

Equal Opportunity/Civil Rights Policy Statement

USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service

Oklahoma

The Equal Opportunity Program of the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is a continuing responsibility of each employee. Our efforts in equal opportunity are channeled simultaneously in two directions:

1. To our fellow employees with whom we work, and
2. To the people whom we serve who own and use the land.

In both instances, discrimination, on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, political belief, disability, marital or familial status, is prohibited.

Equal Employment Opportunity (Title VII)

Oklahoma NRCS is fully committed to Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and the implementation of a strong affirmative employment program. EEO is a basic policy of the NRCS. The Service's practices, under appropriate regulations, concerning such areas as recruitment, selection, placement, employee development, training, promotion, classification, employee services, working conditions, disciplinary actions, adverse actions, grievances, and appeals, will be free from discrimination because of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, political belief, or disability. In addition, the Service's personnel practices will not be affected by:

- ◆ Lawful political, fraternal or union affiliations, or
- ◆ Marital status, dependencies, or kindred (except that one relative should not be in a position to influence administrative decision or action affecting another).

Affirmative action to carry out this policy, the goals of EEO, and to overcome the effects of

past discrimination, are a part of the responsibilities of every supervisor and manager in NRCS in Oklahoma.

The full realization of equal opportunity in employment must be maintained through continuing programs of affirmative employment at every management level within the NRCS in Oklahoma. The Service subscribes to and implements to the fullest requirements of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Executive Order 11478, as amended; the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, as amended; the Equal Pay Act of 1963, as amended; and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

The Multi-Year Affirmative Employment Plan (MYAEP) is the EEO Strategic Business Plan. As such, it provides direction and assists the NRCS in Oklahoma in fulfilling its mission by having all of its employees contribute to our objectives. A strong chain of communication and coordination must be developed among all levels of management to reach and achieve the objectives of our MYAEP.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN PROGRAM DELIVERY (TITLE VI)

From a public point of view, Equal Opportunity in program delivery is the more visible of our Civil Rights responsibilities. The public's perception of NRCS really occurs at the county, area, and state levels. In every NRCS location across the state, each employee has an important role in ensuring equality in delivery of program benefits. We all need to be aware of any artificial barriers to program participation and be diligent in working toward their removal.

To provide equal opportunity in both employment and program delivery, we must ensure that:

- ◆ Our workforce reflects cultural diversity;
- ◆ The public sees women, minorities, and individuals with disabilities employed in all positions in our offices;
- ◆ Women, minorities, and Tribal members are encouraged to become members of participating Boards, and/or Councils with whom we work;
- ◆ Limited resource land users and small producers are provided opportunities to benefit from our program;
- ◆ Compliance reviews reflect the real picture of equal opportunity in program participation and, if not, that corrective action is taken.

Equal Opportunity is a critical element in our performance appraisal system and requires each employee to dedicate himself/herself to the policy of meeting such responsibility in a manner that yields results.

Managers and supervisors are directed to place strong emphasis on Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights in the course of day-to-day operations in their respective work areas.



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State Conservationist