

# Montana Civil Rights Advisory Committee

## Summary of 2020 Accomplishments



The Montana Civil Rights Advisory Committee (MCRAC) is a sixteen-member employee committee that advises and assists Montana NRCS leadership with the objectives of the Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity (CR/EEO) programs. The committee also supports staff throughout the state with civil rights reviews, trainings and participation in a wide variety of outreach activities.

The MCRAC is composed of a representative from each area, a state office representative, a Senior Leadership Team representative, a Beginning Farmer Rancher representative, two advisors, and eight Special Emphasis Program Managers that represent American Indian/Alaska Native; Asian American/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander; Black Emphasis; Disability Employment; Federal Women; Hispanic; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender; and Veterans. This report is a condensed summary of the MCRAC's actions and accomplishments for 2020. For more information on how to participate in MCRAC activities or how to serve on the Committee, please visit the [Montana Civil Rights Advisory Committee](#) webpage.

## Projects and Accomplishments

- Developed and distributed a "How can we help?" survey for Montana NRCS employees to query how the MCRAC can better serve them and the landowners they work with.
- Created presentations and a CR/EEO Jeopardy-style game for the Montana NRCS All Employee Meeting
- Area Representatives regularly apprised their respective field and area office staffs of important updates and policy changes relating to CR/EEO matters.
- Distributed the FY2019 National Disability Employee Awareness Month poster
- Electronically distributed the new Anti Harassment and EEO Complaint and Counseling posters for placement in NRCS Field Offices.
- Created and distributed a list of required civil rights information for office displays
- Updated the MCRAC webpages to reflect the most up-to-date membership, CR/EEO statements, employee assistance sources, and policy requirements.
- Created an on-boarding folder containing documents of importance for new MCRAC members.
- Collaborated with Montana NRCS Public Affairs staff to update outreach materials.
- Added the Senior Leadership Team Representative member position to the Committee
- Added the Beginning Farmer Rancher Representative member position to the Committee.
- Amended and ratified the MCRAC bylaws to include membership and procedural changes.
- Assisted field offices throughout the state in updating their mandatory CR/EEO poster displays.



## Montana Civil Rights Advisory Committee Members for 2020

**Pat Lauridson**, Chair & Disability Employment SEPM

**Austin Allen**, Vice Chair & Black SEPM

**Brooke Johns**, Secretary & Miles City Area Representative

**Rebecca Ayre**, Great Falls Area Representative

**Kristine Handley**, Missoula Area Representative

**David Molebash**, Bozeman Area Representative

**Kristi Nile**, Federal Women's SEPM

**Andrea "AJ" Limberger**, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender SEPM

**John Bowe**, Veteran SEPM

**Camille Waters**, Hispanic SEPM

**Vacant**, American Indian/Alaska Native SEPM

**Kerri Bilbo**, Senior Leadership Team Representative

**Shelby Doherty**, State Office Representative

**Faith Hill**, Beginning Farmer Rancher Representative

**Kris Berg**, Advisor

**Jerry Shows**, Advisor

## Projects and Accomplishments (continued)

- Finalized the 2020 MCRAC Business Plan and updated accomplishments throughout the year
- Finalized the 2021 MCRAC Business Plan in preparation for the new fiscal year
- Submitted comments and suggested edits concerning CR/EEO items contained within the Field Office Appraisal Guide
- Compiled "How can we help?" survey results and brainstormed ideas to address feedback provided through the survey.
- Began drafting a whitepaper for the Montana Senior Leadership Team that outlines the Committee's suggested approaches to increasing employee diversity through the Pathways Program.
- Administered the Montana State Civil Rights Awards process

## Outreach

- Maintained a list of employment and civil rights outreach events occurring in Montana for 2020
- Promoted Pathways internship opportunities through Handshake.com to over 30 schools across the western U.S. as well as all Montana colleges and universities
- Posted Montana NRCS job announcements to Handshake.
- Developed a list of college contacts for universities that may not participate in Handshake job posting
- Worked with the Boys and Girls Club of Ronan on a raised garden bed project.
- Montana SEPMs regularly interacted with their national counterparts to inform them of Montana's activities and gain insight concerning national level policy and trends.
- Made contact with Malstrom Air Force Base personnel who agreed to advertise our open positions on the base and forward them to their Transition Assistance Program participants.

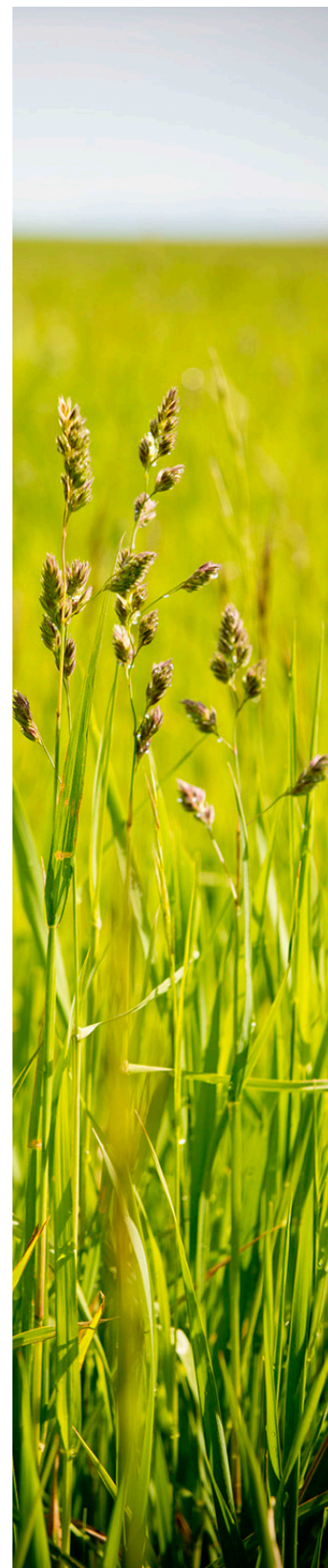
## Training

- Participated in the Montana NRCS Pathways Orientation event
- Developed CR/EEO and MCRAC training materials to be presented at the next Montana NRCS All Employee Meeting.
- MCRAC Members authored and posted eleven educational Montana NRCS News articles this year.

## Workshop and Event Attendance

The MCRAC regularly participates in workshops, college and community job fairs, and CR/EEO specific functions throughout the year. Attendance at such events supports several of the Committee's mission goals including participating in recruitment practices and ensuring under-represented groups are aware of NRCS employment opportunities. This year, however, participating in such events proved challenging at best due to the COVID pandemic. Many of the historically attended events were postponed indefinitely or canceled this year. Nevertheless, MCRAC members were still able to find events to attend, often remotely through the aid of modern technology. The following highlights some of the events members participated in this year.

- Provided a presentation of NRCS assistance programs at the Veterans on the Farm's 'Battlefields to Farmfields' Webinar event.
- Presented on NRCS programs to Team Rubicon (Veteran's focused assistance program)
- Attended Women Stepping Forward for Agriculture event
- Represented Montana NRCS as an employer at the Montana State University Job Fair
- Attended the National Federal Women's Leadership Development Workshop



Montana

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