

United States Department of Agriculture



Natural Resources Conservation Service
210 Walnut Street, Room 693
Des Moines, IA 50309-2180

August 21, 2008

GENERAL MANUAL (GM)
230-EOP
AMENDMENT IA1 (Part 404)

SUBJECT: EOP – THE IOWA NRCS CRAC CHARTER

Purpose. To provide the Iowa NRCS Civil Rights Advisory Committee (CRAC) Charter to all employees.

Effective Date. Upon receipt.

Contact. If there are questions about this amendment, contact Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen, State Outreach Coordinator, at 515/284-4525 or by email at tanya.meyer@ia.usda.gov.

Filing Instructions.

<u>Insert</u>	<u>Dated</u>	<u>Immediately After</u>
IA1 Part 404 – CRAC	August 2008	Title 230, Part 404

The current National General Manual Title 230-Equal Opportunity, Part 404, Civil Rights Advisory Committee, Amendment 19, March 2005, can be accessed on the national NRCS Electronic Directives System site at <http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov/>.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard Sims".

Richard Sims
State Conservationist

Attachment

GM

IA404.0 Purpose and Scope

A. The Iowa NRCS CRAC focuses on providing counsel and recommendations to the State Conservationist and provides support, information, and education to all employees on all matters related to equal employment opportunity and program delivery in Iowa NRCS.

B. The CRAC does not discuss EEO/CR complaints. The CRAC does not advise employees who want to take action regarding discrimination.

IA404.1 Composition of Civil Rights Advisory Committee (CRAC)

B. Membership

The **Charter for the Iowa NRCS CRAC** consists of:

- Two Assistant State Conservationists for Field Operations (ASTC-FO), one serving as Chair and the other as Assistant Chair
- Five (5) Area Representatives consisting of field and area staff
- One State Office representative
- One Sponsor (Assistant State Conservationist for Management), whom also serves as the Equal Opportunity (EO) Liaison
- All Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPM), including American Indian Alaska Native Emphasis Program Manager (AIANEPM), Asian American Pacific Islander Emphasis Program Manager (AAPIEPM), Black Emphasis Program Manager (BEPM), Disability Emphasis and Veteran's Emphasis Program Manager (DE/VEPM), Federal Women's Program Manager (FWPM), and Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager (HEPM)
- State Outreach Coordinator (SOC) as advisor
- Human Resources (HR) Manager as advisor

All Area and State Office representatives and SEPM members of the CRAC are expected to serve a minimum of three (3) years and a recommended maximum of five (5) years. Terms may be extended by the Deputy Equal Opportunity Officer (State Conservationist), in consultation with the CRAC Chair and specific member. The terms will be staggered so that no more than 1/3 to 1/2 of the members' terms expire in any given year. Terms begin on October 1.

If a CRAC member position becomes vacant before the term has expired, the ASTC-FO and/or State Conservationist (STC) will appoint a replacement to complete the existing term. Members should represent diversity in gender, race, grade level and series.

Upcoming CRAC member vacancies will be advertised statewide at least six (6) months prior to the end of a term if possible. This will provide an opportunity for selection and training of new members.

Each ASTC-FO, on a rotational basis, will first serve as Assistant Chair for two (2) years, and then will become the Chair for two (2) years. The Deputy Equal Opportunity Officer (DEOO) appoints the Chair, Assistant Chair, and Sponsor. The SOC and HR Manager serve as perpetual advisors.

All members are to receive EEO/CR training as soon as possible. It is suggested that this take place within six (6) months to one year of initial selection.

IA404.2 Role of Civil Rights Advisory Committee

A. Customers

Our primary direct customers are:

- NRCS employees
- State Conservationist
- Potential employees
- Partner employees
- National Headquarters

Our other customers include contractors, Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Commissioners, Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council members, existing and potential program participants.

B. Products and Services

The CRAC provides:

- Information
- Recommendations
- Training and Education
- Annual Business Plan
- Quarterly Civil Rights Self Assessment
- Annual summary of Iowa's Civil Rights Compliance Reviews and assistance with completing them in the field
- Leadership opportunities
- Communication to and from management regarding the efforts being made to maintain a quality civil rights program in Iowa NRCS
- Assistance in meeting state and national EEO/CR requirements and performance goals

C. Activities and operating methods

The CRAC meets quarterly face-to-face, and may meet at other times or by teleconference to discuss any pertinent information regarding EEO/CR issues. Minutes are provided in a timely manner after each quarterly meeting. Most decisions are reached by consensus of CRAC members in attendance at meetings. All members are expected to actively participate and provide input. Occasionally, the Chair must make independent decisions.

Title 230 – EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Part 404 – Civil Rights Advisory Committee

The CRAC is charged with the responsibility to:

1. Serve as a communication link between employees, the CRAC, and management.
2. Advise and provide recommendations to the State Conservationist regarding workforce diversity and distribution, training, and program participation trends.
3. Participate in Civil Rights Compliance Reviews and assist in recommending specific actions to meet state and national requirements and performance goals.
4. Provide an opportunity for personal development, career enhancement and enrichment, skills and leadership development.

Team members are expected to collaborate in order to provide the necessary level of support to all employees so we are able to achieve the greater good for the organization and the people we serve.

Methods used by the CRAC include:

- Email
- Audio/Visual Tools (power point, DVD etc.)
- Career/Job Fairs
- Meetings
- Training presentations and events
- Civil Rights webpage
- Personal interaction
- Reports
- Bulletins
- Posters
- Brochures
- Shared drive