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Dedication

This handbook is dedicated to you, our fellow Rural Development employees in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Your dedication, loyalty, diligence, talents, and abilities make Rural Development in Virginia a leader within the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The information we have compiled will hopefully become a primary reference source that will better enable you to perform your regular departmental duties in a working environment which is culturally diverse, and free from any discrimination with regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status.

Acknowledgement

We would like to take this opportunity, as members of the Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committee (EEOAC), to gratefully acknowledge the support and commitment shown to this committee by Mr. Joseph Newbill, our State Director. The committee has been encouraged to function independently as well as given the latitude to carry out our mandated responsibilities. Additionally, Mr. Newbill has maintained his objectivity while considering the many recommendations of the EEOAC.

To all employees who have been involved with assisting the committee, directly or indirectly, we extend our sincere appreciation. Through our State Director's sincere advocacy of equal opportunity and the corroboration of each member of our management team and technical advisors, the Kaleidoscope, Virginia's EEO on-line handbook, has been made possible.

USDA, Rural Development
Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committee

Foreword

This handbook has been prepared by the Virginia Equal Opportunity Advisory Committee (EEOAC) for use as an EEO reference for all Rural Development employees throughout the Commonwealth. Whether new to the agency, or an employee with many years tenure, it is imperative that you stay abreast of current EEO policies and their implementation in all Rural Development programs.

It is the intention of the EEOAC that this handbook serves as a guide to achieve and maintain Rural Development's high standards as an Equal Opportunity Employer. The EEOAC hopes that you will find the material contained within this manual to be informative, and will enhance your knowledge of the EEO program.

Secretary's Policy Statement

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

Civil Rights Policy Statement

President Abraham Lincoln founded the United States Department of Agriculture in 1862 to serve the people of this Nation. Today, nearly 150 years later, USDA employees are among the finest public servants, committed to ensuring that every customer and colleague is treated with fairness, equality, and respect.

As your Secretary, I am firmly committed to ensuring USDA's compliance with civil rights and equal employment opportunity for everyone regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, marital or family status, political beliefs, parental status, or protected genetic information.

There is no principle more important. We must comply with every aspect of our Nation's civil rights laws. To do otherwise is simply not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

As public servants, we cannot be effective without being fair. We cannot be responsive without being respectful. We cannot deliver programs and services without being sensitive to the human issues that are so much a part of our work.

Our adherence to these principles also requires a swift, reasonable, and credible process for addressing and remedying deficiencies. It must also include consistent education and outreach to ensure civil rights are protected, our laws are enforced, and discrimination in any form is prevented.

This must be our passion and our vision. We must continue to strive for a workplace and society that are inclusive and respectful of differences, while working toward unity and harmony. Our actions must always speak louder than words.

With your help and commitment, and using our collective best efforts across every agency and every office, we can reach new heights. Together, we can create a better workplace for all employees, and a Department that delivers programs and services to all people fairly and with integrity and equality.

I look forward to fulfilling this vision -our goals -together.

/s/Ann M. Veneman

Ann M. Veneman
Secretary

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

State Director's Policy Statement



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Rural Development
Rural Business -
Cooperative Programs
Rural Housing Programs
Rural Utilities Programs

1606 Santa Rosa Road
Culpeper Building, Suite 238
Richmond, Virginia 23229-5014
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TDD: 804-287-1753

State Director's Policy Statement on Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)

Just as Secretary Ann M. Veneman has confirmed her commitment to our Nation's Civil Rights laws, I, as your State Director, want to express my commitment to those same principles. Although it has become routine for employees to expect the State Director to endorse USDA policies on civil rights, I want you to know that I personally have patterned my career and my life around these principles, and I wish to affirm my strong personal belief and commitment to assuring civil rights and equal employment opportunity to everyone regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, marital or family status, political beliefs, parental status, or protected genetic information.

I also wish to say, however, that establishing and maintaining a climate of equal opportunity is a responsibility we all share -- at all levels. Each and every employee must be held accountable and personally responsible for his or her performance in ensuring equal opportunity and promoting civil rights. In her Civil Rights Policy Statement, Secretary Veneman emphasizes the importance of working together to assure equal opportunity and civil rights by stating, "Together, we can create a better workplace for all employees, and a Department that delivers programs and services to all people fairly and with integrity and equality."

Annually, we celebrate special emphasis days, weeks, or months to call our attention to what makes us different in an effort to better understand our backgrounds, our cultures, and our priorities. By doing so, we hope that others will appreciate us more for who we are. And while these things are important, I believe we must also spend more time emphasizing how we are all the same.

The unfortunate and tragic events of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, have drawn us together as a country. We are all Americans. We are all employees of USDA Rural Development. We are all paid by the taxpayers to deliver the programs passed by the United States Congress. We all take pride in doing a good job. Let's build on the patriotism generated by 9-11 renewed by these commonalities that bring us closer together as employees, recognizing that we are all unique and we are all stronger because of our diversity -- if we work together.

Not only must we be aware of what the law requires, but we must each understand the need to abide by these principles in our day-to-day activities at work and at home. We all know what we must do to abide by the laws and the requirements of our employer; but more than just knowing what to do, we must all practice and live up to what we must do. This must be our ultimate goal as Americans and as Rural Development employees.

/s/ Joseph W. Newbill
JOSEPH W. NEWBILL
State Director
USDA Rural Development

Historical Synopsis

The Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Policy of Rural Development has a dual purpose: (1) Emphasizing affirmative action in employment and recruitment, and (2) prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status.

To better understand what EEO is all about, it is important to know how the current EEO policy originated and developed within the Federal Government. In 1940, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order (EO)-8587, which provided "public employment could not be denied for reasons of race, creed or color." This was the first EO to address discrimination in Federal employment. Provisions of EO-8587 became public law that same year. There were a series of EOs and legislation issued from 1940 through 1965 aimed at eliminating discrimination within Federal employment. Among those issues were:

- ▣ Executive Order 10925 - Signed by President John F. Kennedy, it established the Commission on Equal Employment Opportunity.
- ▣ Civil Rights Act of 1964 - Federal legislation enacted which extended jurisdiction to the district courts to provide injunctive relief against discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin or religion.
- ▣ Executive Order 11246 - Issued in 1965, and later amended by Executive Order 11357 in 1967, this EO included gender (sex) to the official nondiscrimination language. The Federal Women's Program was established as a result of this action.

During the period of 1970 and 1987, several EOs were enacted to place stronger emphasis on Equal Employment Opportunity. These actions included:

- ▣ The initiation of the Hispanic Employment Program
- ▣ The enactment of the Equal Employment Opportunity Act, which established the Commission on Civil Rights
- ▣ The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 mandated Federal agencies give full consideration to the hiring, placement, and advancement of qualified persons with mental and/or physical handicaps
- ▣ The Fair Labor Standards Amendments of 1974 added age to the official nondiscrimination language
- ▣ The Civil Service Reform Act resulted in the establishment of the Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program
- ▣ The Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987

Equal opportunity laws were created for the benefit of all employees. Likewise, every employee shares in the responsibility for creating a positive and nondiscriminatory work environment. By supporting equal employment opportunities for all individuals, and affirmative action programs for minorities and women, we all demonstrate that such actions are entirely in harmony with sound management practices.

Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committee Bylaws

Statement of Mission

The Virginia Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committee (EEOAC) seeks to keep informed as management pursues its commitment of providing equitable employment opportunities and to participate continuously in appropriate activities to enhance Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) in the state of Virginia. Our mission is to provide meaningful recommendations to the Deputy Equal Employment Opportunity Officer (DEEOO), (State Director) to promote EEO among Rural Development employees in Virginia.

I. Role of the EEOAC

- A. The EEOAC shall advise and assist the DEEOO on all matters relating to carrying out the objectives of the EEO program. In carrying out this role, the Committee
 1. Provide the DEEOO feedback on the performance of the EEO program, identify areas program, identify areas of weakness, and suggest ways in which the program can be improved.
 2. Identify emerging EEO program areas needing attention from the DEEOO.
 3. Provide an informal forum representative of employees to bring EEO matters to the attention of the DEEOO.
- B. The Committee shall seek to create an environment conducive to improved efficiency of the Agency through recommendations for complete equality of employment opportunity, unrestricted by considerations of political affiliation, race, color, religion, sex, national origin, marital status, age or handicap

II. Duties and Responsibilities of the Committee

- A. **Recruitment**. The Committee shall review current recruiting methods and make recommendations for improving the use of Rural Development resources in reaching members of all ethnic and racial groups.
- B. **Training**. The committee shall review training programs and make recommendations to ensure that equal opportunity is provided for all employees to receive training which will increase their potential for advancement. A member of the EEOAC shall serve the state's Training Committee when and if formed.
- C. **Program Awards**. The Committee shall provide input into the special achievement and honorary awards program, including the EEO achievement awards to assure fair and equitable recognition for outstanding service and accomplishments. A member of the EEOAC shall serve on the state's Awards Committee when and if formed.

- D. **Promotions**. The Committee shall review current personnel practices to determine whether the procedures set forth in the Merit Promotion Plan and other personnel regulations are being applied without discrimination for reasons of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability.
- E. **Disciplinary Action**. The Committee shall review statistics on disciplinary cases to determine whether or not disciplinary measures are being applied in the same manner for all employees, realizing that the EEOAC does not receive, investigate, or in any way adjudicate individual cases.
- F. **Separations**. The Committee shall review reasons for separations to determine whether the reasons for separations are being applied in the same manner for all employees. The EEOAC will advise the DEEOO of its findings and possible recommendations.
- G. **Community Participation**. The Committee shall encourage appropriate contacts with community and civic organizations, schools, and churches in order to establish a community relationship which will assist the Agency in accomplishing EEO objectives.

III. Authority of the Committee

- A. The Committee shall not attempt to resolve individual discrimination complaints or grievances, but will direct such matters to the proper channels for disposition.
- B. The Committee shall not attempt to formulate policy in the Equal Employment Opportunity area.
- C. The Committee shall, as it deems necessary, submit recommendations for action to the DEEOO.

IV. Composition of the Committee - The EEOAC will be representative of all races insofar as possible, both sexes, various grade levels, and encompassing all geographical areas, based on nomination, election, and appointment procedures contained in RD Instruction 2045-X.

- A. **Membership**. Membership of the Committee shall be no fewer than ten members. Terms of service for Committee members and alternates will be arranged so that one-third of the membership expires each year. An aggregate of three years will be the maximum term of office for Committee members and alternates except as contained below.
 - 1. A member elected or appointed to succeed a member whose term has expired will serve for three years.
 - 2. If, for some reason, a member is unable to complete his/her term, the alternate will serve for the remainder of the unexpired term.
 - 3. A member whose term has expired cannot be reelected or reappointed until after the lapse

- of one year.
4. Any permanent employee can serve as a member of the EEOAC.
- B. **Election and Appointment**. Each year, approximately one-third of the voting membership will be replaced. Two must be elected with the balance appointed by State Director to achieve the prescribed representation stated in Section IV, Composition of the Committee.
1. The number of nominees on the ballot will be twice the number elected (4) and a maximum of all nominees receiving at least 3 nominations.
 2. As prescribed in RD procedure 2045-X, Exhibit G, Paragraphs E and I, the State Director will determine the dates for nomination and election, notify the field staff of the eligibility criteria for nominees, and review the eligibility status of each nominee.
 3. All nominees will be notified and given the opportunity to decline their nomination prior to the ballot being distributed to the field.
 4. Each new member will be assigned an alternate whose term will run concurrent with the member's term. Employees who are on the ballot but are not elected and receive the next highest number of votes will be named as alternate until all vacancies are filled.
 5. An alternate pool will be created from the nominations received from the field. The purpose of this pool is to provide considerations for additional alternates should the named alternates fill unexpired terms. The DEEOO will retain the right to appoint alternates outside of the pool to maintain the diversity of the committee.
- C. **Authorization**. Notification of employees of their appointment or election will be in writing and signed by the State Director. The notification will contain a brief description of the purpose of the Committee and provide an indication of the time required for committee work.
- D. **Attendance**. All EEOAC members or their alternates will attend meetings and conduct Committee business on official time and at Government expense.
- E. **Advisors**. The Director of Administrative Programs and any other ex officio members shall serve as advisors to the EEO Advisory Committee.
- F. **Ex Officio Members**. The Special Emphasis Program Managers and Presidents of the state employee organizations are ex-officio members and shall serve for as long as they remain in their positions. Ex-officio members do not hold office and do not have voting privileges. Immediate past Chairperson may serve an additional period of one year as an ex-officio member to assist in providing continuity and consultation to the Committee.

V. Officers of the Committee

- A. Annually, the members of the Committee shall elect a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, and may elect a Parliamentarian.
- B. To be eligible for election to the office of Chairperson, following the initial installation proceedings, a member must have served on the Committee for at least the 12 preceding months.
- C. The Chairperson presides over committee meetings and is responsible for the orderly conduct of such meetings and maintains liaison with the DEEOO.
- D. If a vacancy occurs in the office of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson will assume that office. If a vacancy exists as to Vice-Chairperson, a replacement will be elected by the Committee.
- E. The Secretary shall have the responsibilities of:
 - 1. Recording the minutes of each meeting which will be sent to the Chairperson and the State Director within two weeks to be approved and distributed to all Virginia Rural Development employees. The approved copy will be sent to the EEO Coordinator, National Office, within one month following the meeting.
 - 2. Sending announcements/notices of meetings to Committee members at least one month before the meeting with a copy of the agenda.

VI. Meetings of the Committee

- A. The Committee shall meet quarterly, or more often, if necessary. The exact time and place shall be fixed by the Chairperson, in consultation with the DEEOO or his/her designee.
- B. In the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson will perform all the Chairperson's duties. In the event that both the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson are unable to attend a scheduled meeting, the meeting will either be rescheduled or one of the subcommittee chairpersons will be appointed by the Chairperson to act in their stead.
- C. Special meetings may be called upon written request to the Chairperson. The request shall state the purpose for which the special meeting is called and should be filed with the Secretary at least 48 hours in advance. The request will be read at the meeting and entered into the minutes. The Secretary will send written notice of special meetings 48 hours before the meeting date.
- D. A quorum is necessary to conduct Committee business. (A quorum is defined as fifty (50) percent of membership.) A simple majority vote shall determine the course of action of the Committee.
- E. The Committee shall prepare its own agenda for all meetings and establish its own rules for the conduct of meetings and other Committee activities.

- F. The Committee shall meet on official time and shall receive reimbursement for travel expenses.
- G. The Committee shall record its recommendations to the DEEOO in its minutes. Communications from the DEEOO shall also be made a part of the Committee's minutes. Recommendations not resolved shall be continued in subsequent meetings and recorded in the minutes until no further action is required. Minutes of Executive Committee meetings should be made available to all members.

VII. Executive Committee and Subcommittee

- A. The Executive Committee consists of the officers of the EEOAC and the Chairpersons of each Subcommittee.
 - 1. The Executive Committee will inform the Chairperson of all subcommittee activities as a basis for planning future EEOAC meetings.
 - 2. The Executive Committee meets at the discretion of the Chairperson with the approval of the DEEOO.
- B. The Chairperson shall have the authority to establish subcommittees or working groups in order to carry out its objectives. These subcommittees shall include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - 1. Bylaws**
 - 2. Information/Communication Dissemination**
 - 3. Internal Barriers**
 - 4. External Barriers**
 - 5. Scheduling**
- C. Subcommittee's Functions:
 - 1. Bylaws: Maintain, interpret, and recommend changes to the Bylaws that govern the internal affairs of the EEOAC.
 - 2. Information/Communication Dissemination: Creatively and consistently informs all Rural Development employees about equal employment opportunity issues and activities of the EEOAC.
 - 3. Internal Barriers: Ensure fair and equitable treatment of all Rural Development employees by creating an environment of objectivity and impartiality in the following areas:
 - Employment Status Changes
 - Merit Promotion Panels

- Quality Step Increases (QSI)
 - Affirmative Employment Program (AEP)
 - Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program (FEORP)
 - Training
 - Incentive Awards
 - Cash Awards
 - Time Off Awards
4. External Barriers: Reviews and updates all agency recruitment literature to reflect appropriate program and related job categories and ensure that it is geared toward the audience that their agency needs to reach.
 5. Scheduling: Arrange meeting space for the EEOAC meetings.

VIII. Revisions and Amendments to ByLaws

- A. Any member of the EEOAC is eligible to recommend an amendment to these Bylaws in writing to the Chairperson of the EEOAC.
- B. The Bylaws subcommittee, as directed by the EEOAC Chair, shall formulate the revisions and amendments and present them to the full EEOAC for action.
- C. Revisions and amendments to the Bylaws will be approved or disapproved by simple majority vote of the EEOAC as per Section VI.D. of the Bylaws.

Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committee (EEOAC)

Roster

MEMBER	ALTERNATE
<p>Arthur Powers RDS, Lynchburg Area Office (434) 239-3473 Ext. 115 Art.Powers@va.usda.gov</p>	<p>Rose Finch CDM, Boydton (434) 738-0300 Ext. 104 Rose.Finch@vaboydton.fsc.usda.gov</p>
<p>Berran Rogers CDM, Accomac (757) 787-3181 Ext. 114 Berran.Rogers@vaaccomac.fsc.usda.gov</p>	<p>Michael Piercy CDM, Dinwiddie (804) 469-3311 Michael.Piercy@vadinwiddi.fsc.usda.gov</p>
<p>Brunilda Piña-Noble CDT, Culpeper (540) 825-4200 Ext. 110 Brunilda.Pina-noble@vaculpeper.fsc.usda.gov</p>	<p>Barbara Martin CDT, Verona (540) 248-6218 Ext. 102 Barbara.Martin@vaverona.fsc.usda.gov</p>
<p>Donna Wallace CDS, Fredericksburg (540) 899-9492 Ext. 110 Donna.Wallace@vafrederic.fsc.usda.gov</p>	<p>Vickie Racca RDS, Harrisonburg (540) 433-9126 Ext. 132 Vickie.Racca@vaharrison.fsc.usda.gov</p>
<p>Edward Davis RDS, Lynchburg (434) 239-3473 Ext. 111 Ed.Davis@va.usda.gov</p>	<p>Evelyn Thomas CDT, Rocky Mount (540) 483-5341 Ext. 111 Evelyn.Thomas@varockymou.fsc.usda.gov</p>
<p>Gale Hence CDS, Tappahannock (804) 443-4304 Ext. 117 Gale.Hence@vatappahan.fsc.usda.gov</p>	<p>Peggy Jordan CDS, Smithfield (757) 357-7004 peggy.jordan@vasmithfie.usda.fsc.gov</p>
<p>James Warner CDM, Lebanon (276) 889-4650 Ext. 115 James.Warner@valebanon.fsc.usda.gov</p>	<p>Jennifer Rhoten CDT, Gate City (276) 386-3951 Ext. 102 Jennifer.Rhoton@vagatecity.fsc.usda.gov</p>
<p>Jeanie Harmon CDS, Wytheville (276) 228-3513 Ext. 116 Jeanie.Harmon@vawythevil.fsc.usda.gov</p>	<p>Cynthia Buck RDT, Wytheville Area Office (276) 228-3513 Ext. 119 Cynthia.Buck@vawythevil.fsc.usda.gov</p>
<p>Ora Rollins MFHS, State Office (804) 287-1584 Ora.Rollins@va.usda.gov</p>	<p>B. J. Fulcher RBS, State Office (804) 287-1604 BJ.Fulcher@va.usda.gov</p>
<p>Sherry Marshall CDA, Chirstianburg (540) 382-0267 Sherry.Marshall@vachristia.fsc.usda.gov</p>	<p>Craig Barbrow RBS, Wytheville (276) 228-3513 Craig.Barthrow@vawythevil.fsc.usda.gov</p>
<p>Wayne Dail Appraiser, Farmville (434) 392-4906 Ext. 115 Wayne.Dail@vafarmvill.fsc.usda.gov</p>	<p>Barbara Hodges RU/CF Technician, State Office (804) 287-1601 Barbara.Hodges@va.usda.gov</p>

Technical Advisors

Name	Location	Telephone	E-mail Address
James Reid	CFS, State Office	(804) 287-1603	James.Reid@va.usda.gov
Sherrie Anderson	HRM, State Office	(804) 287-1589	Sherrie.Anderson@va.usda.gov
Sheri Savelli	DIR, Admin, State Office	(804) 287-1562	Sheri.Savelli@va.usda.gov

Disabilities Employment Program Manager

Name	Location	Telephone	E-mail Address
Peggy McCleary	Management Analyst, SO	(804) 287-1567	Peggy.McCleary@va.usda.gov

Federal Women's Program Manager

Name	Location	Telephone	E-mail Address
Peggy Jordan	CDS, Smithfield	(757) 357-7004 Ext. 119	Peggy.Jordan@vasmithfie.fsc.usda.gov

Hispanic Program Manager

Name	Location	Telephone	E-mail Address
Brunilda Piña-Noble	CDT, Culpeper	(540) 825-4200 Ext. 110	Brunilda.Pina-Noble@vaculpeper.fsc.usda.gov

Native American Program Manager

Name	Location	Telephone	E-mail Address
Cynthia Bomar	RDS, Lynchburg	(434) 239-3473	Cindy.Bomar@va.usda.gov

Virginia Association of Credit Specialists

Name	Location	Telephone	E-mail Address
Anne Herring	CDM, Verona	(540) 248-6218 Ext.105	Anne.Herring@vaverona.fsc.usda.gov

Virginia Association of Support Personnel

Name	Location	Telephone	E-mail Address
Cynthia Buck	RDT, Wytheville	(276) 228-3513 Ext.119	Cynthia.Buck@vawythevil.fsc.usda.gov

Wellness Program Coordinator

Name	Location	Telephone	E-mail Address
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Ora Rollins	MFH Spec, State Office	(804) 287-1587	Ora.Rollins@va.usda.gov
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Officers

Edward Davis, Chairperson
Jeanie Harmon, Vice Chairperson
Gale Hence, Recording Secretary

Advisory Committee

James Reid
Sherrie Anderson
Sheri Savelli

EEOAC Sub-Committees

Bylaws Committee

Committee Function: To maintain, interpret, and recommend changes to the Bylaws that govern the internal affairs of the EEOAC.

James Warner, Chairperson Cynthia Buck, Recorder Art Powers	Rose Finch Jennifer Rhoton
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Information/Communication Dissemination Committee

Committee Function: To creatively and consistently inform all Rural Development employees about equal employment opportunity issues and activities of the EEOAC.

Sherry Marshall, Chairperson Brunilda Piña-Noble, Recorder Berran Rogers Anne Herring	Craig Barbrow Barbara Martin Michael Piercy Carla Dean
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Scheduling Committee

Committee Function: To arrange meeting space for the EEOAC meetings.

Ora Rollins	B.J. Fulcher
Sherrie Anderson	

Internal Barriers Committee

Committee Function: To ensure fair and equitable treatment of all Rural Development employees

by creating an environment of objectivity and impartiality in the following areas:

- Employment Status Changes
- Merit Promotion Panels
- Quality Step Increases (QSI)
- Affirmative Employment Program (AEP)
- Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program (FEORP)
- Training
- Incentive Awards
- Cash Awards
- Time Off Awards

Wayne Dail, Chairperson
Jeanie Harmon - Recorder
Donna Wallace
Gayle Hence

Barbara Hodges
Cindy Buck
Vickie Racca
Peggy Jordan

External Barriers Committee

Committee Function: To review and update all agency recruitment literature to reflect appropriate program and related job categories and ensure that it is geared toward the audience that their agency needs to reach.

Wayne Dail, Chairperson
Jeanie Harmon - Recorder
Donna Wallace
Gayle Hence

Barbara Hodges
Cindy Buck
Vickie Racca
Peggy Jordan

EEOAC Technical Advisors

Overview

The Technical Advisors to the EEOAC are:

James Reid, Ex-officio
Sherrie Anderson, Human Resources Manager
Sheri Savelli, Director, Administrative Programs

These individuals are available to assist and guide the EEOAC in implementing and achieving goals related to Equal Employment Opportunity in Rural Development in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Their training and expertise in the area of Equal Employment Opportunity ensure the ongoing success of the EEOAC in providing a fair, equitable, and progressive EEO mandate for Rural Development in Virginia.

Voting Status

Technical Advisors are not voting members of the EEOAC, and do not directly influence the operation of the Committee. However, the Advisors do inform the EEOAC of matters affecting employment in the Agency, and are available for advice and suggestions at all Committee meetings.

Merit Promotion Panels

Overview

Having EEOAC member representation during Merit Promotion Panels provides an important service to all Rural Development employees. The presence of an EEOAC member enhances the credibility of the merit promotion system.

In addition, should questions arise from any unsuccessful candidate or should any selection be challenged, the EEOAC representative acts as a valuable information resource to the State Director. In this instance, the EEOAC member can provide a full account to the State Director of the proceedings of the Merit Promotion Panel.

Attendance

Per RD Instruction 2045-C, while it is not required for a member of the EEOAC to attend Merit Promotion Panels, it is a suggested practice and one which Rural Development in the Commonwealth of Virginia has adopted. Accordingly, attendees will basically have the following responsibilities:

Ensure that non-merit factors are not presented or taken into consideration during the Merit Promotion Panel.

If questions regarding EEO should arise, the EEOAC member is available to issue an informative response.

Should an EEOAC member believe that any form of discrimination or impropriety has occurred during the Merit Promotion Panel, the member will notify the State Director of the specific incident or remark.

EEOAC member representation during Merit Promotion Panel proceedings ensures that Rural Development EEO and affirmative action policies are followed during the selection process.

Statistical Information

Grade	Sex	Race	Total
4	Female	Black	1
5	Female	Black	2
	Female	White	6
6	Female	Black	2
	Female	White	5
	Female	Hispanic	1
7	Female	Black	4
	Female	White	20
	Female	Pacific Islander	1
8	Female	Black	1
	Female	White	1
9	Female	White	15
	Female	Black	3
	Male	White	5
11	Female	White	2
	Female	Black	3
	Male	Black	1
12	Female	White	14
	Female	Black	4
	Male	Black	6
	Male	White	20
	Female	Hispanic	1
13	Female	White	4
	Female	Black	1
	Male	White	3
	Male	Black	1
15	Male	White	1
Total Employees			128

Support For Persons with Disabilities

At Rural Development we recognize that all individuals have a right to full and fair consideration for any job for which they might apply. We offer an environment in which employees can reach their full potential and make a significant difference for their country. Rural Development is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Hiring and advancement practices within this agency are based on qualifications and performance, regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. Our EEO policy ensures that every person will receive equal consideration in obtaining employment for which he or she qualifies, regardless of disabilities.

Having a disability will not be a disadvantage to any person in being considered for employment, or in pursuing career opportunities once employed with Rural Development to make reasonable accommodations in the duties of a job or in the worksite to make it easier for an individual with disabilities to perform their assigned duties. Here are some of the ways in which the needs of disabled employees can be matched with the requirements of the job:

- ☒ Interpreters for persons with hearing impairments
- ☒ Readers for persons with visual impairments
- ☒ Restructuring of work sites
- ☒ Modification of job duties and assignments
- ☒ Alteration of work schedules
- ☒ Special equipment or furniture acquisition
- ☒ Personal assistance when needed

Rural Development is goal oriented and quality driven. We believe that our commitment to employ reliable and achievement-oriented persons, including those with disabilities, results in a more productive and dedicated workforce. We strongly believe that persons with handicaps represent a viable, untapped human resource, which we proudly support in our hiring and advancement practices.

Sexual Harassment

What is sexual harassment?

Any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and any other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitutes sexual harassment when:

- ☒ Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, or
- ☒ Submission to, or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or
- ☒ Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

In more common terms, sexual harassment includes such unwelcome behavior as verbal abuse, insults, whistles, suggestive comments, jokes, notes or picture display. Other actions such as touching, physical aggressiveness, pressure for dates, threats or sexual assaults are also forms of harassment.

Sexual harassment does not have to take place on the job, or the work site to be prohibited behavior. The rules and guidelines concerning sexual harassment also apply to business trips, meetings and conferences away from the regular workplace, and off the clock work related social activities. If such behavior results in the loss of productivity, affects personnel actions, or creates a psychologically harmful or unsafe working condition, it is prohibited. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, guarantees Federal employees a working environment free of gender-based intimidation.

What are the effects of sexual harassment?

Individuals who are sexually harassed often feel guilty; they fear being blamed, ostracized, or fired. Also, sexually harassed persons frequently feel angry and powerless.

Employees who do not submit to the harasser's demands may suffer economic retaliation such as being discharged, receiving an unfavorable evaluation, or failing to obtain a pay raise or promotion which may be warranted by merit. On the other hand, employees who surrender to the harasser's advances may eventually be fired anyway because they present potential embarrassment. And, if they should quit their job, the harassed individual may encounter difficulty in acquiring new employment. Also, their reason for leaving may not be considered "just cause." The individual may be denied unemployment compensation and thereby suffer financial hardship.

How often does sexual harassment occur?

In 1987, as well as 1980, a Merit Systems Board (MSB) study revealed 42 percent of all women and 14 percent of all men reported they had experienced some form of uninvited and unwanted sexual attention. Sexual harassment is no longer simply a "women's issue," it affects both men and women.

The MSB study also revealed that sexual harassment is now more likely to occur between co-workers rather than between a supervisor and an employee. Additionally, the study provided the following "high risk" profile for women representing the greatest potential of being sexually harassed:

- Between the ages 20 and 44
- Are single or divorced
- Have some college education
- Have a nonresidential job or work in a predominantly male environment, or work for male supervisors

What should I do if I am sexually harassed?

1. Recognize sexual harassment for what it really is. Understand the harassment is not your fault. You have the right to complain and take action.
2. Make it perfectly clear you are not interested in the harasser's advances and their behavior is totally unacceptable. If possible, confront the offender directly if you think he or she can be reasoned with, or made to cease their activities.
3. Keep a written record of each incident of harassment, of your complaints, and their results. If other people are present during the harassment, ask them if they saw and heard what happened. Witnesses will be more likely to remember the incident if you inquire about their observations at the time or as soon after as possible.

4. Talk to friends, co-workers, or relatives about it. It is important to have a strong support system during this time period. If you keep your feelings to yourself, you remain isolated and powerless. By speaking out, as well as documenting the incidents and forms of sexual coercion, you help yourself and build a stronger defense against your assailant.
5. Get additional information and advice about taking further action against the harasser from:

Your supervisor
 Your supervisor's manager, (if your supervisor is the offender) or
 Your EEO Counselor:

Counselors	
Aletha Johnson	Clarles Glenn
Matthew Miller	Lavern Mathis
USDA-Rural Development 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250 Mail Code: 0703 Tel: 1-800-787-8821	
Your Federal Women's Program Manager	Peggy Jordan
Your State Equal Employment Opportunity Specialist	

If you do not want to speak with anyone within Rural Development, you can contact one of the following Federal agencies:

Office of the Inspector General

1-800-424-9121

U.S. Office of Personnel Management

(202) 606-1800

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

(202) 663-4900

The only way to end sexual harassment is for you to seek the proper assistance.

Hostile Environment

Hostile environment sexual harassment is often subtle and can be difficult to detect. It occurs anytime conduct of a sexual nature creates a working environment that is intimidating, hostile or offensive to another individual. This can occur in a variety of settings and take a number of forms. It is important to consider whether sexually oriented behavior is present. Also to be considered is whether the negative perceptions of this conduct adversely interfere with an individual's ability to carry out work-related responsibilities.

Career Enhancement Program *Upward Mobility*

What is the Career Enhancement Program?

Rural Development's Career Enhancement Program is an in-house training program designed to meet specific Agency needs where traditional recruitment systems indicate limited success. At the same time, this program can improve career opportunities for those employees who are the most able and deserving of special career assistance serving in career or career-conditional appointments in single-interval series positions grade level GS-1 through GS-9, and equivalent Wage Grade Positions throughout the National, State, and Finance Offices.

This ongoing career program enables RD to better meet mission objectives while assisting employees to enter and qualify for positions of different and/or greater responsibility and remuneration. Upward Mobility programming is an important component of affirmative Equal Employment Opportunity.

What is Upward Mobility and what is the eligibility criteria?

To be eligible to apply for the RD Career Enhancement Upward Mobility Program an employee must:

- ❑ Be currently assigned to a one-grade position. This includes GS-1 through GS-9 or an equivalent wage grade. Employees above the GS-9 grade level, or employees serving in two-grade interval series are not eligible to participate in the Program.
- ❑ Hold either a career or career-conditional appointment. Or, the employee may be serving under special authorities for the severely physically handicapped or the Veteran's Readjustment Act (VRA) within the Department of Agriculture. The Program is not open to employees currently in professional positions which require positive educational requirements.
- ❑ Be within the minimum area of consideration specified in the Vacancy Announcement (i.e. RD Statewide). The Program does not guarantee an automatic promotion for employees recommended for Upward Mobility positions. Employees must apply and will be competitively selected for Upward Mobility positions.
- ❑ Have a current performance rating of satisfactory or better. Employees must be performing at a fully satisfactory level within their current position before promotion to a higher grade or target position is possible.
- ❑ Have served one or more years in Federal service. Upward Mobility is not a "new-hire" program, or for temporary employees. To compete, employees must have a minimum of one year in Federal service.

What can I expect as a Career Enhancement Upward Mobility trainee?

The Upward Mobility trainee's responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. The selected trainee must participate in the preparation of the Individual Training Plan.
2. The trainee is expected to perform to the best of his or her ability all of the duties and responsibilities of the newly assigned position.
3. The trainee shall pursue educational training assignments with diligence and determination.
4. The trainee will initiate self-development activities to augment the internal training given.
5. The trainee is expected to maintain frequent consultation with supervisors, their Upward Mobility Coordinator, Director of Personnel, the personnel office, finance office, and the Administrative Officer.
6. And, the trainee should inform their supervisor, training coordinator, and/or the administrative staff of any problems which may affect the quality of their training and job performance.

Is Rural Development committed to the success of the Upward Mobility program?

The success of every Upward Mobility trainee is a success shared by Rural Development. There are no guarantees that the Career Enhancement Upward Mobility program is right for every employee. However, Rural Development will continue to do its part to ensure the Program enhances the growth and motivational potential of each participant.

The Career Enhancement Upward Mobility Program is evaluated each year by the Agency's Upward Mobility Coordinator. This evaluation is conducted to determine the following information:

1. What was the overall effectiveness of the Program?

- Were all of the objectives met by both the supervisor and selected employee?
- How was the employee's job performance affected during the training?
- What was the employee's job performance level after completion of the Program?

2. What was the overall effect of the Program on the employee's morale?

- Did the Program enhance the employee's morale about the Agency or their current position?
- Did the Program enhance the trainee's previous understanding and awareness of the duties and responsibilities of the position?

- How was the trainee's self esteem, and professional capabilities enhanced or motivated by the Program?

3. How cost effective was the Program?

- What were the total number of training man-hours and associated training material expenses?
- Cite areas in which it was more cost effective to conduct internal training than to send employee to external training programs.

Rural Development is committed to the concept of promoting from within the Agency. Employees who display a "can do" spirit and a willingness to learn will be provided every opportunity to excel within this Agency.

Career opportunities for employees within single interval series positions (grades GS-1 through GS-9) can be enhanced through the Upward Mobility Program. At the direction of the State Director, human resource personnel monitor the Program's progress and advise the State Director of any areas in which improvements can be made.

Affirmative Employment Program

Overview

Rural Development subscribes to the Federal government's policy which provides equal opportunity in employment for all persons. Further, this policy prohibits discrimination in employment because of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. Rural Development promotes Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) through a positive continuing program applied to every aspect of Federal employment policy and practice.

EEO Programs

Each Agency Administrator within Rural Development is designated as Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Officer with responsibility for effectively administering the EEO Program, which includes affirmative actions, equal opportunity in recruitment, the Federal Women's Program (FWP), the Hispanic Employment Program (HEP), Disabilities Employment Program (DEP), the EEO Counseling Program, and the Complaints of Discrimination Program.

Each State Director for Rural Development is designated as Deputy EEO Officer and will assist each Rural Development Administration in carrying out his/her functions as EEO Officer within their assigned areas.

Affirmative Action Program & Plan

The Affirmative Action Program is a system of continuous positive management actions designed to remedy the effects of past discrimination based on race, color, national origin,

gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital or family status. The Program strives to bring about positive action in personnel administration and management matters including recruiting, hiring, training, career development, and progression designed to remedy the historically disparate treatment and underrepresentation and/or underutilization of women and minorities through the removal of barriers and implementation of corrective measures.

Each fiscal year an Affirmative Employment Program Plan is developed by management with the aid of the Equal Opportunity Advisory Committee. The plan serves to formalize the objectives of management, which are designed to improve the participation of minorities and women in all categories of employment. Two important features of the plan are the goals and implementation timetable sections, which outline specific corrective steps. The plan is also used as an interim management tool for correcting imbalances in the workforce. Such measures ensure equal employment opportunity within the parameters of merit principles.

Reference List

The Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committee has compiled the following publications listing. These materials may be used as reference guides in answering a wide variety of EEO questions.

Retirement and Health Benefit Forms

RI 20-59*	Information for Annuitants (CSRS)
RI 25-26*	Information for Survivor Annuitants (CSRS)
RI 30-13*	Information for Disability Annuitants (CSRS)
RI 76-12*	Information for Retirees and Their Families: Federal Employee's Group Life Insurance Program
RI 79-2*	Information for Retirees and Survivor Annuitants About the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program
RI 83-1*	The Civil Service Retirement System
RI 83-2*	Military Service Credit Under Civil Service Retirement System
RI 83-3*	Deposits And Redeposits Under the Civil Service Retirement System
RI 83-4*	Disability Retirement Under the Civil Service Retirement System
RI 83-5*	Survivor Benefits Under the Civil Service Retirement System
RI 83-6*	Early Retirement Under the Civil Service Retirement System
RI 83-7*	Computing Retirement Benefits Under the Civil Service Retirement System
RI 83-8*	Credit For Unusued Sick Leave Under the Civil Service Retirement System
RI 83-9*	Refunds Under the Civil Service Retirement System
RI 83-10*	Voluntary Contributions Under the Civil Service Retirement System
RI 83-11*	Thinking About Retirement
RI 90-1*	FERS - Federal Employees Retirement System
RI 90-3*	FERS - Federal Employees Retirement System Transfer Handbook
RI 90-8	Information for FERS Annuitants
RI 90-12	Information for FERS Survivor Annuitants
RI 98-2	Information for FERS Disability Annuitants
TSP-1*	Election Form
TSP-3*	Designation of Beneficiary
TSP-9*	Change of Address for Separated Participant
TSP-13*	Designation of an Eligible Retirement Plan
TSP-16*	Exception to Spousal Requirements
TSP-17*	Information Relating to Deceased Participant
TSP-20*	Loan Application
TSP-30*	Interfund Transfer Request
TSP-60	Request For a Transfer Into the TSP
TSP-70/70T	Withdrawal Request/Transfer Information
TSPBK	Withdrawal Package Folder
TSPBK	Withdrawing Your TSP Account After Leaving Federal Service
TSPBK	TSP - Loan Program
TSPBK	Thrift Savings Plan Annuities
TSPBK	Summary Of The Thrift Savings Plan For Federal Employees
TSPLF	"Start on the Right Track"

Standard Forms

SF-2817 Life Insurance Election: Federal Employee's Group Life Insurance Program

Rural Development Procedure References

1951-C Offsets of Federal Payments to USDA Agency Borrowers
2006-F Delegations of Authority

2006-G Designation of Acting Officials
 2006-H Employee Suggestion Program
 2006-L Position Management System
 2006-M Management Control System
 2012-A Audits
 2012-B Investigations and Whistleblower (Hotline) Complaints
 2015-B Public Information Functions of Farmers Home Administration Employees
 2018-D Policy and Procedure for Handling U.S. Treasury Checks and U.S. Savings Bonds
 2018-F Availability of Information
 2021-C Smoking Standards
 2036-A Travel Regulations and Policies
 2042-A Claims under Federal Tort Claims Act
 2042-B Reporting Accidents
 2045-C Merit Promotion Program
 2045-D Career Program Transfers
 2045-X Equal Employment Opportunity
 2045-Y Career Enhancement Program (an Upward Mobility Program)
 2045-Z Action Plans for Progress in Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)
 2045-BB Employee Responsibilities and Conduct
 2045-CC Political Activity and Holding State or Local Office
 2045-FF Civil Service Commission Appeals System
 2045-GG Adverse Actions - Delegation of Authority and Procedures
 2048-A Position Classification
 2048-E Position Classification Post-Audits
 2048-H Supervisors File of Position Description and Standards of Performance
 2051-A Highest Previous Rate
 2051-G Hours of Duty, Flextime, and Compressed Work Schedules - Bargaining Units
 2051-H Overtime Provisions of Title 5, U. S. Code, and the Fair Labor Standards Act
 2051-I Holidays and other Non-workdays
 2054-A Within-Grade Salary Increases
 2054-U Probationary and Trial Periods and Reports Requirements
 2057-A FmHA Employee Training and Development Program
 2057-C Orientation Training for New Employees
 2057-D Individual Development Plans (IDPS)
 2057-G Executive, Management and Supervisory Development
 2060-A FmHA Performance Appraisal
 2063-B Recognition Program
 2063-F Employee Assistance Program
 2063-G Legal Assistance Available to Employees
 2063-I Labor-Management Relations Program
 2063-J Policy On Employee's Rights to Representation in Dealing with Management
 2063-K Operations of the Labor-Management Relations Program
 2063-L Administrative Grievance Procedure
 2066-A FmHA Leave Program
 2069-A FmHA Safety and Health Management Program
 2069-B Employee Injuries-Reporting and Compensation

*Available through the State Office