

## CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLAINTS

SEPMs **do not** handle Civil Rights Complaints. Civil Rights information and links for EEO and Program Complaint processes may be found at: [www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/pia/about/civilrights](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/pia/about/civilrights)

## WHAT ARE THE FEDERAL SPECIAL EMPHASIS PROGRAMS?

Special Emphasis Programs are an integral part of the overall equal opportunity program in NRCS. These programs are coordinated through national Special Emphasis Program Managers who are assigned to the Outreach and Advocacy Division and serve as the principal staff advisors to the director of the Outreach and Advocacy Division on legislation, policies, employment, and program issues impacting:

- African Americans;
- American Indians/Alaska Natives;
- Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders;
- Persons with disabilities;
- Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender individuals;
- Hispanics;
- Veterans; and
- Women.

Special Emphasis Programs address the unique concerns of these groups in achieving diversity, inclusion, and equal opportunity.

## PIA SPECIAL EMPHASIS PROGRAMS & MANAGERS

**CIVIL RIGHTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE CHAIR**  
CHERYL MORTON (HONOLULU)

**CIVIL RIGHTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE VICE CHAIR**  
VALERIE RUSSELL (HONOLULU)

**AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE**  
JAY DORONILA (SAIPAN)

**ASIAN AMERICAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER**  
MATT WUNG (WAIMEA)

**BLACK**  
SHARON SAWDEY (HONOLULU)

**DISABILITY**  
ALICIA GREENE (HILO)

**FEDERAL WOMEN'S**  
AMY KOCH (HILO)

**LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL & TRANSGENDER**  
VALERIE RUSSELL (HONOLULU)

**HISPANIC**  
KARA NELSON (HONOLULU)

**VETERANS**  
MICHAEL CONSTANTINIDES (HONOLULU)

## SPECIAL EMPHASIS MONTHS

**FEB** – AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

**MAR** – WOMENS HISTORY

**MAY** – ASIAN AMERICAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE

**JUN** – LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL & TRANSGENDER PRIDE

**SEPT/OCT** – HISPANIC HERITAGE

**OCT** – DISABILITY AWARENESS

**NOV** – NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE

**NOV** – VETERANS

## WHAT ARE THE TYPICAL DUTIES OF A SEPM?

The SEPMs collectively form the PIA Civil Rights Advisory Committee (CRAC) and report directly to the PIA Director.

Throughout their appointment (typically 3 years), SEPMs regularly:

- Collaborate with CRAC members and network with SEPMs from other states
- Develop and implement an annual business plan and budget
- Communicate with all employees to promote awareness and respect for special emphasis groups
- Follow current events (news, articles, activities, etc.) pertinent to the area of emphasis
- Review employment data and perform barrier analysis related to recruitment, retention, promotion, as well as customer service to special emphasis groups
- Develop methods to increase outreach to targeted populations

## HOW CAN YOU MAKE THE SPECIAL EMPHASIS PROGRAMS WORK FOR YOU?

- Develop a working relationship with the CRAC and individual SEPMs
- Attend programs sponsored by the SEPMs
- Discuss ideas and concerns on improving employment opportunities and working conditions with your SEPMs
- Volunteer to serve as a SEPM when vacancies arise (pending supervisor approval)

## SPECIAL EMPHASIS PROGRAMS SERVE YOU BY:

- Encouraging and promoting tolerance and acceptance in a diverse workplace that translates to valuing every employee's unique contributions
- Identifying and helping remove cultural and sub-cultural biases that limit employees' success within the agency
- Providing a means for employees to participate in the processes related to creating and maintaining equal employment opportunity
- Keeping another channel of communication open to leadership regarding Equal Employment Opportunity concerns and successes
- Encouraging creativity and activity through Spot Awards for work done "above and beyond" the usual duties in creating diverse and accepting work environments
- Promulgating and sponsoring a range of information about, experiences in, and activities relating to multiple cultures and sub-cultures
- Encouraging and assisting the improvement of employee opportunities through fact-based research and analyses

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

### NRCS Outreach and Advocacy Division Special Emphasis Programs

[www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/arr/about/outreach/sep/](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/arr/about/outreach/sep/)

### PIA NRCS Civil Rights

[www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/pia/about/civilrights/](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/pia/about/civilrights/)

### NRCS National Civil Rights Division

[www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/about/civilrights/](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/about/civilrights/)

### NRCS General Manual Online at eDirectives

Title 230 – Part 403  
[directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/  
RollupViewer.aspx?hid=17023](http://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/RollupViewer.aspx?hid=17023)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers. If you believe you experienced discrimination when obtaining services from USDA, participating in a USDA program, or participating in a program that receives financial assistance from USDA, you may file a complaint with USDA. Information about how to file a discrimination complaint is available from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights. USDA prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex (including gender identity and expression), marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, genetic information, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) To file a complaint of discrimination, complete, sign, and mail a program discrimination complaint form, available at any USDA office location or online at [www.ascr.usda.gov](http://www.ascr.usda.gov), or write to: USDA Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW.; Washington, DC 20250-9410. Or call toll free at (866) 632-9992 (voice) to obtain additional information, the appropriate office or to request documents. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay service at (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

## SPECIAL EMPHASIS PROGRAMS

INFORMATION FOR A NRCS EMPLOYEE

**USDA** UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE



NATURAL RESOURCES  
CONSERVATION SERVICE  
PACIFIC ISLANDS AREA

