

NRCS is required to deliver USDA Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity requirements and information with institutions that participate in or administer USDA federally conducted and/or federally assisted programs. In an effort to fully comply with Federal, Departmental, and Agency governing Civil Rights laws and regulations, this check-list serves as an internal guide to assist with the Civil Rights responsibilities and expectation discussion between NRCS and Partners.

Board Membership Responsibilities

- Annual review of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between NRCS and Board.
- SWCD Board Demographic Information - NRCS Plan of Action for Representation on Boards, Councils, and Committees, requires States to annually review current Board membership data with state conservation agencies and discuss the opportunities and benefits of having minority and female representatives on local boards/councils who are impacted by the board's/council's decisions regarding conservation programs.
- Prohibition disclosure of certain information by the USDA and its Cooperators - Applicants, participants, location, and any and all privacy information is not to be disclosed without a FOIA request. Upon Board membership ending, former Board members have the responsibility to protect any information.
- New and existing partners are invited and should attend NRCS sponsored Civil Rights Training.

Federally Assisted and Federally Conducted Program Delivery Responsibilities

- 1964 Civil Rights Act - Title VI is a federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance. Unlawful/prohibited discrimination is unfair or unequal treatment based on a prohibited bases.
- NRCS employees and partners who work with USDA programs are required to guarantee fairness and equal treatment to all customers eligible to receive USDA/NRCS programs and services regardless of any of the cited prohibited bases enforced by USDA:
 - race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, familial/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)

Program Outreach

- NRCS State and Field offices are required to establish and maintain outreach programs at the local level to ensure that all persons know about the availability of USDA/NRCS program services effectively and are encouraged to participate:
 - Board membership includes willingness to reach out to others, to reach out farther than others, to exceed normal communication expectation, or to go beyond existing limits to communicate with the under-served or under-resourced (women, minorities, persons with disabilities, historically underserved, limited resource, etc.)

Public Notification Responsibilities

- Governing documents relative to required equal opportunity public notification requirements that conservation partners must review:

• Secretary of Agriculture Civil Rights Policy Statement	• USDA Equal Employment Opportunity is the Law poster
• USDA Alternative Dispute Resolution Policy Statement	• NRCS Chief's Civil Rights Policy Statement
• USDA Anti-Harassment Policy Statement	• NRCS EEO Counseling poster
• USDA Nondiscrimination Statement	• NRCS LEP Policy Statement
• *"And Justice for All" poster	• NRCS LEP Services poster
• USDA "Sexual Harassment is Illegal" poster	• [RESERVED]

- The public notification requirements must be prominently and visibly displayed in all offices where there is a USDA presence and where viewing is accessible for employees and customers.
- Compliance with Section 504¹ and Section 508² of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- Access public notification required documents at the following link:
http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/national/about/civilrights/?cid=nrcs143_022466
- Public notification documents attached: (Review description for partners)

1. Secretary of Agriculture Civil Rights Policy Statement – affirms USDA's commitment to equality and civil rights for program delivery and employment with emphasize on USDA's zero tolerance for any form of discrimination or reprisal.
2. USDA Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Policy Statement – affirms USDA's commitment to conflict prevention to increase customer satisfaction and employee morale.
3. USDA Anti-Harassment Policy Statement – affirms USDA's commitment to maintaining an environment free from unlawful harassment (sexual and non-sexual).
4. USDA Nondiscrimination Statement – must be posted in all USDA offices and included on all materials produced by USDA for public information, public education, or public distribution. In addition to Section 504 and Section 508 requirements, the statement shall be made available in other languages appropriate to the local population served or directly affected by USDA program or activity.
5. "And Justice for All" poster – primary method utilized to inform customers or their civil rights. Institutions participating or administering USDA programs are required to display the appropriate poster in respective facilities where poster can be viewed by customers. (NRCS applicable versions: Form AD-475-A, relevant to assisted programs; and Form AD-475-C, relevant to conducted programs.)
6. USDA "Sexual Harassment is Illegal" poster – general preventive tips and guidance on filing sexual harassment claims.
7. USDA "EEO Is The Law" poster – employee information and guidance on filing an EEO complaint.
8. NRCS Chief's Civil Rights Policy Statement – reaffirms Secretary of Agriculture's Civil Rights policy and emphasizes that reprisal of any kind against customers or employees will not be tolerated.
9. NRCS "EEO Counseling" poster – contact information for employees filing an EEO complaint. (does not apply to customers)

¹ Federal facilities and locations must be accessible for the public to guarantee access to persons with a disability.

² Public and employee notices regarding events and activities sponsored, co-sponsored, hosted, and or co-hosted by USDA, NRCS contain NRCS POC information including name, telephone number, email address, and a respond by date for persons to request accommodations (for example – an interpreter, translator, seating arrangements, etc.) materials in an alternative format (for example – braille, large prints, audiotape – captioning, etc.)

10. NRCS Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Policy Statement – reaffirms USDA’s commitment and provides support to the provisions of federally conducted and federally assisted prohibited discrimination based on national origin. LEP applies to individuals who do not speak English as their primary language, and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.

11. NRCS LEP Services poster – provides notice to customers that LEP oral interpreting and written translation services are available at no cost to customer relative to NRCS federally assisted and federally conducted programs.

Affirmation of Review:

Field Office/State _____

SWCD Board _____

Board Member(s)- Printed Name:

Signature and Date:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

NRCS Rep - Printed Name and Title:

Signature and Date:

1. _____
