

## Subpart C - Federal Women's Program

### 403.30 Purpose

This subpart provides guidance and direction to NRCS organizational units on the development and implementation of the Federal Women's Program (FWP). The purpose of the program is to provide focus on issues such as employment, retention, promotion, training, career development, and advancement opportunities affecting female employees and applicants in NRCS.

### 403.31 Policy

It is NRCS policy to conduct a positive and continuing FWP that provides equal employment opportunity for women in all personnel management policies and practices and in NRCS sponsored programs and activities.

### 403.32 Authorities

- A. The Federal Women's Program (FWP).—This program was established to implement a recommendation of the President's Committee on the Status of Women and was later integrated into the Federal Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Program after the issuance of Executive Order 11478 (August 1969). The activities of the FWP focus on employment needs and problems of women as they relate to Federal personnel policies and practices.
- B. Executive Order 11375 (October 1967) added sex to other prohibited forms of discrimination in the Federal Government.
- C. Executive Order 11478 (August 1969) integrated the FWP into the overall EEO Program and placed the FWP under the directors of EEO. Federal Personnel Manual 713 was issued to carry out Executive Order 11478, and Federal Personnel Manual 713.9, dated May 29, 1970, directed directors of EEO to have a manager for the Federal Women's Program on staff.
- D. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was amended in March 1972 to apply equal opportunity protection in employment to the Federal Government. The designation of a Federal Women's Program manager was codified in 29 CFR Section 1614.102 as appropriate for carrying out equal employment opportunity functions in all organizational units of an agency and at all agency installations.
- E. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended and Civil Rights Act of 1991, Equal Employment Opportunity.
- F. The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 requires "fair and equitable" treatment in all aspects of personnel management without regard to political affiliation, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age, or disabling condition.
- G. 29 CFR Part 1614, Federal Sector Equal Employment Opportunity.
- H. Executive Order 11478, Equal Employment Opportunity in Federal Government (August 12, 1969) (superseded Executive Orders 11246 and parts of 11375 applicable to the Federal Government) as amended by Executive Orders 13087 (May 28, 1998) and 13152, of May 2, 2000.
- I. U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Management Directive 110.
- J. U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Management Directive 715.
- K. USDA Departmental Regulation 4230-002, Special Emphasis Programs (June 4, 2009).

### 403.33 Policy Objectives

The Federal Women's Program is an integral part of the overall EEO program and is designed to—

- (1) Ensure that the women receive equal treatment in all aspects of employment.
- (2) Increase the number of women employed in all professional, administrative, technical, clerical, and other categories, series, and grade levels.
- (3) Provide opportunities to participate in training, career development, and leadership programs.
- (4) Encourage the participation of women in all NRCS-sponsored programs and activities.
- (5) Provide a network of professional support for women.
- (6) Provide mentoring support to women in the workforce.
- (7) Educate all NRCS employees by raising the level of awareness of women's workplace issues and concerns.

### 403.34 Organizational Structure

The FWP is an integral part of the overall equal opportunity program in NRCS. It is coordinated through the national Federal Women's Program manager (national FWPM), who is assigned to the Outreach and Advocacy (O&A) Division and serves as the principal staff advisor to the director of the O&A Division on legislation, policies, employment, and program issues impacting women.

### 403.35 Appointment of the National FWPM

The national FWPM position is filled through competitive appointment on a permanent full-time basis.

#### **403.36 Duties and Responsibilities of National FWPM**

The national FWPM is responsible for providing program leadership and direction for agency-wide activities related to the FWP. Specifically, the National FWPM—

- (1) Formulates and implements the general direction of the overall NRCS Federal Women's Program and evaluates the effectiveness of activities and programs toward achieving FWP objectives.
- (2) Provides training, guidance, information, and assistance to National Headquarters, regions, State managers, supervisors, and collateral duty FWPMs concerning their FWP responsibilities. In addition, the national FWPM serves as the principal resource person and staff advisor on legislation, affirmative employment programs, and unique concerns and problems related to equal opportunities for women employees.
- (3) Analyzes and evaluates employment policies, practices, procedures, and workforce profile data to determine if barriers or potential barriers to full participation exist and reports findings to the appropriate officials with recommendations for corrective action. This includes participation in the development and monitoring of the agency's civil rights program, plans, and reports (e.g., EEOC's MD-715, EEO Program Status Report, and reports relating to women in the Federal Government).
- (4) Establishes and strengthens relationships with organizations and groups representing women.
- (5) Maintains relationships with FWPMs from other agencies and women's organizations for the mutual exchange of ideas, advice, best practices, and information.
- (6) Serves as the NRCS representative on the Department's FWP committee.
- (7) Participates in studies and reviews to identify possible forms of discrimination and barriers to equal opportunity in employment activities (e.g., recruitment, hiring, development, promotion, recognition and awards, and retention).
- (8) Serves as the principal resource for the director of the O&A Division by providing assistance on national reporting requirements and tasks related to special emphasis programs and provides training, guidance, and assistance to collateral duty national special emphasis program managers.

#### **403.37 Appointment of Collateral Duty FWPMs**

A. Deputy equal opportunity officers (DEOOs) appoint collateral duty FWPMs within their jurisdictional areas. The collateral duty FWPMs report directly to the DEOOs on issues impacting women.

B. A collateral duty FWPM should devote 20 percent of his or her time to the program. It is recommended that the FWPM serve on a collateral duty basis for a 3-year term. At the end of the 3-year term, the incumbent may reapply and if selected may be renewed for an additional 3-year term.

C. Criteria for selection should include sensitivity to women's workplace issues, ability to function effectively under pressure, and commitment to EEO and the FWP.

#### **403.38 Duties and Responsibilities of Collateral Duty FWPMs**

Collateral duty FWPMs provide program leadership and support the national FWPM in implementing a viable FWP agencywide. The national FWPM provides technical guidance and the collateral duty FWPM ensures that FWP activities are integrated into the overall equal opportunity program in the organizational unit. In their organizational units, the collateral duty FWPMs—

- (1) Advise the directors and State Conservationists on matters affecting the employment and advancement of women in the workplace.
- (2) Serve as members to the civil rights committee in their organizational units to ensure that all NRCS activities are free from discrimination and that barriers to the recruitment, employment, and advancement of women are addressed. FWPMs assist in evaluating the effectiveness of the overall equal opportunity program in their organizational units and assist in identifying new and changing program needs.
- (3) Coordinate or conduct educational programs (e.g., workshops, training seminars, or other types of programs such as FWP history observances).
- (4) Maintain close contact with community organizations for possible job referrals of women applicants and stay attuned to concerns of women producers in the community.
- (5) Attend job fairs or other functions at local high schools, colleges, and universities to obtain names of applicants and provide information on job opportunities; send recruitment literature to schools and community groups; sponsor workshops and speakers, information booths at conferences, career days, and other training programs.
- (6) Keep the national FWPM informed of field activities affecting women in the workplace.
- (7) Serve as local representatives at national, regional, and State meetings concerning women's workplace issues.
- (8) Serve as communication link between employees and the national FWPM, keeping State employees aware of FWP activities and developmental opportunities through electronic messages, memos, bulletins, newsletters, and other appropriate means.

(9) Perform other duties related to the FWP as identified by the DEOO, national FWPM, and FWP committees, as appropriate.

#### **403.39 Documenting FWPM Collateral Assignments**

A. The FWPM's collateral duty will be described in writing as part of his or her position description and show—

- (1) Scope of responsibility.
- (2) Supervisory roles of DEOO, equal opportunity liaison officer, and the immediate supervisor.
- (3) Percentage of official time to be spent on the FWP.
- (4) Specific duties and responsibilities of the collateral assignment.

B. In addition, the DEOO, equal opportunity liaison officer, and the immediate supervisor will prepare a memorandum of understanding (see subpart J) that responds to the following questions regarding working conditions:

- (1) How and when will the appointee receive FWP assignments?
- (2) What percentage of official time will be spent on the FWP, and how will adjustments be made to meet FWP objectives?
- (3) Who will appraise the appointee's performance, and how will the appraisals be completed?
- (4) Who will provide clerical support and office facilities, if needed?

#### **403.40 Annual Business Plan of Operation**

A. Annual business plans of operation are important management tools that are effective in gauging progress in meeting short- and long-term goals and in scheduling annual program activities. They also provide the basis for determining the performance of managers in specific areas of responsibility.

B. Collateral duty FWPMs will develop results-oriented annual business plan of operations. The annual plan should contain realistic and achievable action items in accordance with this subpart.

#### **403.41 Reports**

A. Collateral duty State FWPMs will submit quarterly activity reports to the national Federal Women's Program manager.

B. Collateral duty State FWPMs will submit an annual report to the national Women's Program manager highlighting major accomplishments during the fiscal year.

m manager highlighting major accomplishments during the fiscal year.