



October 24, 2013

SUBJECT: 2013 Diversity/Equal Employment Opportunity Statement

TO: All NPA Employees

FROM: Laurence D. Chandler, Area Director

As Director of the Northern Plains Area I am fully committed to a diverse workplace and a workplace culture where all employees are respectful towards one another and our customers. Maintaining a workplace culture where employees are respected and discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation do not occur is of utmost importance to me, and should be equally important to all Northern Plains Area employees. Achieving and maintaining a workplace culture that values diversity and has zero tolerance of discrimination, harassment and/or retaliation ultimately rests with each of us.

Specifically, discrimination and/or harassment against employees, customers, and applicants for employment based on race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or where all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department of Agriculture is prohibited. Additionally, retaliation against individuals for having filed, threatened to file, or participated in a complaint of discrimination and/or harassment is also prohibited. As Area Director, I will act promptly to address instances where discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation are alleged.

Approvals to recruit positions are increasing, and it is important when recruiting for positions that we actively seek to further diversify our workforce so that we as an organization can benefit from having a wide range of backgrounds and perspectives that comes with having a diverse workforce.

I ask all NPA employees to join me in making sure that our workplace environment is engaging and respectful. When issues among employees arise, there are many resources available. For example, employees can always contact [Barbara King](#), NPA ODEO Program Manager with initial questions about interpersonal conflict, civil rights, and/or equal opportunity – she can be reached at 970-492-7053. The [Cooperative Resolution Program](#) (Jeff Schmitt and Jan Lewis) with the [Office of Outreach, Diversity, and Equal Opportunity](#) (ODEO, 202-720-6161) offers conflict resolution and training and will visit locations. Questions about reasonable accommodations can be directed to [Mary Ward](#) (ODEO, 202-720-6161).

This policy will be posted on the NPA website. <http://www.ars.usda.gov/Main/docs.htm?docid=16578>