

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) remains committed to the Secretary's Cultural Transformation initiative and his vision of creating a more diverse, more inclusive, and higher performing organization with equity of opportunity for all employees and customers. This 2013 NRCS Cultural Transformation Action Plan builds on successes of previous year's Action Plan and focuses on areas where improvement is still warranted - specifically the need to address outcomes from the FY2012 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS).

In an effort to build upon the fundamental concepts of Cultural Transformation – diversity, inclusion, high performance, and equity of opportunity, NRCS completed the development of a new Human Capital Strategic Plan (HCSP) during the summer of 2012 which outlines the Agency's human capital roadmap for the next five years and supports Cultural Transformation - built into the HCSP are the Cultural Transformation concepts addressed above.

The following content is the Cultural Transformation Effectiveness Measures, aligned with the human capital initiatives (where able/appropriate) which are expected to take place in part, or completion during FY2013. By aligning the Cultural Transformation and HCSP efforts, NRCS creates consistency in its approach and aligns strategic priorities supporting the Secretary's Cultural Transformation Initiative.

LEADERSHIP

Effectiveness Measure: Leadership & Knowledge Management index score on FEVS.

USDA Target: 5% positive response improvement year over year.

- **Human Capital Initiative 2.2.B:** Implement and integrate new competency models (for MCOs) into existing infrastructure (e.g., performance management plans, IDPs, training programs, and development activities and tools).
- **Human Capital Initiative 2.4.C:** Implement initiative to provide mandatory mentoring programs for (1) new supervisors, (2) Pathways participants, and (3) participants in the Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program.

Effectiveness Measure: Establish mechanisms used to communicate monthly with employees.

USDA Target: Establish at least 2 mechanisms.

- **Human Capital Initiative 2.1.B:** Expand understanding of human capital functions and increase accountability through improved HR/human capital communications (NRCS People SharePoint).
- **Action Strategy:** Deliver monthly VTCs with NHQ leadership (Chief, Associate Chief, Regional Conservationists) and state leadership to communicate pertinent information, expectations and actions.

Effectiveness Measure: SES, hiring managers, supervisors and employees will complete diversity and inclusion training.

USDA Target: 100% completion.

- **Action Strategy:** Launch *new* Cultural Transformation training to ALL employees, of ALL levels in the Agency targeting the concepts of diversity and inclusion through AgLearn and

track attendance. Training will be required for ALL employees and completion date will be by end of FY2013.

Effectiveness Measure: Hiring managers, HR personnel, SEPMs and recruiters will complete veterans hiring flexibility training through AgLearn.

USDA Target: 100% completion.

- **Action Strategy:** Launch “Veterans Employment Training for Federal HR Professionals” course via AgLearn and track mandatory attendance. Training is required for HR professionals and completion date is 3/7/2013.

Effectiveness Measure: Develop and deliver Agency Pulse Survey that correlates to Cultural Transformation metrics and is focused on FEVS questions.

USDA Target: Administer survey in 2013.

- **Action Strategy:** Finalize development of NRCS Pulse Survey and delivery survey in calendar year 2013 on an off schedule to the annual FEVS.

EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

Effectiveness Measure: Employees will create Individual Development Plans (IDPs) and utilize them for personal development along career paths.

USDA Target: 95% of eligible employees will have IDPs.

- **Human Capital Initiative 2.2.B:** Implement and integrate new competency models (for MCOs) into existing infrastructure (e.g., performance management plans, IDPs, training programs, and development activities and tools).
- **Human Capital Initiative 4.5.G:** Develop and implement a virtual career center to facilitate career growth and development for GS0457 and GS0810.

Effectiveness Measure: Performance plans of all SES, Managers and Supervisors take into account the Cultural Transformation effort and ensure the same for other staff and applicable employees to include how they will be evaluated on those measures.

Effectiveness Measure: Performance Plans of all SES, Managers and Supervisors include a performance element and standards that hold the supervisor accountable for the performance management of subordinates.

USDA Target: 5% positive response improvement year over year for Results Oriented Performance Culture index on FEVS.

Effectiveness Measure: Percentage of performance plans, annual evaluations and mid-year reviews completed within established timeframes for eligible employees.

USDA Target: 100% completed within established timeframes.

- **Human Capital Initiative 3.4.C:** Communicate performance management expectations to supervisors and employees throughout the Agency (i.e. - provide training on how to give/receive performance feedback, timelines, use SMART goals, etc.).

TALENT MANAGEMENT / HIRING REFORM

Effectiveness Measure: Percentage of employees hired within 80 calendar days.

USDA Target: 90% of new employees will be hired within 80 days.

- **Human Capital Initiative 1.1.A:** Develop and implement an HR service delivery model that aligns with Department-wide administrative efforts and strengthens HR accountability.

- Action Strategy: Design and implement the stand-up of a national Hiring and Staffing team to address HR audits concerns and create a more standardized way hiring is performed.

Effectiveness Measure: Percentage of employees reporting satisfaction with the hiring process.

USDA Target: 85% satisfaction rate.

- Human Capital Initiative 4.4.A: Standardize NRCS's onboarding process to engage employees and promote retention – launch new national framework.

Effectiveness Measure: Hiring manager's participation in OPM's CHCO Manager Satisfaction Survey.

USDA Target: 90% satisfaction rate.

- Action Strategy: Design and implement the stand-up of a national Hiring and Staffing team to address HR audits concerns and create a more standardized way hiring is performed.
- Action Strategy: Provide ongoing training on utilization of USA Staffing system (as part of Hiring Reform) in order to meet expectations and satisfaction levels of service delivery for the hiring process – currently, the survey is delivered to hiring managers during hiring/selection through the USA Staffing system.

Effectiveness Measure: Percentage of managers reporting they are fully involved in the workforce planning process including determining current and future workforce requirements.

USDA Target: 75% of managers participate in workforce planning process.

- Human Capital Initiative 1.2.B: Develop data-driven workforce and succession plans that position NRCS to successfully manage workforce transitions (retirement, separations, promotions, laterals).
- Human Capital Initiative 4.3.B: Build a data-driven recruitment strategy using the workforce planning results, performance data and retention analysis data.
- Action Strategy: Fill vacancy on Human Resources Strategy Team for FTE to focus on workforce planning across the Agency.

Effectiveness Measure: Average number of calendar days to hire.

USDA Target: 80 days to hire.

- Action Strategy: Design and implement the stand-up of a national Hiring and Staffing team to address HR audits concerns and create a more standardized way hiring is performed.

Effectiveness Measure: Percentage of employees reporting regular communication throughout the entire hiring process.

USDA Target: 75% positive response rate.

- Action Strategy: Design and implement the stand-up of a national Hiring and Staffing team to address HR audits concerns and create a more standardized way hiring is performed.
- Action Strategy: Analyze new hire survey data specifically examining results from FY2012. Use FY2012 outcomes to make modifications to the hiring process and increase positive results.

CUSTOMER FOCUS AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Effectiveness Measure: Initiate projects with targets which focus on assessing customer's needs or increasing the customer's involvement in decision making.

USDA Target: Initiate at least one project.

- **Action Strategy:** Train NRCS employees on skills needed to work more effectively with diverse and underserved customer populations in an effort to expand the reach of NRCS services.
- **Action Strategy:** Implement Regional Tribal Conservation Advisory Councils (RTCAC) - councils will engage in consultation sessions that enable tribal representatives to have direct communication with NRCS at the regional and national level.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Effectiveness Measure: Percentage of employee participation in telework program.

USDA Target: 45% of eligible employee's participate in "core" telework; remaining 25% participate in "ad-hoc."

- **Human Capital Initiative 3.5.A:** Improve perceptions of telework through constructive, meaningful dialogue – NRCS People SharePoint discussion forums and face to face conversations between manager, supervisor and staff.

Effectiveness Measure: Job Satisfaction and Employee Engagement FEVS index scores on FEVS.

USDA Target: 5% positive response improvement year over year.

- **Action Strategy:** Conduct second annual Cultural Transformation Awareness Day in Sept. 2013 to further educate NHQ employees on the vast array of cultures our employees and customers bring to our work every day.
- **Action Strategy:** Execute the strategic initiatives outlined in the new Human Capital Strategic Plan which are slated for FY2013 – revise timelines as needed. Through implementation of these strategic initiatives, employees will be more engaged and satisfied with the focus and roadmap the Agency has set forth for employees.

Effectiveness Measure: New employees reflect they have been provided access to the Department on-boarding website and register on the site with their name and Agency.

USDA Target: 80% of new employees register on the site.

- **Human Capital Initiative 4.4.A:** Standardize NRCS's onboarding process to engage employees and promote retention – launch new national framework.

PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

Effectiveness Measure: Initiate major efforts related to process improvement – set a target and track progress.

USDA Target: Increase 2-3 major efforts.

- **Action Strategy:** Design and implement the stand-up of a national Hiring and Staffing team to address HR audits concerns and create a more standardized way hiring is performed.
- **Action Strategy:** Design and implement the stand-up of a national Reimbursable Accounting team to address audit concerns and create a more standardized way this type of accounting is performed.

- Action Strategy: Design and implement the stand-up of a national Geospatial Center of Excellence.

DIVERSITY ROADMAP

Effectiveness Measure: Overall diversity make-up as compared to the CLF.

USDA Target: 2012 CLF mark of 29.7%.

- Action Strategy: Launch NRCS Recruitment Framework FY2013-FY2017.
- Action Strategy: Conduct training for Recruiters, HR, and Hiring Managers on new Recruitment Framework and targeted recruitment activities.
- Action Strategy: Fill Talent Management Director vacancy whose job responsibilities include leading diversity, student programs, recruitment and retention initiatives for the Agency.

Effectiveness Measure: Percentage of workforce with reportable disabilities.

USDA Target: 8% of workforce with reportable disabilities.

Effectiveness Measure: Percentage of workforce with targeted disabilities.

USDA Target: 3% of workforce with targeted disabilities.

- Action Strategy: Align NRCS Reasonable Accommodations policy with USDA policy.
- Action Strategy: Conduct training for Recruiters, HR, and Hiring Managers on disability (targeted and reportable) recruitment activities.
- Action Strategy: Launch NRCS Recruitment Framework FY2013-FY2017.
- Action Strategy: Fill Talent Management Director vacancy whose job responsibilities include leading diversity, student programs, recruitment and retention initiatives for the Agency.

Effectiveness Measure: Percentage of new hires that are veterans.

USDA Target: 17% of new hires will be veterans.

- Action Strategy: Launch “Veterans Employment Training for Federal HR Professionals” course via AgLearn and track mandatory attendance. Training is required for HR professionals and completion date is 3/7/2013.
- Action Strategy: Launch NRCS Recruitment Framework FY2013-FY2017.
- Action Strategy: Fill Talent Management Director vacancy whose job responsibilities include leading diversity, student programs, recruitment and retention initiatives for the Agency.

Effectiveness Measure: Diversity make-up of student intern programs as compared to CLF; including workforce with reportable and targeted disabilities.

USDA Target: 2010 CLF demographics.

Effectiveness Measure: Conversion rate of student interns to career status.

USDA Target: Establish a baseline metric for student intern conversion rates.

- Action Strategy: Launch NRCS Recruitment Framework FY2013-FY2017.
- Action Strategy: Finalize mechanism for tracking the number of hours a student intern serves in an effort to understand eligibility for transition to career status (need 640 hours).
- Action Strategy: Fill Talent Management Director vacancy whose job responsibilities include leading diversity, student programs, recruitment and retention initiatives for the Agency.

LABOR RELATIONS

Effectiveness Measure: Greater collaboration between Management and Unions.

USDA Target: NRCS established target score of 3.5/5.0 on annual USDA Labor Relations Climate Survey.

- Action Strategy: Conduct meetings with the NRCS Labor-Management Forum in conjunction with leadership as outlined in Executive Order 13522 – review and analyze results from the 2012 Climate Survey and develop action items based on outcomes.