



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

Civil Rights Policy Statement

As Secretary, I have made it my priority to ensure the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has a comprehensive civil rights program, one which not only makes us a model employer, but also a premier service provider to our millions of customers. We continue to make strides toward moving USDA in this direction. Each Agency has made considerable efforts to ensure language services, such as translation, materials, and interpretation, are available for our Limited English Proficient customers. New anti-harassment and anti-bullying policy statements address sexual and non-sexual harassment, both of which require timely responses to claims of harassment in the workplace. These accomplishments among others demonstrate our commitment to progress. But, we will not stop here; all USDA employees must constantly endeavor to improve civil rights.

Our policy at USDA is zero tolerance for any form of discrimination, and we must ensure that this standard is maintained throughout the Department. This standard is applicable to every employee and manager and to every action taken at USDA. I expect all employees to demonstrate respect for, and adherence to, USDA civil rights, equal employment opportunity, and diversity policies. Our cultural transformation programs are dedicated to increasing recognition and acceptance of cultural differences and to creating a workplace where all employees and customers are treated with dignity and respect. All senior leaders, managers, and supervisors must model appropriate behavior and lead by example.

I will continue to hold all managers, supervisors, and other employees accountable for ensuring that all USDA applicants, customers, constituents, and stakeholders are treated fairly, with integrity, and provided equal access to all opportunities, programs, and services available through "The People's Department." Accordingly, I am counting on USDA employees to dedicate themselves to developing and cultivating relationships with small and disadvantaged businesses and community-based organizations, particularly those owned and operated by, or which provide services to, minorities, women, veterans, and people with disabilities in order to foster a collaborative environment.

We strive to eliminate under-representation in the workforce by recruiting and employing a diverse workforce that is rich in talent, ideas, background, and experience. Let us continue to improve civil rights in a transparent and ethical manner, and, by doing so, we will turn the challenges of the past into opportunities for the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Vilsack", written over a horizontal line.

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary

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