Subpart G - Black Emphasis Program

403.110 Purpose

This subpart provides guidance and direction to NRCS organizational units on the development and implementation of the Black Emphasis Program (BEP). The purpose of the program is to provide focus on such issues as employment, retention, promotion, training, career development, and advancement opportunities affecting African American/Black applicants and employees at NRCS.

403.111 Policy

It is NRCS policy to conduct a positive and continuing BEP that provides equal employment opportunity for African Americans/Blacks in all personnel management policies and practices and in NRCS-sponsored programs and activities.

403.112 Authorities


B. 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 disabiling condition.


G. USDA Departmental Regulation 4230-002, Special Emphasis Programs (June 4, 2009).

403.113 Program Objectives

The Black Emphasis Program is an integral part of the overall equal employment opportunity (EEO) program and is designed to—

1. Ensure that African Americans/Blacks receive equal treatment in all aspects of employment.

2. Increase the number of African Americans/Blacks 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 African Americans/Blacks in all NRCS-sponsored programs and activities.

5. Provide a network of professional support for African Americans/Blacks.

6. Provide mentoring support to African Americans/Blacks in the workforce.

7. Educate all NRCS employees by raising the level of awareness of African American/Black workplace issues and concerns.

403.114 Organizational Structure

The BEP is an integral part of the overall equal opportunity program in NRCS. It is coordinated through the collateral duty national Black Emphasis Program manager (BEPM), 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 African Americans/Blacks.

403.115 Appointment of the Collateral Duty National BEPM

A. The collateral duty national BEPM vacancy is announced every 3 years, or on an as-needed basis, through a national bulletin and filled through a competitive process. The position is a collateral assignment and appointed by the director of the O&A Division.

B. The national BEPM serves 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. The collateral duty national BEPM is required to dedicate 20 percent of his or her official time performing national BEPM-related assignments.

403.116 Duties and Responsibilities of the Collateral Duty National BEPM

The collateral duty national BEPM is responsible for providing program leadership and direction for agencywide activities related to the BEP. Specifically, the collateral duty national BEPM—

1. Formulates and implements the general direction of the overall NRCS Black Emphasis
Subpart G - Black Emphasis Program

403.110 Purpose
This subpart provides guidance and direction to NRCS organizational units on the development and implementation of their Black Emphasis Programs (BEP) (hereinafter referred to as BEPMs). The BEP is an integral part of the overall equal opportunity program in NRCS. It is coordinated through the Outreach and Advocacy (O&A) Division and serves as the principal staff advisor to the director of the O&A Division. The BEP is managed by the Black Emphasis Program manager (BEPM), who is assigned to the Outreach and Advocacy (O&A) Division.

The purpose of the BEP is to provide equal employment opportunity for African Americans/Blacks in all personnel management policies and practices and in NRCS agencywide activities related to the BEP. Specifically, the BEP is coordinated through BEPMs who report directly to the director of O&A and serve as the principal staff advisor to the director of O&A.

The BEP is an integral part of the overall equal opportunity program in NRCS. It is coordinated through BEPMs who report directly to the director of O&A and serve as the principal staff advisor to the director of O&A.

403.119 Documenting State and Center BEPM Collateral Assignments

A. The State or center BEPM’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 the DEOO, equal opportunity liaison officer and the immediate supervisor.
(3) Percentage of official time to be spent on the BEP.
(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 BEP assignments?
(2) What percentage of official time will be spent on the BEP, and how will adjustments be made to meet BEP 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?

403.120 Definition

A Black or African American is a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.

403.121 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 State and center BEPMs will develop results-oriented annual business plan of operations. The annual plan should contain realistic and achievable action items in accordance with this subpart.

403.122 Reports

A. Collateral duty State and center BEPMs will submit quarterly activity reports to the collateral duty national Black Emphasis Program manager.

B. Collateral duty State and center BEPMs will submit an annual report to the collateral duty national Black Emphasis Program manager highlighting major accomplishments during the fiscal year.