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.
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.
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 QA 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.
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 FWP is an integral part of the agency’s EEO program and is designed to ensure that women are provided equal opportunity for employment, retention, promotion, training, career development, and other personnel management activities. The national FWPM is responsible for providing program leadership and direction for agencywide.

403.31 Policy
(1) The purpose of the FWP is to ensure that the NRCS is free from discrimination against women in all personnel management policies and practices and in NRCS-sponsored programs and activities.

403.32 Definitions
For purposes of this subpart, the following definitions apply:

A. Collateral Duty FWPM: An individual who is not a full-time or part-time employee of the agency but who, as a supervisory or non-supervisory employee, is designated by the agency head to perform specific tasks related to the FWP.

B. DEOO: Director, Equal Employment Opportunity.

C. Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Program: A comprehensive program of policies, procedures, and practices designed to ensure that all employees are treated fairly and equitably with regard to their rights and opportunities under the laws of the United States.

403.33 Policy Objectives
The objectives of the FWP are to:

A. Provide a network of professional support for women.
B. Assist women in identifying, applying for, and accepting employment opportunities.
C. Assist in the development of educational programs and activities.
D. Assist in the development and monitoring of the agency’s civil rights program, plans, and reports (e.g., Title 230 – Equal Opportunity, Title 29 – Equal Employment Opportunity, and the EEO 1 Report).

403.34 Subpart C - Federal Women’s Program

403.35 Directions
This subpart provides detailed guidance to State FWPMs and other designees on the development and implementation of the FWP.

403.36 Duties and Responsibilities of National FWPM
The national FWPM will be responsible for:

A. Providing program leadership and direction for agencywide.
B. Assuring that all NRCS activities are free from discrimination and that barriers to the recruitment, employment, advancement of women in the workplace are eliminated.
C. Maintaining relationships with FWPMs from other agencies and women’s organizations.
D. Providing technical guidance to State FWPMs.
E. Providing technical guidance and direction to NRCS organizational units on the development and implementation of the FWP.
F. Providing technical guidance and direction to NRCS organizational units on the development and implementation of the FWP.
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X. Providing technical guidance and direction to NRCS organizational units on the development and implementation of the FWP.
Y. Providing technical guidance and direction to NRCS organizational units on the development and implementation of the FWP.
Z. Providing technical guidance and direction to NRCS organizational units on the development and implementation of the FWP.

403.37 Duties and Responsibilities of State FWPMs
The State FWPMs will be responsible for:

A. Providing program leadership and direction for their organizational units.
B. Providing technical guidance and direction to other designees on the development and implementation of the FWP.
C. Providing technical guidance and direction to other designees on the development and implementation of the FWP.
D. Providing technical guidance and direction to other designees on the development and implementation of the FWP.
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403.38 Duties and Responsibilities of DEOO
The DEOO is responsible for:

A. Providing program leadership and direction for the agency.
B. Providing technical guidance and direction to NRCS organizational units on the development and implementation of the FWP.
C. Providing technical guidance and direction to NRCS organizational units on the development and implementation of the FWP.
D. Providing technical guidance and direction to NRCS organizational units on the development and implementation of the FWP.
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Z. Providing technical guidance and direction to NRCS organizational units on the development and implementation of the FWP.

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.