USDA
United States Department of Agriculture

Research, Education, and Economics
Agricultural Research Service

SUBJECT: 2014 Diversity/Equal Employment Opportunity Policy Statement

TO: All ARS Employees

FROM: Chavonda Jacobs-Young
Administrator

Chavonda Jacobs-Young MAY 22 2014

In accordance with Secretary Vilsack's Civil Rights Policy and Cultural Transformation Initiative, one of the Agricultural Research Service's (ARS) top priorities is to improve civil rights throughout the Agency by eradicating discrimination, sexual/non-sexual harassment, and retaliation; improving and successfully managing a work environment as diverse as our customers; creating and maintaining an environment where all ARS employees are valued, respected, and free to develop and perform to their fullest potential; and diversifying a work environment representative of our customers.

Secretary Vilsack states "the success of today's People's Department requires the steadfast support and commitment of every employee." ARS' zero tolerance policy prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment based on race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income 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 (not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities).

If an employee feels he/she has been discriminated against and wishes to file an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) complaint, he/she must contact the Outreach, Diversity, and Equal Opportunity (ODEO) Staff at 202-720-3410 or 1-800-340-4289 or through the Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339 or 1-800-845-6136 (Spanish). If an employee requires alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) or other reasonable accommodation, please contact the Research, Education, and Economics Disability Program Manager at 202-720-6161.

Hiring managers should utilize the Area's Management Directive 715 in recruitment and hiring processes to leverage diversity and ensure all demographic groups are fully represented. Managers, whenever possible, should always try to utilize the services of the ARS Cooperative Resolution Program, which offers effective techniques for dispute resolution such as facilitated dialogues, mediation, conflict coaching, and team building. I encourage all employees to participate in mentoring, career development, special emphasis programs, serving on the EEO Diversity Committees, and other innovative activities to help prevent and eliminate barriers hindering our diversity goal and preventing ARS from being a model EEO employer.

Office of the Administrator
Jamie L. Whitten Federal Building, Room 302-A
1400 Independence Avenue, SW.
Washington, D.C. 20250-0300
An Equal Opportunity Employer