how: In accordance with pre-established Statement of Work and Procurement procedures.   |   |                      |    |  |

|  |  |                      |    |  |
|--|--|----------------------|----|--|
|  |  |                      |    |  |
| Does the agency monitor and ensure that new investigators, counselors, including contract and collateral duty investigators, receive the 32 hours of training required in accordance with EEO Management Directive MD-110?                                     |  | X                    |    |  |
| Does the agency monitor and ensure that experienced counselors, investigators, including contract and collateral duty investigators, receive the 8 hours of refresher training required on an annual basis in accordance with EEO Management Directive MD-110? |  | X                    |    |  |
|  Compliance Indicator   | The agency has sufficient staffing, funding and authority to comply with the time frames in accordance with the EEOC (29 C.F.R. Part 1614) regulations for processing EEO complaints of employment discrimination. | Measure has been met |    | For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report |
|  Measures   |  | Yes                  | No |  |
| Are benchmarks in place that compares the agency's discrimination complaint processes with 29 C.F.R. Part 1614?  |  | X                    |    |  |
| Does the agency provide timely EEO counseling within 30 days of the initial request or within an agreed upon extension in writing, up to 60 days?  |  | X                    |    |  |
| Does the agency provide an aggrieved person with written notification of his/her rights and responsibilities in the EEO process in a timely fashion?   |  | X                    |    |  |
| Does the agency complete the investigations within the applicable prescribed time frame?   |  | X                    |    |  |
| When a complainant requests a final agency   |  |                      | X  | Final Agency Decisions are   |

|   |   |                      |    |  |
|---|---|----------------------|----|--|
| decision, does the agency issue the decision within 60 days of the request?   |   |                      |    | issued by ASCR and not NRCS.   |
| When a complainant requests a hearing, does the agency immediately upon receipt of the request from the EEOC AJ forward the investigative file to the EEOC Hearing Office?  |   | X                    |    |  |
| When a settlement agreement is entered into, does the agency timely complete any obligations provided for in such agreements?   |   | X                    |    |  |
| Does the agency ensure timely compliance with EEOC AJ decisions which are not the subject of an appeal by the agency?   |   | X                    |    |  |
|  Compliance Indicator  | There is an efficient and fair dispute resolution process and effective systems for evaluating the impact and effectiveness of the agency's EEO complaint processing program. | Measure has been met |    | For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report |
|  Measures  |   | Yes                  | No |  |
| In accordance with 29 C.F.R. §1614.102(b), has the agency established an ADR Program during the pre-complaint and formal complaint stages of the EEO process?   |   | X                    |    |  |
| Does the agency require all managers and supervisors to receive ADR training in accordance with EEOC (29 C.F.R. Part 1614) regulations, with emphasis on the federal government's interest in encouraging mutual resolution of disputes and the benefits associated with utilizing ADR? |   | X                    |    |  |
| After the agency has offered ADR and the complainant has elected to participate in ADR, are the managers required to participate?   |   | X                    |    |  |
| Does the responsible management official directly involved in the dispute have settlement   |   |                      | X  | The Agency's practice is that the RMO's immediate  |

|   |  |                      |    |  |
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| authority?  |  |                      |    | supervisor serves as the RO.   |
|  Compliance Indicator  | The agency has effective systems in place for maintaining and evaluating the impact and effectiveness of its EEO programs. | Measure has been met |    | For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report |
|  Measures  |  | Yes                  | No |  |
| Does the agency have a system of management controls in place to ensure the timely, accurate, complete and consistent reporting of EEO complaint data to the EEOC?  |  | <b>X</b>             |    |  |
| Does the agency provide reasonable resources for the EEO complaint process to ensure efficient and successful operation in accordance with 29 C.F.R. § 1614.102(a) (1)?   |  | <b>X</b>             |    |  |
| Does the agency EEO office have management controls in place to monitor and ensure that the data received from Human Resources is accurate, timely received, and contains all the required data elements for submitting annual reports to the EEOC? |  | <b>X</b>             |    |  |
| Do the agency's EEO programs address all of the laws enforced by the EEOC?  |  | <b>X</b>             |    |  |
| Does the agency identify and monitor significant trends in complaint processing to determine whether the agency is meeting its obligations under Title VII and the Rehabilitation Act?  |  | <b>X</b>             |    |  |
| Does the agency track recruitment efforts and analyze efforts to identify potential barriers in accordance with MD-715 standards?   |  | <b>X</b>             |    |  |
| Does the agency consult with other agencies of similar size on the effectiveness of their EEO programs to identify best practices and share ideas?  |  | <b>X</b>             |    |  |
|  Compliance Indicator  | The agency ensures that the investigation and adjudication function of its   | Measure has been met |    | For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an   |
|  Measures  |  | Yes                  | No |  |

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|---|--|---|--|---|
|   | complaint resolution process are separate from its legal defense arm of agency or other offices with conflicting or competing interests. |   |  | EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report   |
| Are legal sufficiency reviews of EEO matters handled by a functional unit that is separate and apart from the unit which handles agency representation in EEO complaints? |  | X |  |   |
| Does the agency discrimination complaint process ensure a neutral adjudication function?  |  | X |  |   |
| If applicable, are processing time frames incorporated for the legal counsel's sufficiency review for timely processing of complaints?                                    |  |   |  | Not Applicable the USDA Office of Adjudication and Compliance is responsible for this function. |

**Essential Element F: RESPONSIVENESS AND LEGAL COMPLIANCE**  
This element requires that federal agencies are in full compliance with EEO statutes and EEOC regulations, policy guidance, and other written instructions.

|  |   |                      |    |  |
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|  Compliance Indicator | Agency personnel are accountable for timely compliance with orders issued by EEOC Administrative Judges.  | Measure has been met |    | For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report |
|  Measures             |   | Yes                  | No |  |
|  | Does the agency have a system of management control to ensure that agency officials timely comply with any orders or directives issued by EEOC Administrative Judges? | X                    |    |  |
|  Compliance Indicator | The agency's system of management controls ensures that the agency timely completes all ordered corrective action   | Measure has been met |    | For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H                               |
|  Measures             |   | Yes                  | No |  |

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|   | and submits its compliance report to EEOC within 30 days of such completion.                                  |  |    | to the agency's status report  |
| Does the agency have control over the payroll processing function of the agency? If Yes, answer the two questions below.                      |   | X  |    |  |
| Are there steps in place to guarantee responsive, timely, and predictable processing of ordered monetary relief?                              |   | X  |    |  |
| Are procedures in place to promptly process other forms of ordered relief?  |   | X  |    |  |
|  Compliance Indicator  | Agency personnel are accountable for the timely completion of actions required to comply with orders of EEOC. | Measure has been met                                 |    | For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report |
|  Measures  |   | Yes  | No |  |
| Is compliance with EEOC orders encompassed in the performance standards of any agency employees?  |   | X  |    |  |
| If so, please identify the employees by title in the comments section, and state how performance is measured.                                 |   | CR Director; stand alone CR/EEO performance standard |    |  |
| Is the unit charged with the responsibility for compliance with EEOC orders located in the EEO office?  |   | X  |    |  |
| If not, please identify the unit in which it is located, the number of employees in the unit, and their grade levels in the comments section. |   | X  |    |  |
| Have the involved employees received any formal training in EEO compliance?   |   | X  |    |  |
| Does the agency promptly provide to the EEOC the following documentation for completing compliance:   |   | X  |    |  |

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| Attorney Fees: Copy of check issued for attorney fees and /or a narrative statement by an appropriate agency official, or agency payment order dating the dollar amount of attorney fees paid?   | <b>X</b> |  |  |
| Awards: A narrative statement by an appropriate agency official stating the dollar amount and the criteria used to calculate the award?  | <b>X</b> |  |  |
| Back Pay and Interest: Computer print-outs or payroll documents outlining gross back pay and interest, copy of any checks issued narrative statement by an appropriate agency official of total monies paid?   | <b>X</b> |  |  |
| Compensatory Damages: The final agency decision and evidence of payment, if made?  | <b>X</b> |  |  |
| Training: Attendance roster at training session(s) or a narrative statement by an appropriate agency official confirming that specific persons or groups of persons attended training on a date certain?   | <b>X</b> |  |  |
| Personnel Actions (e.g., Reinstatement, Promotion, Hiring, Reassignment): Copies of SF-50s   | <b>X</b> |  |  |
| Posting of Notice of Violation: Original signed and dated notice reflecting the dates that the notice was posted. A copy of the notice will suffice if the original is not available.  | <b>X</b> |  |  |
| Supplemental Investigation: 1. Copy of letter to complainant acknowledging receipt from EEOC of remanded case. 2. Copy of letter to complainant transmitting the Report of Investigation (not the ROI itself unless specified). 3. Copy of request for a hearing (complainant's request or agency's transmittal letter). | <b>X</b> |  |  |
| Final Agency Decision (FAD): FAD or copy of the complainant's request for a hearing.   | <b>X</b> |  |  |
| Restoration of Leave: Print-out or statement   | <b>X</b> |  |  |

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| identifying the amount of leave restored, if applicable. If not, an explanation or statement.   |          |  |  |
| Civil Actions: A complete copy of the civil action complaint demonstrating same issues raised as in compliance matter.                                | <b>X</b> |  |  |
| Settlement Agreements: Signed and dated agreement with specific dollar amounts, if applicable. Also, appropriate documentation of relief is provided. | <b>X</b> |  |  |

Footnotes:

1. See 29 C.F.R. § 1614.102.

2. When an agency makes modifications to its procedures, the procedures must be resubmitted to the Commission. See *EEOC Policy Guidance on Executive Order 13164: Establishing Procedures to Facilitate the Provision of Reasonable Accommodation* (10/20/00), Question 28.

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| <b>EEOC FORM<br/>715-01<br/>PART I</b>  | <b>U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission<br/>FEDERAL AGENCY ANNUAL<br/>EEO PROGRAM STATUS REPORT</b>   |
| <b>Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)</b>   | <b>For period covering October 1, 2012 to September 30, 2013</b>  |
| <b>EEO PLAN TO ELIMINATE IDENTIFIED BARRIER</b>   |   |
| <b>STATEMENT OF CONDITION THAT WAS A TRIGGER FOR A POTENTIAL BARRIER:</b><br>Provide a brief narrative describing the condition at issue.<br><br>How was the condition recognized as a potential barrier? | The total number of employees in NRCS decreased from 11,772 in FY 2012 to 11,162 in FY 2013. This represents a decrease of 610 employees, or a 5.18 percent decrease. The participation rate of Hispanic males and females, white women, black males and females, Asian males and females, and persons with targeted disabilities are below their civilian labor force participation. |
| <b>BARRIER ANALYSIS:</b> Provide a description of the steps taken and data analyzed to determine cause of the condition.  | Analysis of the Total Workforce (Table A1, B1), illustrating distribution by Race/Ethnicity and Sex; and New Hires by Type of Appointment (Table A8, B8) – by Race/Ethnicity and Sex.   |
| <b>STATEMENT OF IDENTIFIED BARRIER:</b><br>Provide a succinct statement of the agency policy, procedure or practice that has been determined to be the barrier of the undesired condition.                | NRCS developed a national recruitment plan and began implementing the plan in FY 2010. NRCS will conduct further analysis in FY 2013 to continue to identifying barriers or potential barriers.   |
| <b>OBJECTIVE:</b> State the alternative or revised agency policy, procedure or practice to be implemented to correct the undesired condition.   | Implement NRCS Recruitment Plan, approved in FY 2010, and focus our recruiting efforts on diverse groups and applicant pools, particularly those who have low participation in the NRCS workforce.  |
| <b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL:</b>  | Talent Management, Human Resources and Deputy Chief for Management  |
| <b>DATE OBJECTIVE INITIATED:</b>  | November 9, 2010  |
| <b>TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION OF OBJECTIVE:</b>   | September 30, 2014  |

| PLANNED ACTIVITIES TOWARD COMPLETION OF OBJECTIVE:   | TARGET DATE                              |
|--|--|
| Conduct Human Resources training throughout the Agency on the use and importance of using the Workforce Recruitment Program for College Students with Disabilities, Schedule A and other Hiring Authorities to increase the number of persons with disabilities in the workforce. HR training was not completed due to lack of staffing, Agency wide training was not completed during this fiscal year. | September 30, 2011<br>September 30, 2012 |
| Provided a briefing to hiring officials, DEPM, VEPM on the use and value of special hiring authorities. (Schedule A , Veterans preferences, VEOA etc)  | Completed                                |
| Target hiring Veterans and persons with Targeted Disabilities for those series which are most difficult to fill and determine if pay incentives (i.e. special salary rates, relocation bonuses, etc) would increase the applicant pools for these positions.   | Completed                                |
| National Special Emphasis Program Managers will conduct workforce and barrier analysis and provide findings and recommendations to the Agency leadership.  | Completed                                |
| Special Emphasis Program Managers will strengthen partnerships with groups that can assist in improving diversity in the agency.   | Completed                                |

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS and MODIFICATIONS TO OBJECTIVE

NRCS does recognize the need to have a dedicated workforce planning tool which is now available to leadership agency-wide to ensure that decisions regarding the workforce are made strategically with clear, consistent and complete information.

In FY 2009, we established a design team to review the current state of workforce planning, establish a vision for what the perfect system would be and then to identify gaps between the current state and the vision.

- 1) **Workforce Planning Policy** - In FY 2010, The Workforce Planning Policy was developed and finalized. General Manual 360, Subpart A, Part 402.
- 2) **ABC Enhancement Initiative** – Activity Based Costing (ABC) is a system which measures productivity based on past performance time and needs. Analysis of the data will feed into the WFP Software Tool to address the FTE “demand” needs of the agency.
- 3) **Workforce Planning Software Tool**: To implement a WFP process and system(tool) that will determine workload demand, supply and gaps, competency demand, supply and gaps, as well as workforce profile supply, demand and gaps. Work has begun on this process.

NRCS has updated a national recruitment framework which was approved in FY 2012 by NRCS leadership. This strategic document has been the foundation of the recruitment events at NRCS for FY 13 and will continue through FY 17. This strategic plan aligns with the USDA Strategic Plan, the NRCS Strategic Plan and the NRCS Human Capital Strategic Plan.

During FY 2013, the following initiatives identified in the Recruitment Strategy have been implemented:

- Increasing identification of partnerships that will support diverse candidate pools. NRCS has added one additional partnership as well as working to enhance the to our previous efforts and currently have partnerships with the following:
  - Thurgood Marshall College Fund
  - Minorities in Agriculture and Natural Resources Related Sciences (MANRRS)
  - American Indians Science and Engineering Society (AISES)
  - Hmong National Development
  - FFA Career Development Experience
  - California State Polytechnic University – Pomona
- Increase number of Presentations to Diversity Groups
  - MANRRS National Conference
  - Thurgood Marshall Leadership Institute
  - Five AISES regional conferences
  - FFA National and Regional conferences (5)
- Recruited diverse candidates at the following Career Events:
  - MANRRS National Conference
  - MANRRS Regional Conferences (3)
  - Thurgood Marshall Leadership Institute
  - AISES Conferences
  - FFA National Conferences

Onboarding system was another initiative identified by the Recruitment Strategy Design Team. In FY 13, the onboarding system was launched and an implementation date of April 30, 2013 was set for all states to begin utilizing the new system.

A National Recruitment Cadre is in the early stages of planning for helping to implement the National Recruitment Framework and will continue working with these individuals through FY 13 and into FY 14. Oversight for recruitment, will begin to be implemented from a National perspective for FY 13 and beyond and this will allow for a broader reach of all targeted populations, including race, ethnicity, disability, and veterans.

NRCS Hispanic, Black, and AIAN recruitment cadres have been established and continue to gain success through utilization of strong ties to campus involvement. Relationships have been established which allow NRCS to have a presence in classrooms while on campuses for recruitment fairs. Recruitment teams also hosted events for Agricultural-related student groups such as MANRRS, so that students would have additional access to staff members. From our contacts at career fairs, a data base was created with information that was shared with other areas of NRCS. The database has proven to be a good source to recruit women and minority interns and new permanent employees.

Diversity recruitment efforts existed throughout the Agency. We recruited students and entry level hires at the following recruitment events:

- American Indian Agriculture Symposium, Las Vegas, NV
- American Indian Science and Engineering Fair (NAISEF), Albuquerque, NM
- American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES)
- Black Engineer of the Year Conference
- California State Polytechnic University Career Fair, Pomona, CA

- Conference on Asian Pacific American Leaders (CAPAL)
- Federal Asian Pacific American Council Conference (FAPAC)
- Florida A & M (1894)
- Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College
- HACU Career Fair
- Hiring Heros Career Fair, Little Rock, AK
- League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) national conference, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- LULACs National Veterans Summit, Los Angeles, CA
- Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS)
- New Mexico State University Career Fair, Las Cruces, NM
- Society for Range Management
- Texas A&M University Career Fair, Kingsville, TX
- Thurgood Marshall Leadership Institute Conference
- Tuskegee University
- University of Puerto Rico Career Fair, Mayaguez, PR
- University of Texas Career Fair, El Paso, TX
- Wounded Warriors Career Fair, LA, CA

Presentations to Diversity Groups included the following:

- Four MANRRS regional conferences
- MANRRS National conference
- Five AISES regional conferences
- Two National AISES conferences
- Latino Education Conference (Faculty members of HSIs)
- League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) national conference
- HSI Student Leadership Program for Ag Students
- FFA Regional Conference
- Presentations at HSIs in Illinois, Florida, California
- Hispanic Leaders in Agriculture Environment (HLAE) at Texas A&M
- National Hispanic Environmental Council for Students Summer Institute
- Federally Employed Women (FEW) Conference, New Orleans, LA

For FY 13, NRCS has hired 416 student interns nationwide. The breakdown is as follows:

| Race             | Count | %     |
|------------------|-------|-------|
| African American | 82    | 19.7% |
| Asian            | 18    | 4.3%  |
| Hawaiian         | 6     | 1.4%  |
| Hispanic         | 31    | 7.4%  |
| Native American  | 20    | 4.8%  |
| Other            | 23    | 5.5%  |
| White            | 236   | 56.7% |

A new partnership was formed with Hispanic Leaders in Agriculture and the Environment (HLAE), a graduate program that focuses on working in Hispanic communities. This partnership will allow NRCS to sponsor 2 students in the graduate program and will give us a stronger presence in University of Texas A&M. We will be able to select research projects that will be completed by the students and therefore, will have access to prepared research information as well as students involved in the program.

The Workforce Recruitment Program for College Students with Disabilities database is provided to all Disability Emphasis Program Managers (DEPMs) and the link is identified on the NRCS CRD Web site. In March, the 2010 Workforce Recruitment Program for College Students with Disabilities (WRP) data was available on the website ([www.wrp.gov](http://www.wrp.gov)). It provides information on over 1,800 college students with disabilities who are seeking summer or permanent employment in federal agencies nationwide. In order to access the database you must request your ID/PW through the above-noted Web site. Because of the confidential information within the database access is restricted to DEPMs/VEPMs, HRM and hiring officials.

NRCS has over 300 State and Center collateral duty special emphasis program managers (SEPMs). The national SEPMs provide training through teleconferences and face-to-face classroom workshops. Many of the SEPMs participate in recruiting for SCEP and STEP students hired for summer work. Each State that hires students is responsible for hiring a diverse group that consists of women, minorities, and people with disabilities. Students are regularly converted upon graduation so the student hiring is a useful tool in our efforts to increase diversity in permanent staff as well.

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| <b>EEOC FORM<br/>715-01<br/>PART I</b>  | <b>U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission<br/>FEDERAL AGENCY ANNUAL<br/>EEO PROGRAM STATUS REPORT</b>  |   |
| <b>Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)</b>   |  | <b>For period covering October 1, 2012, to September 30, 2013</b> |
| <b>EEO PLAN TO ELIMINATE IDENTIFIED BARRIER</b>   |  |   |
| <b>STATEMENT OF CONDITION THAT WAS A TRIGGER FOR A POTENTIAL BARRIER:</b><br>Provide a brief narrative describing the condition at issue.<br><br>How was the condition recognized as a potential barrier? | There is low participation of women, minorities, and persons with disabilities in agency leadership positions and agency major occupations.  |   |
| <b>BARRIER ANALYSIS:</b> Provide a description of the steps taken and data analyzed to determine cause of the condition.  | Occupational Groups (Tables A3-1, A3-2) – Distribution by Race/Ethnicity and Sex; Participation Rates Across General Schedule (GS) Grades (Table A4-1P, A4-1T, A4-2P, A4-2T, )– by Race/National Origin and Sex; and Participation Rates for Major Occupations (Table A6P and A6T) Distribution by Race/National Origin and Sex. |   |
| <b>STATEMENT OF IDENTIFIED BARRIER:</b><br>Provide a succinct statement of the agency policy, procedure or practice that has been determined to be the barrier of the undesired condition.                | NRCS has developed national developmental programs open to women, minorities and persons with disabilities in higher level position. However, NRCS will conduct further analysis in FY 2013 to continue to identifying barriers or potential barriers.   |   |
| <b>OBJECTIVE:</b> State the alternative or revised agency policy, procedure or practice to be implemented to correct the undesired condition.   | Develop a diverse pool of qualified successors for NRCS' leadership positions.   |   |
| <b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL:</b>  | Talent Management, Human Resources, and Deputy Chief for Management  |   |
| <b>DATE OBJECTIVE INITIATED:</b>  | November 9, 2010   |   |
| <b>TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION OF OBJECTIVE:</b>   | September 30, 2014   |   |
| <b>PLANNED ACTIVITIES TOWARD COMPLETION OF OBJECTIVE:</b>   |  | <b>TARGET DATE</b>  |
| National Special Emphasis Program Managers will conduct workforce and barrier analysis and provide findings and recommendations to the Agency leadership.   |  | September 30, 2013  |
| Special Emphasis Program Managers will disseminate vacancy announcements and strengthen partnerships with groups that can assist in improving diversity in the agency.                                    |  | September 30, 2013  |

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| <b>EEOC FORM<br/>715-01<br/>PART I</b>  | <b>U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission<br/>FEDERAL AGENCY ANNUAL<br/>EEO PROGRAM STATUS REPORT</b>   |  |
| <b>Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)</b>   | <b>For period covering October 1, 2012 to September 30, 2013</b>  |  |
| <b>EEO PLAN TO ELIMINATE IDENTIFIED BARRIER</b>   |   |  |
| <b>STATEMENT OF CONDITION THAT WAS A TRIGGER FOR A POTENTIAL BARRIER:</b><br><br>Provide a brief narrative describing the condition at issue.<br><br>How was the condition recognized as a potential barrier? | NRCS is losing highly qualified employees to retirement, other Federal Agencies, and the private sector. However, the low participation rate of minorities, women, and persons with disabilities continues.   |  |
| <b>BARRIER ANALYSIS:</b><br><br>Provide a description of the steps taken and data analyzed to determine cause of the condition.   | Analysis of the Total Workforce (Table A1), Distribution by Race/Ethnicity and Sex; and Separations by Type of Separation (Table A14) – Distribution by Race/National Origin and Sex.   |  |
| <b>STATEMENT OF IDENTIFIED BARRIER:</b><br><br>Provide a succinct statement of the agency policy, procedure or practice that has been determined to be the barrier of the undesired condition.                | NRCS developed a national recruitment plan and began implementing the plan in FY 2010. The plan focuses on recruitment and retention strategies. NRCS will conduct further analysis in FY 2013 to continue to identifying barriers or potential barriers.                             |  |
| <b>OBJECTIVE:</b><br><br>State the alternative or revised agency policy, procedure or practice to be implemented to correct the undesired condition.  | Retain a diverse workforce by implementing a national retention plan. Increase outreach efforts to educate employees and potential student applicants on the Pathways Program. Human Capital Implementation Plan has been drafted in conjunction with the 5-year Investment Strategy. |  |
| <b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL:</b>  | Talent Management, Human Resources, and Deputy Chief for Management   |  |
| <b>DATE OBJECTIVE INITIATED:</b>  | November 9, 2010  |  |
| <b>TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION OF OBJECTIVE:</b>   | September 30, 2014  |  |

| PLANNED ACTIVITIES TOWARD COMPLETION OF OBJECTIVE:  | TARGET DATE<br>(Must be specific) |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| National Special Emphasis Program Managers will conduct workforce and barrier analysis and provide findings and recommendations to the Agency leadership. | Completed                         |

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS and MODIFICATIONS TO OBJECTIVE

NRCS employees have the opportunity to join five professional employee organization groups (i.e., Asian, American Indian, Black, Hispanic and Women). These NRCS resource groups provide employees the opportunity to network, receive training and mentoring experiences. These groups are helping the Agency address this barrier by providing support and examples of successful employment relocations.

To increase retention and improve workforce diversity, the Agency updated the Special Emphasis Programs policy and added two new national collateral duty Special Emphasis Program Managers: Veterans Emphasis Program Manager (VEPM) and a Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender (GLBT) Emphasis Program Manager. Each State and Center respectively will also have a collateral duty VEPM and GLBT SEPM. NRCS's Federal Women Program Manager and acting Hispanic Program Manager are full time employees.

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| <b>EEOC FORM<br/>715-01<br/>PART I</b>  | <b>U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission<br/>FEDERAL AGENCY ANNUAL<br/>EEO PROGRAM STATUS REPORT</b>   |  |
| <b>Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)</b>   | <b>For period covering October 1, 2012, to September 30, 2013.</b>  |  |
| <b>EEO PLAN TO ELIMINATE IDENTIFIED BARRIER</b>   |   |  |
| <b>STATEMENT OF CONDITION THAT WAS A TRIGGER FOR A POTENTIAL BARRIER:</b><br>Provide a brief narrative describing the condition at issue.<br><br>How was the condition recognized as a potential barrier? | The total number of employees in NRCS decreased from 11,772 in FY 2012 to 11,162 in FY 2013. This represents a decrease of 249 employees, or a 5.92 percent decrease. The participation rate of Hispanic males and females, white women, black males and females, Asian males and females, and persons with targeted disabilities are below their civilian labor force participation. |  |
| <b>BARRIER ANALYSIS:</b> Provide a description of the steps taken and data analyzed to determine cause of the condition.  | Analysis of the Total Workforce (Table A1, B1), illustrating distribution by Race/Ethnicity and Sex; and New Hires by Type of Appointment (Table A8, B8) – by Race/Ethnicity and Sex. Special Emphasis Programs Barrier Analysis Survey.  |  |
| <b>STATEMENT OF IDENTIFIED BARRIER:</b><br>Provide a succinct statement of the agency policy, procedure or practice that has been determined to be the barrier of the undesired condition.                | NRCS' barrier analysis revealed a lack of visibility and awareness of NRCS careers among women, minorities, persons with disabilities, Veterans, and LGBT.  |  |
| <b>OBJECTIVE:</b> State the alternative or revised agency policy, procedure or practice to be implemented to correct the undesired condition.   | Implement strategies identified in NRCS' recruitment plan and initiatives that will increase visibility and awareness of NRCS careers among diverse groups, particularly the underrepresented groups in NRCS workforce to increase applicant pool.  |  |
| <b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL:</b>  | Talent Management Director and Deputy Chief for Management  |  |
| <b>DATE OBJECTIVE INITIATED:</b>  | October 1, 2011   |  |
| <b>TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION OF OBJECTIVE:</b>   | September 30, 2014  |  |

| PLANNED ACTIVITIES TOWARD COMPLETION OF OBJECTIVE:  | TARGET DATE        |
|---|--------------------|
| Create videos that focus on mission critical positions and illustrate the jobs NRCS employees perform daily.  | September 30, 2012 |
| Redesign the careers website.   | September 30, 2013 |
| Increase usage of social media for recruitment.   | September 30, 2012 |
| Increase usage of VideoTeleConferencing (VTC) to conduct Career Information Sessions with schools.  | September 30, 2012 |
| Develop recruitment marketing brochures targeting women, minorities and persons with disabilities to promote NRCS.  | September 30, 2012 |
| Design new exhibit banners.   | September 30, 2012 |
| Establish and strengthen partnerships with groups that can assist in improving diversity in the agency.   | September 30, 2014 |
| REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS and MODIFICATIONS TO OBJECTIVE  |                    |
| <p>In 2013, the National SEPMs conducted a survey in 2013 and compared the results with the 2011 survey they conducted. They prepared a report for leadership on barriers and recommendations to overcome them.</p> |                    |

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| <b>EEOC FORM<br/>715-01<br/>PART I</b>  | <b>U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission<br/>FEDERAL AGENCY ANNUAL<br/>EEO PROGRAM STATUS REPORT</b>  |  |
| Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)  | For period covering October 1, 2012, to September 30, 2013.  |  |
| <b>EEO PLAN TO ELIMINATE IDENTIFIED BARRIER</b>   |  |  |
| <p><b>STATEMENT OF CONDITION THAT WAS A TRIGGER FOR A POTENTIAL BARRIER:</b><br/>Provide a brief narrative describing the condition at issue.</p> <p>How was the condition recognized as a potential barrier?</p> | <p>Although the overall workforce decreased, the number and percentage of permanent NRCS female employees also decreased from 4,209 (35.78%) in FY 2012 to 3960 (35.48%) in FY 2013. The Hispanic female, White female, Black female, and Asian female are below their representation in the civilian labor force.</p>   |  |
| <p><b>BARRIER ANALYSIS:</b> Provide a description of the steps taken and data analyzed to determine cause of the condition.</p>   | <p>Analysis of the Total Workforce (Table A1, B1), illustrating distribution by Race/Ethnicity and Sex; and analysis of Separations by Type of Separation (Table A14), illustrating Distribution by Race/Ethnicity and Sex. Special Emphasis Programs Barrier Analysis Survey and reports.</p>   |  |
| <p><b>STATEMENT OF IDENTIFIED BARRIER:</b><br/>Provide a succinct statement of the agency policy, procedure or practice that has been determined to be the barrier of the undesired condition.</p>                | <p>NRCS will be addressing the following retention concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NRCS has not implemented a consistent on boarding process to minimize the potential for voluntary separation.</li> <li>• Supervisors' inconsistent knowledge of available managing options and tools to increase retention.</li> </ul> <p>Further analysis will be conducted in FY 2014 to identify reasons for voluntary separations.</p> |  |
| <p><b>OBJECTIVE:</b> State the alternative or revised agency policy, procedure or practice to be implemented to correct the undesired condition.</p>  | <p>To build on the progress made in recruitment, NRCS will examine and improve current retention methods to ensure that the workforce remains motivated, dedicated, and satisfied with NRCS.</p>   |  |
| <p><b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL:</b></p>   | <p>Human Resources Director, Talent Management Director, Civil Rights Director, and Deputy Chief for Management</p>  |  |
| <p><b>DATE OBJECTIVE INITIATED:</b></p>   | <p>October 1, 2011</p>   |  |
| <p><b>TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION OF</b></p>   | <p>September 30, 2014</p>  |  |

**OBJECTIVE:**

| PLANNED ACTIVITIES TOWARD COMPLETION OF OBJECTIVE:  | TARGET DATE        |
|---|--------------------|
| Implement on-boarding framework nationwide.   | September 30, 2013 |
| Conduct further analysis to identify why women are resigning and develop specific initiatives to improve retention, and identify why Hispanic females are voluntarily separating above their representation in the workforce. | September 30, 2014 |
| Develop and conduct training on Cultural Sensitivity focusing on retention issues.  | September 30, 2014 |
| Train supervisors on available managing options and tools to increase retention (e.g., increase use of flexible workplace options, increase telework).  | September 30, 2014 |
| REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS and MODIFICATIONS TO OBJECTIVE  |                    |
| <p>In 2013, the National SEPMs conducted a survey in 2013 and compared the results with the 2011 survey they conducted. They prepared a report for leadership on barriers and recommendations to overcome them.</p>           |                    |

| EEOC FORM<br>715-01<br>PART J  | <i>U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission</i><br><b>FEDERAL AGENCY ANNUAL<br/>EEO PROGRAM STATUS REPORT</b><br>Special Program Plan for the Recruitment, Hiring, and Advancement of Individuals With Targeted Disabilities |                       |   |                     |         |                |                |               |   |
|--|--|-----------------------|---|---------------------|---------|----------------|----------------|---------------|---|
| <b>PART I<br/>Department<br/>or Agency<br/>Information</b>   | 1. Agency  |                       | 1.U.S. Department of Agriculture            |                     |         |                |                |               |   |
|  | 1.a. 2 <sup>nd</sup> Level Component   |                       | 1.a. Natural Resources Conservation Service |                     |         |                |                |               |   |
|  | 1.b. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Level or lower  |                       | 1.b.  |                     |         |                |                |               |   |
| <b>PART II<br/>Employment<br/>Trend and<br/>Special<br/>Recruitment<br/>for<br/>Individuals<br/>With<br/>Targeted<br/>Disabilities</b> | Enter Actual Number at the ...   | ... beginning of FY.  |   | ... end of FY.      |         | Net Change     |                |               |   |
|  |  | Number                | %   | Number              | %       | Number         | Rate of Change |               |   |
|  | Total Work Force   | 11,772                | 100.00%                                     | 11,621              | 100.00% | -659           | -5.182%        |               |   |
|  | Reportable Disability  | 1166                  | 9.90%                                       | 1130                | 10.15%  | -33            | -2.83%         |               |   |
|  | Targeted Disability*   | 115                   | 0.98%                                       | 102                 | .283%   | -13            | -11.30%        |               |   |
|  | * If the rate of change for persons with targeted disabilities is not equal to or greater than the rate of change for the total workforce, a barrier analysis should be conducted (see below).                                   |                       |   |                     |         |                |                |               |   |
|  | 1. Total Number of Applications Received From Persons With Targeted Disabilities during the reporting period.  |                       |   |                     |         |                |                |               |   |
| 2. Total Number of Selections of Individuals with Targeted Disabilities during the reporting period.                                   |  |                       |   |                     |         |                |                |               |   |
| <b>PART III Participation Rates In Agency Employment Programs</b>  |  |                       |   |                     |         |                |                |               |   |
| Other Employment/Personnel Programs  | TOTAL  | Reportable Disability |   | Targeted Disability |         | Not Identified |                | No Disability |   |
|  |  | #                     | %   | #                   | %       | #              | %              | #             | % |
| 3. Competitive Promotions  |  |                       |   |                     |         |                |                |               |   |

|  |         |        |       |       |      |       |      |         |       |
|--|---------|--------|-------|-------|------|-------|------|---------|-------|
| 4. Non-Competitive Promotions            | 705     | 92     | 13.03 | 9     | 1.27 | 12    | 1.7  | 602     | 85.27 |
| 5. Employee Career Development Programs  |         |        |       |       |      |       |      |         |       |
| 5.a. Grades 5 - 12                       |         |        |       |       |      |       |      |         |       |
| 5.b. Grades 13 - 14                      |         |        |       |       |      |       |      |         |       |
| 5.c. Grade 15/SES                        |         |        |       |       |      |       |      |         |       |
| 6. Employee Recognition and Awards       | 8443    | 659    | 8.9   | 67    | 0.9  | 110   | 1.5  | 6392    | 86.8  |
| 6.a. Time-Off Awards (Total hrs awarded) | 7884    | 905    | 11.47 | 62    | 0.76 | 200   | 2.53 | 6779    | 85.9  |
| 6.b. Cash Awards (total \$\$\$ awarded)  | 6785704 | 556759 | 8.7   | 56580 | 0.77 | 93977 | 1.33 | 6134968 | 90.4  |
| 6.c. Quality-Step Increase               | 331     | 24     | 7.2   | 1     | .3   | 3     | .9   | 278     | 94.2  |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| EEOC FORM 715-01 Part J                                      | Special Program Plan for the Recruitment, Hiring, and Advancement of Individuals With Targeted Disabilities  |
| <b>Part IV</b><br>Identification and Elimination of Barriers | Agencies with 1,000 or more permanent employees MUST conduct a barrier analysis to address any barriers to increasing employment opportunities for employees and applicants with targeted disabilities <b>using FORM 715-01 PART I</b> . Agencies should review their recruitment, hiring, career development, promotion, and retention of individuals with targeted disabilities in order to determine whether there are any barriers.  |
| <b>Part V</b><br>Goals for Targeted Disabilities             | Agencies with 1,000 or more permanent employees are to use the space provided below to describe the strategies and activities that will be undertaken during the coming fiscal year to maintain a special recruitment program for individuals with targeted disabilities and to establish specific goals for the employment and advancement of such individuals. For these purposes, targeted disabilities may be considered as a group. Agency goals should be set and accomplished in such a manner as will effect measurable progress from the preceding fiscal year. Agencies are encouraged to set a goal for the hiring of individuals with targeted disabilities that is at least as high as the anticipated losses from this group during the next reporting period, with the objective of avoiding a decrease in the total participation rate of employees with disabilities. Goals, objectives and strategies described below should focus on internal as well as external sources of candidates and include discussions of activities undertaken to identify individuals with targeted disabilities who can be (1) hired; (2) placed in such a way as to improve possibilities for career development; and (3) advanced to a position at a higher level or with greater potential than the position currently |

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
|  | occupied. |
|--|-----------|

## APPENDIX A

### MD-715 Report Acronyms List

ADR – Alternative Dispute Resolution  
AI/ANEPM – Asian American/Pacific Islander Emphasis Program, American Indian/Alaska Native Emphasis Program Manager  
AISES – American Indian Sciences and Engineering Society  
BEPM – Black Emphasis Program Manager  
CEP – Career Enhancement Program  
CR – Civil Rights  
CRAC – Civil Rights Advisory Committee  
CRD – Civil Rights Division  
CRIA – Civil Rights Impact Analysis  
DEPM – Disability Emphasis Program Manager  
DR – Departmental Regulations  
EEOC – Equal Employment Opportunity Commission  
EEO – Equal Employment Opportunity  
EO – Equal Opportunity  
FAPAC – Federal Asian Pacific American Council  
FEORP – Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Plan  
FWPM – Federal Women Program Manager  
GM – General Manager  
GS – General Schedule  
HACU – Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities  
HBCU – Historically Black Colleges and Universities  
HEPM – Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager  
HR – Human Resources  
HRMD – Human Resource Management Division  
HSI – Hispanic Serving Institutions  
LEAD – Leadership for the Employment of Americans with Disabilities  
LULAC – League of United Latin American Citizens  
MANRRS – Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences  
MD – Management Directive  
NCLF – National Civilian Labor Force  
NCRC – National Civil Rights Committee  
NFC – National Finance Center  
NHQ – National Headquarters  
NRCS – Natural Resources Conservation Service  
NSEPM – National Special Emphasis Program Manager  
OAC – Office of Adjudication and Compliance  
OMB – Office of Management and Budget  
OPM – Office of Personnel Management  
OSC – Office of Special Counsel  
PMC – Position Management Committee  
RA – Reasonable Accommodation

RAC – Regional Assistant Chief  
RCLF – Relevant/Occupational Civilian Labor Force  
RSNOD – Race, Sex, National Origin and Disability  
SES – Senior Executive Service  
SEPM – Special Emphasis Program Manager  
USDA – United States Department of Agriculture  
WINS – Washington Internships for Native Students  
WG – Wage Grade

## APPENDIX B

### MD-715 Report Definitions List

(The following definitions apply to Management Directive 715)

- **Administrative Support Workers** – Includes all clerical-type work regardless of level of difficulty, where the activities are predominately non-manual though some manual work not directly involved with altering or transporting the products included. Includes: bookkeepers, collectors (bills and accounts), messenger and office helpers, stenographers, typist and secretaries, telegraph and telephone operators, legal assistants, and kindred workers.
- **Applicant Flow Data** - Information reflecting characteristics of the pool of individuals applying for an employment opportunity.
- **Barrier** - An agency policy, principle, practice or condition that limits or tends to limit employment opportunities for members of a particular gender, race or ethnic background or for an individual (or individuals) based on disability status.
- **Civilian Labor Force** - Persons 16 years of age and over, except those in the armed forces, who are employed or are unemployed and seeking work.
- **Craft Workers (Skilled)** – Manual workers of relatively high skill level having a thorough and comprehensive knowledge of the processes involved in their work. Exercise considerable independent judgment and usually receive an extensive period of training. Includes: the building trades, hourly paid supervisors and lead operators who are not members of management, mechanics and repairers, skilled machining occupations, compositors and typesetters, electricians, engravers, painters (construction and maintenance), motion picture projectionists, pattern and model makers, stationary engineers, tailors, arts occupations, hand painters, coaters, bakers, decorating occupations, and kindred workers.
- **Disability** - For the purpose of statistics, recruitment, and targeted goals, the number of employees in the workforce who have indicated having a disability on an Office of Personnel Management Standard Form (SF) 256. For all other purposes, the definition contained in 29 C.F.R. parts 1630.2 applies.
- **EEO Groups** - Members of groups protected under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and other Federal guidelines. Includes White Men, White Women, Black Men, Black Women, Hispanic Men, Hispanic Women, Asian Men, Asian Women, Native American Men, Native Hawaiian Other Pacific Islander Men, Native Hawaiian Other Pacific Islander Women, and Persons with Disabilities.

- **Employees** - Members of the agency's permanent or temporary workforce, whether full or part-time and whether in competitive or excepted service positions.
- **Employment Decision:** Any decision affecting the terms and conditions of an individual's employment, including but not limited to hiring, promotion, disciplinary action and termination.
- **Federal Categories (Fed9)** - For the first time EEOC is requiring agencies to report their workforce data by aggregating it into nine employment categories. These categories are more consistent with those EEOC uses in private sector enforcement and will permit better analysis of trends in the federal workplace than previous categories used. The Commission has created a Census/OPM Occupation Cross-Classification Table by OPM Occupational Code (crosswalk) which assists agencies in determining the categories in which to place a position through use of the position's OPM or SOC codes or the OPM or Census Occupation Title. The crosswalk may be accessed at the Commission's website.
- **Fiscal Year** - The period from October 1 of one year to September 30 of the following year.
- **Goal** - Under the Rehabilitation Act, an identifiable objective set by an agency to address or eliminate barriers to equal employment opportunity or to address the lingering effects of past discrimination.
- **Laborers (Unskilled)** - Workers in manual occupations which generally require no special training who perform elementary duties that may be learned in a few days and require the application of little or no independent judgment. Includes: garage laborers, car washers and greasers, ground keepers and gardeners, farm workers, stevedores, wood choppers, laborers performing lifting, digging, mixing, loading and pulling operations, and kindred workers.
- **Major Occupation** - Agency occupations that are mission related and heavily populated, relative to other occupations within the agency.
- **Officials and Manager** – Occupations requiring administrative and managerial personnel who set broad policies, exercise overall responsibility for execution of these policies, and direct individual offices, programs, division or other units or special phases of an agency's operations. In the federal sector, this category is further broken out into four sub-categories: **(1) Executive/Senior-Level, (2) Mid-Level, (3) First-Level and (4) Other.** When an employee is classified as a supervisor or manager, that employee should be placed in the Officials and Managers category rather than in the category in the crosswalk that they would otherwise be placed in based on the on their OPM occupational code. Those employees classified as supervisors or managers who are at the GS-12 level or below should be placed in the **First-Level** sub-category of Officials and

Managers, those at the GS-13 or 14 should be in the **Mid-Level** sub-category and those at GS-15 or in the SES should be in the **Executive/Senior-Level** sub-category. An agency may also choose to place employees who have significant policy-making responsibilities, but do not supervise other employees, in these three sub-categories. The fourth category called "**Other**" contains employees in a number of different occupations which are primarily business, financial and administrative in nature and do not have supervisory or significant policy responsibilities. For example, Administrative Officers (OPM Code 0341) are appropriately placed in the "**Other**" sub-category.

- **Operatives (Semiskilled)** - Workers who operate machine or processing equipment or perform other factory-type duties of intermediate skill level which can be mastered in a few weeks and require only limited training. Includes: apprentices (auto mechanic, plumbers, bricklayers, carpenters, electricians, machinists, mechanics, building trades, metalworking trades, printing trades, etc.), operatives, attendants (auto service and parking), blasters, chauffeurs, delivery workers, sewer and stitchers, dryers, furnace workers, heaters, laundry and dry cleaning operatives, milliners, mine operatives and laborers, motor operators, oilier and greasers (except auto), painters (manufactured articles), photographic process workers, truck and tractor drivers, knitting, looping, taping and weaving machine operators, welders and flame cutters, electrical and electronic equipment assemblers, butchers and meat cutters, inspectors, testers and graders, hand packers and packagers, and kindred workers.
- **Professionals** - Occupations requiring either college graduation or experience of such kind and amount as to provide a comparable background. Includes: accountants and auditors, airplane pilots and navigators, architects, artists, chemists, designers, dietitians, editors, engineers, lawyers, librarians, mathematicians, natural scientists, registered professional nurses, personnel and labor relations specialists, physical scientists, physicians, social scientists, teachers, surveyors, and kindred workers.
- **Reasonable Accommodations** - Generally, any modification or adjustment to the work environment, or to the manner or circumstances under which work is customarily performed, that enables an individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of a position or enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment as are enjoyed by similarly situated individuals without a disability.
- **Relevant Labor Force** - The source from which an agency draws or recruits applicants for employment or an internal selection such as a promotion.
- **Sales** - Occupations engaging wholly or primarily in direct selling. Includes: advertising agents and sales workers, insurance agents and brokers, real estate agents and brokers, stock and bond sales-workers, demonstrators, sales workers and sales clerks, grocery clerks, and cashiers/checkers, and kindred workers.

- **Service workers** - Workers in both protective and non-protective service occupations. Includes: attendants (hospital and other institutions, professional and personal service, including nurses aides, and orderlies), barbers, char workers and cleaners, cooks, counter and fountain workers, elevator operators, firefighters and fire protection, guards, door-keepers, stewards, janitors, police officers and detectives, porters waiters and waitresses, amusement and recreation facilities attendants, guides, ushers, public transportation attendants, and kindred workers.
- **Technicians** - Occupations requiring a combination of basic scientific knowledge and manual skill which can be obtained through two years of post high school education, such as is offered in many technical institutes and junior colleges, or through equivalent on-the-job-training. Includes: computer programmers, drafters, engineering aides, junior engineers, mathematical aides, licensed, practical or vocational nurses, photographers, radio operators, scientific assistants, technical illustrators, technicians (medical, dental, electronic, physical science), and kindred workers.

## APPENDIX C

### **SUPPORTING DATA DOCUMENTATION FROM 462 REPORT; COMPLAINT PROCESSING PROGRAM DEFICIENCIES; ADR; REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS AND NO FEAR ACT**

#### ***Program Status for NRCS Complaints (FY2013)***

**Informal Complaints:** There were 77 pre-complaints initiated and 13 pre-complaints at the beginning of the reporting period. Seventy-two pre-complaints were completed and of the 72, 11 were settled, 19 were withdrawn, and 41 completed counseling which resulted in 43 formal complaints filed. At the end of FY 2013, there were 3 pending decisions to file complaints.

**Formal Complaints:** There were 43 formal complaints filed during FY 2013, and 59 complaints at the beginning of the reporting period. Twenty-seven complaints were closed and 80 complaints were open at the end of the fiscal year. During the process, time of counseling through closure of the complaint, the trend analysis revealed complaints processing exceeded regulatory time frames, but at an improvement rate over FY 2013.

#### **Alternate Dispute Resolution**

There were 64 offers to participate in ADR during the informal process in FY 2013; 16 offers were declined by the Agency; and 48 was accepted into the ADR program. Through ADR, there were 10 settlements with benefits; and 14 with no resolution.

#### **Monetary Payouts**

The total cost for settlements with monetary benefits during the informal process were \$5,500. During the formal process, closures with monetary benefits to complainant(s) was \$271,429.02 which were lump sum payments. Attorney fees and cost were \$135,116.98 and \$89,255.44 in contractor investigation.

#### **Investigative Costs**

There were 30 investigations completed during this reporting period; 8 were timely investigated in 180 days or less, 21 which were untimely investigated in 181 - 360 days, and 1 completed in 361 days or more. The total cost of the contractor investigation costs was \$89,255.44. NRCS continues to utilize its automated tracking system to ensure NRCS is processing complaints in a timely manner. The investigations that exceeded the required 180 days are attributed to the delay in OAC's accept/dismiss responsible function of the formal complaint. NRCS will continue to work with our liaison at OAC to overcome these barriers. The costs of the investigations are not affected by any delay in processing as there is a set fee in each complaint.

**Review of ADR data:**

ADR is offered to all employees during the Pre-complaint (informal) and Formal stage of the EEO process. The decision to elect ADR is determined by the complainant. However, statutes prohibit mediating complaints alleging sexual harassment , investigations, and workplace violence.

**Harassment Training, EEO Complaint Processing, Age Discrimination, and GINA Training:**

Through the results of trend analysis, CRD determined the type of training to fit the needs identified. This training was provided to all NRCS managers/supervisors and employees.

The training modules implemented included such topics as ADR Awareness, Conflict Management and Effective Communication, Sexual Harassment, Non-Sexual Harassment and Preventing a Hostile Work Environment.

## Appendix D

### Reasonable Accommodations

This table represents reasonable accommodations provided to NRCS employees with disabilities in (FY'2013).

| <i>TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION REQUESTED</i>                   | <i>NUMBER REQUESTED</i> | <i>NUMBER GRANTED</i> | <i>VALUE(\$ ) OF ACCOMMODATIONS</i> |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Transfer to different Agency</i>                      | <i>0</i>                | <i>0</i>              |                                     |
| <i>Ergonomic Chair</i>                                   | <i>12</i>               | <i>10</i>             | <i>\$1500.00 each</i>               |
| <i>Telework on indefinite basis</i>                      | <i>11</i>               | <i>9</i>              | <i>N/A</i>                          |
| <i>Job Restructuring</i>                                 | <i>4</i>                | <i>3</i>              | <i>N/A</i>                          |
| <i>Driving Assistance during work or to work events</i>  | <i>1</i>                | <i>1</i>              | <i>N/A</i>                          |
| <i>Medical assistance animals permitted in workspace</i> | <i>0</i>                | <i>0</i>              |                                     |
| <i>Maxi Flex Tour of Duty</i>                            | <i>0</i>                | <i>0</i>              |                                     |
| <i>Use of All Terrain Vehicle</i>                        | <i>1</i>                | <i>1</i>              | <i>\$15,000</i>                     |
| <i>Extended Overnight Stay</i>                           | <i>0</i>                | <i>0</i>              |                                     |
| <i>Re-configured Workspace</i>                           | <i>1</i>                | <i>1</i>              |                                     |
| <i>Parking Permit</i>                                    | <i>6</i>                | <i>4</i>              | <i>N/A</i>                          |
| <i>Personal Care Assistant/ Reader</i>                   | <i>1</i>                | <i>0</i>              |                                     |
| <i>CapTel Phone/ TTY/ Dragon Software</i>                | <i>7</i>                | <i>7</i>              | <i>Free through CAP Program</i>     |
| <i>Leave without Pay for extended time</i>               | <i>2</i>                | <i>2</i>              |                                     |

***Summary provided by NRCS Reasonable Accommodations Manager***

Appendix E

**Equal Employment Opportunity Data Posted Pursuant to the No Fear Act:**

**NRCS (and below)**

**FY 2013**

| Complaint Activity         | Comparative Data          |      |      |           |           |                 |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|------|------|-----------|-----------|-----------------|
|                            | Previous Fiscal Year Data |      |      |           |           | 2013 Thru 09-30 |
|                            | 2008                      | 2009 | 2010 | 2011      | 2012      |                 |
| Number of Complaints Filed | 42                        | 45   | 26   | <u>29</u> | <u>40</u> | <u>43</u>       |
| Number of Complainants     | 33                        | 43   | 25   | 29        | 40        | 42              |
| Repeat Filers              | 8                         | 2    | 1    | 0         | 0         | 1               |

| Complaints by Basis  | Comparative Data          |      |      |           |           |                 |
|--|---------------------------|------|------|-----------|-----------|-----------------|
|  | Previous Fiscal Year Data |      |      |           |           | 2013 Thru 09-30 |
| <i>Note: Complaints can be filed alleging multiple bases. The sum of the bases may not equal total complaints filed.</i> | 2008                      | 2009 | 2010 | 2011      | 2012      |                 |
| Race   | 16                        | 15   | 11   | <u>15</u> | <u>21</u> | <u>21</u>       |
| Color  | 4                         | 5    | 1    | <u>2</u>  | <u>8</u>  | <u>8</u>        |
| Religion   | 0                         | 1    | 0    | <u>0</u>  | <u>2</u>  | <u>2</u>        |
| Reprisal   | 24                        | 25   | 13   | <u>16</u> | <u>18</u> | <u>19</u>       |
| Sex  | 14                        | 12   | 8    | <u>10</u> | <u>21</u> | <u>17</u>       |
| PDA  | 0                         | 0    | 0    | <u>0</u>  | <u>0</u>  | <u>0</u>        |
| National Origin  | 3                         | 4    | 4    | <u>2</u>  | <u>6</u>  | <u>7</u>        |
| Equal Pay Act  | 0                         | 0    | 0    | <u>0</u>  | <u>0</u>  | <u>1</u>        |

| Complaints by Basis  | Comparative Data          |      |      |           |           |                       |
|--|---------------------------|------|------|-----------|-----------|-----------------------|
|  | Previous Fiscal Year Data |      |      |           |           | 2013<br>Thru<br>09-30 |
| <i>Note: Complaints can be filed alleging multiple bases.<br/>The sum of the bases may not equal total complaints filed.</i> | 2008                      | 2009 | 2010 | 2011      | 2012      |                       |
| Age  | 9                         | 17   | 11   | <u>16</u> | <u>17</u> | <u>15</u>             |
| Disability   | 8                         | 6    | 5    | <u>5</u>  | <u>8</u>  | <u>13</u>             |
| Genetics   | 0                         | 0    | 0    | <u>0</u>  | <u>0</u>  | <u>0</u>              |
| Non-EEO  | 2                         | 3    | 1    | <u>1</u>  | <u>3</u>  | <u>1</u>              |

| Complaints by Issue  | Comparative Data          |      |      |          |          |                       |
|--|---------------------------|------|------|----------|----------|-----------------------|
|  | Previous Fiscal Year Data |      |      |          |          | 2013<br>Thru<br>09-30 |
| <i>Note: Complaints can be filed alleging multiple bases.<br/>The sum of the bases may not equal total complaints filed.</i> | 2008                      | 2009 | 2010 | 2011     | 2012     |                       |
| Appointment/Hire   | 1                         | 0    | 0    | <u>3</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>2</u>              |
| Assignment of Duties   | 5                         | 6    | 3    | <u>1</u> | <u>8</u> | <u>14</u>             |
| Awards   | 1                         | 1    | 0    | <u>0</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>1</u>              |
| Conversion to Full-time  | 0                         | 0    | 0    | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u>              |
| <b>Disciplinary Action</b>   |                           |      |      |          |          |                       |
| Demotion   | 1                         | 0    | 1    | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u>              |
| Reprimand  | 4                         | 2    | 0    | <u>2</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>2</u>              |
| Suspension   | 1                         | 1    | 1    | <u>2</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>1</u>              |
| Removal  | 0                         | 0    | 0    | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u>              |
| Other  | 0                         | 0    | 0    | <u>1</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>0</u>              |
| Duty Hours   | 0                         | 0    | 0    | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>4</u>              |
| Evaluation Appraisal   | 2                         | 7    | 3    | <u>3</u> | <u>7</u> | <u>7</u>              |
| Examination/Test   | 1                         | 0    | 0    | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u>              |

| Complaints by Issue  | Comparative Data          |      |      |           |           |                       |
|--|---------------------------|------|------|-----------|-----------|-----------------------|
|  | Previous Fiscal Year Data |      |      |           |           | 2013<br>Thru<br>09-30 |
| <i>Note: Complaints can be filed alleging multiple bases.<br/>The sum of the bases may not equal total complaints filed.</i> | 2008                      | 2009 | 2010 | 2011      | 2012      |                       |
| <b>Harassment</b>  |                           |      |      |           |           |                       |
| Non-Sexual   | 17                        | 19   | 6    | <u>10</u> | <u>25</u> | <u>23</u>             |
| Sexual   | 4                         | 0    | 1    | <u>1</u>  | <u>0</u>  | <u>3</u>              |
| Medical Examination  | 0                         | 0    | 0    | <u>0</u>  | <u>0</u>  | <u>0</u>              |
| Pay (Including Overtime)   | 0                         | 0    | 0    | <u>0</u>  | <u>1</u>  | <u>4</u>              |
| Promotion/Non-Selection  | 8                         | 15   | 8    | <u>5</u>  | <u>12</u> | <u>13</u>             |
| <b>Reassignment</b>  |                           |      |      |           |           |                       |
| Denied   | 0                         | 0    | 0    | <u>0</u>  | <u>0</u>  | <u>3</u>              |
| Directed   | 3                         | 10   | 1    | <u>2</u>  | <u>5</u>  | <u>4</u>              |
| Reasonable Accommodation   | 4                         | 1    | 2    | <u>1</u>  | <u>4</u>  | <u>7</u>              |
| Reinstatement  | 0                         | 0    | 0    | <u>0</u>  | <u>0</u>  | <u>0</u>              |
| Retirement   | 0                         | 0    | 0    | <u>0</u>  | <u>0</u>  | <u>0</u>              |
| Termination  | 1                         | 5    | 2    | <u>5</u>  | <u>1</u>  | <u>5</u>              |
| Terms/Conditions of Employment   | 0                         | 0    | 0    | <u>4</u>  | <u>6</u>  | <u>19</u>             |
| Time and Attendance  | 5                         | 2    | 0    | <u>0</u>  | <u>3</u>  | <u>6</u>              |
| Training   | 3                         | 1    | 0    | <u>1</u>  | <u>4</u>  | <u>8</u>              |
| Other  | 12                        | 10   | 5    | <u>5</u>  | <u>11</u> | <u>1</u>              |

| Processing Time                         | Comparative Data          |        |        |        |        |                       |
|---|---------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-----------------------|
|   | Previous Fiscal Year Data |        |        |        |        | 2013<br>Thru<br>09-30 |
|   | 2008                      | 2009   | 2010   | 2011   | 2012   |                       |
| Complaints pending during fiscal year   |                           |        |        |        |        |                       |
| Average number of days in investigation | 174.14                    | 191.34 | 297.73 | 289.57 | 189.23 | 213.63                |

| Processing Time  | Comparative Data          |        |        |        |        |                       |
|--|---------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-----------------------|
|  | Previous Fiscal Year Data |        |        |        |        | 2013<br>Thru<br>09-30 |
|  | 2008                      | 2009   | 2010   | 2011   | 2012   |                       |
| Average number of days in final action                               | 580.17                    | 586.59 | 229.43 | 178.44 | 341.82 | 117.22                |
| Complaint pending during fiscal year where hearing was requested     |                           |        |        |        |        |                       |
| Average number of days in investigation                              | 174.33                    | 189.00 | 373.20 | 362.07 | 182.79 | 204.82                |
| Average number of days in final action                               | 175.07                    | 238.91 | 105.67 | 25.00  | 210.00 | 0                     |
| Complaint pending during fiscal year where hearing was not requested |                           |        |        |        |        |                       |
| Average number of days in investigation                              | 174.00                    | 192.43 | 279.76 | 226.12 | 206.71 | 237.88                |
| Average number of days in final action                               | 813.88                    | 714.07 | 273.12 | 188.67 | 417.14 | 131.88                |

| Complaints Dismissed by Agency              | Comparative Data          |      |      |      |      |                       |
|---|---------------------------|------|------|------|------|-----------------------|
|   | Previous Fiscal Year Data |      |      |      |      | 2013<br>Thru<br>09-30 |
|   | 2008                      | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |                       |
| Total Complaints Dismissed by Agency        | 6                         | 0    | 5    | 1    | 3    | 3                     |
| Average days pending prior to dismissal     | 286                       | 0    | 237  | 51   | 395  | -1                    |
| <b>Complaints Withdrawn by Complainants</b> |                           |      |      |      |      |                       |
| Total Complaints Withdrawn by Complainants  | 4                         | 1    | 1    | 2    | 0    | 1                     |

| Total Final Agency Actions<br>Finding Discrimination | Comparative Data          |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |                       |     |
|--|---------------------------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|-----------------------|-----|
|  | Previous Fiscal Year Data |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |      |     | 2013<br>Thru<br>09-30 |     |
|  | 2008                      |     | 2009 |     | 2010 |     | 2011 |     | 2012 |     |                       |     |
|  | #                         | %   | #    | %   | #    | %   | #    | %   | #    | %   | #                     | %   |
| Total Number Findings                                | 1                         |     | 1    |     | 1    |     | 1    |     | 1    |     | 2                     |     |
| Without Hearing                                      | 0                         | 0   | 1    | 100 | 1    | 100 | 1    | 100 | 1    | 100 | 2                     | 100 |
| With Hearing   | 1                         | 100 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0                     | 0   |

| Findings of Discrimination<br>Rendered by Basis   | Comparative Data          |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |          |     |                           |    |
|---|---------------------------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|----------|-----|---------------------------|----|
|   | Previous Fiscal Year Data |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |          |     | 2013<br>Thru<br>09-<br>30 |    |
|   | 2008                      |     | 2009 |     | 2010 |     | 2011 |     | 2012     |     |                           |    |
|   | #                         | %   | #    | %   | #    | %   | #    | %   | #        | %   | #                         | %  |
| <b>Note: Complaints can be filed alleging multiple bases. The sum of the bases may not equal total complaints and findings.</b> |                           |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |          |     |                           |    |
| <b>Total Number Findings</b>  | 1                         |     | 1    |     | 1    |     | 1    |     | 1        |     | 2                         |    |
| Race  | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 1    | 100 | <u>1</u> | 100 | 0                         | 0  |
| Color   | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0   | <u>0</u>                  | 0  |
| Religion  | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0   | <u>0</u>                  | 0  |
| Reprisal  | 1                         | 100 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0   | <u>0</u>                  | 0  |
| Sex   | 1                         | 100 | 1    | 100 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0   | 1                         | 50 |
| PDA   | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0   | <u>0</u>                  | 0  |
| National Origin   | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0   | <u>1</u>                  | 50 |
| Equal Pay Act   | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0   | <u>0</u>                  | 0  |
| Age   | 1                         | 100 | 1    | 100 | 1    | 100 | 1    | 100 | <u>1</u> | 100 | 0                         | 0  |
| Disability  | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0   | 1                         | 50 |
| Genetics  | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0   | <u>0</u>                  | 0  |
| Non-EEO   | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0   | <u>0</u>                  | 0  |
|   |                           |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |          |     |                           |    |
| <b>Findings After Hearing</b>   | 1                         |     | 0    |     | 0    |     | 0    |     | 0        |     | 0                         |    |
| Race  | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0   | <u>0</u>                  | 0  |
| Color   | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0   | <u>0</u>                  | 0  |
| Religion  | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0   | <u>0</u>                  | 0  |
| Reprisal  | 1                         | 100 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0   | <u>0</u>                  | 0  |
| Sex   | 1                         | 100 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0   | <u>0</u>                  | 0  |
| PDA   | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0   | <u>0</u>                  | 0  |
| National Origin   | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0   | <u>0</u>                  | 0  |
| Equal Pay Act   | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0   | <u>0</u>                  | 0  |

| Findings of Discrimination<br>Rendered by Basis   | Comparative Data          |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |                           |    |
|---|---------------------------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|---------------------------|----|
|   | Previous Fiscal Year Data |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |      |     | 2013<br>Thru<br>09-<br>30 |    |
|   | 2008                      |     | 2009 |     | 2010 |     | 2011 |     | 2012 |     |                           |    |
|   | #                         | %   | #    | %   | #    | %   | #    | %   | #    | %   | #                         | %  |
| <i>Note: Complaints can be filed alleging multiple bases. The sum of the bases may not equal total complaints and findings.</i> |                           |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |                           |    |
| Age   | 1                         | 100 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0                         | 0  |
| Disability  | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0                         | 0  |
| Genetics  | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0                         | 0  |
| Non-EEO   | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0                         | 0  |
|   |                           |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |                           |    |
| <b>Findings Without Hearing</b>   | 0                         |     | 1    |     | 1    |     | 1    |     | 1    |     | 2                         |    |
| Race  | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 1    | 100 | 1    | 100 | 0                         | 0  |
| Color   | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0                         | 0  |
| Religion  | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0                         | 0  |
| Reprisal  | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0                         | 0  |
| Sex   | 0                         | 0   | 1    | 100 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 1                         | 50 |
| PDA   | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0                         | 0  |
| National Origin   | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 1                         | 50 |
| Equal Pay Act   | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0                         | 0  |
| Age   | 0                         | 0   | 1    | 100 | 1    | 100 | 1    | 100 | 1    | 100 | 0                         | 0  |
| Disability  | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 1                         | 50 |
| Genetics  | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0                         | 0  |
| Non-EEO   | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0                         | 0  |

| Findings of Discrimination<br>Rendered by Issue | Comparative Data          |     |      |     |      |   |      |     |          |   |                           |    |
|---|---------------------------|-----|------|-----|------|---|------|-----|----------|---|---------------------------|----|
|   | Previous Fiscal Year Data |     |      |     |      |   |      |     |          |   | 2013<br>Thru<br>09-<br>30 |    |
|   | 2008                      |     | 2009 |     | 2010 |   | 2011 |     | 2012     |   |                           |    |
|   | #                         | %   | #    | %   | #    | % | #    | %   | #        | % | #                         | %  |
| <b>Total Number Findings</b>                    | 1                         |     | 1    |     | 1    |   | 1    |     | 1        |   | 2                         |    |
| Appointment/Hire                                | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0 | <u>0</u>                  | 0  |
| Assignment of Duties                            | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0 | <u>0</u>                  | 0  |
| Awards  | 1                         | 100 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0 | <u>0</u>                  | 0  |
| Conversion to Full-time                         | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0 | <u>0</u>                  | 0  |
| Disciplinary Action                             |                           |     |      |     |      |   |      |     |          |   |                           |    |
| Demotion  | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0 | <u>0</u>                  | 0  |
| Reprimand                                       | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0 | <u>0</u>                  | 0  |
| Suspension                                      | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0 | <u>0</u>                  | 0  |
| Removal   | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0 | <u>0</u>                  | 0  |
| Other   | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0 | <u>0</u>                  | 0  |
| Duty Hours                                      | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0 | <u>0</u>                  | 0  |
| Evaluation Appraisal                            | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0 | <u>0</u>                  | 0  |
| Examination/Test                                | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0 | <u>0</u>                  | 0  |
| Harassment                                      |                           |     |      |     |      |   |      |     |          |   |                           |    |
| Non-Sexual                                      | 1                         | 100 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0 | 1                         | 50 |
| Sexual  | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0 | 1                         | 50 |
| Medical Examination                             | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0 | <u>0</u>                  | 0  |
| Pay (Including Overtime)                        | 1                         | 100 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0 | <u>0</u>                  | 0  |
| Promotion/Non-Selection                         | 0                         | 0   | 1    | 100 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0 | <u>0</u>                  | 0  |
| Reassignment                                    |                           |     |      |     |      |   |      |     |          |   |                           |    |
| Denied  | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | <u>0</u> | 0 | <u>0</u>                  | 0  |
| Directed  | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 1    | 100 | 0        | 0 | <u>0</u>                  | 0  |

| Findings of Discrimination<br>Rendered by Issue | Comparative Data          |     |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |     |                           |   |    |
|---|---------------------------|-----|------|---|------|---|------|---|------|-----|---------------------------|---|----|
|   | Previous Fiscal Year Data |     |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |     | 2013<br>Thru<br>09-<br>30 |   |    |
|   | 2008                      |     | 2009 |   | 2010 |   | 2011 |   | 2012 |     |                           |   |    |
|   | #                         | %   | #    | % | #    | % | #    | % | #    | %   | #                         | % |    |
| Reasonable Accommodation                        | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0                         | 1 | 50 |
| Reinstatement                                   | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0                         | 0 | 0  |
| Retirement                                      | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0                         | 0 | 0  |
| Termination                                     | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0                         | 0 | 0  |
| Terms/Conditions of Employment                  | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0                         | 0 | 0  |
| Time and Attendance                             | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0                         | 0 | 0  |
| Training  | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0                         | 0 | 0  |
| Other - User Defined                            | 1                         | 100 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 1    | 100 | 0                         | 0 | 0  |
|   |                           |     |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |     |                           |   |    |
| <b>Findings After Hearing</b>                   | 1                         |     | 0    |   | 0    |   | 0    |   | 0    |     | 0                         |   |    |
| Appointment/Hire                                | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0                         | 0 | 0  |
| Assignment of Duties                            | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0                         | 0 | 0  |
| Awards  | 1                         | 100 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0                         | 0 | 0  |
| Conversion to Full-time                         | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0                         | 0 | 0  |
| Disciplinary Action                             |                           |     |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |     |                           |   |    |
| Demotion  | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0                         | 0 | 0  |
| Reprimand                                       | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0                         | 0 | 0  |
| Suspension                                      | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0                         | 0 | 0  |
| Removal   | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0                         | 0 | 0  |
| Other   | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0                         | 0 | 0  |
| Duty Hours                                      | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0                         | 0 | 0  |
| Evaluation Appraisal                            | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0                         | 0 | 0  |
| Examination/Test                                | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0                         | 0 | 0  |

| Findings of Discrimination<br>Rendered by Issue | Comparative Data          |     |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |          |                           |          |   |
|---|---------------------------|-----|------|---|------|---|------|---|------|----------|---------------------------|----------|---|
|   | Previous Fiscal Year Data |     |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |          | 2013<br>Thru<br>09-<br>30 |          |   |
|   | 2008                      |     | 2009 |   | 2010 |   | 2011 |   | 2012 |          |                           |          |   |
|   | #                         | %   | #    | % | #    | % | #    | % | #    | %        | #                         | %        |   |
| Harassment                                      |                           |     |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |          |                           |          |   |
| Non-Sexual                                      | 1                         | 100 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | <u>0</u> | 0                         | <u>0</u> | 0 |
| Sexual  | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | <u>0</u> | 0                         | <u>0</u> | 0 |
| Medical Examination                             | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | <u>0</u> | 0                         | <u>0</u> | 0 |
| Pay (Including Overtime)                        | 1                         | 100 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | <u>0</u> | 0                         | <u>0</u> | 0 |
| Promotion/Non-Selection                         | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | <u>0</u> | 0                         | <u>0</u> | 0 |
| Reassignment                                    |                           |     |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |          |                           |          |   |
| Denied  | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | <u>0</u> | 0                         | <u>0</u> | 0 |
| Directed  | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | <u>0</u> | 0                         | <u>0</u> | 0 |
| Reasonable Accommodation                        | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | <u>0</u> | 0                         | <u>0</u> | 0 |
| Reinstatement                                   | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | <u>0</u> | 0                         | <u>0</u> | 0 |
| Retirement                                      | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | <u>0</u> | 0                         | <u>0</u> | 0 |
| Termination                                     | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | <u>0</u> | 0                         | <u>0</u> | 0 |
| Terms/Conditions of Employment                  | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | <u>0</u> | 0                         | <u>0</u> | 0 |
| Time and Attendance                             | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | <u>0</u> | 0                         | <u>0</u> | 0 |
| Training  | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | <u>0</u> | 0                         | <u>0</u> | 0 |
| Other - User Defined                            | 1                         | 100 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | <u>0</u> | 0                         | <u>0</u> | 0 |
| <b>Findings Without Hearing</b>                 |                           |     |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |          |                           |          |   |
|   | 0                         |     | 1    |   | 0    |   | 1    |   | 1    |          | 2                         |          |   |
| Appointment/Hire                                | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | <u>0</u> | 0                         | <u>0</u> | 0 |
| Assignment of Duties                            | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | <u>0</u> | 0                         | <u>0</u> | 0 |
| Awards  | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | <u>0</u> | 0                         | <u>0</u> | 0 |
| Conversion to Full-time                         | 0                         | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | <u>0</u> | 0                         | <u>0</u> | 0 |
| Disciplinary Action                             |                           |     |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |          |                           |          |   |

| Findings of Discrimination<br>Rendered by Issue | Comparative Data          |   |      |     |      |   |      |     |      |   |                           |    |
|---|---------------------------|---|------|-----|------|---|------|-----|------|---|---------------------------|----|
|   | Previous Fiscal Year Data |   |      |     |      |   |      |     |      |   | 2013<br>Thru<br>09-<br>30 |    |
|   | 2008                      |   | 2009 |     | 2010 |   | 2011 |     | 2012 |   |                           |    |
|   | #                         | % | #    | %   | #    | % | #    | %   | #    | % | #                         | %  |
| Demotion  | 0                         | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0                         | 0  |
| Reprimand                                       | 0                         | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0                         | 0  |
| Suspension                                      | 0                         | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0                         | 0  |
| Removal   | 0                         | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0                         | 0  |
| Other   | 0                         | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0                         | 0  |
| Duty Hours                                      | 0                         | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0                         | 0  |
| Evaluation Appraisal                            | 0                         | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0                         | 0  |
| Examination/Test                                | 0                         | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0                         | 0  |
| Harassment                                      |                           |   |      |     |      |   |      |     |      |   |                           |    |
| Non-Sexual                                      | 0                         | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 1                         | 50 |
| Sexual  | 0                         | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 1                         | 50 |
| Medical Examination                             | 0                         | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0                         | 0  |
| Pay (Including Overtime)                        | 0                         | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0                         | 0  |
| Promotion/Non-Selection                         | 0                         | 0 | 1    | 100 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0                         | 0  |
| Reassignment                                    |                           |   |      |     |      |   |      |     |      |   |                           |    |
| Denied  | 0                         | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0                         | 0  |
| Directed  | 0                         | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 1    | 100 | 0    | 0 | 0                         | 0  |
| Reasonable Accommodation                        | 0                         | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 1                         | 50 |
| Reinstatement                                   | 0                         | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0                         | 0  |
| Retirement                                      | 0                         | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0                         | 0  |
| Termination                                     | 0                         | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0                         | 0  |
| Terms/Conditions of Employment                  | 0                         | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0                         | 0  |
| Time and Attendance                             | 0                         | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0 | 0                         | 0  |

| Findings of Discrimination<br>Rendered by Issue | Comparative Data          |   |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |          |                           |          |   |
|---|---------------------------|---|------|---|------|---|------|---|------|----------|---------------------------|----------|---|
|   | Previous Fiscal Year Data |   |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |          | 2013<br>Thru<br>09-<br>30 |          |   |
|   | 2008                      |   | 2009 |   | 2010 |   | 2011 |   | 2012 |          |                           |          |   |
|   | #                         | % | #    | % | #    | % | #    | % | #    | %        | #                         | %        |   |
| Training  | 0                         | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | <u>0</u> | 0                         | <u>0</u> | 0 |
| Other - User Defined                            | 0                         | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 0 | 0    | 1        | 100                       | 0        | 0 |

| Pending Complaints Filed in Previous<br>Fiscal Years by Status | Comparative Data          |      |           |           |           |          | 2013<br>Thru<br>09-<br>30 |
|--|---------------------------|------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|---------------------------|
|  | Previous Fiscal Year Data |      |           |           |           |          |                           |
|  | 2008                      | 2009 | 2010      | 2011      | 2012      |          |                           |
| Total complaints from previous Fiscal Years                    | 105                       | 71   | 52        | 36        | 42        | 59       |                           |
| Total Complainants   | 88                        | 57   | 46        | 33        | 41        | 58       |                           |
| <b>Number complaints pending</b>                               |                           |      |           |           |           |          |                           |
| Investigation  | 0                         | 3    | 0         | 1         | <u>1</u>  | <u>1</u> |                           |
| ROI issued, pending Complainant's action                       | 0                         | 0    | 0         | <u>0</u>  | <u>0</u>  | <u>0</u> |                           |
| Hearing  | 15                        | 14   | <u>11</u> | <u>13</u> | <u>22</u> | 36       |                           |
| Final Agency Action  | 16                        | 5    | <u>4</u>  | <u>3</u>  | <u>0</u>  | 2        |                           |
| Appeal with EEOC Office of Federal Operations                  | 3                         | 3    | 2         | <u>2</u>  | <u>2</u>  | <u>2</u> |                           |

| Complaint Investigations  | Comparative Data          |      |          |          |      |                           |
|---|---------------------------|------|----------|----------|------|---------------------------|
|   | Previous Fiscal Year Data |      |          |          |      | 2013<br>Thru<br>09-<br>30 |
|   | 2008                      | 2009 | 2010     | 2011     | 2012 |                           |
| Pending Complaints Where Investigations Exceed Required Time Frames | 4                         | 8    | <u>8</u> | <u>1</u> | 3    | 6                         |

# Disabled Veteran Affirmative Action Plan FY 2012 Report

# Disabled Veteran Affirmative Action Plan FY 2013 Plan D

DISABLED VETERANS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION  
PROGRAM REPORT (DVAAP)  
FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2012

*Methods Used to Recruit and Employ Disabled Veterans*

**1) Implementation of the NRCS Recruitment Strategy**

The NRCS Recruitment Strategy was finalized in FY 2010. The strategy provides a roadmap for attracting, recruiting, and retaining a skilled, diverse workforce that we continue to use in FY 2011 and FY 2012. It consists of five central goals with outcomes and specific initiatives and actions that NRCS will take to reach them. These goals are:

- a. Plan strategically for recruiting a skilled, diverse workforce
- b. Develop an integrated approach to recruitment
- c. Implement standardized and user-friendly selection methods
- d. Recruit with an emphasis on retention

- e. Increase accountability through measurement and evaluation

This strategic plan aligns with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Strategic Plan (2010–2015) and the NRCS Human Capital Strategic Plan. Both underscore the paramount importance of recruiting the right people at the right time to do the right job through diverse branding and targeted recruitment initiatives.

## **2) Information Sharing**

- a) DVAPP was shared with all Human Resources offices and all Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPMs) for both Veterans and Disabilities.
- b) During FY 2012, Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPMs) from all states met on a quarterly basis.

### ***Internal Recruitment***

#### **1) Emerging Leaders Development Program (ELDP)**

NRCS initiated a re-engineered leadership program, Emerging Leaders Development Program (ELDP) in FY 2011 which has continued throughout FY 2012. The program focuses on training activities that include classroom training, individual and on line learning, stretch assignments, mentoring and coaching. The opportunity to apply for this program was posted agency wide and did contain criteria for selection, including the desire to have a diverse group of participants.

#### **2) Update of Web Site**

NRCS has launched an updated web site in FY 2012. Material has been developed which will enhance the “Careers” page of this new site.

#### **3) Onboarding**

Transitioning to a new position is not easy for anyone but can be especially daunting for veterans who are leaving a different life and transitioning to the civilian workforce. NRCS has developed an Onboarding framework that provides supervisors, human resources staff and other onboarding support people the tools, templates and policies that will provide the ability to have seamless and consistent new hire integration into the NRCS workforce. Information will be available to newly hired employees through this updated onboarding process as well as to employees who wish to have better access to internal opportunities.

### ***Monitor, Review and Evaluate Activities***

NRCS does monitor and evaluate based on information from the following:

- Civil Rights Compliance Audits
- Review and Analysis of Workforce Demographic Data
- New Hire Survey Results
- Exit Survey Results

## ***FY 2012 Progress***

### **Recruitment Activities**

During FY 2012, NRCS was able to attend and recruit at a number of events that were directly targeting veterans, including those veterans with disabilities

- a) Wounded Warriors
- b) Hiring Heroes
- c) American Legion Convention
- d) Quantico Transition Fair
- e) Detroit Veteran's Hiring Fair
- f) Operation War Fighter

### **Training**

- a) NRCS has provided training on direct hiring authorities to SEPM in the Veteran's and Disabilities groups.
- b) Training for recruiters has been developed which holds information regarding hiring authorities, targeting recruitment, conducting recruiting events, etc.
- c) Training for hiring managers has been completed which addresses hiring of veterans and hiring of individuals with disabilities. 100% of all hiring managers in the agency have completed 99.9% of all supervisors in the agency
- d) OPM's Veteran Hiring has been completed by 99% of all HR staff
- e) Training for Pathways has been completed by 99.9% of all supervisors which included information on veteran adjudication

### **Research**

- a) Best Practices in Veterans programs have been researched
- b) Potential sources to utilize in targeted recruitment have been researched however this is ongoing.

### **Barriers**

- a) Hiring freezes were in place at various times throughout FY 2012. This creates a significant barrier to facilitation of ongoing recruitment efforts. It is anticipated that this will continue into FY 2013 due to budget limits.
- b) Data is difficult to access. Without accurate data, it is difficult to make informed decisions and market to hiring managers. To overcome this barrier, Talent Management has completed an in depth data integrity study which included looking at coding for veterans. We will begin to look at implementing the changes recommended in FY 2013 as we continue to work with the Human Resources Information Systems office as well as NRCS Information Technology to develop a way to ensure we have reliable data sources.

## DVAPP Plan Certification - Fiscal Year 2013

A. Name of the Agency

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington D.C. 20250

B. Name and Title of Designated DV AAP Office  
(including address if different from above):

Jane Hardisty  
Acting Deputy Chief of Management

C. Name and Title of Contact Person  
(including address if different from above):

Marvis Montesano  
Director, Talent Management  
1400 Independence Ave, SW  
Room 6220  
Washington DC 20250  
Telephone and FAX numbers:  
(202)690-2250 (phone)  
(202) 720-7721 (fax)

**CERTIFICATION:**

I certify that the above named agency: (1) has a current DISABLED VETERANS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAM (DV AAP) PLAN and the program is being implemented as required by 38 U.S.C. 4214, as amended, and appropriate regulations and guidelines issued by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management: (2) that all field offices or installations having less than 500 employees are covered by a DVAAP Plan: (3) that all field offices or installations having 500 or more employees are covered by this plan or by a local plan: and (4) that such plans are available upon request from field offices or installations.

SIGNATURE AND DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Jane Hardisty, Acting Deputy Chief for Management

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

# DISABLED VETERANS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAM PLAN

## (DVAAP) FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2013

### 1. AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE

Pursuant to section 403 of the Vietnam Era Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, as amended (38 U.S.C. 2014), and section 307 of the Civil Rights Reforms Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. 3112), and section 307 of the Civil Rights Reform Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. 3112), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is required to have an up to date affirmative action plan to promote employment and advancement opportunities for qualified disabled veterans. Accordingly, the purpose of this document is to serve as the agency's Disabled Veteran Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP) Plan for FY 2011.

### 2. PLAN COVERAGE

The DVAAP Plan covers all NRCS offices: National Headquarters (NHQ), Regional Offices, State Offices, Centers, and Field Offices. This plan also includes specific affirmative action to be taken by all offices, as appropriate, to promote the employment and advancement of disabled veterans. All employing offices are required to have a copy of the current NRCS DVAAP plan to facilitate the implementation of agency policy, to carry out their responsibilities under the national plan, and to accomplish all program objectives and goals as established by NHQ.

### 3. POLICY

It is the policy of NRCS to promote equal employment and advancement opportunities for disabled veterans, especially those who are 30 percent or more disabled. NRCS is committed to the employment and advancement opportunities for disabled veterans regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, marital status, political beliefs, familial status or any other non-merit reason, as we are an equal opportunity employer.

### 4. PROGRAM LEADERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibility for the success of the DVAAP is permeated throughout all levels of the agency.

- A. Overall responsibility for the development and implementation of this action plan is assigned to the Director of the Talent Management Division. The Director is designated by the NRCS as the DVAAP Manager. The day to day operations of the DVAAP are

assigned to a staff member in the Talent Management Division. The DVAAP Manager's responsibilities include providing guidance and assistance to the Human Resources staff, supervisors and managers, employees and applicants, distributing the DVAAP plan throughout the Agency, analyzing workforce data on veterans, publicizing the program and preparing the various reports related to the employment of veterans.

- B. The overall management of the Agency's Disability Employment Program is delegated to the Talent Management Division, in conjunction with the Outreach and Advocacy Division to which the National Disability Employment Program Manager (DEPM) is assigned. The National DEPM is responsible for coordinating the Disability Awareness Program to ensure that managers, supervisors, and employees have a full understanding of the program. Talent Management is responsible for coordination and development of strategic approaches to veterans programs including initiatives related to disabled veterans recruitment and retention.
- C. Regional Conservationists and State Conservationists are accountable for the success of the program in their respective areas. This includes ensuring vacancy announcements are open to disabled veterans, providing accommodations when necessary to employ disabled veterans, and publicizing the program through various media.
- D. Human Resources Managers/Specialists, in collaboration with Talent Management are responsible for implementing, evaluating and monitoring the DVAAP within their respective States. This includes publicizing the program through any available means, such as trainings, newsletters, and all-employee meetings.
- E. Disability Employment Program Managers, in collaboration with Talent Management, are responsible for coordinating the awareness of the Disabilities Program including the DVAAP, within their respective States. They serve as a link between the program operations in the State and the National DEPM. They assist in recruitment efforts and provide on-going assistance to employees and applicants, as required.
- F. All managers and supervisors are responsible for providing Equal Employment Opportunity for disabled veterans.

## 5. PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Metrics have been established to ensure that NRCS has measurable methods of determining the success of our recruitment efforts. Attrition rates are monitored to acquire necessary information regarding separating employee's rationale for leaving the Agency.

A continuing appraisal of the program will be made throughout the year using the National Finance Center (NFC) system workforce statistical data. In addition, we continue to monitor results of our New Employee Survey and Exit Survey to retrieve information that identifies both why employees are joining and why employees are separating from NRCS.

## 6. RECRUITMENT/OUTREACH/ADVANCEMENT ACTIVITIES

It is NRCS' objective to participate in various recruitment initiatives, when possible and appropriate based on Agency recruitment needs, to inform disabled veterans of vacancies within the agency and to obtain qualified applicants for available or anticipated positions.

NRCS plans to continue to educate and train supervisors and managers on Veterans' Preference and noncompetitive appointments for preference eligible Veterans. We will provide information to hiring managers and human resources staff that will ensure that they are aware of the availability of accommodations through the USDA Target Center and the DOD Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program (CAP).

NRCS was able to fill the vacant Reasonable Accommodations Coordinator position. The job description was written to allow for spending 50% of time on Reasonable Accommodations and 50% on recruitment of individuals with disabilities, including veterans with disabilities.

NRCS will communicate the availability of an Agency-specific web-based recruiter training which has been developed in an effort to provide an overview of hiring authorities, methods of targeted recruitment and the importance of having a skilled and diverse workforce.

#### A. External Recruitment

*Focus on underrepresented groups.* Our recruiting efforts will focus on diverse groups and applicant pools, particularly those who are under-represented in the NRCS workforce. These efforts will go beyond ethnicity and gender, to include veterans, disabled, mid-level career, and other diverse applicants. To ensure our success, we will use diversity metrics in our planning documents and target diverse universities, educational institutions, groups, and organizations that include the under-represented populations. Our efforts to do this began with doing research and identifying barriers for each individual group and within FY 2013, we will have a finalized action plan to eliminate those barriers for:

- Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders
- Hispanics/Latinos
- African Americans
- American Indians/Alaska Natives
- Disabled Individuals
- Veterans

The NRCS Recruitment Strategy addresses use of targeted recruitment processes to reach all under-represented groups, including Veterans and Disabled individuals. NRCS will utilize established contacts with veteran's organizations and will also reach out to form new contacts, such as: the Veterans' Employment Service of the Department of Veterans Affairs; and other similar organizations which foster the employment of disabled veterans.

Much of our recruitment is done at colleges and universities. While on campuses, NRCS will actively engage with veteran contacts whenever possible. In FY 2013, we will

continue to develop a comprehensive student employment program using the new Pathways Program which will allow us to share information on campuses.

NRCS will focus on social networking and media of a variety of types in FY 2013. We believe that use of social media will expand the number of opportunities we will have to connect with veterans.

#### B. Internal Recruitment

All employees, including disabled veterans, are to be notified of vacancies that will be filled through placement and provided with information about procedures to follow in order to be considered for positions.

Additional informational documents will be prepared and made available which will address the ways that veterans can combine the benefits of Federal employment with their Veterans benefits.

#### C. Special Appointing Authorities

Talent Management Division, VEPMs, DEPMS and servicing human resources offices will continue to inform managers of the availability of special hiring authorities, such as the Veterans Readjustment Appointment Authority (VRA), Veterans Employment Opportunity Act (VEOA) and the hiring authority for veterans with 30 percent or more disability. Managers will be encouraged to give consideration for using all appropriate authorities when filling positions.

During FY 2013, NRCS will continue to develop and deliver training to both Human Resources and Hiring Managers.

#### D. Vacancy Announcements

Servicing human resources offices are required to accept applications from persons eligible for consideration under special hiring authorities (including VRA, appointment of veterans with 30 percent or more disability etc.) at all times. Vacancy announcements will include a statement that voluntary applications from persons who want to be considered under special hiring will be accepted and considered at all times.

#### E. Special Events

Servicing human resources offices will participate in special events, such as career days, veterans' job fairs, employer seminars, conferences, etc. that promote awareness of the DVAAP.

The DVAAP Manager will assist offices in identifying available events that will ensure that we attract disabled Veterans and other targeted groups.

#### F. Unpaid Training or Work Experience

Disabled veterans may work for a Federal agency while in training in accordance with the requirements in 38 U.S.C. Chapter 31 (Veterans Administration Vocational Rehabilitation). Subsequently, a veteran may receive a non-competitive appointment to a vacancy for which he or she is qualified when training is completed. Placement does not have to be in the agency in which training was received.

### 7. MONITORING, REVIEW, AND EVALUATION

The DVAAP Manager will provide oversight of the program agency-wide through periodic reviews of statistical data, inclusion of the program in any Human Resources Management evaluations or Civil Rights reviews which may be conducted throughout the year, as well as other similar oversight activities. We will continue to develop reliable data sources and will utilize all metrics available.

We plan to expand the scope of data monitoring in FY 2013 to provide a solid knowledge base on which to determine the effectiveness of our recruiting efforts.

# Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program - FY 2013

As required by Public Law 96-454 Part 720 of Title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations and subsequent regulations and guidelines issued by the Office of Personnel management, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) of the Department of Agriculture (USDA) is required to have an up-to-date FEORP to promote equitable recruitment and employment practices throughout the agency. This document will identify initiatives to be implemented during FY 2011, which were established in the NRCS Recruitment Strategy

## PLAN COVERAGE

This plan covers all NRCS employees. All employing offices will have a copy of the current FEORP to ensure that the plan is implemented consistently across the agency. The implementation of the initiatives included will be facilitated by this plan.

## PROGRAM COORDINATION

The designated FEORP official is Marvis Montesano, Director, Talent Management, NRCS. Marvis will serve as the contact person for this plan and all agency initiatives related to national recruitment.

## PLAN FOR FY 2013

Since the 1930s, the mission of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has been *Helping People Help the Land*. We achieve this mission by providing agricultural producers and others with technical and financial assistance. Our continued success depends on recruiting a skilled, motivated, and diverse workforce with technical expertise, dedication, and the ability to work collaboratively with a diverse customer base.

As more of NRCS's experienced employees contemplate retiring and the labor market becomes more competitive, this requirement has become increasingly more important than ever before. Goal 4 of the Human Capital Strategic Plan (FY 2013-2017) is "Attract, select and retain talented individuals with the right technical and professional skills needed to meet our mission."

The NRCS Recruitment Strategy, approved in FY 2010 and consists of five central goals, highlighting specific initiatives, actions and resulting outcomes that NRCS will take to reach them. These goals are:

1. Plan strategically for recruiting a skilled, diverse workforce
2. Develop an integrated approach to recruitment
3. Implement standardized and user-friendly selection methods
4. Recruit with an emphasis on retention
5. Increase accountability through measurement and evaluation

As we enter into a period where funding is anticipated to substantially decrease, it becomes an even greater need for NRCS to make sound, data driven decisions related to recruitment and retention of our workforce.

Initiatives which will be addressed in FY 2013 include:

*Plan strategically for recruiting a skilled, diverse workforce*

4) *Updating the Recruitment Strategy and developing a National Recruitment Framework:*

Planning recruitment is a major component of strategic human capital management. It helps NRCS to identify and address the gaps between the workforce of today and the needs of tomorrow, fostering a diverse and talented workforce. The NRCS recruitment efforts will directly tie to workforce planning at the state, center, and national levels and will improve NRCS' ability to recruit the workforce that is needed to meet the workload demands. To ensure our methods are consistent and accurate, National Headquarters will provide guidance, tools and process documentation to states for creating strategic alignment between recruitment, workforce, and other strategic plans. The initiatives in the FY 2010 Recruitment Strategy have been in progress and by updating the recruitment strategy to a national framework, we will be including the next generation of initiatives.

5) **Implementing our plan to Focus on underrepresented groups.** Our recruiting efforts will focus on diverse groups and applicant pools, particularly those who are under-represented in the NRCS workforce. These efforts will go beyond ethnicity and gender to include veterans, disabled, mid-level career, and other diverse applicants. To ensure our success, we will use diversity metrics in our planning documents and target diverse universities, educational institutions, groups, and organizations that include the under-represented populations.

FY 2013 will include a special focus on disability recruitment and recruitment of veterans. We will continue to work to incorporate diversity into our student programs.

6) **Establish meaningful, clearly-branded and updated materials, incorporating the importance of diversity.**

- **Develop national marketing and promotional materials:** To ensure that NRCS’s message is consistent, the national office will develop a core image and brand that will apply to all materials and products from collateral pieces to giveaway items. We will provide guidelines with step-by-step procedures and examples so there is consistency and understanding of efforts throughout NRCS. The guidelines will also contain information on how to:
  - ✓ Tailor marketing efforts to reach diverse segments of the population, such as college students, agriculture and natural resources individuals, minority groups, and individuals with disabilities;
  - ✓ Approach special hiring authorities for specific targeted groups of applicants;
  - ✓ Convey information about government benefits, the agency mission, and unique NRCS attributes and benefits;
  - ✓ Tailor marketing templates, (e.g., brochures, posters, and advertisements) to include state- specific information; and
  - ✓ Utilize available brochures and posters previously developed to convey the mission of the agency.
  - ✓ Translate student information into Spanish

7) **Research and incorporate technology and social media into our national recruitment efforts.** By utilizing technology, NRCS will be better equipped to reach out to a wider group of diverse applicants. These efforts have begun in FY 2012 and will continue with wider implementation in FY 2013:

- ✓ Using Video Technology with colleges and universities to do information sessions with students in science based curriculum
- ✓ Utilize videos on NRCS “Careers” web site
- ✓ Roll out the web site information for newly hired employees
- ✓ Begin to use videos in social media sites

**Develop an integrated approach to recruitment**

Developing an integrated approach to our recruitment efforts offers us many benefits from expediting processes to reaching more of the skilled and diverse candidates NRCS seeks. Implementing these strategies will prove vital to the objectives of NRCS. To achieve this, we need to utilize a central organizing framework where our recruiting activities occur. According to best practice research, there are three models from which to establish our model: a centralized, decentralized, or hybrid approach. While all offer benefits, a hybrid approach would work best for NRCS because we can centralize activities at National Headquarters, offering consistent guidance, policies, and tools to ensure that all levels of NRCS focus on the same outcome while also enabling local offices to customize their approaches, as they deem appropriate.

- 1) **Establish additional guidance and structure for the recruitment program, positions, and responsibilities.** The Talent Management Division, based at National Headquarters under the Chief Human Resources Officer as part of the Management Deputy Area and has the responsibility to provide the National Approach. During FY 2013, we plan to
  - ✓ Provide program management and oversight for NRCS recruiting such as overseeing the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of NRCS recruiting activities at the national level;
  - ✓ Oversee how we develop and use recruiting materials;
  - ✓ Provide ongoing support and guidance to other recruiting staff throughout the NRCS Recruitment Lifecycle;
  - ✓ Collect evaluation and tracking data to ensure that NRCS recruiting is successful in achieving its stated objectives;
  - ✓ Establish structure for our student programs; and
  - ✓ Integrate branding and sourcing efforts, including gifts, tools, and packages and the national Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPMs) into the recruitment process. This will include a recruitment kit that contains a general video about NRCS, brochures, templates for state-specific brochures, giveaways, applications to give candidates at events, and other standard materials.
- 2) **Form a cadre of diverse, trained recruiters to organize and lead recruiting efforts.** The recruitment cadre would be a multi-disciplinary and diverse team which will be identified by each state. Web based Recruiter training has been developed and will be used to train and ensure that best practices are used. In addition, we will be conducting train the trainer recruiter training by VTC. We hope that being able to have a identified team in each state, we will be better able to communicate effectively with all individuals involved in recruitment.

**Implement standardized and user-friendly selection methods**

- 1) **Standardized application selection criteria.** We will continue to enhance the development of assessment questions that can be used in USA Staffing to produce a better applicant pool. During FY 2013, it is planned that we will be moving toward a different staffing system and NRCS will ensure that staff are trained and provided resources to make that transition possible.
- 2) **Work to promote interview protocols across the states.** Interview training will be made available for all managers.
- 3) **Standardized approach to the hiring processes and guidance for applicants.** We will continue to enhance the careers web site to ensure that we have information available about NRCS opportunities and processes. We will also ensure communication through use of the NRCS recruitment email box which allows for direct communication with NRCS HR staff.

### *Recruit with an emphasis on retention*

- 1) **Offer Training and Developmental Opportunities.** Benefits clearly have an impact on employee retention, but they are not the only factor. Training is a critical investment in a strategy that leads to internal promotion, succession planning, and employee development. Developmental opportunities are an investment in employee productivity and retention through career progression and employee job satisfaction over the long-term.
- 2) **Begin to build a Virtual Career Center.** This effort will be a multi-year project which will offer resources to both our current employees and those individuals who will be moving toward applying to positions within NRCS. Based on competency models, we will be showing career pathing for our mission critical positions. It is anticipated that we will be develop the career paths for 2-3 series during FY 2013 at a minimum.
- 3) **Standardize the onboarding process.** Onboarding is crucial to ensuring that all of the time, effort, and expense of recruitment and selection yield an engaged and productive new hire. A successful onboarding program can result in higher employee satisfaction, increased retention of high performers, reduced time-to-productivity, and increased employee engagement and commitment. A re-engineered program has been developed and we will begin implementation in early FY 2013. This effort will:
  - ✓ Provide supervisors and NRCS staff with tools and training to provide a great onboarding experience to new employees. In addition to the materials, training, work and other components of onboarding, we will include topics such as welcoming new employees and helping new hires understand the culture of their worksite.
  - ✓ Supervisors and Human Resources staffs will receive checklists, standardized tools and templates to clarify their role in the onboarding process as well as a new employee package, with materials that they will review, personalize (where needed) and give to the new employee.

### *Increase accountability through measurement and evaluation*

- 1) **Identify recruitment metrics.** NRCS must be able to evaluate the success of recruitment efforts, track our progress toward recruitment goals, and determine continuing needs. To do this, we will select recruiting metrics such as applicants per recruiting source and hires, per recruitment source, and establish measures for assessing the effectiveness or return on investment of individual recruitment activities. We will consider the recruitment metrics in all phases of the recruitment lifecycle, from strategic planning to onboarding and retention efforts.
- 2) **Tie metrics to strategic plans.** Recruiting staff should review diversity reports such as, MD715 optional ethnicity form and retirement reports to determine where the

opportunities to increase diversity exists, and analyze applicant and student databases to target diversity and skill sets.

- 3) **Analyzing and Reporting on results of NRCS surveys.** New Hire and Exit surveys have been put in place and are ready for use in annual reviews of recruitment goals. We will continue to provide an ongoing reporting structure so that Leadership will be able to rely on results and align new practices with the findings.

## Appendix H

### United States Department of Agriculture



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
P.O. Box 2890  
Washington, D.C. 20013

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MAR 13 2013

SUBJECT: EOP -NRCS Civil Rights Policy Statement

TO: All NRCS Employees

File Code: 230-15

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) employees represent an array of cultures, ethnicities, and backgrounds, and that diversity helps us meet our mission. I am committed to enforcing the Secretary's zero tolerance policy on discrimination. Prohibited discrimination is a violation of Title VI and Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

It is NRCS' policy to treat all customers and employees equitably regardless of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and expression), religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital or familial status, parental status, and protected genetic information. It is also our policy that customers and employees be free from reprisal or harassment in the pursuit of fairness and equal employment opportunities.

Complainants, representatives, and witnesses involved in complaints of discrimination must be unimpeded and free from restraint, coercion, or retaliation in the exercise of eliminating discrimination in the workplace. Reprisal of any kind against customers or employees will not be tolerated. Agency officials, managers, supervisors, and other employees will be held accountable for discrimination, reprisal or harassment, civil rights violations, and related misconduct.

Managers and supervisors are responsible for the environment in which their employees work and have a duty to take both affirmative and corrective action to ensure equal opportunity and civil rights for customers and employees. To deter violations, managers and supervisors are required to take appropriate corrective or disciplinary action on findings of discrimination, reprisal, civil rights violations, and related misconduct in employment and program matters. They must demonstrate an elevated regard by supporting civil rights, equal employment opportunity, and diversity in the workplace.

All NRCS employees are expected to adhere to this policy. NRCS will ensure appropriate corrective or disciplinary action is taken against violators who engage in discriminatory behavior.

The Civil Rights Division will continue to provide guidance and ensure the agency's compliance with the laws and principles of equality for employment and programs. If you have questions, concerns, suggestions, or complaints of discrimination, contact the Civil Rights Division at (301) 504 2181.



Jason A. Weller  
Acting Chief

*Helping People Help the Land*

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

## Appendix I

### United States Department of Agriculture



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
P.O. Box 2890  
Washington, D.C. 20013

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DEC 19 2013

SUBJECT: EOP - Natural Resources Conservation Service  
(NRCS) Anti-Harassment Policy

TO: All NRCS Employees

File Code: 230-15

The most productive and satisfying work environment is one in which work is accomplished in a spirit of mutual trust and respect. All employees have a right to work in an environment free from discrimination and harassing conduct, including sexual harassment.

Harassment is a form of discrimination that is offensive, impairs morale, undermines the integrity of employment relationships, and causes serious harm to the productivity, efficiency, and stability of our organization. Harassment on the basis of an employee's race, color, national origin, sex, gender (including gender identity and expression), religion, age (40 and over), mental or physical disability, political affiliation or belief, sexual orientation, marital or familial status, genetic information, and/or reprisal (retaliation) for prior Equal Employment Opportunity activity will not be tolerated.

For the purpose of this policy, harassment is defined as persistent and unwelcome conduct or actions on any of the bases above. Sexual harassment is one type of harassment and includes unwelcome sexual advances, unwelcome physical contact, and unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

**Unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature includes, but is not limited to -**

The repeated making of unsolicited, inappropriate gestures or comments.  
The display of offensive sexually graphic materials not necessary for our work.

**Harassment on any basis (race, sex, age, disability, etc.) exists**

**whenever-** Submission to harassing conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual's employment.

Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for an employment decision affecting an individual.

The conduct interferes with an employee's work or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

**Harassment** may be subtle or manipulative and is not always evident. It does not refer to occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature. It refers to behavior that is not welcome and is personally offensive. All forms of gender harassment are covered. Men can be sexually harassed; men can harass men; women can harass other women. Offenders can be managers, supervisors, coworkers, and nonemployees, such as clients or vendors.

**Physical harassment** is actual or threatened assault, including hitting, tripping, kicking, punching, unwanted touching, and malicious or insulting gestures.

**Verbal harassment** includes jokes, insults, and innuendoes (based on race, sex, age, disability, etc.); degrading sexual remarks; referring to someone as a stud, hunk, or babe; whistling; "cat calls", comments regarding a person's body or sex life; or pressures for sexual favors.

**Nonverbal harassment** includes gestures, staring, touching, hugging, patting, blocking a person's movement, standing too close, brushing against a person's body, or display of sexually suggestive, degrading, racist or other derogatory pictures, cartoons, or drawings.

This policy also expressly prohibits retaliation of any kind against any employee bringing a complaint or assisting in the investigation of a complaint. Such employees may not be adversely affected in any manner related to their employment. NRCS views harassment and retaliation to be among the most serious breaches of workplace behavior. Consequently, appropriate disciplinary or corrective action, ranging from a warning to termination, can be expected.

This policy will be issued to all current employees and during orientation of new employees.

Any employee who believes he or she is being harassed, or any employee who becomes aware of harassment, should promptly notify his or her supervisor. If the employee believes that the supervisor is the harasser, the supervisor's supervisor should be notified. If an employee is uncomfortable discussing

harassment with his or her supervisor, the employee should contact the NRCS Civil Rights Division. Information on your right to file a harassment complaint is also available at <http://www.usda.gov/ups/portal/nrcs/main/national/about/civilrights/>.

As Chief of NRCS, I am fully committed to ensuring that every employee and customer is treated with dignity and respect. Managers, supervisors, and employees must remain cognizant of this policy and refrain from perpetrating acts of harassment. All employees, including contractors and others performing official work for the agency must fully support this zero- tolerance harassment policy.



Jason A. Weller  
Chief

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