

**Natural Resources Conservation Service
Civil Rights Performance Report
Fiscal Year 2002**

Performance Standards	Performance Data for Fiscal Year 2001	Performance Data for Fiscal Year 2002
<p>Goal 1: <u>Accountability</u>. Incorporate the USDA civil rights goals and priorities throughout agency operations to ensure that customers and employees are treated fairly and equitably, with dignity and respect.</p>		
<p><i>Performance Objective 1.1 Hold managers, supervisors and other employees accountable for ensuring that USDA customers and employees are treated in accordance with the USDA's civil rights policy.</i></p>		
<p>1. Agency displays commitment to USDA's civil rights goals in its strategic plan.</p>	<p>NRCS updated its strategic plan in 2001. Accomplishments for FY 2001 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • States have developed outreach plans to improve service delivery to under-served groups in the area of farmland protection and community planning. • The NRCS area-wide planning course was presented at the Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota and Nevada in 2001. The Lakota Tribes of North and South Dakota were invited to participate in the training. The course was geared towards tribal conservation districts in using the nine-step planning process in developing conservation goals. 	<p>The agency has specific goals identified to promote strong proactive Civil Rights programs. The Regional offices have incorporated Civil Rights outreach goals in their strategic plans. States' strategic plans and business plans have specific Civil Rights elements that support USDA's Civil Rights goals. Some examples to demonstrate regional commitment to civil rights are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS used committees made up of diverse individuals to develop plans to achieve conservation goals, civil rights policies, and outreach objectives. • The Agency's Strategic Planning and Accountability Business Plan for FY 2002 contains specific items that deal directly with outreach and ways to provide assistance to small scale, limited resource, and minority customers. • NRCS supported the development of the State Food and Agriculture Council Long Range Outreach Plan that ensures the timely delivery of information and services to socially disadvantaged producers.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with the Tribal Governments Course was conducted for the State Conservationists in the West Region and in Oklahoma. This resulted in improved working relations with tribes in both the western States and Oklahoma. • Working Effectively with Native Americans, "The Harmony Training Course" has been held in California, Utah, Washington, South Dakota, and Oregon in FY 2001. Results: improved delivery of services to American Indian producers. • In FY 2001, NRCS entered into an agreement with the Intertribal Agricultural Council to provide outreach to tribal governments across the country. NRCS strategic plan includes the “delivery of services fairly and equitably” with a performance target that by 2005, 100,000 members of minority, underserved, and nontraditional groups will receive NRCS conservation assistance annually to help them plan and apply conservation on their lands and the lands that they manage. • NRCS will have in place a workforce recruitment plan that will 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A diverse committee of NRCS employees (ethnicity, grade level, discipline) developed a comprehensive Civil Rights Business Plan that comprised five strategic issues: training, program delivery, policy review, special emphasis programs, and workplace diversity. These action items increase employees and partnership knowledge of civil rights issues, improve outreach to socially disadvantaged producers, and increase the dissemination of information and education materials to all clients. • NRCS strategic plan is to “deliver services fairly and equitably” with a performance target that by 2005, 100,000 members of minority, underserved, and nontraditional groups will receive NRCS conservation assistance annually to help them plan and apply conservation on their lands and the lands that they manage. • The NRCS strategic plan will strengthen the conservation delivery system, with a performance target that by 2005, NRCS will have in place a workforce recruitment plan that will include criteria for the Agency’s workforce to reflect the diversity of the Nation. • Civil Rights program delivery and employment issues are evaluated as part of the Agency’s management reviews conducted at Regional, State, Center and Institute offices. • NRCS conducted twelve Civil Rights compliance reviews. • The National Organization of Professional Hispanic NRCS Employees (NOPHNRCSE)
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	<p>include criteria for the Agency's workforce to reflect the diversity of the Nation by October 1, 2001.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil Rights program delivery and employment issues are evaluated as part of the Agency's management reviews conducted at Regional, State, Center and Institute offices. • NRCS conducted eight management reviews and twelve Civil Rights compliance reviews. • Assisted the Asian American/Pacific Islander (AAPI) Employee Advisory Council by contributing 14 action items for the council's strategic plan on how to target diverse AAPI customer groups on the mainland, as well as in the Pacific Basin, thereby helping to extend and deliver USDA program benefits to such customer groups. • Established the 3rd tribal office with the Quinault Nation in Washington State, and full time office on Fort Hall Reservation in Idaho. Established a new Tribal Liaison position and office at Keshena, Wisconsin, to service the Menominee Nation and the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of the Mohicans. Result has been an increase in direct technical 	<p>National Conference and the Asian/Pacific Islander Organization's Annual Meeting provided technical training to attendees about the services of the National Design, Construction, and Soil Mechanic Center (NDCDSMC). Also discussed were the water quality curriculum and how members in remote locations could gain access to training through distance learning and self-paced study programs. As a result of this training, the conferees are able to utilize the NDCDSMC and to transfer newly acquired water quality curriculum knowledge to better serve their customers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS provided staff time for two NDCDSMC employees to serve as EEO Committee chair and committee member-at-large. These employees helped to develop the annual affirmative employment plan and assisted the Science and Technology Consortium Center (the National Soil Survey Center) with their plan.
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	<p>assistance to American Indian operators.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Montana maintains seven NRCS Field Offices located at Tribal Headquarters and has increased staffing levels to 12 FTE to provide outreach, program delivery, and services to the Tribes and individual Indian operators. • Established three part-time tribal offices with Acoma and Taos Pueblos, and with the Jicarilla Apache Nation in New Mexico. • Extended a RC&D grant to the Sho-Ban Tribal Nation in Idaho to plant indigenous crops and developed interpretive signs, in both languages, to describe history and uses. • Established a new RC&D Office in Bethel (85% Alaskan Native) and in Nome, Alaska (70% Alaskan Native) to provide increased services to local communities. • Established a new soil survey area that will encompass 19 Alaskan Native villages and their adjoining resource lands of over 1.9 million acres. • Established a sub-office in Craig to serve the communities of Prince of Wales Island. • Created a Wisconsin tribal 	
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	<p>Advisory Council that enables tribes to work with NRCS on Tribal conservation issues and provides a vehicle to consolidate recommendations to the Farm Bill.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assigned staff to American Indian and Outreach work groups to identify barriers and improve program outreach to under-served customers. Regional Conservationist (RC) and State Conservationists (STC) approved the Northern Plains American Indian Work Group work plan to improve NRCS effectiveness and decrease barriers to working with American Indians.• Formalized the Tribal Advisory Council in Montana, resulting in direct input into the decision making process on program issues that affect American Indian tribes. This effort has improved lines of communication between NRCS and tribal leaders, including tribal land managers.• The Standing Rock Tribe has organized their Soil Conservation District under Tribal Law. The Cooperative Working Agreement is in the	
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	<p>process of being finalized. Result is a commitment by the STC to staff the Tribal SCD with its own District Conservationist.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Caribbean Area Business Plan for FY 2001 reflects the commitment to the Secretary's CR goals in its established actions. As a result, 5,032 customers received first-time assistance and 7,332 customers received technical assistance during the fiscal year. • 91% of the total assistance to customers has been directed to minorities. Additional priority areas for EQIP were funded, with participation of 92% of the field offices and an estimated 98% of minorities' program participants. • Expanded relationships with the 2,501 program managers at Fort Valley State University (Georgia's 1890 institution) and the Federation of Southern Cooperatives to better serve the same limited resource and minority farmers already identified by this program. • The Southeast Region conducted the first Natural 	
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	<p>Resources Conservation Service's Program Delivery Initiative meeting with American Indians. The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (MBCI) were the hosts for the meeting in Philadelphia, Mississippi. The conference promoted government to government relationships with tribal leaders. Questions were raised and answers were provided on how to access NRCS programs and services for American Indian producers and landowners. The question and answer session provides a listening forum, to surface concerns that Southeastern Tribes have in accessing conservation programs and services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS develops and communicates Civil Rights policies, guidelines, regulations, and directives to address procedures to follow in the case of discriminatory acts. 	
<p>2. Agency ensures that all employees received copies of the Secretary's Civil Rights Policy Statement.</p>		<p>The Secretary's Civil Rights Policy Statement was distributed and posted in all offices that have an NRCS presence, and the Statement was also transmitted electronically to all NRCS employees. In addition, the</p>

		<p>policy statement and other civil rights documents are accessible through the agency website.</p> <p>The NRCS Chief's Civil Rights Policy was issued and distributed to all NRCS employees on July 1, 2002.</p>
<p>3. Managers' performance standards mandate actions that implement the Agency's civil rights program objectives; integrate civil rights principles throughout Agency programs and operations; and ensure an environment free of discrimination.</p>	<p>The standards for all NRCS management were updated and in place in October 2000. They are reviewed semi-annually. These directions have produced management actions that included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial assistance and technical assistance to develop and support 30 Diversity Days across the country for all NRCS States. • Program Outreach Coordinators, American Liaisons, Small Farmers Coordinators, and Environmental Justice Coordinators are maintained in Regional and State offices. • Mentoring programs for new NRCS employees have increased by 20% throughout NRCS. • Provided data and cautions on the use of data for the Performance Review Management System, which tracks the Agency's service to minority, female, and limited resource farmers. • Training opportunities for Scholar Interns are averaging approximately five per State. 	<p>The standards for all NRCS management are updated and in place in October 2002. They are reviewed semi-annually.</p> <p>All Senior Executives have an established civil rights performance plan attached to their performance standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All managers and supervisors are held accountable for Equal Opportunity/Civil Rights. • Managers and supervisors were provided an opportunity to attend the National Employee Development Center (NEDC) course entitled "Civil Rights Compliance in Program Delivery." • Funding for civil rights committee training and Special Emphasis Program Managers is included in each State's budget annually. • The Agency continues to provide financial and technical assistance to develop and support 30 Diversity Days across the country for all NRCS employees. • The Agency continues to provide data for the Performance Review Management System, which tracks the Agency's service to minority, female, and limited resource farmers. • A binder of key information regarding USDA civil rights policy, procedures, and EEO processes was developed and distributed to

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated Civil Rights objectives into managerial responsibilities to effectively serve customers. Strengthen performance standard for all managers and supervisors to ensure that CRAT Civil Rights goals are met. Support and enhance supervisory training to effectively manage Agency Civil Rights goals. Utilized social science expertise to: • Provided a social impact assessment on selected Urban Resources Partnership Projects to improve project evaluations; • Organized a panel to discuss environmental justice issues as related to soil, water, and air quality at the Professional Agricultural Workers' Conference. Panelists provided information to a diverse audience that represented NRCS and Forest Service employees, 1890 faculty, and community based organization personnel; • Developed a web-based economics program, "ProCosts" (version 1.1 delivered 4-01) to provide improved support for NRCS staff's use in increasing service delivery to farmers/ranchers, despite size and type of operation; • Improved customer service to American Indian producers by 	<p>offices throughout the agency. Offices, can update this information with local census data that identifies potential minority and limited resource farmer workloads, local contracts for minority organizations, and media outlets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The agency's National Civil Rights Committee reports to the Chief include a discussion of civil rights activities and issues in the agency. These presentations enhance civil rights emphasis in the agency. • In compliance with annual agency policy, the Regional and State Conservationists issued a policy statement to all employees regarding the unacceptability of sexual harassment in the workplace. The result was that all employees were made aware that sexual harassment would not be tolerated in any NRCS workplaces.
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	<p>developing "Consultation with American Indian Governments," a NRCS training course to provide employees with consistent concepts, methods, and techniques for consulting with sovereign American Indian Nations, in cooperation with Salish-Kootenai Tribal College, a minority-serving educational institution;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provided technical engineering assistance for projects benefiting historically underserved individuals, areas, and groups. Two examples follow:• Initiated a work-plan and developed a design approach, consistent with local needs and values, for reduction of erosion and sedimentation in the Asaayi Lake Watershed in Northern New Mexico on Navajo lands; and• Coordinated delivery of technical assistance to disadvantaged populations in foreign countries, including Eritrea, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and the Peoples Republic of China;• Ensured the development of a Low Initial Cost Structures Handbook, presenting affordable conservation solutions for economically disadvantaged farmers and	
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	<p>landowners;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided social and economic data to NRCS field offices, to assess increased service to underserved populations; • Ensured that Nutrient Management Systems for small farms addresses disadvantaged groups; • Aggregated and disseminated environmental justice information to the Soil Survey Marketing Committee and to selected national organizations; and • Marketed "Women in Leadership and Learning," one of NRCS "The Leader in You" training seminars. • Regional and State Conservationists issued a policy Statement to all employees regarding the unacceptability of sexual harassment in the workplace. The result was that all employees were made aware that sexual harassment would not be tolerated in any NRCS workplaces. • NRCS Regional and State offices have been big supporters of the Welfare to Work Initiative and have participated in the training of numerous interns since the program began. • Managers perform all duties in a 	
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	<p>manner that consistently demonstrates fairness, cooperation, and respect towards co-workers, partners, and other internal and external customers in the performance of official business. Managers champion EO/CR policies and responsibilities in meeting Agency and Departmental goals of valuing a diverse, yet unified, workforce.</p>	
<p>4. Agency ensures that all employees' performance standards provide for civil rights accountability.</p>	<p>All NRCS employees have a Civil Rights performance standard in their annual appraisal document that provides and ensures accountability of all Civil Rights laws and policies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards for new employees are put in place within 30 days of Enter On Duty (EOD). Performance standards for all employees reflect required language and were mandated by Agency policy. • Computerized Automated Management System (CAMS) automatically generates a Civil Rights performance element for supervisors and employees. All employees have a CAMS generated performance standard in place. State issued policy and guidelines to all offices explaining CAMS, employees' and supervisor's 	<p>All NRCS employees have civil rights elements in their performance standard. Standards for new employees are established in the Computerized Automated Management System (CAMS) within 30 days of entering on duty. Performance Standards reflect the required language as mandated by USDA policy. This results in a continuing awareness by agency employees of civil rights policy and their civil rights responsibilities.</p>

	<p>responsibilities, instructions on CAMS entry and retrieval, and other information informing of all requirements and accountability and mid-year performance review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-supervisory employees are encouraged to display courteous and tactful behavior towards internal and external customers, supervisors, co-workers, and/or team members, resulting in employees projecting a positive and professional image of USDA and demonstrating an understanding of equal opportunity and Civil Rights policies and responsibilities. • NRCS practices a policy of zero tolerance as it relates to any form of discrimination. Leadership communicates non-tolerance of discrimination and failure to adhere to equal opportunity and Civil Rights policies and responsibilities. • Employees who make significant accomplishments in the Civil Rights arena are recognized and awarded each year as part of the awards program. One award is for program delivery and the other is for employment matters. 	
<p><i>Performance Objective 1.1 Hold managers, supervisors and other employees accountable for ensuring that USDA customers and employees are treated in accordance with the USDA’s civil rights policy. (Continued)</i></p>		

<p>5. Agency allocates resources in a manner that provides for a results-oriented Civil Rights program at field offices and headquarters.</p>	<p>NRCS allocates resources in the form of financial assistance and technical assistance to support and accomplish Civil Rights related program activities. These efforts have produced results that include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organized a 2002 Farm Bill American Indian Listening Session that had over 200 American Indians attend and speak in support of NRCS technical assistance. • Worked in conjunction with State Association of Conservation Districts to sponsor the first of three 2–day capacity-building workshops for Arizona’s 8 Tribal Conservation Districts. • Received and funded EQIP applications for Tribal Nations under NRCS State-wide concerns. • Completed 660 Conservation plans on the Duck Valley Reservation in Nevada. • Completed a total reservation resource plan on the Pyramid Lake Reservation (480,000 acres) in Nevada. • Received approval for a new RC&D that was named by one of the two Tribal sponsors. 	<p>NRCS provided financial assistance and support to strengthen and enhance Civil Rights activities as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established Outreach specialists for each State. • Civil rights related training for all employees included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ National on-line training for managers and supervisors provided at a cost of \$80,000. ✓ National training for over 200 SEPM’s and CR Advisory Committee members at a cost of \$200,000. ✓ “Working Effectively with American Indians” training to 200 employees. ✓ “Operations Management Training for Supervisors and Program Managers” contained a module dedicated to civil rights. This training has been provided to 200 NRCS managers. ✓ “Sailing Through the Federal Sector EEO Process” was provided on CD to all states. ✓ State Conservationists and Civil Rights Committees hosted more than 30 Diversity Day programs for cultural awareness and sensitivity. • NRCS conducted 12 National Civil Rights compliance reviews in order to ensure USDA compliance. • NRCS provides support to professional partner organizations through employee participation and attendance. This has resulted in recruitment of employees from under represented groups, enhanced civil rights leadership in the agency,
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established \$40,000 Wetland Agreement with Tulalip Nation. • The Agency allocated \$10,000 and significant staff time to make an evaluation of conservation in conservation districts that have a predominately urban workload. Result: The evaluation will help improve conservation delivery to areas that may have large minority and under-served populations. • Assisted the National Association of RC&D Councils to increase minority representation on the Board of Directors by providing financial support to fill at-large board seats from the underrepresented community. • Provided financial incentive to the National Association of RC&D Councils to schedule a national forum on how RC&D Councils can address persistent poverty concerns in rural counties. • Funded development of an outreach plan by the National Association of RC&D Councils that is reviewed at each board meeting. Development of the plan also led to the establishment of an outreach committee for the association. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Allocated \$444,000 to support Civil Rights Council 	<p>reduced complaints of discrimination, had a significant improvement related to outreach to American Indians, and other traditionally under served communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS provides continual support to the Hmong farmers to further implement the work products of a cooperative agreement with the Asian American Council. • Each of the Special Emphasis Program Managers in the agency provided information and organized presentations in observance of their respective recognition month. Financial resources are committed to annually support procurement of visual material, such as posters, video, etc., to value diversity, enhance employees' awareness, and celebrate those things that make us unique and join us together. • NRCS encourages and supports employees' membership, active involvement, and participation in minority organizations and professional societies, meeting, and conferences to maintain and enhance the agency's capabilities and professional resource management. The agency ensures representation at employee associations training conferences. The agency has committed its resources to increase employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities in the transfer of emerging technologies to support conservation activities. • In cooperation with the Farm Service Agency and the Rural Development, Iowa sponsored a diversity day event "United We Stand" to create a
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	<p>activities including meetings, training, SEPM events, and staff outreach in Arizona.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Financial support of Service Center Multi-Cultural Day Events, API Heritage Celebration, and Blacks in Government Training Conference. ✓ \$661,000 was allocated to cover outreach costs (SOC, travel & supplies) and offices at tribal headquarters which resulted in meeting FY01 PRMS goals of serving 800 minorities in Oregon. • Procurement business with 8(a), minority-owned, women-owned, and small disadvantaged business, accounted for approximately \$482,600, which is 79% of Iowa's procurement (non-construction) dollars. • Provided continual support to the Hmong farmers to further implement the work products of a cooperative agreement with the Asian American Council of Iowa in the amount of \$12,200. • Outreach efforts to 1890 and 1994 Land Grant Colleges and Universities have increasingly produced a diverse pool of 	<p>spirit of unit for all employees of various cultures and origin in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11th. The effort promoted the concept of “Team USDA” while emphasizing the value of a diverse culture.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The agency revitalized the mentoring program for all new employees to assist them with establishing and achieving their career goals. Through the efforts of the Federal Women’s Program, (FWP) the program focus on new employees to enhance career development and employee growth both professional and personal. The mentoring program continues to assist employees to transition into the agency culture. • Approximately 350 minority landowners were reached through workshop’s held in conjunction with the Arkansas Farm and Land Development Cooperation annual conference, the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff Rural Life Conference, and USDA 2501 Program. The purpose of the workshops was to educate landowners and producers about USDA/NRCS programs. • NRCS assisted the Greater New Orleans Agriculture Coalition in conducting a Limited Resource Agricultural Conference. The program was aimed at strengthening partnerships in the region and addressing the needs of Southwest Louisiana’s limited resource farmers, growers, ranchers, nurseryman, and producers in a more productive way. • Two cooperative agreements totaling \$95,000 were entered into with North Carolina AT&T
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	<p>applicants. Student employment for FY 2000 was 17; FY 2001, Iowa committed to 20 (6 SCEP and 14 STEP). Financial resources totaling approximately \$50,000 were committed for subsidized lodging and transportation expenses, including expenses for three (3) students employed by other States, but receiving work experience in Iowa.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minorities represent 55% of the student employment in Iowa. Iowa's present student workforce far exceeds the representational data of USDA's 2000 student employment percentages. • Iowa's Leadership Development Program (LDP), only available to employees at the GS-11 and above grade levels, equips employees with the skills to serve as future State managers and beyond. Our level of commitment for seven (7) participants totals approximately \$100,000, including employees, State managers serving as counselors, support cost, etc. In partnership with the Iowa Division of Soil Conservation (DSC), Iowa's LDP promotes commitment, career advancement, and partnership from the State leadership. 	<p>University. One agreement resulted in scholarships to minority agricultural engineer students at the university.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The South Central Region made available technical materials in Spanish to benefit Hispanic customers. The ecological site development posters and the Land Evaluation and Self Assessment (LESA) handbook was also translated into Spanish.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each Special Emphasis Program Manager (SEPM) has provided information and organized presentations in observance of a respective recognition month. Financial resources in the amount of approximately \$10,000 are committed to annually support procurement of visual material, such as posters, videos, etc., to value diversity, enhance employees' awareness, and celebrate those things that make us unique and join us together. • Approximately \$30,000 has been committed to encourage and support employees' membership, active involvement, and participation in minority organizations and professional societies, meetings, and conferences to maintain and enhance our capabilities in professional resource management. • Iowa awarded an 8(a) contract in the amount of \$110,900 to Pinnell Brown Construction (a minority-owned, HUBZone firm) for repair of a grade stabilization structure within the Davis-Battle Creek Watershed. • 8 (a) firms accounted for 	
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	<p>approximately \$40,425 or 6.7% of Iowa's procurement (non-construction) dollars.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with the Small Business Administration (SBA) to award an 8(a) contract with Job Shops Company, a project planning and architectural consulting firm. Estimated cost \$10,000. • Iowa will be allocating resources to procure copies of the video entitled "Diversity Diner" to enhance employees' understanding of diversity. • Michigan's FY 2001 budget provides \$5,000 for implementation of a weeklong camp for American Indian and African American students in grades 7 through 10. • Michigan has dedicated the following staff to implementing Civil Rights and outreach: full-time American Indian coordinator; 11 Tribal coordinators assigned 20% of their time; half-time State outreach coordinator; 7 Watershed Outreach coordinators assigned 20% of their time; 5 SEPM's assigned 20% of their time; 1 additional Civil Rights Team member assigned 20% of the time; and a collateral duty Civil Rights Program Manager. 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adequate funding is provided for all of the various Civil Rights activities to the extent possible, providing the budget. Such funding covered purchases, travel, and training.• 63 employees attended "Civil Rights in Program Delivery" training in FY 2001 to increase their knowledge in assisting minority and limited resource producers.• Amish sensitivity training was provided to NRCS, RD, and FSA employees working in areas with Amish populations, enabling employees to better serve the Amish clientele.• Harmony Workshop that resulted in increased sensitivity to American Indians and has improved working relationships.• \$410,000 of SD EQIP budget is earmarked for American Indians. This ensured that these limited resource operators get a fair portion of the EQIP budget. Five of the tribes in SD have approved EQIP priority areas.• Ute Mountain Ute and Southern Ute tribes have EQIP priority areas with FY 2001 funding of \$356,000. Recommended increasing FY 2002 EQIP funding for tribes to	
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	<p>\$800,000.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Montana maintains seven NRCS Field Offices located at Tribal Headquarters and has increased staffing levels to 12 FTE to provide outreach, program delivery, and services to the Tribes and individual Indian operators. • Montana NRCS allocates financial and educational assistance funds, along with technical assistance, to support and carry out program activities and outreach to support Civil Rights related activities. • FY 2001 58% (\$26,196) of the EQIP EA funds was allocated for educational assistance on American Indian reservations in Montana targeting traditionally underserved populations. • FY 2001 39% (\$1,159,950) of the EQIP GPA FA funds was allocated as priority area funding on American Indian reservations. • Provided funding for sign language interpreters for NRCS employees. • Provided \$8,225 EWP assistance to the Winnebago tribe. • Twenty-three workshops were conducted throughout the South Central region that targeted and/or 	
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	<p>solicited small-scale, limited-resource, and minority landowner involvement in USDA/NRCS programs. Approximately 800 minority landowners were reached by the workshops. In addition, more than thirty outreach meetings were also held throughout the region — over 300 minorities attended. Twelve EQIP Education Assistance Grants were developed to help in outreach efforts and other grant proposals were prepared for demonstration projects. More than 17 full-time equivalent positions (including full-time and part-time positions) were dedicated to outreach in the region. NRCS personnel provided outdoor classroom instruction to 1,000 minority students in one State alone. A handbook was developed for small-scale and minority cattle producers and a tourism-enhancement, economic-development brochure for five American Indian Tribes were also developed. Team USDA participated in the NAACP National Convention in New Orleans – in which three large exhibits were displayed. An NRCS presentation was made at the United South and</p>	
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	<p>Eastern Tribes (25 tribes) semi-annual meeting. Assisted the National NRCS team with photos and captions for a National low-cost, low-input, conservation practice publication for limited-resource producers. USDA liaisons are supported to enhance recruitment; dollars are provided to Hispanic-Serving Institutions and 1890 Universities. Funding and technical assistance provided to community based-organizations and limited-resource groups. Technical assistance and financial assistance provided to develop multiple tours for limited-resource producers and small-scale farmers outreach conferences supported.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Caribbean area has allocated funding for the outreach programs, which covers 100% salary in addition to funding for training of Special Emphasis Managers and training for CR Advisory Committee. Training has been provided to district board members in which Civil Rights and outreach were included. Employees all received Workplace Violence Policy and are constantly reminded of no-tolerance policy regarding sexual harassment. 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial assistance has been provided in Florida for Civil Rights training. For the second consecutive year, Florida hosted an in-State CR for Advisory Committee Members course. NRCS has trained approximately 50 USDA employees in this area in a formal classroom setting, instructed by the USDA Graduate School. Over 200 employees completed training in Preventing Sexual Harassment, Diversity, Special Emphasis Programs, and other Civil Rights training. • Funding for Civil Rights Committee training and Special Emphasis Program Managers is included each year in the State budget. SEPM's attend employee-organization and other offered training conferences each year. 10% of EQIP funds are earmarked for small and limited resource farmers in Georgia's budget. • In August 2001, in North Carolina, three employees will participate in the USDA graduate training – CR for advisory committee members. Two employees will participate in SEPM training at the graduate school. Total cost, approximately \$3,500. Two cooperative 	
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	<p>agreements totaling \$95,000 have been entered into with NC A&T State University during FY 2001. One agreement results in scholarships to minority Erg Engineer students at the University.</p>	
<p>6. When discrimination, reprisal or misconduct is found, Agency takes appropriate disciplinary or corrective action.</p>	<p>In 2001, NRCS is committed to ensuring its employees work in a non-discriminatory environment and takes acts of discrimination seriously. Where employees act inappropriately, NRCS has taken appropriate disciplinary actions in accordance with the USDA table of penalties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When identified, NRCS National Head Quarters (NHQ), Regional and State Offices always take immediate action to correct any discrimination, reprisal, or misconduct issues. NRCS is committed to ensuring that all employees are free from workplace discrimination and conflict. • NRCS Regional and State Conservationists provided sensitivity training to all employees for the purpose of increasing their awareness in carrying out Title VI and VII Civil Rights Responsibilities. 	<p>NRCS continues its commitment to ensuring its employees work in a non-discriminatory environment, and takes discriminatory acts seriously by taking corrective action. When discrimination is found against an employee or applicant, appropriate remedial measures as set forth in 29 CFR Part 1614, Subpart E—Remedies and Enforcement are awarded. Remedial relief is considered appropriate if such remedial reasonably guarantee that the actions challenged in the complaint will not reoccur to the complainant or an individual within the complainant’s protected group.</p> <p>The NRCS Civil Rights Staff promptly adheres to the EEOC order, regarding corrective actions and discipline. In addition, such decisions and orders are forwarded to the Human Resources Management Division, which then makes recommendations to the Agency Chief on the question of additional discipline.</p>

Goal 2: Program Delivery. Ensure all customers equal access and equal treatment in the delivery of USDA programs and services.		
<i>Performance Objective 2.1 Deliver agency programs in compliance with civil rights laws and with Departmental regulations, policy, and goals.</i>		
<p>7. Agency conducts compliance reviews for Federally-assisted and Federally-conducted programs in accordance with Departmental guidelines. Reviews are scheduled such that the Agency examines some programs every year, and all major programs at least every 5 years.</p>	<p>NRCS conducts compliance reviews for Federally-assisted and Federally-conducted programs and conducts Section 504 Self-Evaluations in a timely, complete, and impartial manner. Results are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately 440 program compliance reviews have been completed, and the report contains recommendations and agreed-to items identifying deficiencies or inadequacies that were found. Corrective plans are developed and monitored by State and Regional Conservationists to determine action completion. When the deficiencies are not completed within 30 days, quarterly reports are required until the items are completed. 	<p>All States in the agency have been provided a copy of the NRCS Compliance Review Guide that contains specific directions and guidance on the methodology to be used in conducting compliance reviews.</p> <p>All compliance reviews include Section 504 evaluations. A schedule of field office compliance reviews are developed for each State. Compliance reviews are conducted every year, and all offices are reviewed at least every 5 years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Twelve national compliance reviews (covering Titles VI and VII) have been conducted by the National Civil Rights Staff to ensure State's compliance in program delivery. To date, reviews have resulted in 329 recommendations and 20 required actions taken to enhance program delivery to our customers. Civil Rights Compliance Reviews are conducted as part of each State program review as identified in the states' strategic business plans. Approximately 400 program compliance reviews have been completed, and the reports contained recommendations and agreed-to items identifying deficiencies or inadequacies that were found. Corrective actions found in fiscal year 2002 included: handicap accessibility compliance issues; minority participation (parity); civil rights training as a component of employee Individual Development Plan (IDP); and improper, outdated civil rights informational posters and nondiscrimination statements.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corrective measures have been completed to address deficiencies or a plan of action put in place to ensure compliance.
<p><i>Performance Objective 2.1 Maintain an effective process for handling civil rights program complaints. (continued)</i></p>		
<p>8. Agency evaluates and updates Section 504 plans in accordance with Departmental guidelines.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS guidance on program delivery evaluations is provided in Section 230, Part 405 of the NRCS General Manual, which is being revised and will be distributed to all offices in FY 2002. • Civil Rights program delivery and employment issues are evaluated as part of the Agency’s management reviews conducted at Regional, States, Centers and Institutes offices. NRCS conducted eight management reviews and twelve Civil Rights compliance reviews in FY 2001. • Additional guidance containing specific directions on the methodology of compliance reviews is provided in the NRCS Civil Rights Compliance Review Guide, which was revised and distributed to all States and Regions in June 2001. • Guidance and procedures on standards and specifications to satisfy Section 504 regulations have been provided to all NRCS offices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS guidance on program delivery evaluations, provided in Section 230, Part 405 of the NRCS General Manual, has been revised and distributed to all offices. • Evaluations of Section 504 (accessibility) were carried out through the Civil Rights Compliance Reviews conducted by the NRCS Civil Rights Staff. • Where 504 violations were found, States were required to develop corrective action plans that address the deficiencies in accordance with USDA guidelines. Plans included actions to correct violations identified during the reviews, and also to conduct State-wide accessibility evaluations of office facilities to identify and correct other deficiencies. • When practical, deficiencies are corrected on the spot during compliance review. • The Civil Rights Staff developed and distributed to each State a comprehensive section 504 review guide that provided more specific information on accessibility requirements. • Some 504 findings resulted from lack of adequate clearance, inadequate handicap signs, improper marking on pavement to identify handicap parking, and lack of restroom accessibility, etc.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All NRCS offices have been evaluated for their compliance with Section 504 regulations as part of the USDA Service Center initiative. The evaluations revealed that approximately 95% of all NRCS offices are accessible, with plans in place to bring the remaining 5% into compliance. • NRCS employees timely completed the Section 504 Self-Evaluation in accordance with Department guidelines. Multi-year AEPs were developed and utilized, resulting in increased hiring and PFT conversion of minority employees. • NRCS Missouri has five Federally assisted programs with \$115,494 being provided. There were 17 recipients, and a total of \$431,214 being committed to section 504 Federally conducted programs. Total Federal work years--5.0. • NRCS Ohio has five Federally assisted programs (FIP, EQUIP, WRP, WHIP, and newly funded SWCA. Total FTE's are 232, including WAE positions. Ohio's total dollar amount for Federal financial assistance provided during FY 2001 is \$5,288,000. There are 464 recipients of Federal financial assistance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a result of these findings, every State has conducted an accessibility survey. 90% of the offices surveyed are in compliance, and plans are in place to bring the remaining 10% into compliance.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS Puerto Rico-Virgin Islands is working with eight Federally assisted programs. Total Federal work years are 65. Dollar amount of Federal financial assistance is estimated at \$900,000. Approximately 380 recipients of Federal financial assistance. • NRCS Kentucky has approximately 10 Federally assisted Federal programs in FY 2001. 258 total Federal work-years (full time equivalent). 13.8 total Federal work-years (full time equivalent) committed to section 504 Federally conducted programs. NRCS Virginia's website reviewed for compliance with Section 504. As new changes are implemented, they will bring the site into compliance. Special accommodations have been made for two NRCS employees with disabilities. 	
<p>9. Agency identifies and implements preventive and corrective measures to address deficiencies found as a result of the compliance reviews.</p>	<p>All NRCS Civil Rights Compliance Reviews which identified deficiencies have been corrected, and/or remedial action plans have been strategically developed and implemented to correct those deficiencies within the specific time frame.</p>	<p>All NRCS Civil Rights Compliance review reports are compiled with commendation, recommendations, corrective action, and required actions. Recommendations and required actions identify deficiencies or inadequacies requiring corrective action. When deficiencies are not completed within 30 days, quarterly reports are required until the items are completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions on 75% of findings of non compliance were completed in 30 days. Action plans were completed on findings requiring more than 30

		<p>days to complete.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans are monitored by the Civil Rights staff to ensure deficiencies are corrected and States are brought into a compliance status in a timely manner. • Some of most common findings include lack of documentations on training, no documentation on grassroots organizations, lack of civil rights nondiscrimination statement on new articles, performance results and measurement system (PRMS) data reflecting non parity in program delivery, and facilities out of compliance with requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
<p>10. Agency conducts effective Civil Rights Impact Analyses, makes Environmental Justice Issue Determinations, and develops Limited English Proficiency Plans, as required. Reports comply with Departmental requirements.</p>	<p>Both Civil Rights Impact Analysis (CRIA) and Environmental Justice (EJ) reports are prepared in conformance with regulations from USDA. NRCS addressed many environmental concerns that surfaced through outreach, technical assistance, locally-led conservation and watershed planning. Impact analyses have been prepared for the following projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmland Protection and Community Planning Division • Environmental Justice Study • Environmental Justice Analysis on the Hackberry Draw Watershed Rehabilitation Project in New Mexico, and as a result of that 	<p>Civil Rights Impact Analysis (CRIA) reviews are prepared in accordance with Departmental Regulations to ensure Agency's decisions pose no adverse impact for women, minorities, or persons with disabilities. A comprehensive impact analysis of the program, activity, policy, or decision is cooperatively completed by NRCS program and civil rights staffs. CRIAs were prepared during FY 2002 for the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Environmental Quality Incentives Program ✓ Farmland Protection Program ✓ Third Party Vendor Program ✓ Agriculture Marketing Assistance ✓ Grassland Reserve Program

	<p>analysis, selected an alternative treatment because of the detrimental impact on minorities and people with limited income, posed by the initial plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holbrook Watershed in Colorado. No adverse impacts identified. • Trend analysis as part of an internal program review process on all Financial Assistance & Technical Assistance programs. This analysis is conducted at the conclusion of the fiscal year for all programs that are Federally funded. <p>A Civil Rights Impact Analysis (CRIA) was conducted during the decision to move the Area 1 Area Office from Bowling Green, Kentucky to Madisonville, Kentucky. The (CRIA) revealed no adverse Civil Rights employee impact.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Agricultural Air Quality Task Force ✓ Conservation Security Program ✓ Conservation of Private Grazing Land <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and educational materials related to NRCS and USDA programs and activities are being printed in English, Spanish, and other languages including Hmong, to reach Limited English Proficiency customers. In addition, the Agency is producing and using foreign language and English videos to provide information and educational materials to customers without reading skills. • Colorado developed a cadre of multi-lingual NRCS employees to serve as translators for non-English speaking customers. They also implemented phone greetings in Spanish in Service Centers located in Hispanic communities. • Colorado used Civil Rights Impact Analyses to evaluate potential effects of NRCS project activities for three watershed plans during FY 2002. • Under the auspices of the Environmental Justice Program, NRCS Florida has funded \$97,000 for a mobile drinking water lab with Florida A&M University to educate rural residents about drinking water. • In Louisiana, NRCS personnel are continuing to work on the Bayou Bourbeux Watershed, an Environmental Justice Project. Two meetings were held this FY with city officials about the flood protection phase of the project. The predominantly minority community will be
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		<p>protected from flooding after the project is constructed in FY 2003.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS Montana utilized a Hmong community translator and obtained training materials for work with Hmong community members. Accomplishments included a number of Hmong farmers that were able to obtain Pesticide Certification and their group applied for and obtained non-profit 501 c(3) status. • NRCS Montana utilized existing staff at the Crow Agency Field Office for translation of Agency information and materials into the Crow language. These materials were then provided to Crow Tribal members with limited English proficiency. These customers comprise 70% of the customer base for this field office. • The South Central Region identified that Technical Materials should be available in Spanish to benefit our Hispanic customers. The Ecological Site Development information posters and the LESA handbook have been translated into Spanish.
<p>• <i>Performance Objective 2.2 Maintain an effective process for handling civil rights program complaints.</i></p>		
<p>11. Agency updates complaint processing procedures, tracks and processes complaints in a fair and timely manner, and in accordance with Departmental guidelines.</p>	<p>NRCS has a tracking system in place to monitor and track program complaints. Program complaints are tracked in accordance with USDA regulations. NRCS Civil Rights Staff (CRS) has constructed an internal tracking system which shows on a routine basis the status of complaints, from the time of</p>	<p>The NRCS Civil Rights Staff has developed and implemented a tracking system for program complaints. All complaints are handled expeditiously as possible and in a fair and impartial manner. A compliant file is developed pertaining to each complaint. Personal information and other documentation relating to complaint files are maintained in a confidential manner by the agency</p>

	<p>their receipt, through the claim review and complaint investigation stages, to their closure. Complaint files are maintained by a Civil Rights Specialist who is in constant contact with USDA staff which processes NRCS complaints.</p>	<p>until the complaint is closed. All case files are archived and destroyed at the appropriate timeframe.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The agency communicates with the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) Staff on a regular basis to ensure the agency’s cases are being processed as well as reconciled. The NRCS Civil Rights Staff works with the OCR investigator and the NRCS State staff by providing information and assistance and with the assigned investigators and NRCS State staffs to assist with facilitation of case processing. • NRCS Louisiana developed and distributed wallet sized cards on Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to employees and customers. • In Maryland, all field level NRCS and District employees have been provided a Partnership File Guide for Civil Rights and Program Delivery.
<p><i>Performance Objective 2.2 Maintain an effective process for handling civil rights program complaints. (Continued)</i></p>		
<p>12. Agency promptly implements preventive and corrective actions resulting from complaint findings.</p>	<p>NRCS studies the bases and the issues of complaints, and provides preventive pro-active training to employees in addressing forms of discrimination. NRCS has taken disciplinary and corrective actions to address concerns of the Agency. All NRCS employees are required to complete computer-based training designed by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) entitled “<i>Sailing through the Federal Sector EEO Process.</i>” All NRCS employees are encouraged to</p>	<p>NRCS promptly implements preventive and corrective action regarding complaints. For Instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the NRCS Civil Rights Staff determines or suspects that violations have occurred in program delivery matters, the CR Director initiates discussion with State, Regional, or National Office managers to consider ways to immediately resolve the complaint, and/or correct the practice that led to the complaint. • During the preparation of the Agency Position Statement relative to a program complaint, the Agency examines the nature of the complaint

	<p>attend and participate in all special emphasis observances, i.e. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Black History Month, Women’s History Month, Asian Pacific American Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, Native American History Month, and Disability Awareness Month.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS guidance on program delivery is provided in NRCS GM 230, Part 405, which is being revised and will be distributed to all offices in FY 2002. • Social Science brochures and guidance are routinely sent to the field offices for their use in determining limited resource farmers. Also issued was "Technical Note Women in Agriculture: Changing Roles and Current Outreach Techniques." • The National Employee Development Center (NEDC) conducted 11 training sessions on Civil Rights Compliance in Program Delivery for approximately 375 NRCS employees. • All NRCS offices are required to maintain and prominently display the “And Justice for All” poster which advises NRCS employees, customers, and partners of their 	<p>filed and what can be done immediately to resolve the complaint.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All NRCS offices have prominently displayed the “And Justice for All” poster, which advises NRCS customers and partners of their rights to file discrimination complaints. • Memorandums of Understanding are reviewed annually to ensure that our partners remain cognizant of agency civil rights policies and regulations. • NRCS maintains web pages which identify the program complaint process.
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	<p>rights on filing a discrimination complaint.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS Division Directors, Regional and State Conservationists completed ethics training. 	
<p>13. Agency promptly implements terms of conciliation agreements.</p>	<p>NRCS has policy in place related to implementation of complaint terms of conciliation. Presently, there are no conciliation agreements in force or being formulated.</p>	<p>The NRCS Civil Rights Staff instructs responsible officials to comply with all terms of settlement agreements within 30 days. In addition, responsible officials are instructed to develop a compliance file, with documentation that each of the terms to the agreement has been addressed. Upon completion of all terms, the file is then sent to the NRCS Civil Rights Staff for review and closure. This process provides oversight and review to insure that the agreed upon settlement terms are implemented by the Agency.</p>
<p>14. Agency analyzes trends in the numbers, types, and outcomes of complaints. When warranted, program changes are implemented to ensure nondiscrimination and fair treatment and to avoid future complaints.</p>	<p>NRCS Civil Rights Staff reviews and analyzes all program complaints by identifying allegations of discrimination and determining possible corrective actions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS Regional and States offices have been analyzing, not only complaints, but also employment data to determine if "institutional discrimination" exists and how it may be affecting the success of employees in competing for higher graded positions. In addition, States are analyzing program participation data to determine how limited resource and minority 	<p>The Agency examines and identifies trends associated with complaint bases. Program complaints and information gathered through civil rights reviews are analyzed to ensure that policies, procedures and practices are carried out in a nondiscriminatory manner. As a result, when violations occur, the Civil Rights Director initiates discussion with the State, Regional, or National Office managers, to identify ways to immediately resolve the issue(s) and correct the practice(s) that led to the complaint.</p>

	<p>producers may be affected in the bid processes for program participation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each complaint is informally analyzed on its own merits by NRCS Regional or State management officials and discussed to determine if adjustments are necessary. Trends are reviewed to determine if training and/or program delivery can be improved. 	
<p><i>Performance Objective 2.3 Improve service delivery to historically underserved populations.</i></p>		
<p>15. Agency identifies new priorities and accomplishments, establishes specific goals, and creates mechanisms to improve service to underserved populations.</p>	<p>The NRCS has maintained a network of Outreach specialists at the NHQ, Regional, State, and Field Office levels, which was designed to improve service to under served populations. Outreach plans are being implemented through NRCS according to their goals, objectives, and action items related to program and benefit delivery. Accomplishments that have resulted from this direction are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employed a full time outreach coordinator with the Federation of Southern Cooperatives. Surpassed goals for technical assistance for under-represented groups. • The Standing Rock Tribe in North Dakota has organized a Soil Conservation District (SCD) under Tribal Law, resulting in a 	<p>NRCS has made substantial contributions toward the improvement of services to underserved populations. For instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Information Technology Center and New Mexico completed a telecommunications pilot in January 2002 to identify broadband solutions for USDA offices serving small and disadvantaged groups in remote areas. The selected solution will be implemented in FY 2003 and applied nationally. ✓ The NRCS Outreach Division corresponds with the Regional Outreach Coordinators on a monthly basis to provide advice and counsel to improve service to underserved communities.

	<p>commitment by the State Conservationist to staff the Tribal SCD with their own District Conservationist.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established soil survey project offices on campuses of the 1890 institutions. Results: a) Part-time employment for students and direct exposure to NRCS; b) opportunity to recruit 1890 students to NRCS; and c) project soil scientists give lectures in soil science, exposing students to NRCS. • Quarterly, discuss the need for employees to demonstrate courtesy to farmers and to show respect toward internal and external customers. • Instructed outreach techniques as part of the public participation module of the RC&D Concepts course. Two courses were conducted in FY 2001 with a total of 48 students. • Civil Rights program delivery and employment issues are evaluated as part of the Agency's management reviews conducted at center, institute, State and regional offices. NRCS conducted eight management reviews and twelve Civil Rights compliance reviews. • Through a Joint Agreement with the Intertribal Ag Council (IAC), the NRCS conservation work is featured in IAC's quarterly newsletter "The Indian Ag Link." A four-page section features NRCS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Outreach coordinators are at the Regional, State and Field levels, in addition to Tribal Liaisons, Environmental Justice, and Small Farm Coordinators. ✓ Program outreach plans are developed at the Regional, State, and field levels to track program outreach accomplishments. Also the Outreach Division and coordinators use the field PRMS system to capture varied achievements. ✓ The NRCS Outreach Division has increased the establishment of working agreements with partners from USDA as well as other Federal, State, and local governments, tribes, colleges and universities, and community-based organizations. ✓ Communication in the development of partnerships with public and private sector entities in alignment with the President's out-sourcing management agenda are currently underway. • Tribal Lands Soil Survey Initiative continued in AZ, NM, AK, OR, CO, WY; Soil Survey Division expects to exceed 2001 mapping accomplishments of 925,000 acres in 2002. • The NRCS Strategic Plan sets a performance target that by 2005, 100,000
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	<p>technical and program assistance on land owned by American Indians. The publication reaches more than 4,600 mostly American Indian homes in every State but Maine. This outreach effort has resulted in increasing NRCS's credibility with American Indians, because the information is transferred through a publication that is valued and trusted by the American Indian community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Dakota's outreach plan is in place, and the field office business plan includes actions that resulted in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Establishing and staffing a State tribal liaison position and five tribal liaison positions at tribal headquarters. ✓ Agreements with tribes on how to improve timelines in addressing cultural resources. ✓ Approving all tribal requests for EQIP priority areas. ✓ Obligation of \$410,000 of EQIP funds earmarked for American Indians. ✓ Detailing additional conservation planners to assist American Indian producers with requests for EQIP contracts. • Standing Rock Reservation combined three geographical priority areas into one reservation-wide area. In addition, a full time NRCS District Conservationist position was established and approved. This has improved program delivery on the 	<p>members of the minority, under served and non-traditional groups will receive NRCS conservation technical assistance each year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific targets and performance measures are included in the FY 2001 Annual Performance Plan. Minority clients Applying Conservation Systems with Technical Assistance and Minority Clients Applying Conservation Systems using NRCS cost share programs are the two performance measures. Progress is updated daily and monitored weekly through the Performance and Results Measurement System (PRMS). Progress is reviewed at weekly Chief's staff meetings and reports are available on the web to all managers. • NRCS is analyzing the effect of the new Census definitions and reporting choices on the NRCS parity reporting system. • During the course of FY 2002, the NRCS Legislative Affairs staff assisted with development of the 2002 Farm Bill (Public Law 107-217). A number of provisions were included in the Farm Bill that will assist limited resource farmers. A summary of those provisions follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides option to allow the Secretary to provide incentives for Beginning Farmers, Indian Tribes, and limited resource agricultural producers to participate in the
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	<p>reservation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS Washington established a Geographic Priority Area with the Yakama Indian Nation and the Colville and Spokane Tribal Nations. • NRCS Washington implemented the Omak Creek PL-566 Watershed Project with the Colville Tribal Nation. • NRCS Hawaii produced and distributed a brochure entitled “How to Apply a Conservation Plan” in three languages: English, Korean and Ilocano. • NRCS Alaska initiated contact and held Watershed Training with seven tribal governments, to investigate opportunities and to provide instruction on long range planning, capacity building and watershed programming in the Iliamna and Lake Clark area of Southwest Alaska. • NRCS Alaska completed Southeast Alaska Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy with the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska. • NRCS Alaska received a grant from the Southeast Conference through RC&D assistance to assist communities impacted by downturn in the timber industry. • NRCS Alaska implemented an EQIP satellite telemetry program to remote areas of Alaska for Alaska native reindeer herders in support of reindeer operations. • NRCS Alaska assisted Port Graham and Nanwalek IRA’s and Village Councils, in 	<p>conservation program to foster new farming and ranching opportunities, and to enhance environmental stewardship over the long term.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) was amended to permit the Secretary to increase cost-share for eligible practices from 75% to a maximum of 90% for limited resource and beginning farmers. Also provides for payments in the first year of the contract and eliminates competitive bid-downs. These changes will assist limited resource farmers and improve access to the program. • Conservation of Private Grazing Land Program was amended to include tribally owned in the definition as eligible for assistance. • Farmland Protection Program was amended to make Indian Tribes eligible entities for the program. • Resource Conservation and Development Program was amended to make Indian Tribes eligible entities for establishing a RC&D Council. • The Northern Plains Regional Office took initiative to reach a broader American Indian audience by using the Inter-Tribal Ag Council’s (IAC) quarterly publication "The Indian Ag Link." This publication has
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	<p>the implementation of their Wetlands Watershed Management Plan, snow survey automated site installation at Port Graham for village council and implementation of EQIP Contract with Port Graham Tribal Council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS Alaska established EQIP Contracts with Tanaq, Chaluka and Tanadgusix Corporation for conservation practices on Umnak Island and WHIP contract with Tanadgusix Corporation for wildlife improvements on Umnak Island. • NRCS California received funding for a proposal for Tribal College Outreach. Planning for the first college camp is in process. Camp will be held Fall 2001. Proposal submitted for additional funding of the “American Indian Watershed Awareness Project” to the National Office. • NRCS California established a Watershed Partnership Cooperative Agreement and review is in progress for signatures with four Indian Centers and appropriate field offices. Funding received from Cal Fed for Indian Center representatives to attend leadership institute. • NRCS California planned and facilitated a session on “Your Local Environment-Serious & Fun!” while more than 40 participants attended the intertwined NRCS, Adopt-a-Watershed, and Roundhouse Council Indian Education Center Workshop. • NRCS California created a process, which 	<p>credibility within Indian communities, and reaches more than 4,800 readers among every tribe in the United States, with a heavy concentration in the Northern Plains. NRCS articles spread the word about conservation and the successful use of conservation programs on Indian Lands.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Northern Plains Regional Office created a comprehensive, training tool of outreach tactics and methods focusing on limited resource producers, small producers, minority, female and physically challenged producers. Besides being used as a stand-alone tool, the materials also included instruction on environmental justice. This tool is being used by states in the Northern Plains Region, as well as by NHQ and other regions. • Rural community leaders are being trained as effective communicators and spokespersons on rural issues as they affect natural resources and society. These leaders will be able to work with decision-makers to address issues affecting the 34 County Texas/Mexico border areas. • Hundreds of local meetings have been organized and conducted to market conservation programs from
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	<p>allows all California staff to input information regarding assistance provided to customers who do not fit the reporting frame provided by Performance Results Management System (PRMS). Employees access Outreach Activity Tracking Sheet (OATS) via the State NRCS Webpage. More than 100 field and State office staff information entries on actions have been logged since December 2000 (data entries include RSNO, particular level of participation, number of contacts made through the activity, etc. To date, the number of contacts made exceed more than 1,000).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS California developed a publication called <i>Inside OUTREACH</i>, which is transmitted electronically to share success stories in both words and pictures. It regularly uses articles from the field. More than 80% of the first year of stories were included in the “NRCS This Week” publication. <i>InsideOUTREACH</i> shares our outreach stories with employee, partners and potential customers. • NRCS California planned, set up, and staffed USDA’s California Agricultural Marketing & Outreach Conference. The conference provided the small, limited resource and minority farmers information on fuller participation in the agricultural marketplace. There were more than 350 attendees from all over the State. 	<p>the USDA Service Center level to communities and customers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nationwide, the Agency coordinates & participates in rural development activities in underserved communities. • Nationwide, the Agency provides outreach assistance to federally and non-federally recognized tribal governments and entities. • Through consistent outreach assistance to traditionally under served landowners, priority assistance needs are identified and have been incorporated into Field Office Operating Plans. • Libraries and resource centers have been developed that contain various USDA program fact sheets, informational materials, and program materials which are available to the general public and are distributed at various meetings and workshops. • NRCS Arizona provided assistance to Kids Can, an after-school program that offers education activities to low income, primarily Hispanic families. • Because of rapidly changing demographic trends, NRCS State and Field Offices are continuously monitoring local populations for changes in minority communities in
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS California served on a planning committee that helped staff the California Small Farm Outreach Conference. More than 700 small farm producers, limited resource farmers, niche marketers, and students attended. • NRCS New Mexico conducted numerous Outreach sessions with seven Indian Nations. • NRCS New Mexico coordinated with the Southwest Strategy to convene a Tribal Farm Bill Legislation Listening Session, which was held in conjunction with Arizona for American Indian nations. • NRCS New Mexico increased communication efforts have resulted in a significant increase in American Indian participation with NRCS programs. Four tribes and the Intertribal Council are regular participants with the State Farm Bill Technical Committee. Two tribes have EQIP GPA's, and another has a significant WHIP contract. • NRCS Pacific Basin implemented a second language training policy. • NRCS Pacific Basin developed a Pohnepi Landslide Map Set & Brochure in English and in the local dialect. • NRCS Oregon partnered with the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD), Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, and local conservation districts to conduct conservation planning workshops. 	<p>order to provide assistance and inform them of Agency and USDA programs and benefits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of states employ full time Outreach Coordinators that work with farming cooperatives that provide assistance to the Agency in marketing, training, education, and identification of non-traditional customers of NRCS. • Team Agriculture Georgia (TAG) was formed as a partnership team made up of Federal and State agencies, educational institutions, and non-governmental agricultural organizations. Thirteen of the eighteen TAG members are new partners at this mission level. This is an example of innovative partnerships that NRCS is developing to help identify and improve service to underserved communities and customers. • In addition to traditional outreach efforts that have been ongoing (targeted mailings, workshops and meeting for various groups, etc.), States set aside a certain percentage of program funds specifically for limited resource farmers. • NRCS has identified and utilized two pilot States to develop, implement,
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	<p>The goal of the workshop is to help people who own smaller pieces of land, and people who haven't enrolled in any of the USDA programs, to write conservation plans for their properties. The results have been outstanding; the workshops have reached a whole new audience. From September 2000–June 2001, OACD/NRCS has held 16 workshops and has drawn 1,443 participants. This represents an average of over 90 people per workshop. Since the workshops started in 1998, there have been 58 workshops with 3,983 participants. At least three more are scheduled for this year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS Oregon advertising includes ads in local newspapers, including minority papers when available. A public news article is sent to newspaper, radio, television, and cable stations. Minority media is used when available. By using the tax assessor's database, a whole new client base has been contacted. • NRCS Oregon funded five EQIP GPA projects on the Umatilla Indian Reservation, with two more applications pending. • NRCS Oregon used the educational component of EQIP: 1) to fund two no-till workshops, 2) to develop a video on tribal partnership with NRCS and a brochure to accompany the video, 3) to send two tribal members to a cattle herding school in Nevada, 4) to conduct a livestock handling clinic at the tribal arena with the tribal 4-H 	<p>and evaluate outreach efforts to Tribes regarding Third Party Vendor opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Nebraska State Conservationist has worked with the four American Indian Tribes headquartered in Nebraska to develop protocols for consulting about protecting cultural resources. • A comprehensive list of New Mexico community based organizations has been developed to aid in improving service delivery to underserved populations. It is posted on the NM NRCS Website to aid NRCS Field Offices in reaching underserved producers. <p>Oklahoma NRCS through the RC&D program has provided assistance to the following institutions in western Oklahoma to reach the eight southwestern tribes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southwestern Oklahoma State University increased the number of American Indian students and distance learning opportunities • Western Oklahoma Native Nations – increased the number of American Indians receiving program assistance through economic development agencies.
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	<p>club, and 5) to purchase a low stress livestock handling video and a sustaining civilization video to rent out.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS Oregon coordinated and established ten continuous CRP contracts, and approximately 200 regular CRP contracts on the Umatilla Indian Reservation. • NRCS Oregon utilized EQIP funding on the Warm Springs Indian Reservation to exclude grazing from 8 ½ acres of land to allow the growth of the traditional camas plant. Traditional root diggers were having difficulty deciding between the blue camas and death camas varieties due to cattle eating the blooms. Without the distinct flowers of the plants, the two varieties look identical. Death camas is poisonous. • NRCS South Central Region implemented RD-410 Tribal Conservation Advisory Council, with 21 Federally recognized tribes. Limited resource specialist, American Indian Tribal Liaison, and full time outreach coordination worked with under-served groups to carry out more than 75 workshops, training and field days, specifically aimed at underserved communities. • NRCS Ohio co-sponsored a Black Farmers Conference. Results: Increased awareness of programs and services available to minority farmers. Improved current stereotypes about government assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RC&D conducted a workshop that included Carbon Sequestration and Wind Energy Utilization. • NRCS established the Oklahoma Tribal Conservation Advisory Council. Tribes put into place bylaws and a charter, with election of officers. <p>In Washington, the NRCS staff, the Lummi tribe, WDFW, and others are working on a major Wetland Reserve Program project on the Lower Nooksack River. The project includes approximately 200 acres of Nooksack River floodplain and converted wetlands. The project will restore forested riparian and wetland areas along Nooksack and Tennent Creek. This area is a high priority restoration goal for the Lummi tribe.</p> <p>NRCS Washington provided interpretive services, as well as presentations, at three Hispanic outreach meetings held throughout the state. Informational presentations on EQIP and WHIP sign ups were made in Spanish on a local Hispanic radio station.</p>
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	<p>and employees in the Black farming communities. Formed one on one relationships with other agencies that have an outreach component in the services they provide. Formed one-on-one relationships with minority farmers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS Georgia assisted the Southeast Regional Office with the first NRCS Tribal Program Delivery Initiative, which was designed to educate Tribal Leaders regarding resource management needs related to the 2002 Farm Bill. Continued to assist the Lower Muskogee Creek Tribe with the value added agricultural produce processing project which will process vegetables and fruits under a Tribal label for resale at major grocery markets. The project partners are Golden Triangle RC&D, Southwest Georgia Homegrown Produce Cooperative, and the Regional Economic Development Authority. • NRCS Georgia expanded relationships with the 2501 program managers at Fort Valley State University (Georgia's 1890 institution) and the Federation of Southern Cooperatives to better serve the same limited resource and minority farmers already identified by this program. • RC&D councils in Georgia are engaged in the Wheels-to-Work program, which has resulted in delivery of over 1,500 vehicles this fiscal year to assist welfare clientele. The Wheels to Work program was initiated 	
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	<p>by Georgia RC&D Councils and has been so successful that the Governor provided \$10 million to the Georgia State RC&D Council, for the program during FY 2001. This program began because it was apparent that a major obstacle to the Welfare-to-Work program was a lack of transportation for welfare recipients to get to jobs or school. This program and funding allows Georgia RC&D councils to buy vehicles at reasonable prices, and provide them to the Division of Family and Children Services (DFACS) clients with no interest loans, keeping the payments usually under \$100/month so that they are affordable. These vehicles make it possible for welfare recipients to travel to school or work, subsequently coming off the welfare rolls. Georgia RC&D councils also have 75 no-till drills in the State which they rent at a minimum cost to low income and small farmers who cannot afford to buy their own no-till equipment. As a result, over 25,000 acres of no-till crops have been planted this FY. Since the program's inception in Georgia, over 2 million acres have been planted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NRCS Kentucky field offices have provided a list of media (print and broadcast) that have a high circulation and listenership of minority clientele. In addition, field offices were supplied a list of community based organizations that have in-roads to under-	
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	<p>served communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS North Carolina is currently working in partnership with the North Carolina Division of Soil and Water Conservation to provide assistance to the Eastern Band of Cherokees regarding the establishment of a conservation district on the reservation. • NRCS Tennessee’s Outreach Strategic Plan identifies four main issues: sustainable community, natural resource conservation, retention of land ownership, and access to all USDA and partnership programs. Each issue has goals, objectives, and action items. It is through this plan that outreach activities in Tennessee are prioritized. Ongoing outreach activities to publicize NRCS services and work with community-based grassroots organizations are slowly removing barriers to the under-served population. Results: 723 minority agricultural producers, and 2,706 first time minority general customers were serviced. • NRCS Arizona assisted local individuals in the Hohokam RC&D service area through community outreach meetings to make them aware of the programs available to them, and to encourage their participation on local boards. • NRCS Mississippi provided a number of scholarships for farmers and landowners to attend outreach conferences and workshops to obtain program information. Mississippi has supported numerous listening sessions 	
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	<p>to learn more about what landowners need and want through programs. Information from these sessions supported some program language change requests from the Washington level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NRCS South Carolina State Outreach Council (SOC) has in place a three (3) year plan to conduct ten (10) outreach workshops, which began in 2000 throughout the State of South Carolina. Results: The SOC has been very effective in getting approximately 20-25 Federal, State, and local Agencies, and community-based organizations involved in the planning and implementation process of the outreach workshops in South Carolina. Three (3) of the ten (10) outreach workshops have been completed with great success. There were approximately 500 small farmers, landowners, and agency personnel attending the three (3) outreach workshops. The SOC and local planning teams have four (4) outreach workshops planned for this calendar year.• NRCS Virginia promoted the Federal Incentives Program (FIP) in 28 churches throughout the Tidewater Soil and Water Conservation District. Acquired special funding and held a FIP sign-up targeted for under served customers. The entire allotment of \$50,000 was directed toward 28	
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	<p>contracts. A CARD Grant was received in the Zacata Community to increase the use of Best Management Practices by minority landowners. Five minority farmers established a cover crop on 518 acres of cropland with high leaching indexes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Southeast Regional Office established an Outreach Work Group (9 full-time State outreach coordinators and 1 part-time State outreach coordinator) working at the State level to implement the Outreach Process within the Region. Resulted in the development of a work plan with action items to address system barriers through internal and external training, technology transfer, field demonstrations, workshops, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Southeast Regional Office established an Outreach Advisory Council (a diversified committee) to ensure that the Region meets the recommendations of the CRAT, USDA Secretary's Hispanic Advisory Council Report, and the USDA National Commission on Small Farms Report. The council reviews and makes recommendations to the Work Group on outreach activities and initiatives. • NRCS Michigan Outreach strategic plan has 39 action items targeted to improve service to under-served populations. In addition to requiring activities of all employees, the following positions have been established to 	
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	<p>increase the effectiveness of outreach within Michigan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A full-time American Indian coordinator. ✓ Eleven tribal coordinators assigned 20 % of their time. ✓ A half-time State outreach coordinator. ✓ Seven Watershed Outreach Coordinators assigned 20% of their time. ✓ Five SEPM's assigned 20 percent of their time. ✓ State Civil Rights Program Manager. • Accomplishments which are targeted at removing barriers to program participation and receipt of services include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Outreach Coordinators and Program Managers have met to discuss specific program provisions that may cause resulting in under-served customers not qualifying for program assistance. ✓ Training is being conducted in each service unit that provides a review of tools available in the service unit to facilitate outreach, and assists in reviewing baseline data and establishing outreach goals for the service unit. ✓ The Tribal Community is establishing Natural Resource libraries at each of the 	
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	<p>12 tribal offices for use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS Michigan is working with 15 partners to establish the "Protectors of the Earth Camp." The goal of this one-week experience for American Indian and African American students is to learn more about the opportunities, careers, enjoyment, and importance of natural resources, while sharing similarities and differences within their cultures. • NRCS Michigan sponsored the first Michigan Conference. Over 400 people participated in the conference. The Michigan web page contains an icon for outreach which provides baseline data, program data, cultural information, media contacts, etc. for under served groups. The Michigan web page contains an icon for organic agriculture that includes information available from NRCS that is geared to organic farmers. • NRCS Missouri, along with FSA, RD, and other partners, have a detailed outreach plan. Included in the actions items are such activities as identifying limited resource farmers and other under-served customers, holding listening forums, using alternative public notice methods, and holding educational or informational meetings and tours. As a result, NRCS is reaching more of our potential customers. This in turn results in them using and benefiting from more of our services. 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS Missouri established three unique offices, in addition to field offices that help with or provide outreach to the under-served. They are the Dexter Irrigation Office, the Kansas City Resource Conservation Office, and the St. Louis Regional Outreach Projects Office. In addition, Missouri placed a soil conservationist in SE Missouri, who works solely with limited resource farmers. • NRCS translated NRCS brochures into Hmong and Spanish to assure targeted groups and other under-served community's needs are being met. Hmong and Spanish populations are informed on available services. A number of workshops and initiatives have been made in local communities. 	
<p>16. Agency identifies barriers to participation for underserved groups, takes affirmative steps within the authority of the Agency to remove barriers, and increases program participation by and service delivery to underserved groups over FY 2001.</p>	<p>The NRCS has taken steps to eliminate barriers to program participation by creating a nation-wide network of Outreach Coordinators in every State and region, and 95 Resource Conservationists assigned to tribal field offices. In addition, various teams are identifying existing and potential barriers to program participation so that strategies are developed to eliminate the barriers. Some of the barriers and the affected programs are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS identified systemic problems with the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) which affects historically underserved populations. Collaborated with 	<p>NRCS continues to take affirmative steps to remove barriers and increase program participation to underserved groups. Some of the contributions NHQ has made toward this effort include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program information and forms are now readily available over the internet. (E-Gov. Initiative) • All new websites and services offered are 508 compliant. NRCS forms posted on the web are 508 compliant. (E-Gov.

	<p>the Farm Service Agency and recommended elimination of the "buydown" provision, shortening the contract from 5-10 years to 3-10 years, and allowing payments during the first contract year to producers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specifically targeted \$8.7 million in EQIP financial assistance to assist tribal landowners in installing conservation practices. • NRCS initiated a Civil Rights Reporting Requirements Team to develop a consistent credible process to gather and report race, sex, and national origin of individual cost share applicants and recipients. This team reviewed and assessed required programs and assistance reporting for protected groups, identified reporting requirements, and quantified measures to be included in the Performance and Results Measurements System (PRMS). • NRCS provided \$2000 in funding to Puerto Rico to translate the Comprehensive Nutrient Management Planning Technical Guidance into Spanish to help ensure broader access and equal treatment in the delivery of USDA programs and services. • NRCS ensured that American Indians and tribal representatives participated in and gave presentations on water resources planning and protection to Federal officials attending an interdepartmental November 2000 meeting in Denver, Colorado, regarding the Clean Water Action Plan. 	<p>Initiative)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All new websites and services are available to all customers free of charge (NRCS pays the licensing fees). (E-Gov. Initiative) • The systems are web-based and accessible from any computer with internet access. Therefore, customers may use public use or group use computers with internet access and are not required to own or have full-time access to a computer. (E-Gov. Initiative) • Worked directly with an Indian reservation in Washington State to improve the use of their WAN connection to the Internet and eventually into the USDA Web Farm at Fort Collins. Through the efforts of the ITC, the Indian reservation was able to connect to the web farm and access and utilize soil data within their GIS system. (ITC) • NRCS Outreach Division provided \$200,000 to St. Croix and the Caribbean Area to provide technical assistance, due to tropical storms and other natural disasters assisting in resolving soil irrigation problems.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS initiated compilation of a national list of successful new, low-cost, and innovative approaches used to assist small and limited resource animal feeding operations for distribution nationally. • In preparation for the 2002 Farm Bill, NRCS held four tribal listening sessions in Wisconsin (Great Lakes Tribes), Arizona (southwestern tribes), Montana, and Washington. Several others are planned as requested by the tribes. • NRCS initiated an Agency-wide interdivisional coordination of education needs, outreach needs, programmatic changes needed, and actions each entity will carry out to better service historically underserved animal feeding operations. • NRCS developed an MOU with the Grazing Lands Consortium and Texas A&M University providing \$30,000 to translate range site descriptions into Spanish. • NRCS entered into an agreement with Atlantico RC&D for \$4,000 to translate comprehensive nutrient management plan guidance into Spanish. • NRCS finalized the translation of the Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) Guide into Spanish. • NRCS updated Conservation Programs Manual, Part 513- Resource Conservation and Development Program. Ensured Civil Rights information use included in the manual. Added the new Civil Rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded the cooperative agreement to increase training and technical assistance in the amount of \$250,000 to tribes across the country through our partnership with the Intertribal Agriculture Council (IAC). • Provided \$50,000 in support and assistance to the NRCS National Civil Rights Committee that enables the group to provide recommendations to the Chief on employment and program concerns and issues. • Provided resources and assistance to the following with colleges and universities to increase program participation and workforce diversity efforts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Langston University Grassland Center of Excellence - \$200,000 - North Carolina A&T University – Agricultural Bios Stems Engineering Program - \$70,000 - California State Polytechnic University - \$10,000 - South Carolina State University – Environmental Science Center of Excellence - \$140,000 - Lincoln University – GIS/Wildlife Center of Excellence - \$200,000
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	<p>Compliance Review Guide to the exhibits of Part 513.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS updated Limited Resource Farmer policy, which reaffirms the Agency commitment to provide equal access to all programs and services. • NRCS issued Agency policy for small farms resulting from recommendations by the Civil Rights Action Team. • NRCS partnered with the RC&D Councils that resulted in serving over 700,000 minority and socially or economically disadvantaged citizens through projects this year. • NRCS developed and implemented a \$20,000 agreement with the National Environmental Council to sponsor students on natural resources issues at various institutes and centers. • NRCS developed and implemented a \$30,000 agreement with the Rural Coalition to evaluate the needs for minorities on conservation programs. • NRCS completed a review of performance measures related to Civil Rights by a diverse team. The team validated the current performance measures. Improvements are still being explored for FY 2002. • NRCS Northern Plains Region coordinated “Consultation with American Indian Governments” training session for employees in the region to improve NRCS interactions with American Indian 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New Mexico State University – National Small Farms Conference - \$15,000 <p>Some Regional contributions towards the identification and removal of barriers to program participation, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A farm policy legislative forum was held in conjunction with the leadership forum. This informed key leaders of Farm Bill issues, key dates, and deadlines for producer input. Through this workshop, sponsors gained valuable information to use in conducting similar workshops across the country. The forum was developed and carried out by Texas Mexico Border Coalition. In addition, the coalition was instrumental in acquiring a 2501 grant in conjunction with the University of Texas Pan America to provide Internet access to farmers and ranchers interested in tracking farm legislation. <p>Various State contributions towards the identification and removal of barriers to program participation include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many States are working with landowners, groups, and Community
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	<p>governments and individuals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS Alaska offered EQIP Education Assistance to Alaska Natives at Galena and Nulato on subsistence berry management. A cooperative agreement was developed with Loudon Tribal Council. • NRCS Alaska opened the Craig sub-office to assist under served communities on Prince of Wales Island. Many of the communities have high or predominantly native populations including Craig, Klawock, Hydaburg, and Kasaan. • NRCS Alaska maintains contact with the Reindeer Management Satellite Telemetry participants every 3-5 days to follow-up with their program and overall progress by providing reindeer collars and satellite telemetry assistance for native herders on St. Paul Island, Nunivak Island, and on the Seward Peninsula. • NRCS Alaska developed an Ecological site map and range survey of Umnak Island. • NRCS Arizona assisted the Water Conservation Management Program in translating information on an irrigation water management system for predominantly Spanish-speaking irrigators in the Phoenix and the Chandler FO service areas. • NRCS Arizona produced the Green Frog News, a publication about the environment 	<p>Based Organizations (CBO) to establish and promote demonstration farms and revolving loan funds for hands on and farm level training.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to weather-related disruption in travel and the remoteness of many locations, Alaska has been using audio conferences to hold meetings. As a result, attendance at Council meetings has improved vastly, as has participation in NRCS and USDA programs. • Language barriers are being identified in many parts of the country. These include barriers to participation by indigenous peoples of the United States, and by increasing immigrant populations. It includes communities from Alaska to Florida, and from the Pacific Basin to New England. State, field, and RC&D offices are developing and providing information and educational materials in a variety of languages, and to a variety of customers and communities. The materials include information on RC&D, Farm Bill programs, irrigation water management, conservation practices, other information and education materials, and guidance on additional USDA programs. In addition, offices are
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	<p>targeted to 6th graders in Arizona and throughout the Nation. The publication is now on the Internet and will be published in Spanish in the near future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS Arizona provided resources and assistance to the Gila River Natural Resources Conservation District Disadvantaged Youth Project which helped to clean up the Gila River Indian Reservations. • NRCS Arizona publishes the Ni hi Kéyah Binaanish Behané, a newsletter in the Navajo language devoted to land resource conservation. The mailing list is over 1,000 people. • NRCS Arizona continues to staff positions and funds annually \$50,000 to Southwest Strategy (SWS), a collaborative effort to maintain and restore the cultural, economic, and environmental quality of life in Arizona and New Mexico. • NRCS Arizona established a field office on the White Mountain Apache Nation to serve this previously underrepresented group. • NRCS Nevada conducts Saturday tours for Pyramid Lake Paiute Indian Tribe to allow attendance by members who work off the Reservation during the week. Tours may become annual events based on success of the first tours. • NRCS Nevada completed 660 conservation plans on Duck Valley Reservation. The 	<p>utilizing techniques such as providing foreign language phone links, interpreter services to enhance accessibility to NRCS and USDA programs by non-traditional customers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Douglas, AZ the Malpai Borderlands Group works with U.S. and Mexican agencies to reach out to all elements of the community. • Border Community Forums have been scheduled to identify natural resources issues. A Border Immigration Report was completed to identify impacts of illegal immigration to the natural resources. Ecological syntheses have been completed for two U.S./Mexico border areas. • NRCS Arizona continues to publish the Nihi Keyah Binaanish Behane, a newsletter in the Navajo Language, devoted to land resource conservation. The mailing list is over 1,000 people. • Hohokam RC&D in Arizona is providing assistance to the Gila River NRCD in a project that works with gangs on the Gila River Indian Community to clean up the reservation.
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	<p>result is increased EQIP applications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS Nevada completed a total reservation wide (480,000-acre) resource plan on the Pyramid Lake Indian Reservation. The Tribe plans to use the plan as a funding document from all sources in the future. • NRCS Washington partnered with the Columbia Basin Conservation Districts to hire two bilingual Irrigation technicians to provide technical assistance to Hispanic farmers and workers, thereby removing language as a barrier to program participation. • NRCS Utah developed a Harmony Plus advanced training to improve working relationships with tribal government units. • NRCS South Dakota worked closely with newly formed Oglala Lakota Tribe's Conservation District (CD) and as a result accomplished more in the first half of FY 2001 than all of FY 2000. • NRCS Wyoming Torrington Field Office reached the primary minority group in the area through Spanish language conservation messages on a local radio station. • NRCS North Dakota contracted a total of 179,202 acres (21%) of the total trust land in North Dakota through EQIP. Nearly 8% of the ND's EQIP monies are allocated to address resource concerns on the four American Indian Reservations. Reservation lands account for less than 2% of North 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AZ NRCS supports a staff position and an annual \$50,000 to South West Strategy (SWS), a collaborative effort to maintain and restore the cultural, economic, and environmental quality of life in Arizona and New Mexico. • A partnership has been created in Northern California to provide technical information to Indian Education Centers, and to develop a strategy and information materials that will be used in California and available to other NRCS offices. • Iowa NRCS has instituted a Spanish Translation Team that continues to translate agency publications for use nationwide. As a result, the Team translated three (3) publications focused on the Latino population in Iowa. Field staffs are providing the translated materials to the communities they serve. • Iowa District Conservationists, in counties with Amish producers, are becoming very active during and after work hours with the Amish community in order to better understand the Amish culture. As a result, Amish participation with NRCS in Iowa has increased by 40% in FY 2002.
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	<p>Dakota's landmass.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS Kentucky reassigned a Soil Conservationist to provide assistance and program information to under-served populations. The results are: 1) under-served communities have a direct contact, 2) under-served communities receive timely information in a fashion that is beneficial, and 3) NRCS provides training to 1890 University employees on program eligibility requirements. • NRCS Tennessee distributed copies of NRCS publications in Spanish to all offices, and identified a Spanish-speaking radio station in Haywood County to broadcast public service announcements about new programs available in several west Tennessee, heavy agriculture, counties. Expected Result: Increase in requests for technical assistance from Spanish-speaking population. • NRCS Tennessee held more than twenty community meetings Statewide in 2001 for the purpose of informing the under-served about a variety of programs and technical assistance available through NRCS and our partners. • NRCS Tennessee developed and printed an "acronym directory" containing the most commonly used Agency acronyms and their definitions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field staffs continue to host meetings and correspond with women landowners in order to identify and remove barriers to conservation decision making. As a result, minority contacts at the field and State level have increased by 20% due to the use of non-traditional media. • North Carolina is currently working with the NC Coalition of Farm and Rural Families to conduct 3-5 workshops on wills and heir lands targeted to resource producers. There are many absentee landowners in North Carolina and those tracts of land are tied up with multiple heirs. An agreement was established to transfer funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. We are a partner in this agreement. These outreach workshops will hopefully increase participation by, and service delivery to, underserved groups. • One of Ohio's RC&D offices secured a grant for \$100,000 for a playground project for disabled children. This playground is designed to allow children with all abilities to play side by side with children with disabilities.
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Washington NRCS is providing technical assistance and support to the “Center for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers,” which received a \$247,660 grant from the USDA Office of Outreach, under the “2501” program for outreach and assistance to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. The group hosted producer meetings in the Yakima Valley, Chelan and Okanogan areas the latter part of April to introduce USDA programs.
<p><i>Performance Objective 2.3 Improve service delivery to historically underserved populations. (Continued)</i></p>		
<p>17. Agency partners with outside groups, minority-serving institutions, and community-based organizations, and improves service delivery to underserved populations over FY 2001.</p>	<p>NRCS relationships have been established with National, State, and local Food and Agriculture Councils (FACs) and Outreach Committees to identify and develop common goals and commitments for outreach activities. In addition, Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Councils and Associations serve as important partners for outreach efforts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NRCS established the 1890 institutions and the 1994 Hispanic-Serving Institutions part of the National Cooperative Soil Survey. NRCS developed partnership with Prairie View A&M University to 	<p>NRCS relationships with outside groups, minority-serving institutions and community – based organizations contributes to the development of partnerships and the improvement of services to under served populations. Some of these initiatives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) program partners with the Coalition of Agricultural Mediation Programs to ensure that the State Certified Agricultural Mediation Programs are knowledgeable of and available to mediate NRCS program disputes. NRCS Outreach Division participates with and provides assistance to minority employee organizations, community based organizations, and minority institutions that serve as partners to increase program outreach efforts, including

	<p>carry out a wetland monitoring program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS entered into a cooperative agreement with American Community Gardening Association to develop and provide natural resource conservation information to underserved populations across the country which will result in the soil and natural resource conservation message delivered nationwide to thousands of underserved citizens. • NRCS provided leadership and active participation in the USDA Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) Board. • NRCS established new tribal conservation districts on the Acoma Pueblo in New Mexico and Fort Belknap in Montana. • NRCS has engaged with the Rural Coalition in a set of local listening activities across the country, and will participate in a survey of 2,000 small and limited resource farmers. • NRCS has engaged the USDA Advisory Committee on Small Farms in discussions on the 2002 Farm Bill. • NRCS has established professional relations with U.S. missions abroad, foreign governments, international 	<p>but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intertribal Agriculture Council - USDA National Small Farms Advisory Board - 1890, 1994 and HSIs in implementation of the NRCS Soil Science and USDA 1890 Scholars programs. - Continued collaboration with the State Food and Agriculture Councils and County committees. - National Black Mayors Incorporation - Environmental Careers Organization ▪ Distributed notifications to outside groups and minority-serving institutions and community based organizations on the upcoming Ag Census to begin in December 2002, as well as on impending Farm Bill program changes and additions. Participated in the National Conference on Poverty held in Tunica, MS hosted by the National Resource Conservation and Development Councils. • The Northern Plains Regional Office developed a pilot project on third party vendor opportunities of the new farm bill targeted to American Indian tribes in our region. In coordination with Inter-Tribal Ag Council, two meetings will be conducted in August in South Dakota and Montana. • Various State contributions to the development of partnerships and the improvement of services to under served populations.
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	<p>organizations, and foreign embassies to assist in improving the management and conservation of natural resources globally. Additionally, NRCS has developed, strengthened, and maintained partnerships with non-governmental organizations for the purposes of conservation application, disaster mitigation, and capacity building which has resulted in improving the quality of life of the people in Central America and the Caribbean. Some of our partners are: World Relief, World Vision, CARE, Catholic Relief Services, Center for Agroforestry Development, Nature Foundation, Pro-Nature, FISE, and United Agricultural Producers of Nicaragua. (IPD)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS Missouri partnered with the Rural Coalition and the University of Missouri to learn how USDA conservation programs serve our limited resource farmers and ranchers. Focus groups have been held to determine changes needed in programs and program delivery to increase participation. • NRCS initiated dialogue with National Organization of Black County Officials to strengthen communities about NRCS' programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the RC&D program, States partner with economic development districts to improve assistance to local communities. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed Southeast Alaska Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy with Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska. • Southeast Conference (SEC) RC&D Council in Alaska received a grant to assist communities impacted by a downturn in the timber industry. SEC hired a planner to work with communities. The planner assisted Ketchikan Indian Corporation (KIC) on two projects; to determine feasibility of a wood carvers apprentice program and to review capital projects needs and repairs to KIC Hatchery. The planner also wrote a grant proposal and application for the engineering and design for Hoonah's marine bulkhead project. • NRCS California initiated and assisted the Conservation on the Road project, which included funding the purchase and refurbishing of a bus with five different learning centers. South Coast RC&D worked with the Los Angeles School District and Earth Team Volunteers to set up the programs and to take the bus to community fairs, Tribal conferences, and LA County schools. So far they have reached over 8,000 students and teachers in CA. After hearing of the program's success, requests have come from Oregon and Washington
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	<p>and services available to private landowners and communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS provided funds to actively support an African American, Asian American and Tribal representatives serving as at-large members of the National Association of RC&D Councils board of directors. • NRCS provided assistance to help in the formation of the US-Mexico RC&D Border Coalition (Composed of 10 designated and applicant RC&D Areas). The coalition held its first meeting in May 2001, formed a charter, and developed an action plan to address social, economic, and environmental needs along the border (an area of high poverty, increasing population, environmental issues, etc.). • NRCS utilized the Emergency Watershed Protection Program to provide recovery work for 31,900 minority landowners in 11 States. • NRCS provided social science expertise to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Kunte Kinta Foundation agreement, which produced a report ("Economic Renaissance: Revealing the True Role of the Bound Agricultural Worker In United States History") on the historical sources on the 	<p>NRCS to have the bus travel to their events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Delaware RC&D program targets very low income, elderly, minority, and disabled homeowners through its Emergency Home Repair Program RC&D partners with numerous local agencies that focus on elderly, minority and disabled individuals. Of households assisted, nearly half were minority owned, 40% were owned by the elderly, and 20% were homes owned by persons with disabilities. • NRCS Iowa entered into an agreement with the IARC&D to increase the diversity and program participation of under represented groups. The agreement was \$65,000 in FY 2001 and \$35,000 for FY 2002. • NRCS Arizona partners with the following groups: University of Arizona, Arizona State University, the Government of Mexico; all 29 Indian Nations in Arizona; all natural resource oriented Federal and State agencies in Arizona; other agencies such as the Border Patrol, EPA, BIA, BLM, Forest Service, Bureau of Reclamation; schools, local agencies, and private groups such as Brownsfield National Partnership, the Malpai Borderlands Group, the Verde Watershed Association, and others. Assistance was provided on a variety of projects. • NRCS Arizona also worked with Indian Health Services to develop projects for Native
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	<p>contributions of indentured servants and slaves to the development of the United States' economy;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Texas A&M to study the role of Tejano (Hispanic) Ranchers and Farmers in the Conservation District Movement of South Texas; ✓ North Carolina A&T to conduct a study on African-American in the Civilian Conservation Corps supervised by NRCS; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS identified and hosted two California Asian America peach farmers to the May 3, 2001, USDA Annual AAPI Heritage Month celebration to receive recognition by Secretary Veneman (for their accomplishments in conservation, and special contributions made to American agriculture and to their community). • NRCS developed a CORE 4 Conservation Plan on the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB), an 1890 Land Grant University, Lonoke Research Farm to establish it as a demonstration farm/learning center/outdoor classroom for key conservation practices, directed toward helping limited resource 	<p>American food gardens on the Tohono O’odham Nation. 2 projects (gardens) planned and developed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arkansas NRCS partnered with Arkansas Farm and Land Development Cooperative (ALFDC) a community-based organizations and University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB) minority-serving institutions to conduct Farm Bill Forums. With the assistance of these groups, 110 minority landowners were in attendance. • California NRCS sponsors the annual CA Small Farm Conference, which focuses on limited resource farmers, socially disadvantaged producers, and niche marketers. California/NRCS partners with Forest Service Agency, Rural Development, UC-Davis Small Farms Program, California Alliance for Family Farmers, local Community Colleges, Resource Conservation Districts, (among other groups) to provide a 4-day conference which was attended by 400 participants. This year we are sponsoring 70 scholarships for farmers, as well as serving an integral part of the executive planning team. • Other partners working with NRCS in the Caribbean are: the Puerto Rico Association of Conservation Districts, State Government Agencies, SCD Islandwide, Caribe RC&D, Atlantico RC&D, USVI RC&D. Working agreements have been developed with the Caribe SCD to work on a drainage improvement project and another potential
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	<p>farmers and UAPB faculty and students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS financially supported plant data collection studies at 1890 Land Grant Universities and other institutions for use in Erosion Prediction Models. Studies were completed at Alcorn State University, North Carolina A&T State University, University of Guam, and American Samoa Community College. The funding of these projects has provided capacity building and student employment. • NRCS developed a Small Scale/Small Field Conservation tutorial on soil and water conservation, and provided technical guidance concerning installation of relatively simple and cost effective conservation practices that protect the natural resources on small farms. The publication targets limited resource farmers and other operators of small farms and conservationists who serve them. • NRCS organized and held the 2nd Annual 1890 University Agroforestry Consortium training session on forest riparian buffers, in cooperation with Alabama A&M University for faculty members from 8 colleges and universities. • Assisted Alabama A&M in receiving 	<p>agreement with the Oeste SCD is underway for an educational project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS Iowa established five (5) new partnerships in FY 2002. These include: the Working Group on Sustainable Agriculture Enterprise Development; Iowa State University Sustainable Agriculture Program; USDA Risk Management Agency; Sac and Fox Natural Resources Department; and Rockwell Educational Access to Technology. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the Working Group, the agency provided additional collaborative service to small and non-traditional producers, including limited resource farmers, across the state. • Through Iowa State University, the agency provided assistance to small organic meat processors through development of an informational brochure. • Through the USDA Risk Management, enabled the agency to increase technical assistance to small and non-traditional producers, women landowners, minority landowners, and organic farmers. • The partnership with the Sac and Fox Tribe Natural Resource Department has been strengthened. Through the partnership, the agency increased technical assistance to the Sac and Fox Tribe by 80%, increased funding, and also increased program, committee, and council participation by the Tribe.
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	<p>‘provisional status’ from the Society of American Foresters, to become the first 1890 Land Grant University to receive accreditation by the professional society for foresters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed a Web-based Alternative Crops module for limited resource farmers to assist NRCS field offices in providing assistance to clients. Assisted the USDA team by holding national marketing meetings for limited resource farmers and provided coordination and support for outreach activities such as the Southern Sustainable Farmer Conference, Chattanooga, TN; Mississippi Small Farmer Conference, Jackson, MS; Marketing Outreach Conference, Perry, GA; plus the national MANNRS annual meeting, Washington, DC. • NRCS established a cooperative agreement with the National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (NATHPO) which provides a framework for cooperative activities between NRCS and NATHPO to plan and assist in developing consultation protocols and agreements with individual Federally recognized tribes. The agreement also enables joint participation in development and delivery of training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the Rockwell Educational Access to Technology, the agency provided 13 refurbished computers to limited resource producers. <p>NRCS Iowa continued to provide support to the Sac and Fox Tribe during 2002 by developing and producing a poster of traditional plants that will be utilized by the Tribe to assist Tribal elders in the education of Tribal youth on plant identification.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS Massachusetts worked with non-profit groups in the minority areas of greater Boston (Dorchester, Chelsea, Roxbury, Mattapan) to install a retaining wall, earth fill and landscaping; design and plant erosion control plantings, build greenhouses, establish a native plant nursery, and renovate community gardens. • NRCS in New Hampshire has established a communication link with minority-serving institutions and community-based organizations including the following: 1) Mount Washington Academy, Special Needs Educational Facility, 2) African American Resource Center, 3) Black Student Union, UNH, 4) Seacoast Martin Luther King Jr. Coalition, 5) United Asian Coalition, 6) Alliance for the Progress of Hispanic Americans, 7) Mt. Kearsarge Indian Museum, Board of Trustees, 8) Nation of Abenaki, 9) Monadnock Region Humane Society. • NRCS New Mexico has developed a
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	<p>and strategy sessions on effective cultural resources consultation on tribal and ancestral lands.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS revised and added to the PLANTS Web site 118 culturally significant plant guides to assist the field in providing assistance to NRCS Native American clients. • NRCS established relationships, assisted with ecological restorations, and supported collecting traditional ecological knowledge with the Salinan, Chumash, Karuk, Ohlone, Wintun, and Maidu tribal communities in California. • NRCS increased Spanish-speaking accessibility, by creating Spanish versions of the Science & Technology web site; technical conservation engineering documents, such as the pamphlet describing the determination of soil moisture by the "feel method;" and training/instructional material, based on the "Stream Restoration: Principles, practices, and procedures." • NRCS Ecological Sciences Division completed adjustments to the Science & Technology web site to meet Section 508 requirements in May 2001, and has completed 20 percent of these adjustments to the ESD Web site with September 2001 as the target 	<p>comprehensive list of New Mexico community based organizations that is dramatically improving service delivery to underserved populations. The list is provided to all NRCS offices to insure that important organizations or groups are identified and contacted about projects and programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS North Dakota established a Tribal Advisory Council composed of appointed individuals from each of the four major tribes in North Dakota and Trenton Indian Service Area. The Advisory Council provides the agency with input regarding program delivery and direction. • NRCS Oklahoma assisted the 39 Federally recognized Tribes in Oklahoma to establish and organize their Tribal Conservation Advisory Council. Oklahoma NRCS has committed \$5,000 to support their efforts in establishing four area-wide meetings across OK to inform all Tribes and Tribal citizens of USDA program benefits.
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	<p>date for completion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS developed weekly National Drought Monitor, assessing drought risks which will help underserved individuals to qualify for drought relief services offered by Federal and State agencies. • NRCS established, in cooperation with University of Arkansas, Pine Bluff, a Soil Moisture-Soil Climate Site that provides rapid access to soil climate data at the Pine Bluff Agricultural Research Farm. • NRCS provided technical assistance to the University of Arkansas, Pine Bluff (UAPB), 2501 program efforts in providing assistance to small/limited resource producers in water resources and sustainable agriculture. NRCS transferred technology to members of underserved communities, attended UAPB's Annual rural Life conference, through workshop participation and field days. • NRCS partnered with UAPB and Extension Service in creating the Agriculture Awareness program, providing conservation education to inner city youths (K-12). • NRCS provided expert technical assistance to the Arkansas Land and Farm Development Corporation 	
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	<p>(ALFDC), a community-based organization to target support to the under-served community. Also partnered with ALFDC and UAPB on a jointly sponsored and NRCS funded Site Specific Management program for production agriculture.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS partnered with ARS to provide training on the Agriculture Non-Point Source (AGNPS) Water Quality model to NRCS and Soil Conservation District (SCD) employees and Native American Reservation staff. This resulted in increased knowledge in applying this technology in under served areas. • NRCS partnered with Mississippi State University Extension, USDA-WAOB, in installing and operating a meteor burst master station in the Delta region, to better serve customers with rapid access to soil moisture and soil climate data. • NRCS designed and implemented a liming study at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, an 1890 institution that will study the feasibility of liming to increase production for limited resource farmers in Arkansas. • NRCS produced a draft technical report on affordable precision farming. The report, which is 	
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	<p>targeted to limited resource farmers, introduced the concept of site specific management to increase production, targeted to limited resource farmers that cannot afford the high-cost technical equipment usually associated with precision farming.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS showcased advanced technologies at the Survival Strategies for Small and Limited Resource Farmers and Ranchers, a national outreach conference, hosted by the USDA Risk Management Agency and Tennessee State University, to help small and limited resource farmers and ranchers use conservation planning and application to reduce risks and maintain economic viability. • NRCS Arizona maintains partnerships with: University of Arizona; Arizona State University; the Government of Mexico; all 29 Indian Nations in Arizona; all natural resource oriented Federal and State agencies in Arizona; other agencies such as the Border Patrol and EPA; schools; local agencies; and private groups such as the Brownsville National Partnership, the Malpai Borderlands Group, and the Verde Watershed Association. • NRCS established a partnership and 	
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	<p>entered into an agreement with the Parker Valley NRCD to develop and conduct a leadership/capacity building workshop for supervisors of 12 Indian conservation districts to train and improve their ability to work with and deliver conservation programs to the Native American people within their tribal nations and conservation districts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NRCS established a new partnership with The Brownsville National Partnership. This organization has chosen the Gila River Indian Community as a showcase community and is networking with Federal and State agencies to clean up former commercial and industrial facilities• NRCS worked with University of Arizona on Renewable Natural Resources Department and the Pascua Yaqui tribe to access resource conditions on the La Tortuga Ranch.• NRCS Nevada coordinated with natural resources agencies in Clark County, Nevada (Las Vegas) to develop a handbook of assistance available to American Indians. The handbook was distributed to all tribes in Clark County. In addition, the handbook was posted to the Nevada	
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	<p>NRCS web site.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS Washington identified the following new partners in FY 2001: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ the WA State Commission on Hispanic Affairs; ✓ Office of Minority and Women’s Business Enterprises; ✓ WA. Governor’s Committee on Disability Issues and Employment; ✓ WA. State Dept. of Community Trade & Economic Development. • NRCS Washington maintains on-going partnerships with the 30 Tribal Governments in WA State and with the Rural America Association of Community Based Organizations. • NRCS South Central Region improved service delivery to historically underserved populations. Actions include direct government-to-government training to American Indian Nations and NRCS employees in Oklahoma. Board capacity was built through leadership training, developing a director handbook detailing director duties and responsibilities, and implementation of its strategic plan. Producer capacity was established through field 	
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	<p>days, demonstrations, alternatives for enterprise diversification, and other technology transfer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS Midwest Region improved their services to the under-served, by partnering with other organizations such as FSA, RD, SWCD, Missouri DNR, University Extension, and Lincoln University. The Region also works with such groups as female landowners, Mennonites, Amish, American Indian Centers, minority churches, and others to reach the under-served. The Region has a grant agreement with the Great Rivers Alliance of Natural Resource Districts (GRAND) that helps landowners in SE Missouri establish a vegetable cooperative. • NRCS Missouri assisted the Miami Nation Tribal Council to create a Conservation Advisory Committee. Established the same protocol with this State recognized nation as is afforded nationally recognized tribes. • NRCS Alabama's RC&D Program has been the major program that is used in Alabama to reach under served communities and groups that require assistance beyond the field office level. Listed below are examples of program delivery efforts that are in progress at this point in 	
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	<p>FY 2001 through the RC&D Program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <u>Southern Beef Growers Small Farm Diversity Project</u> – This is a small farm project that is sponsored by the Ala-Tom RC&D Council. The purpose of this project is to show a small farm can be diversified and provide supplemental income for rural families. Workshops and farm visits are conducted on this site to encourage small farm revitalization and diversity of enterprises at the small farm level. ✓ <u>Small Farm Pasture Improvement Project</u> - This project is being sponsored and administered by the Mid-South RC&D Council. The purpose of the project is to demonstrate, at the small farm level, the use and management of native grasses to improve small farm grazing programs. Demonstrations are being established in several counties across the State to encourage participation by small farmers. ✓ <u>Forestry Awareness and</u> 	
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	<p><u>Technical Assistance Project</u> – This is a project that is sponsored by the Mid-South RC&D Council. The purpose of this project is to provide outreach technical assistance to minority landowners in a group of target counties. At this point, a professional minority forester is working in this project for the third year and he has been well trained to provide assistance from a private forester or consultant standpoint. The goal of this project effort is to level the playing field for all forest landowners through equal and fair treatment within the industry.</p> <p>✓ <u>Comprehensive Nutrient Management and Broad Scale Distribution of Raw and Composted Litter Project</u> - A major problem has been generated by the successful poultry industry in the northern section of Alabama involving the proper disposal of litter. Therefore, the Tennessee Valley RC&D Council has designed the above project to establish a cost-share program that would allow the excess litter to be transported</p>	
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	<p>to the southern part of the State and placed on farms that desperately need the nutrients to produce forage grasses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <u>Junior Educators Training Project</u> - This is a comprehensive project that is in progress in Hurtsboro, Alabama. The Wiregrass RC&D Council has adopted this project. They are providing assistance through partnerships to assist in improving the building that houses this program. This center provides many services to youth and adult groups that are under served in Russell and surrounding counties. ✓ <u>Community Recreation and Improvement Project</u> - The Gulf Coast RC&D Council adopted a minority community assistance project in west Mobile County, where over forty (40) local people have come together in an effort to complete a \$238,000 project. ✓ <u>Alabama Small Farm and Economic Development Center</u> - This center is located at Tuskegee University, and serves as a state- 	
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	<p>wide effort to serve under served community groups across the State. The Agency serves as a partner in this effort through its outreach program, and as a result, various communities and groups have received technical and financial assistance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <u>Heifer Project International (HPI)</u> - This is a non-profit organization that works nationally and internationally to assist rural families through training and passing on animals called the gift. The NRCS in Alabama has been working as a partner with HPI to better serve small farm families. At this point over ten (10) groups have active projects in the State. • NRCS Georgia's Team Agriculture Georgia (TAG) was formed as a partnership team made up of Federal and State agencies, educational institutions, and non-governmental agricultural organizations. Thirteen of the eighteen TAG members are new partners at this mission level. TAG is concerned that many small, beginning, and limited resource farmers may be underserved. TAG's purpose is to identify and carry out 	
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	<p>collaborative efforts that will result in broader and easier access to agriculture-related programs, services, and information. TAG members share resources and skills as they plan and carry out projects, such as publishing an annual directory of Ag-related listings, and conducting area workshops for small farmers covering everything from goats to greenhouses, from record keeping to roadside markets. More efficient, conserving, and profitable farming enterprises have resulted. The intention is to benefit landowners in need and eliminate barriers to the success of their land management and farming operations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NRCS Kentucky partnered with outside groups and organizations such as the Kentucky Minority Farmers Association, Federation of Southern Cooperatives, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the NAACP, and others to provide information to under-served groups. These partners have helped in increasing the number of program participants and services and information being provided. The Kentucky Chapter of the National Organization of Professional NRCS Black Employees will present a small and limited resource farmer award to	
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	<p>a limited resource farmer in September at the Kentucky State University Cooperative Extension Field Day. Approximately 500 people will be in attendance. This will bring additional focus to the technical assistance provided by NRCS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS Mississippi's Tunica County Community Pride project is an information and educational tool adopted by the Tunica County Board of Supervisors to be implemented by NRCS and the Tunica County SWCD. The project addresses community concerns, concerns related to the Water Management Project, other resource concerns and issues that enhance the quality of life in the community. The participants in this project are: Tunica County Board of Supervisors, SWCD, NRCS, RC&D, Mississippi State Extension Service, Tunica County Sheriff Department, NW Regional Medical Center, MSWCC, Tunica Fire Department, Solid Waste Department, Tunica County Planning Commission, and the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality. • NRCS North Carolina developed a strong working relationship with the 	
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	<p>NC Coalition of Farm and Rural Families over the past several years. \$4,000 was made available to the Coalition through cooperative efforts with the USFS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS South Carolina developed partnership with the following organizations improve service delivery to the underserved: The Catawba Indian Nation, South Carolina State University's 1890 Extension and 2501 Program, Federation of Southern Cooperatives, Penn Center, Inc., South Carolina Future Farmers of America Association, South Carolina Young Farmers Association, State Outreach Council, and the South Carolina Small Farmers and Landowners State Outreach Committee. • NRCS Tennessee's counties develop grassroots lists and communicate with these various organizations. Examples include NAACP, League of Women Voters, Garden Clubs, Civitan and Kiwanas Clubs, Disabled Veterans Association, Lions Club, Senior Citizen Organizations, Pastoral Assoc., etc. Varies by location - most are not new, but ongoing partnerships. Results: previously under-served groups learn about the services and programs 	
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	<p>available from NRCS. We worked with community based organizations such as Earth Matters-Tennessee, Project 2000 Inc., Northern Tennessee Farmers Association, Give-A-Hoot Inc. and Free Hill Community Assoc. to write five resource grants for computer technology and funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS Tennessee participated in the following partnership outreach activities: Ducks Unlimited Great Outdoor Festival, Give-A-Hoot Week for Kids, Nashville Lawn and Garden Show, Milan No-Till Field Day, Multi-Agency Customer Service Fairs (attended by approximately 350 small farmers), and the National Outreach Conference sponsored by Risk Management Agency. Partnership organizations participated in NRCS-TN Field Office Operations training, which included training on serving all customers and utilizing a business planning process. This increased their understanding of and included them in our planning process. • NRCS Southeast Regional Office's SENRLG is a collaboration of regional Federal executives who lead agencies with natural resource conservation as part of their mission. By working together with Southeast 	
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	<p>Natural Resources Leaders Group, they are promoting conservation and restoration of important natural resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS Colorado partnered with the following organizations to help expose producers to traditional USDA programs. This includes financial and technical assistance to over 20 outreach events. Partners include Colorado Association of Conservation Districts, 67 local soil conservation districts, Colorado State Soil Conservation Board, RC&D Councils and League, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, BLM, FSA, RD, Colorado Division of Wildlife, Nature Conservancy, County Commissioners, Colorado State University, CSU Extension Service, Denver Urban Resources Partnership, Colorado State Forest Service, local service organizations, and local units of government. • NRCS Montana, along with Salish Kootenai College, prepared a proposal for a development workshop for Tribal Colleges - Small Farmer Outreach Training & Technical Assistance Program. Resulted in improved outreach efforts, including efforts to communicate information regarding USDA programs and 	
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	<p>services. Work with partners has improved coordination efforts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NRCS Montana provided assistance and staff support to Montana State University American Indian Science & Engineering Society, Native Waters for the Environmental Protection Future Leaders Conference. The conference focused on improving interactions among students, teachers, professionals, tribal elders, and government officials in order to enhance cultural understanding & environmental awareness.• NRCS Nebraska improved service delivery to underserved populations by:<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Establishing contacts with four Tribal colleges.✓ Formulating an agreement with Fort Yates Tribal College to provide cultural resource curriculum has resulted in an increase in awareness of cultural resource laws and protection of tribal heritage.✓ Providing tribal resource staff with training on the use of GIS equipment, conservation planning,	
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	<p>area-wide planning, and priority area development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Providing assistance to the Center For New Americans in which the RC&D programs expose multi-cultural participants to the economic opportunities available in the sewn products industry. 	
<p>Goal 3. <u>Employment.</u> Provide a workplace free of discrimination and enhance the diversity of the workforce.</p>		
<p><i>Performance Objective 3.1 Take affirmative steps to recruit, hire, train, and promote employees from diverse backgrounds.</i></p>		
<p>18a. Agency assesses underrepresentation, targets improvement, and develops and implements effective strategies for improving diversity.</p> <p>18b. Federally-mandated plans and reports of progress are submitted as prescribed, according to guidelines for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirmative Employment Plan for Minorities and Women (AEP); • Affirmative Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities (AAP); • Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP); and • Federal Equal Opportunity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS State offices provide annual progress summaries to the existing Affirmative Employment Plan. • Managers are using the computerized Work Force Planning (WFP) process to capture the disciplines needed in the future to assist in recruitment. • NRCS Civil Rights Staff has developed a revised Workforce Planning Process in order to capture numbers to reach parity in each State recruitment plan by PATCOB. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Recruited and placed 36 students throughout the region ✓ 7 - American Indians ✓ 5 - Asian American / Pacific 	<p>NHQ contributions to the improvement of diversity in the NRCS workforce.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chief Information Officer/Division Director was awarded an Outstanding Achievement Award for 2002 by the Federal Asian Pacific American Council. This award was based on his assignment of several ITD females and other minorities to high-profile projects that are National in scope, such as the Web Modernization Project. • NRCS hired the first African American female State Conservationist. • NRCS continues to be a lead agency in utilizing the USDA/1890 Scholars Program as a recruitment mechanism. NRCS selected

<p>Recruitment Program (FEORP).</p>	<p>Islanders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 5 - Hispanics ✓ 17 – White Females ✓ 1 – White Male ✓ 1 – African American <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach efforts to 1890 and 1994 Land Grant Colleges and Universities continue to produce a diverse pool of applicants. • Farmland Protection and Community Planning Staff recruitment efforts resulted in the selection of three non-minority women and three minorities, including one disabled veteran and two women. • Provided \$30,000 for cooperation with the National Hispanic Environmental Council to develop outreach newsletters to Hispanic students. • Coordination of Hispanic summer interns as a part of a \$120,000 agreement between the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities for placement of interns in 12 States. • Provided staff assistance to the USDA HACU office to develop a policy on the HACU internship program. • Encouraged self-development of 	<p>five new scholars who will begin school Fall, 2002.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS currently has a total of 15 USDA 1890 Scholars and Interns. • The NRCS Outreach Division provided assistance in employment placement for two 1890 Scholars as soil conservationists in New Jersey and Iowa. • The NRCS Soil Science Scholars Program graduated three scholars in May, 2002, with one attending graduate school. • Four Soil Science Scholars currently attend various Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) and 1890 Colleges and Universities. • The NRCS Outreach Division is in the process of selecting additional scholars from the 1994 Tribal Colleges. • NRCS Outreach Division has contributed and supported approximately \$450,000 towards scholarships, salaries, tuition, books and fees. • In FY 2002, the NRCS NHQ has supported the placement of 56 summer interns. • Designed and implemented a 5-part national recruitment strategy to target diverse populations with skill and education in agricultural fields.
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	<p>Program Assistants to help achieve long range employment goals. Toward that end, staffs were offered detail opportunities at higher-grade levels to gain needed experience and skills to increase opportunities for advancement within the Agency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS utilizes the Federally mandated plans to assess under representation. Relationships are maintained with 1890 colleges and universities, tribal groups, and others to recruit, hire, train, and retain under-represented groups in the NRCS workforce. • NRCS Idaho provided housing and transportation assistance to 9 students in order to help them get situated in the State for the summer work experience. Funding was provided from NHQ. • NRCS Oregon uses a student trainee taskforce and the State's Civil Rights Committee to assist with recruiting students by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Maintaining a recruiting booth at the American Indians in Science and Engineering Society National Conference in Portland, Oregon. Prior to the conference, each State Conservationist was asked to provide information regarding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended annual meetings of the NRCS employee associations, MANNRS, and NHEC to provide information and recruit students and members. <p>Regional contributions to the improvement of diversity in the NRCS workforce include:</p> <p>The Northern Plains Regional Office researched and developed a training tool on the concept of unconscious discrimination and how it impacts the work place (hiring practices, promotion and retention), as well as program outreach efforts. The training tool was made available and is being used by States in the region, other regions and the Outreach Division. It has been presented to the Northern Plains States, National Civil Right Committee, and at NSSC all employee meetings, etc</p> <p>The SC Regional Office held a pre-employment interview opportunity on June 24, 2002. Colleges and universities contacted for recent graduates and/or students included 1890 colleges and the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities. Students interviewed for positions in soil and range conservation, engineering and soil science. We are anticipating employment offers to be made from this effort.</p> <p>Regional Office personnel have assisted with at least two career fairs at colleges/universities within the region and several career awareness activities with local school districts.</p>
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	<p>pending vacancies. This information was available at the booth. Over 200 packets of Agency information were distributed and 10 applications were collected. The taskforce continued to work at developing relationships with professors at colleges and universities in Oregon. After advertising student trainee positions, nearly 50 applications were received.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Vacancy announcements were sent directly to all of the tribal colleges in the country. Information was also sent to Humboldt State University's (CA) American Indian Science and Natural Resources Club. • All NRCS State plans and reports for the AEP were submitted to the Departmental Office of Civil Rights within prescribed time frames. 	<p>The South Central (SC) Regional Office has demonstrated its commitment to civil rights and under-representation issues by providing work experience to two HACU interns (one male and one female Hispanic) and hiring two white females for summer employment.</p> <p>The SC Regional Office has developed a strong working relationship with the Fort Worth Independent School District (FWISD) whose enrollment is approximately 40% Hispanic. The Regional staff has provided presentations and supported the FWISD's Hispanic Youth Promoting Excellence Program that was attended by over 400 youth.</p> <p>State contributions to the improvement of diversity in the NRCS workforce include:</p> <p>All States have developed recruitment plans for regular hires and the various student programs.</p> <p>Recruitment sources include: Colorado State University, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, Texas A&M, Univ. of Wyoming, NE Junior College, Alabama A&M, Trinidad Junior College, Fort Lewis, Tennessee State, Cal. State Polytechnic University, University of Puerto Rico, Alcorn University, University of Alabama Pine Bluff, Southern University, Ohio State University, Michigan State University, Bowling Green University, Southern University, Kentucky State University, Alcorn State University, Alabama A&M University, North Carolina A&T State University, Fort Valley State University,</p>
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		<p>Clemson University, Central State University (a historically black institution), Kent State University, State FFA Conferences, Oklahoma State University, Langston University, University of Central Oklahoma, Oklahoma Panhandle State University, ATI (Agricultural Technical Institute), and Wilmington College. Sources also include all other 1890 Institutions, Land Grant Universities (both 1860 and 1994).</p> <p>Public notification of recruiting activities appears in: Federally Employed Women, Local newspapers, College and High School Career Fairs, Job Service Centers, Internet websites, diversity days, and employees.</p> <p>Agency recruitment efforts have resulted in 65% of new hires are females or members of minority groups.</p> <p>Diversity training to sensitize employees and managers to the value of diversity in the workplace has been conducted in all regions.</p> <p>Throughout NRCS, SEPM positions are maintained for each group. This has resulted in eliminating barriers to employment, increased cultural sensitivity, and improvements in the employment of females and minorities. SEPM functions are monitored during the compliance review process.</p> <p><i>18b Response.</i> Federally-mandated plans and reports of progress are submitted as required, according to guidelines for the following:</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirmative Employment Plan for Minorities and Women (AEP); • Affirmative Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities (AAP); • Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP); and • Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program (FEORP). <p>Regional Affirmative Employment Plan was developed and submitted to the National Civil Rights Staff. The plan is used in maintaining relationships with 1890 colleges and universities, tribal groups, CBOs and others to recruit, hire, train, and retain under-represented groups in the NRCS workforce.</p> <p>During FY 2002, all States developed and evaluated an Affirmative Employment Plan (AEP), an Affirmative Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities (AAP), a Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program (DVAPP), and a Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program (FEORP) Plan. Progress toward accomplishment of goals and objectives is recorded on a quarterly basis.</p>
<i>Performance Objective 3.1 Take affirmative steps to recruit, hire train and promote employees from diverse backgrounds. (Continued)</i>		
<p>19. Agency identifies barriers and takes affirmative steps within the authority of the agency to remove barriers to workforce diversity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presented papers at two national minority employee organizations annual training conferences. Results: Informed employees of soil survey products and services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Hispanic Public Service Scholarship program was launched in early spring and NRCS committed to 5 students attending one of the Hispanic Serving Institutions.

	<p>available from the Soil Survey Division.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four national NRCS employee organizations were sponsored which focused on training, recruitment, career enhancement, mentoring, etc., for Asian/Pacific Islanders, Black, American Indian, and Hispanic employees. • NRCS employees completed 132 long and short-term international conservation assignments in 30 foreign countries, 49 (37%) were minority employees, 25 (19%) were women. • The 2002 Farm Bill development and analysis teams were designed to include a diverse staff. • An NRCS African American male serves as an official USDA delegate under the U.S.-Ghana Consultative Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development. • Increased National Headquarters employees' knowledge and understanding of American Sign Language, by providing training to interested employees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS Outreach Division participated and attended the annual Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS) conference to recruit students in conservation, agricultural, and related fields. • Outreach Division staff participated on the NRCS Farm Bill Outreach Work Group that provided information and analysis on current program policies and implementation strategies • The NRCS Outreach Division participated on the National NRCS Workforce Diversity team and assisted in the development of a national policy on recruitment, addressed barriers, and provided workable solutions. In addition, one of NRCS' 1890 scholars was an active participant and provided a student's point of view in the policy development. • Recruitment posters and brochures are translated into Spanish and prepared in alternate formats for people with visual or cognitive disabilities. • Recruited for NRCS through the Workforce recruitment Program (WRP) for College Students with Disabilities. Nationwide, 9 interns with disabilities hired. Hired 1 Hispanic female WRP student intern. • States have instituted aggressive programs to remove barriers to workforce diversity----special emphasis programs covering many areas of outreach; education outreach; special activities with the 1890 University in the State; and
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS South Central Region, through the use of the workforce planning system, has analyzed diversity needs on a State-by-State basis. This has been reviewed with NHQ during leadership meetings and strategies have been developed to focus resources to address diversity. • Within the South Central Region, Special Emphasis Program Managers, Outreach Coordinators, and Civil Rights Committees are recruiting, colleges and universities to assist in addressing our diversity needs. • NRCS Kentucky appropriated steps within the scope of authority to remove barriers once they are identified: 1) The 1890 Scholar was promoted to a GS-7 upon his return to duty, 2) The Kentucky Chapter of the National Organization of Professional Black Natural Resources Conservation Services Employees (NOPBNRCSE), provides funds to new hires assisting with rent and utilities; and 3) Kentucky and Oklahoma have cooperated in providing a work site and 	<p>cooperative agreements.</p>
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	<p>experience for a Native American female engineer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS Northern Plains Region has created and presented training to members of Civil Rights Committee on hidden discrimination in the work place and what can be done to eliminate it. • NRCS Diversity Day Celebrations were held for all employees. • NRCS Missouri provided financial and manpower support to the Natural Resources Career Camp to expose underprivileged youth from Missouri to careers in Natural Resources • NRCS Minnesota is translating the recruitment brochure into braille and is producing a recruitment audiocassette with the Minnesota State Services for the Blind. • NRCS Minnesota is currently working with Central State University with developing a curriculum that includes soils classes. These soil classes would qualify the graduates of Central State University for our Soil Conservation and Soil Science job series. 	
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<p>20. Agency conducts effective civil rights training for employees, managers and supervisors, committee members, and volunteers to improve awareness, understanding, and appreciation for workforce diversity. Training should include modules on disability and alternative dispute resolution.</p>	<p>NRCS provides training to employees, committee members and volunteers to increase their knowledge of diversity and Civil Rights laws, policies and procedures. Over 11,000 NRCS employees received the following training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy Chiefs, 2 Associate Deputy Chiefs, 6 Division Directors and staff managers participated in 8 hours of diversity training (December 13, 2000). This training expanded understanding of the role of diversity in terms of productivity and program delivery, and sensitivity to an increasing diversified workforce. • NRCS approved and conducted training for all new and current Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPM) during the perspectives on Disability Conference in December 2000 and Federally Employed Women (FEW) conference in July 2001. Additional SEPM training will be provided during this fiscal year. • NRCS conducted computer-based training designed by EEOC on “<i>Sailing Through the Federal Sector EEO Process</i>” to all supervisors, managers and Civil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director for NRCS ADR served on a team to assist the Department in developing the Alternative Dispute Resolution module for the Civil Rights training for all USDA agencies to use. • NRCS Outreach Division provides updates and monitors the outreach modules and training of the Orientation for New NRCS Employees, NEDC’s training modules on Program Delivery and Compliance, Working Effectively with American Indians, and other national special emphasis program managers training sessions. • The Secretary’s Advisory Committee for Employees with Disabilities (SACED); (1) designed and implemented a multi-agency training workshop on Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act; and (2) chaired SACED Marketing Subcommittee, which developed SACED 2002 Marketing Plan. • NRCS has published an article in the Government Executive on emergency evacuation for people with disabilities. • HRMD staff conducted workshops on: “Conflict Management and Disability” and “Service Animals in the Workplace” for the Association for People with Disabilities in Agriculture.
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	<p>Rights staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS approved three employee organization meetings in FY 2001 to increase awareness and provide training. They were the National Organizations of NRCS Professional Employees representing Hispanic, Asian Pacific Islander, and American Indians. • NRCS hired two full time and four collateral National Special Emphasis Program managers in FY 2001. • Orientation for New Employees is a mandatory two-week course for new NRCS employees in their first year of employment. The course contains sessions on diversity and valuing the culture of others in the workplace. The course is taught by instructors with diverse backgrounds that can act as role models to new employees. Employees gain an appreciation and awareness of NRCS's strong commitment to the value of diversity. • NRCS held cultural sensitivity training and environmental justice overview during Diversity Day observances. • NRCS National Headquarters, 	<p>Civil Rights Training is provided to all new Agency employees when they are hired.</p> <p>All NRCS managers and supervisors are currently receiving training in the following five areas through On-Line Civil Rights Training: EEO; ADR: Conflict Resolution Module; Effective Communication; Cultural Diversity: Recruitment, Hiring, and Workforce Profiles; Affirmative Action.</p> <p>NRCS Special Emphasis Program Managers and Civil Rights Managers give diversity training and assist employees with career counseling, guidance, and understanding their rights and responsibilities.</p> <p>More than 50% of the States conduct annual Cultural Diversity Days that provide Civil Rights Training.</p>
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	<p>regional and State offices provide all employees with Civil Rights training through staff meetings, videos, formal and group training, on-line web sites, and committee cadres.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS National Headquarters, regional and State offices provided all employees sexual harassment training. • NRCS Civil Rights Staff (CRS) has completed various Civil Rights training from USDA Graduate School, USDA Office of General Counsel, NEDC, and EEOC. • All NRCS Division Directors and above, Regional and State Conservationist completed the ethics training. This training has been made accessible to all NRCS employees via the Internet. 	
<p><i>Performance Objective 3.2 Conduct a comprehensive equal employment opportunity evaluation program to assess employment policies and practices.</i></p>		
<p>21a. Agency completes EEO compliance reviews according to Departmental Employment Compliance Review Guidance.</p> <p>21b. Agency reports on preventive and corrective actions and outcomes of reviews that were completed in FY 2001 and FY</p>	<p>NRCS completes thorough and impartial Civil Rights Compliance Reviews of its Equal Employment Opportunity Program collaboratively with its program delivery compliance review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twelve Civil Rights Compliance Reviews were conducted in accordance with Departmental 	<p>NRCS has conducted 12 National Civil Rights (Title VI and VII) Compliance Reviews during FY 2002. Recommended and required actions were contained in the review reports, and corrective action plans were developed by each of the State Conservationists. The corrective action plans are monitored for compliance and completion by the NRCS Civil Rights Staff, and close-out letters are issued upon completion. Copies of the Compliance Review Reports are forwarded to the USDA Office of Civil Rights.</p>

2002.	<p>Regulation 4300-1 dated October 18, 2000.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS Civil Rights Staff revised and distributed the Civil Rights Compliance Review Guide to assist management in conducting Compliance Reviews, which addresses the Equal Employment Opportunity Program and Civil Rights in Program Delivery. • All NRCS Civil Rights Compliance Reviews are prepared in a newly revised reporting format that provides a thorough, impartial, and concise report. 	<p>21b. Response</p> <p>States will have conducted 625 Civil Rights (Title VI and VII) Compliance Reviews by the end of FY02. Some of the most common findings included lack of documentation on training, no documentation identifying grassroots organization, lack of civil rights disclaimer statement on news articles, and an occasional office facility not meeting some of the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.</p>
<p><i>Performance Objective 3.3 Manage an effective employment complaint processing program.</i></p>		
<p>22. Agency makes good-faith efforts to resolve employment complaints and workplace disputes at all times, particularly, early in the process; uses alternative dispute resolution programs; updates procedures; takes actions within its control to speed complaint processing; responds timely to requests for information from counselors, mediators, investigators, and adjudicators; and submits EEO counselor reports timely.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All NRCS employees are provided the option and are strongly encouraged to participate in Alternative Dispute Resolution or Traditional EEO Counseling. • All NRCS employees are advised of their rights to contact an EEO Counselor within 45 days of the alleged discriminatory incident. • EEO posters provide information on how to contact a counselor and are located in each NRCS office. We are waiting to receive the updated posters with current information. • All NRCS employees are made 	<p>Attempts are made to resolve complaints at the informal stage. Fifty percent of all complaints are resolved at this stage. In FY 2002 the number of formal complaints has declined by 38%. All parties involved realize the importance of cooperating in the investigative process and have been extremely cooperative with the assigned EEO counselors, investigators, and Civil Rights staff. They have provided requested documentation and affidavits in a timely manner.</p> <p>Employees are made aware of their rights and responsibilities through Civil Rights training throughout the year. NRCS Special Emphasis Program Managers and Civil Rights Committee Members work together to provide diversity training opportunities and assist in understanding employee rights and responsibilities.</p>

	<p>aware of their rights and responsibilities through Civil Rights training, new employee's orientation, and other training opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NRCS Civil Rights Staff is revising the General Manual 230, Part 401 to further educate employees of their rights and responsibilities in the EEO complaint process. • NRCS' Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Program, in accordance with Secretary Memorandum 4710-1, offers mediation and related ADR techniques to prevent and resolve various kinds of work place and program disputes. • NRCS ADR Program conducted briefings on conflict management for the Federal Women's Program Managers, Disability Special Emphasis Program Managers, and the Midwest and Northern Plains Chapters of the National Black NRCS Employees Organization. • NRCS ADR Program developed and completed GM 110, Part 404, Alternative Dispute Resolution, 	<p>Agency makes good-faith efforts to resolve employment complaints and workplace disputes at all times, particularly, early in the process; uses alternative dispute resolution programs; updates procedures; takes actions within its control to speed complaint processing; responds timely to requests for information from counselors, mediators, investigators, and adjudicators; and submits EEO counselor reports timely.</p> <p>EEO posters with information on how to contact a counselor are located in each NRCS office.</p> <p>Employees are made aware of their rights and responsibilities through Civil Rights training during new employee orientation courses, and other field training sessions throughout the year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative Dispute Resolution staff mediates early resolution disputes as well as informal and formal EEO complaints and grievances. Mediations resulted in a 90% resolution rate for early intervention and grievance issues and a 60% resolution for EEO complaints. In addition, several consultations were completed. • NRCS ADR Program held 4 conflict management training sessions for headquarters employees. • NRCS provided ADR training to the National Leadership Team.
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	<p>which establishes the Agency's ADR Program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS ADR Program developed and distributed an ADR fact sheet. • NRCS ADR Program developed and implemented a database used to track and report ADR Program activity. • NRCS ADR Program distributed USDA pamphlets, "Dealing with Workplace Conflict and Concerns." • NRCS ADR Program conducted three briefings for National Headquarters employees advising them on the Agency's ADR Program. • NRCS ADR Program is in the process of providing orientation and conflict management training for all employees. • NRCS ADR Program provided conflict management training to senior management. • NRCS ADR Program provided conflict management training at the West Regional Office. • NRCS ADR Program developed a website to market Program services. • NRCS ADR Program developed an ADR Brochure to be distributed to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS ADR program provided conflict management training to the employees of the Northern Plains Regional Office; Pacific Basin; Hilo, Hawaii; Jackson, Mississippi; and Palmetto, Florida. District employees were included in some of the training sessions. • NRCS ADR program provided an ADR briefing to all employees in the State of Hawaii. • A total of 359 supervisory and non-supervisory personnel received conflict management and ADR training through the 3rd quarter. • NRCS ADR brochure was distributed to all employees. • NRCS ADR collateral duty employees received additional mediation training and experience mediating disputes which has increased their ability to mediate a wide range of disputes. • NRCS ADR program included Rural Development and Forest Service employees in conflict management training in areas where offices are in close proximity. • NRCS ADR and the Forest Service Early Intervention Program work in partnership sharing and mentoring mediators. This allows for faster response time and reduces overall costs for both agencies. NRCS also utilizes mediators from other government agencies.
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	<p>all employees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS ADR Program selected collateral duty workplace mediators and provided mediator training for them through the Justice Center of Atlanta (JCA). • NRCS Human Resources Division distributed copies of the NRCS Grievance Procedures to all employees. This Grievance Procedure explains the Informal and Formal Processes. • NRCS Civil Rights Staff has designed and developed a new EEO poster to advise all employees of the ADR and EEO complaint process. • Provided training for SEPM's and Civil Rights Council members to assist employees with career counseling and to forward any issues to those that can provide resolution at the lowest level. • EEO counselors advise complainants about the ADR process during the pre-complaint process. Complainants electing to participate in the ADR process are brought together with the alleged responding official in the effort to resolve the complaint or conflict. ADR is available throughout the 	
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	<p>EEO complaint process. Efforts to resolve complaints are initiated by the Director of the Civil Rights Staff, with guidance from the Chief and the Deputy Chief for Management.</p> <p>NRCS maintains the lowest formal complaint rate (43%) among USDA agencies.</p>	
<p>23. Agency promptly implements preventive and corrective actions resulting from complaint findings.</p>	<p>NRCS continues to take proactive steps to resolve informal complaints.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive steps are taken to resolve informal complaints. An informal grievance may be filed with the State Conservationist requesting action taken to resolve informal complaints when possible. • NRCS Civil Rights Staff (CRS) Director, the Complaints Branch Chief, and EEO counselors review informal and formal complaints for common issues, trends, and location clusters of complaints. If clusters of complaints are identified, the appropriate manager (State Conservationist or Regional Conservationist) is notified. Through review of the cases and discussion with the manager, affirmative efforts are being made to address the problems. In some cases, a special review team will be sent into the area to inquire on the 	<p>When discrimination, reprisal, or misconduct is found through a decision on a complaint, either from EEOC or USDA, discipline and corrective actions are dictated by that decision (coming from USDA OCR, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) or the Merit System Protection Board (MSPB)). As a result, the agency promptly adheres to the decision order regarding corrective actions and discipline. In addition, such findings of discrimination and their related orders are forwarded to the Human Resources Staff for review and recommendations to the Agency Chief on the question of additional discipline.</p>

	<p>situation. In the case of sexual harassment complaints, the CRS is developing procedures which will insure immediate response to the complaint, in accordance with EEOC guidelines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CRS is currently planning a review of Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy and guidance for managers and employees, in order to provide a work place free from such threats, and to better improve the handling of complaints for both complainants and managers. This effort is being planned for FY 2002. Each year, the CRS reviews one-fifth of all State offices, in order to determine whether the workplace is being maintained free of discrimination and harassment. 	
<p>24. Agency promptly implements terms of settlement agreements.</p>	<p>During the current fiscal year, NRCS has entered into 19 settlement agreements of informal and formal complaints. In all cases, the term of the settlements have been implemented. The CRS is, at this time, establishing a tracking system to monitor settlement agreements.</p>	<p>The Agency monitors all settlement agreements to ensure implementation. Responsible officials are promptly notified of the agreed upon settlement agreements. The responsible official is immediately instructed to comply with all terms of the agreement within the 30 days. In addition, responsible officials are instructed to develop a compliance file, with documentation that supports compliance of each agreed upon term. Upon completion of all terms, the file is sent to the CRS for review, and forwarded to the USDA OCR Employment Compliance</p>

		and Technical Assistance Division for case closure. The agency ensures case closure in a timely fashion.
<p>25. Agency analyzes trends in the number, types and outcomes of complaints. When warranted, changes in employment policies or practices are implemented to ensure nondiscrimination and fair treatment and to avoid future complaints.</p>	<p>NRCS conducts Civil Rights Impact analyses where significant organization changes are being made. The Director of CRS reports to the Chief about trends, numbers, and clusters of complaints. Where appropriate, the Chief provides guidance on addressing identified problems or situations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the case of sexual harassment prevention and reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, the CRS Director will, upon immediate review and discussion of cases with employees and managers, take appropriate action to strengthen the Agency's effort in these two areas. • NRCS analyzes not only complaints, but employment data to try to determine how institutional discrimination may be affecting the success of employees in competing for higher level positions. • NRCS will analyze trends of EEO complaints and disputes to determine if changes to policies and/or procedures should be made to avoid future EEO complaints and ensure non-discrimination and fair 	<p>The Agency conducts trends and analysis on EEO Complaints and information gathering through Civil Rights reviews to ensure policy, procedures, and practices and carried out in a nondiscriminatory manner. Where the CRS determines or suspects that a violation of employment practice has occurred, the CR Director initiates discussion with State, regional, or national office managers, to consider ways to immediately resolve the issue, and to correct the practice that led to the complaint. At this point in FY 2002, the Agency received 57 informal contacts. During this same period 23 formal complaints have been filed. This means that only 30 percent, of informal complaints are being filed as formal complaints. The average of formal complaints for the past 4 years has been 50 percent. There is a process in the agency to examine informal EEO complaints, formal EEO complaints, and program complaints, to immediately determine the origins of the complaint, how to resolve at the earliest point.</p>

	treatment.	
GOAL 4: <u>Procurement</u>. Ensure equal opportunity for minority, women-owned, and small and disadvantaged businesses in all USDA contracting activities.		
<i>Performance Objective 4.1: Take affirmative steps to increase procurement with minority, women-owned, and small and disadvantaged businesses.</i>		
<p>26. Agency develops and implements effective strategies for improving participation by minority, women-owned, and small and disadvantaged businesses, using Federally-mandated plans to assess participation level and to target improvement efforts.</p>		<p>NRCS has established a comprehensive outreach plan that has been distributed to all Regional, State Conservationist and Small Business Coordinators (SBC). NRCS contracts are primarily awarded to vendors for construction related businesses, such as earth filled dams, channel work, recreation facilities, debris removal, and soil erosion. In an effort to aggressively solicit small businesses in the construction area, NRCS coordinates monthly teleconferences with SBC's to share information; monthly vendor outreach meetings are conducted to communicate how to do business with NRCS; and the Management Services Division (MSD) maintains an in-house vendor database that is shared with each SBC nationwide.</p> <p>Contracting officers are encouraged to utilize small business concerns whenever possible. In addition, they provide instructions to the Local Agency Program Coordinators for the Purchase Card Management System to train cardholders on Small Business Program policies, procedures and regulations. Training ensures that cardholders and contracting officers are aware of the impact of Federal procurement on small business concerns.</p> <p>Employees who increase the number of small businesses</p>

		<p>used for NRCS acquisition are rewarded for their exemplary efforts. Monetary awards were presented to five contracting officers in FY 2002 for achieving exemplary utilization of small businesses (three in Stillwater, Oklahoma and two in Syracuse, New York). The contracting officer in Missouri received a performance award that specifically identified accomplishments in the Performance Preference Program. Other incentive awards include overall highest percentage of woman-owned businesses, field coordinators making the greatest effort overall to NRCS in meeting its Performance Preference Goal, and time off award.</p> <p>The year-end procurements can improve the below percentage accomplishments. Historically, the accomplishments are met in the 4th quarter. The majority of NRCS contracts are for construction and earth moving. To date, there are very limited numbers of HUBZone firms that are in the construction arena, but they are beginning to increase. Contracting officers across the Nation are taking the HUBZone training offered by the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU).</p>
<p>27. Agency identifies barriers to participation by minority, women-owned, and small and disadvantaged businesses; takes affirmative steps within the authority of the Agency to remove barriers; and takes affirmative steps to increase employment of persons with disabilities by procuring goods and services under the Javits-</p>		<p>Barriers of awarding contracts to minorities, woman-owned and small and disadvantaged businesses have been identified. These barriers include factors such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These businesses do not always have experienced personnel on their own staff and must recruit to acquire personnel for the performance of the contract. • They must also be in a position to obtain bonding.

<p>Wagner-O'Day Act.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The contractors may lack the skills to market themselves to other government agencies. NRCS is designing training to bolster skills in obtaining and keeping a good solid experienced workforce and other good business practices that would be beneficial in overcoming some of these barriers. The NRCS OSDBU Coordinator has joined efforts with USDA OSDBU to develop strategies for the recruitment of woman owned businesses. Presently, this team effort is developing a survey for all USDA contracting officers that will identify the types of barriers that prevent awarding contracts to woman-owned businesses. • Paperwork necessary to bid a contract is something contractors do not seem proficient to do but it is necessary in order to perform the duties of the contract. <p>Results: NRCS Contracting Officers and Small Business Coordinator (SBC) are aggressively removing the barriers by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing encouragement to contractors so that they do the necessary paperwork to apply to the Small Business Administration for 8(a) status. • Acting as mentors to aid in this process. • Encouraging contractors to seek counseling from SBA on qualifying for HUBZone and small disadvantaged business status. • Two NRCS contractors were honored at the USDA Award ceremony held in Washington, DC on May 30, 2002.
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Stillwater, Oklahoma NRCS Employee Special Achievement Award (Group) were recognized at the USDA Small Business Procurement Award Ceremony for their success in utilizing small and disadvantaged businesses including Native American businesses.
<p>28. Agency submits plans, forecast, and reports within prescribed time frames and according to guidelines from the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization.</p>		<p>The FY 2002 Performance Preference Plan, Procurement Forecast and the NRCS Outreach Plan were submitted in a timely manner. FY 2002 Performance Preference Plan and the NRCS Outreach Plan were submitted August 15, 2001. Sub contracting plans (295) are submitted annually. NRCS entered all pertinent data in a timely manner. Sub contracting accomplishments are not yet available from the OSDBU. OSDBU is awaiting the final report from the General Services Administration (GSA) before they provide the agency with the accomplishments.</p> <p>Agencies have implemented several initiatives to address Civil Rights issues since FY 1998.</p> <p>Initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Manual 120 Part 406, Amendment 54 provides guidance for ordering business cards from Seattle Lighthouse, Inc, a JWOD source. • NRCS implemented a Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) with Boise Cascade, a mandatory source for ordering JWOD supplies. The MSD, Realty Contract Specialist serves as the JWOD Liaison as mandated in the Secretary's Memorandum 4000-2.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering incentive awards to the NRCS procurement community for utilization of small businesses. • Attending conferences, vendors outreach sessions meeting one-on-one with small business vendors. • Development of the NRCS database for tracking vendors met at the above functions. • Increase quantity, quality, and frequency of communications between headquarters and field personnel. • NRCS OSDBU Coordinator participates on the USDA team to strategize recruitment of Woman-Owned businesses. • Encouraged the use of Pro-net throughout the contracting community. • Encouraged contracting officers to work with their local small business administration representative. <p>Outcome:</p> <p>All business cards ordered using appropriated funds are ordered from the JWOD source nationwide. NRCS was the third agency in USDA to pilot the USDA Boise Cascade BPA for JWOD supplies. Effective July 2002, Boise Cascade has become the mandatory source for JWOD supplies. The BPA will automatically change the order to a JWOD supply and notify the purchasing agent of the change. The NHQ OSDBU Coordinator encourages awarding those employees for exemplary utilization of small businesses. In FY 2001, four awards were given by NHQ and five were approved in FY 2002. The NRCS Outreach Plan suggests that each State make similar awards for those employees awarding contracts to</p>
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small businesses. Missouri reports awarding the contract specialist with a performance award for such efforts.

Procurement Preference Program Plan
Goals vs. Accomplishments
As of July 16, 2002

CATEGORY	Goal	Accomplishment	Goal %	% of total Procurement
Small Business	\$59,840,000	\$75,142,616	68%	85%
8(a)	\$ 4,400,000	\$ 4,254,606	5%	4.8%
Small Disadvantaged Business	\$ 4,400,000	\$21,758,888	5%	24.7%
Women-Owned Business	\$ 4,400,000	\$18,158,773	5%	20.6%
HUBZone	\$ 2,200,000	\$ 240,081	2.5%	.27%
Service Disabled Veteran	\$ 2,640,000	\$ 38,210	3%	.04%
Veteran-Owned Small Business	\$ 2,640,000	\$ 1,222,147	3%	1.4%

JWOD program – NRCS established a mandatory BPA with Boise Cascade to enhance the JWOD program. This effort is a pro-active effort as the probability of this becoming another agency goal is very likely. Boise Cascade will pull accomplishment reports upon request by NRCS. As requested in Secretary Memorandum 4000-2 a JWOD Liaison was appointed from the Management Services Division.

The Veteran-Owned and Service Disabled Veteran category is a new requirement this fiscal year.

State activities related to purchasing and contracting with small and minority owned businesses.

		<p>In Arizona, two contracts were awarded to 8(a) contractors. One contract was to a small disadvantaged, veteran owned, HUB, (historically underserved business), and the other was awarded to a small business.</p> <p>Most States, including Delaware, have established a reference file of minority, women-owned and small disadvantaged business. Purchases are reviewed to make sure that this file is being used.</p> <p>In Iowa, 81.6% of all State office procurement activities were with small businesses.</p> <p>Iowa has identified six (6) projects that may be procured as a Performance Based Service Contract (PBSC), estimated value of \$662,300 in FY 2002. The projects will be set aside for Small Business.</p> <p>Louisiana submitted one Advanced Acquisition Plan to USDA's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, and one FY 2002 procurement forecast was provided to Management Services Division for inclusion in USDA's procurement forecast web page (OSDBU) for incorporation into their Advanced Acquisition Planning System.</p> <p>Missouri and many other States have held meetings with, and provided training to, small business operators to increase their participation in our programs.</p> <p>Nebraska developed contracts with Small Business</p>
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		<p>Concern Contractors for 6 construction projects for WRP resulting in \$299,133. One of the contractors was awarded the USDA National Local Contractor Award for 2002. Female owned business procurement results for Nebraska included janitor services, computer supplies, and interpreting services.</p> <p>In North Carolina, small, minority, and female owned businesses have been utilized for the installation of telecommunications lines, consultant services to review contractor's data for a claim, appraisals for WRP, and consultant services for special projects (i.e., CRP).</p> <p>In Ohio, the contracting officer participated in a multi-agency information meeting. This meeting focused on informing contractors about hub zones. Ninety-nine percent of their contacts go to small business concerns. Ohio just awarded a contract for \$788,388.30 to a small business.</p> <p>Oklahoma NRCS Contract Services received the 2002 Special Achievement Award For Outstanding Accomplishment in the area of small, small disadvantaged and women-owned business utilization.</p> <p>In the third quarter of FY 2002, Oregon purchased, through the SBA, buildings for our Snow Survey Sites from an 8a business. This was a \$40,000 contract.</p> <p>In Wyoming, close contact is maintained with small, minority, and female owned businesses, and this has resulted in contracts and purchases with small businesses that total \$617,205, plus \$8,140 with woman owned</p>
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		<p>businesses and \$734,310 with an 8A firm.</p> <p>The South Central Regional Office Contracting Officer is providing contracting services for a large competitive 8(a) set-aside procurement action in Oklahoma. The government estimate for the project is 4.25 million. The action above is a performance-based service contract. The lowest bid is \$1.835 million.</p>
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