

From: "The Office of the Secretary - OSEC" <Officeof.theSecretary@ocio.usda.gov>
Date: Friday, March 9, 2018 at 1:02:39 PM
To: "WCTS - ALL-WASH-AREA-2K" <ALL-WASH-AREA-2K@ocio.usda.gov>, "WCTS - ALL-USDA-2K" <ALL-USDA-2K@ocio.usda.gov>
Subject: OneUSDA Phase III -- Civil Rights

The following message is being transmitted to you as a Departmental Management (DM) service to all USDA employees.

Agency E-mail administrators: Please forward this message to all USDA employees.

******* Please do not respond to this mailbox. Thank you. *******

Dear USDA Family:

To reach our goal of making USDA the most effective, most efficient, most customer-focused department in the entire federal government, we must also ensure that we are providing a workplace that is safe, respectful, and rewarding for all employees. No undertaking is more important than providing a safe workplace for all, so that every single person, internal or external, is afforded the same opportunity and is treated with transparency, objectivity, and consistency.

To that end, today we are announcing [Phase III of our OneUSDA](#) philosophy, which takes us further down the path of orienting USDA as one team, with all of us pulling together in the same direction. Consistency is vital to preserving civil rights; people must have confidence they are being treated fairly and in the same manner as everyone else.

As laid out today, each USDA mission area, in addition to the Office of the Inspector General and departmental staff offices, will be served by a Civil Rights Director and appropriate Equal Opportunity staff. The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OASCR) will direct and oversee all USDA civil rights activities, so we can achieve the uniformity necessary to inspire confidence in the structure and processes. It does not benefit USDA, its employees, or its customers to have different structures, timelines, or outcomes possible, depending on where in the department a civil rights issue arises.

In a significant expansion of civil rights complaints to be considered, OASCR has widened its scope to include programmatic complaints from USDA customers. Previously, OASCR had determined complaints of discrimination from customers about USDA programs to be outside their jurisdiction.

As these changes take effect, it is important to note that under the leadership of Winona Scott, OASCR has already dramatically improved its track record of handling formal EEO complaints in a timely fashion. When the current USDA administration took office in April 2017, there were 51 EEO investigations that had stretched beyond 180 days, which is the regulatory time limit. Today there are none. At the same time, there were 30 EEO complaints awaiting final agency decisions beyond the required timeframe of 60 days. Today there are none. USDA has cleared its entire backlog. We expect this performance to get even better, as President Trump

has selected [Naomi Earp](#) as our new Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights. We eagerly anticipate her Senate confirmation and look forward to her joining our team.

Phase III of OneUSDA follows those previously announced, which sought to ensure that our programs are delivered efficiently, effectively, and with integrity, and addressed treating labor relations as covenants among like-minded groups of people, rather than adversarial contract negotiations. Under OneUSDA, we do not separate ourselves by individual offices or agencies. Instead we recognize how interconnected we are and how the work of one person complements or informs the work of another.

Please watch the [video](#) to see what I hope is an impactful reading of our Civil Rights Policy Statement:

USDA Civil Rights Policy Statement

The hallmark of my tenure as Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is to do right and feed everyone and I don't intend for that to be just a hollow creed. This pledge is at the heart of our work, which includes our commitment to protecting the civil rights of all USDA employees and customers.

Doing right means treating all people equally, regardless of race, religion, gender, national origin, or any other characteristic. We are part of the same human family, imbued with dignity and worthy of respect. I expect every USDA employee to foster a workplace free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation so everyone can reach his or her full potential. Our workplace will be a model for proper enforcement of civil rights protections, not only because it's the law, but also because it's the right thing to do.

Feeding everyone means it doesn't matter what you look like or where you come from, USDA programs are for you. Hunger knows no color or creed. Whether we are responding to disasters with food aid, cultivating sustainable agriculture programs overseas, or improving school meals here at home, at USDA we know food has the power to unite.

When you start with a simple expression of integrity and equality, upholding civil rights and all the freedoms enshrined in our laws is not just compulsory, it becomes intrinsic. For that reason and working together, we will continue to return to our touchstone: Do right ... by everyone ... and feed everyone.

Sonny Perdue
Secretary

Any unauthorized interception of this message or the use or disclosure of the information it contains may violate the law and subject the violator to civil or criminal penalties. If you believe you have received this message in error, please notify the sender and delete the email immediately.