

Chair's Corner

By Katherine Brewer, CRAC chair



I would first like to welcome our newest members of the Tennessee Civil Rights Advisory Committee (CRAC) Elizabeth Bezinque, Martha Griffin, and Harold Pettigrew. Elizabeth is joining us as the new Veteran emphasis program manager. While Martha and Harold will both serve as advisory members in their positions as the state earth team volunteer coordinator and state outreach coordinator. We are excited to have them all on the team!

The Tennessee CRAC had our second quarter meeting on February 16-17. One outcome was that we formed a welcome committee. In response to our influx of hiring, the CRAC has decided to formalize how we welcome new employees to the state. Our goal is that we will not only make new employees feel welcome, but also use this opportunity to provide them with contacts and resources to make them successful in their new roles. We've heard of the many ways this is done

well by our area and field offices and we hope to mirror that effort at the state level to provide a second layer of support for our new hires.

We have also created a new way for employees to reach out directly to the Tennessee CRAC. Some of you may remember the anonymous inbox that was previously available through SharePoint. In place of that we have created this [MS Form](#). Through the form you can submit any comments, suggestions, or questions that you have for the Tennessee CRAC (e.g., Is there some type of civil rights programing or information you'd like for us to provide? Do you have questions about why we do what we do? etc.).

Your responses will be completely anonymous unless you choose to provide your contact information for a direct follow up. We will respond to the anonymous questions in the Tennessee civil rights newsletter following your submission. Please note the Tennessee CRAC does not address allegations of discrimination or process equal employment opportunity complaints and they should not be submitted through this form. If you have questions about filing an equal employment opportunity complaint visit

<https://myfpac.usda.gov/business-center/civil-rights-division/>.

I would also like to thank Katherine Burse and Emily Leonard for all the materials they provided throughout the past two months in celebration of Black History Month and Women's History

Month. I encourage everyone to take the time to go back and check those out if you missed them the first time around. It takes a considerable effort on their part to put those materials together and it is greatly appreciated.

Moving into spring the Tennessee CRAC will be preparing to participate in some upcoming FPAC hosted recruitment events and the field office civil rights reviews. We also look forward to Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month in May and LGBTQ Pride Month in June. Be on the lookout for more information on those observances.

If you'd like to learn more about what the Tennessee CRAC is working on keep an eye out for our newsletter and meeting minutes which are both released quarterly and distributed through the Tennessee weekly update. I'd also like to encourage you again to get in touch with us via our new [MS Form](#) if you have any feedback or questions. I hope that you are all able to get out and enjoy some spring weather!