



A publication of the NRCS Civil Rights Division

Volume 2012, Edition 1

Civil Rights and You

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DEFINE IT!

ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION What does it mean?

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) is a series of non-adversarial processes that assists NRCS customers and employees in resolving Civil Rights complaints and disputes in a quick and efficient manner.

"This is a new day for Equal Employment Opportunity, program delivery in USDA."

-Secretary Thomas J. Vilsack

What Civil Rights means for NRCS customers and employees.

With a new Fiscal and Calendar year underway, there are numerous changes taking place within NRCS, USDA, and the nation in which we live. Secretary Vilsack's Cultural Transformation continues to make NRCS a diverse, inclusive, and high-performing work place. With this transformation comes a change in the face of NRCS, making our agency more diverse in employees and customer base.

The Civil Rights Division (CRD) is restructuring. The division has been realigned under the supervision of the Chief. This change will have minimal impact on how CRD operates as a team within NRCS and the Department. Although there are major reorganizations and transformations occurring and planned within NRCS and USDA, CRD will maintain its purpose and fulfill its mission of monitoring equity for people and programs.

What does this change mean for you as an employee OR as an USDA program customer? Our purpose and commitment

will remain the same. We will continue to change and grow along with the agency and the department. We invite you to work with us, as we serve you.

Here is what you can do:

For NRCS Customers: It is important for you to understand your rights as a program participant. Throughout this year and beyond, NRCS looks forward to enhancing its outreach and training to keep our customer base aware of changes in civil rights laws, regulations, and policies along with changes in NRCS programs. Sources of information include CRD's exciting new website, newsletters, and on-site and online training. Take advantage of all the resources the CRD and NRCS have to offer!

For NRCS Employees: With our 100% support of the Cultural Transformation initiative, the CRD works to ensure that our workplace is free of discrimination.



We hope that as an employee, you also take accountability for ensuring that you protect your Civil Rights and the rights of your coworkers, supervisors, and NRCS customers. Treating your coworkers with dignity, equality, and respect is a simple way to ensure civil rights protection in the workplace. As NRCSers, it is our equal responsibility to maintain equal opportunity. To uphold our purpose and uphold civil rights in our agency, we, the CRD, will remain diligent in our duties and continue to evolve to meet the needs of our diverse workplace and world by offering recommendations to the agency's state and field offices to improve in the areas of Civil Rights all while remaining committed to *Helping People. Help the Land.* We look forward to better serving you this Year!

THE CURRENT

NRCS Civil Rights Division webpage has been updated—

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/about/civilrights>

"All NRCS employees are expected to model equal opportunity, civil rights, and cultural transformation, and managers and supervisors must demonstrate an elevated regard by supporting civil rights, equal employment opportunity, diversity, and cultural transformation." - Chief Dave White,

2012 Civil Rights Policy Statement

http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb1046340.pdf

Hot off the OMB Press...USDA released the newly approved OMB Program Discrimination Complaint form and instructions. For more information visit the NRCS CRD website.

CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION@USDA

DID YOU KNOW?

It is unlawful for an agency to use qualification standards, employment tests, or other selection criteria that screen out or tend to screen out an individual with a disability unless the standard, test, or other selection criteria is shown to be job-related for the position and is consistent with business necessity.

Jones v. Social Security Administration, 111 LRP 54707 (EEOC OFO 08/02/11)

As I wrote you in an email earlier this month, the President signed into law a bipartisan bill that will reduce the deficit and avoid de-fault. A victory for the American people, this legislation prevents a default that would have had a devastating effect on our economy.

This action allows USDA to continue operations and provide service and payments as scheduled. But our efforts to find efficiencies and strengthen USDA must continue. I want us to lead the Federal government in an effort to focus on our core competencies and do them better than anyone in the world. As we lead, I believe your extraordinary work to serve the American people through innovation, creativity and collaboration will help us build an even better USDA. This does not lessen our commit-

ment of USDA work-life. We know that the quality of our work environment helps determine how productive we are. Tele-work, the opportunity to work flexible hours, stronger partnerships with employee affinity groups, and other implemented action items are all conducive to productivity. Tightening our belts does not mean we can be distracted from implementing the Cultural Transformation Initiative. In fact, our continued implementation of the initiative is crucial to our success.

Visit MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov.

And visit the [USDA Cultural Transformation Website](#).



Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary

DIVERSITY IN OUR WORLD

How components of the U.S population are projected to change by 2050:

Racial/ethnic groups	2005	2050 ¹
Foreign-born	12%	19%
White*	67%	47%
Hispanic	14%	29%
Black*	13%	13%
Asian*	5%	9%

As indicated in the chart provided by the Pew Research Center, the United States population will be have a majority population consisting of the Asian, Black, and Hispanic minority groups. Combined, these demographics are projected to make up 51% of our nation's population by 2050. In consistency with our goals as an agency, NRCS's workforce should reflect the population it serves. What are some ways NRCS can transform to reflect these demographic changes?

- ❖ Suggestion
- ❖ Suggestion
- ❖ Suggestion

Send suggestions to [MySuggestions](#). Suggestions may be anonymously posted in upcoming *Civil Rights Chronicle* editions.

"It must mean that a diverse and inclusive workforce is not an exception, but the rule."

-Gregory Singleton,

NRCS, CRD Civil Rights Director

NRCS CRD Director's Corner

A word from the desk of Gregory Singleton, Director, NRCS Civil Rights Division

As I think about the word Equal and all of its connotations, I am reminded that it has but one meaning and that is: of the same value or worth. Similarly, as I ponder the word Opportunity, it too has but one meaning, and that is: a chance to succeed. Equal Opportunity therefore must mean giving everyone that chance to succeed or creating an environment where every applicant,

employee, customer and stakeholder knows that they are working and participating in an environment free of discrimination in any form. It must mean that a diverse and inclusive workforce is not an exception, but the rule. It must mean recognizing, respecting and embracing differences and understanding that they make us better, smarter and stronger. It must mean finding a way to lead with a commitment to uphold those words: Equal Opportunity, so that they can never

be thought of separately, as if they are perpetually bound. It must mean treating others the way you want to be treated. Simply put, it must mean...NRCS. As we strive to be the best agency that we can be, we must be mindful that the responsibility of achieving true fairness lies with each of us. So, thank you for accepting that responsibility and thank you for being NRCSers!

-Gregory Singleton

DID YOU KNOW?

The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA)

The Act, effective as of November 21, 2009, makes it illegal to discriminate against employees or applicants because of genetic information.

For more information visit <http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/genetic.cfm>



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex (including gender identity and expression), marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, genetic information, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotope, etc.) should contact USDA's TAR-GET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD.)

*To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Stop 9410, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call toll free at 866.632.9992 (English); 800.877.8339 (TDD) ; 866.377.8642 (English Federal-relay) or 800.845.6136 (Spanish Federal-relay)

*For the Program Discrimination Complaint form and instructions visit the NRCS CRD website.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Meet the Civil Rights Division

Name	Position	Phone
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE		
Gregory Singleton	Director	301-504-2180
Faye Butler	Administrative Assistant	301-504-2182
Employment Compliance Team		
Sandra M. McWhirter	Supervisory Team Leader	301-504-2198
Anita Holland-Spears	Management Analyst	301-504-0026
Elton Loud	EEO Specialist	301-504-2332
Nettie Moment	EEO Specialist	301-504-2164
Renzlo Page	EEO Specialist	301-504-2279
Barbara Taylor	EEO Specialist	301-504-2185
Program Compliance Team		
Samora Bennerman -Johnson	Supervisory Team Leader	301-504-2286
Kimberly Rodgers	EO Assistant	301-504-0304
Elvin Gant	EO Specialist	301-504-2173
Wytonya Jackson	EO Specialist	301-504-2166
Sheila Shepperd	EO Specialist	301-504-2457



Civil Rights Division

VISION:

To be an inclusive, diverse and equitable Agency that delivers programs in a manner based on and consistent with fairness, availability and accountability.

MISSION:

To be an inclusive, diverse and equitable Agency that delivers programs in a manner based on and consistent with fairness, equality, availability and accountability while ensuring that applicants and employees are treated with respect, dignity and free from discrimination.