



United States Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service

Development Opportunity Placement Program (Basu v. Veneman)

In November, 1999 Arun Basu filed a discrimination complaint on behalf of himself and other Asian/Pacific Islander employees of USDA. Under the leadership of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, a settlement agreement was reached. The settlement agreement was approved by Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in December 2004.

Under the terms of the settlement agreement, USDA will establish a Development Opportunity Placement Program, a Graduate Scholarship Program, and a Department-wide job fair. USDA will also review, update and issue Department-wide Affirmative Employment Plans, and ensure that all Asian/Pacific Islander employees, grade 7 and above, have current, up-to-date Individual Development Plans. A Departmental Liaison, working under the supervision of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, has been appointed to monitor the implementation of the settlement agreement. For more information, read the Notice of Settlement.

Development Opportunity Placement Program

The Development Opportunity Placement Program provides opportunities for eligible and qualified USDA employees to serve on details, receive temporary promotions, or participate in developmental assignments where there may be staffing shortages in headquarters and field office locations.

The Development Opportunity Placement Program is sponsored by Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service; Agricultural Research Service; Farm Service Agency; Food Safety and Inspection Service; Natural Resources Conservation Service; and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights. Each of the agencies will sponsor a minimum of two opportunities annually for a total of six opportunities over the three-year period of the Settlement Agreement.

The Development Opportunity Placement Program is open to USDA employees. Qualification requirements may differ according to the opportunities and will be listed in the opportunity announcements. Twelve opportunities will be available in Fiscal Year 2006. Information about opportunities under this program will be posted on the ASCR Web page for Career and Training Opportunities as they become available.

The Graduate Scholarship Program provides funding for graduate school as preparation for a career in government service. The program is designed to recruit individuals to work for USDA after completion of graduate course work in particular disciplines. Each applicant must meet all of the following eligibility requirements:

- Be a U.S. citizen;
- Possess a Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution, or be a graduating senior, with at least a cumulative 3.0 grade point average based on a 4.0 scale;
- Be accepted into or enrolled in an accredited institution as a graduate student, seeking a Master's or Ph.D. degree in a field as defined above;
- Have a strong interest in a career in public service with USDA; and
- Not a current USDA employee.

From 2006 – 2008 scholarships will be awarded to students enrolled in Master's or Ph.D. programs. Generally, a maximum of two (2) years of funding will be provided for a Master's degree and four (4) years of funding will be provided for a Ph.D. degree. The awards include the following:

- Full-tuition scholarships: tuition, mandatory university fees and books;
- Paid internship (minimum 640 hours) leading to permanent employment;
- Employee benefits; and
- Mentoring, career development, and leadership training.

Recipients of the scholarships enter into an agreement with USDA - NRCS and receive full-tuition scholarships. Prior to graduation, recipients intern at USDA - NRCS for a minimum of 640 hours. The internships are paid in addition to the scholarship funds. After graduation, recipients are required to work for USDA - NRCS one year for every year of financial assistance received from USDA - NRCS.

Eligible Fields of Study for Applicants:

Agricultural Economics Agricultural Engineering Agronomy Archeology Biology (including Wildlife and Fisheries) Civil Engineering	Computer Science Geographic Information Systems Hydrology Soil Science
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<p>For information about the Scholarships, contact:</p> <p>Angela Biggs National AAPI Special Emphasis Program Manager USDA – NRCS 2519 Southwest Avenue Harlan, IA 51537 Telephone number: 712-755-2417 E-mail: Angela.Biggs@ia.usda.gov</p> <p>USDA – NRCS Civil Rights Division Room 1-1112-C 5601 Sunnyside Avenue Beltsville, Maryland, 20705 Telephone number: 301-504-2181</p>	<p>For information about the Basu v. Veneman settlement, contact:</p> <p>Basu v. Veneman Departmental Liaison Office of Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20250, Mail Stop 9410 Telephone number: (202) 720-5212 E-mail: cr@usda.gov</p>
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