



August 20, 2014

IOWA INSTRUCTION 360-399 – INVOLVEMENT IN HIRING AND RATING
DECISIONS FOR PARTNER EMPLOYEES

IA399.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this instruction is to provide limits on NRCS involvement in partner hiring and rating decisions.

IA399.1 SCOPE

This instruction will be followed by all NRCS employees.

IA399.2 FILING INSTRUCTIONS

This Iowa Instruction will be posted on the Iowa NRCS Employee Website, which can be accessed under the Topics/People/NRCS Employees/Iowa NRCS eDirectives or at this link [Iowa NRCS eDirectives website](#).

/s/Jay T. Mar
State Conservationist

Attachment

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IOWA INSTRUCTION 360-399 – INVOLVEMENT IN HIRING AND RATING DECISIONS FOR PARTNER EMPLOYEE

1. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this instruction is to provide limits on NRCS involvement in partner hiring and rating decisions.

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

General Manual 180, Part 401, Subpart D provides guidance on NRCS cooperation with conservation partners, such as Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship. The General Manual states, “Each party is responsible for the hiring, management, supervision, development and evaluation of its own personnel including creating an environment that supports a diverse work force.”

While it is recognized that each organization carries the responsibility for *administrative supervision* of its own employees, it is necessary for NRCS Line Officers to provide day-to-day *technical supervision* to partner employees to facilitate efficient operations. NRCS will provide *technical supervision* only when a partner employee is assigned by the partner to NRCS to carry out federal functions.

A district employee can also receive *technical guidance* from NRCS for those technical activities of the partner that require technical consultation and technical approval.

NRCS employees will not provide administrative supervision to partner employees. In all cases and at all times, a partner employee is under the administrative supervision of the partner.

3. PROCESS:

Specific guidance for commonly occurring situations is provided below.

Timesheets

NRCS employees shall not sign or initial state, district, or other partner employee timesheets. This restriction does not apply to contractor employees, such as Elyon employees. Certain NRCS officials are authorized to sign Elyon contractor timesheets.

Leave Approval

NRCS employees shall not sign or initial state, district, or other partner employee annual leave requests. The district conservationist should be consulted before leave is approved by the partner so he or she knows when the partner employee will be gone. It is recommended that each office utilize a leave calendar or some other mechanism that shows the duty status of all office employees.

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Hiring

The nature of our strong partnership with the conservation districts, nonprofit organizations, and state agencies has been present for many years. At times these organizations provide funds to hire additional staff to help address our similar mission objectives. Our partners may ask us to participate in the hiring process. Involvement in the hiring process is permissible as long as that involvement does not assume the authority or decision-making responsibility of the partner. The partner is the final decision authority for all partner hiring decisions. NRCS involvement in interviews is permitted; however, the partner should lead the discussion and make the decision. The interviewee should have no doubt as to who is in charge of the interview and who will make the hiring decision. NRCS officials may provide input on candidate qualifications and suitability for the position; however, they must leave the hiring decision itself to the partner.

Performance Appraisals

NRCS officials may provide input for partner employee supervisors at their request, to consider in the annual performance appraisal process. NRCS officials will not rate partner employees, nor will they write performance reports or appraisals for partner employees.

Approved By:

Date:

/s/Jay T. Mar
State Conservationist
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