



United States Department of Agriculture

Research, Education, and Economics
Agricultural Research Service

SUBJECT: Administrator's Annual EEO Policy Statement Issuance (2023)

TO: ARS ALL

FROM: Simon Liu
Administrator

 8/24/23

This August marks the 60th anniversary of the March on Washington. It is important for us to take the time to reflect on this historic event and its impact on American society.

The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, also known as the Freedom March, was held on August 28, 1963, at the Washington Monument in Washington, DC, and more than 250,000 people participated in this momentous gathering. The idea for the 1963 March on Washington was envisioned by A. Philip Randolph, a longtime civil rights activist dedicated to improving the economic condition of African Americans. His goal was to present an organized response to racial inequalities and protest against discrimination, and mount a unified demand that African Americans facing repression, institutional racism, and mass incarceration should be guaranteed the same equal rights enjoyed by other Americans throughout the country.

This historic march became one of the largest demonstrations for human rights in U.S. history and provided a platform for leaders in the civil rights movement, labor organizations, and religious groups, as well as prominent celebrities and musicians, to make their demands heard.

Notably, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his exalted and iconic "I Have a Dream" speech, which was covered far and wide by the press. As a result, the March on Washington provided a final impetus for the U.S. government to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which outlawed discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin and was enacted to ensure Black citizens would have the power to represent themselves in government.

As we look back through the last 60 years, we can trace the vital role of this historic march in the subsequent passage of additional civil rights legislation, new programs for economic justice, and initiatives to break down racial barriers to voting rights, education, and public resources for all citizens of this great nation.

USDA strives to become a model of the civil rights ideals in all its programs, functions, and interactions with our employees and the public we serve. These efforts will continue in earnest until racial inequalities and discrimination of any kind are eliminated. I encourage everyone in ARS to do what we can to achieve this goal and encourage all employees to review the [USDA EEO Policy Statement](#) and the [USDA Anti-Harassment Policy Statement](#).