



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".

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary

JUN 8 2016



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Alternative Dispute Resolution Policy Statement

As Secretary, I have made it my priority to ensure the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has a comprehensive Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) program and a workplace where personnel and program recipients are treated with dignity and respect.

Our policy at USDA is to prevent conflicts whenever possible, and when conflicts do occur, to make every effort to reach the earliest possible resolution, and we must ensure that this standard is maintained throughout the Department. This standard is applicable to all personnel and program recipients in every ADR action taken at USDA. I expect all of our managers, supervisors, employees, and customers to demonstrate respect for, and adherence to, USDA and all agency ADR policies.

We continue to make strides to resolve complaints and workplace disputes expeditiously, with a goal of maintaining an environment that fosters communication, trust, and respect among USDA, its customers, and employees.

Our ADR program is dedicated to providing parties in conflict with the opportunity to come together in a non-adversarial manner to explore possible solutions to resolve concerns. A comprehensive ADR program reduces costs and processing time while promoting good will, increasing customer satisfaction, and enhancing employee morale.

I call upon all USDA agencies and their Civil Rights Offices to continue improving our ADR program in a transparent and ethical manner, and, by doing so, increasing customer satisfaction and employee morale at USDA. I am also counting on all USDA employees and supervisors to maximize the use of ADR, in accordance with appropriate procedures, to attempt to resolve conflict and to foster a workplace that is fair and free from discrimination, intimidation, and reprisal.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Thomas J. Vilsack".

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary

JUN. 6 2016



United States Department of Agriculture
Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services
Risk Management Agency

RISK MANAGEMENT AGENCY CIVIL RIGHTS POLICY STATEMENT

Risk Management Agency (RMA) is committed to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Civil Rights, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), and diversity policies and programs. RMA's Civil Rights Policy prohibits discrimination in employment and in all of its programs and activities based on race, color, sex, gender identity, age, religion, national origin, disability, reprisal, protected genetic information, sexual orientation, marital and familial or parental status, political affiliation, and/or receipt of public assistance. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.) It is our policy at RMA to simply understand that there will be *zero tolerance* for any form of discrimination. This standard is applicable to every RMA employee.

As your Administrator, I continue to strongly and fully support Civil Rights, EEO, Diversity and Inclusion, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), and the Secretary's Cultural Transformation Initiatives. In support of USDA's vision of a modern workforce in a modern workplace, I encourage every manager, supervisor and employee to embrace, develop and commit to a diverse workforce within RMA that reflects and demonstrates diversity. In addition, RMA will work toward eliminating under-representation in RMA's workforce while focusing on diversity of our workforce which enriches our workplace and our community.

ADR initiatives are critical to early conflict resolution. ADR is a win-win process in resolving disputes or conflicts. It is also beneficial because it may decrease time and cost otherwise incurred when addressing workplace conflicts or disputes. All managers, supervisors and employees are encouraged to participate in the ADR process. For information on the ADR process, contact RMA's Civil Rights office.

RMA employees, including managers and supervisors, share in the responsibility to promote equal access to the workplace and to federally assisted programs and services. Any employee who believes his or her rights have been violated under this or any anti-discrimination policy *must* contact RMA's EEO Counselor or Civil Rights Director within **45 calendar days** of the alleged discriminatory event or action to initiate the EEO complaint process. It is expected that employees may exercise their rights to the EEO process without fear of reprisal.

Accountability is key and RMA employees will be held accountable for doing their part to ensure all RMA employees, applicants, and customers are provided equal access to the opportunities, programs and services available through RMA.

Accordingly, I am counting on all managers and supervisors to model appropriate behavior and to lead by example. RMA has an obligation to ensure all under-served farmers and ranchers, including women, minorities, small and limited resource, and socially-disadvantaged customers have equal access to program information and technical assistance necessary to participate in all RMA programs and activities.

To fulfill our mission at RMA and USDA, I encourage us all to strive to create an inclusive environment where every employee and customer is respected, trusted and valued.

/s/ Michael A. Alston for
Brandon C. Willis
Administrator

3/29/2016
Date



United States Department of Agriculture
Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services
Risk Management Agency

RISK MANAGEMENT AGENCY ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY STATEMENT

All employees of the Risk Management Agency (RMA) must maintain a work environment free of harassment in all its programs based on race, color, sex, gender identity, age, religion, national origin, disability, reprisal, protected genetic information, sexual orientation, marital and familial or parental status, political affiliation, or receipt of public assistance. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.) It is our policy at RMA to simply understand that there will be *zero tolerance* for any form of harassment or discrimination. This standard is applicable to every RMA employee.

Harassment is defined as unwanted verbal, written or physical conduct or behavior directed at an individual on the basis of a characteristic that is protected by law. The conduct or behavior may be offensive, intimidating and/or degrading towards a person's protected status with the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating or hostile work environment and must negatively affect the person's working conditions, work performance or terms of employment.

Verbal or physical harassment includes, but is not limited to, the use of slurs, epithets, intimidation, threats, or other hostile acts towards a person because of their protected status. Written harassment includes, but is not limited to, placement or circulation of written or graphic material (i.e., email, memoranda, flyers and posters) on walls, bulletin boards or other workplace sites that is offensive or hostile toward a person's protected status.

Bullying is also a form of harassment and can create a hostile work environment over a period of time. Unwarranted and/or unsupported criticism of an employee's work performance, aggressive behavior or shouting, or manipulation of an employee's reputation through gossip, physical attack or threatening gestures are a few examples of bullying.

All RMA managers and supervisors are responsible for enforcing this policy and are expected to take immediate, appropriate and corrective action to stop any harassing behavior. Managers and supervisors should consult with human resources personnel and refer to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Guide for Disciplinary Penalties (DPM-715) when initiating action to enforce this policy. Managers and supervisors who tolerate or are aware of any form of harassment and fails to promptly take immediate, appropriate and corrective action will be held accountable and will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Any employee who believes he or she has been subjected to harassment or has witnessed harassment should, within **45 calendar days** of the alleged incident, report the incident to a supervisor or manager. If immediate, appropriate and corrective action is not taken, the employee must contact RMA's EEO Counselor or Civil Rights Director to report the alleged harassment.

/s/ Michael A. Alston for
Brandon C. Willis
Administrator

3/29/2016
Date



United States Department of Agriculture
Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services
Risk Management Agency

RISK MANAGEMENT AGENCY REPRISAL AND RETALIATION POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Risk Management Agency (RMA) that no employee shall be subjected to reprisal and retaliation for reporting, opposing or participating in practices made unlawful or engaging in any protected activity, including as a witness or associating with another employee engaged in protected activity. The following federal statutes prohibit unlawful discrimination:

- Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended
- Equal Pay Act of 1963
- Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967
- The Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008

Reprisal and retaliation are defined as any adverse employment action taken based on opposition of or participation in protected activity. Any act of reprisal or retaliation by an RMA manager or supervisor against an individual for opposing or participating in any protected activity violates this policy. RMA's reprisal and retaliation policy also applies to vendors, contractors and third parties.

All RMA employees must maintain a workplace free of reprisal and retaliation. Retaliation against any individual who exercises their right under anti-discrimination laws by opposition, participation or assisting another employee engaged in protected activity is strictly prohibited.

All RMA managers and supervisors are responsible for enforcing this policy and must take immediate, appropriate and corrective action to stop any reprisal or retaliation. Any manager or supervisor who tolerates or who is found to have engaged in reprisal and retaliation will be subject to appropriate disciplinary or other corrective action, up to and including termination.

Any employee who believes he or she has been subjected to reprisal and retaliation should, within **45 calendar days** of the alleged incident, immediately report the incident to a manager, supervisor or someone in the employee's supervisory chain who must take immediate, appropriate and corrective action to stop the reprisal or retaliation. If the reprisal and retaliation continues after it has been reported, or if immediate, appropriate and corrective action is not taken, the employee *must* contact RMA's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Counselor or Civil Rights Director to report the reprisal and retaliation.

/s/ Michael A. Alston for
Brandon C. Willis
Administrator

3/29/2016
Date



United States Department of Agriculture
Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services
Risk Management Agency

RISK MANAGEMENT AGENCY SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY STATEMENT

As your Administrator, I am firmly committed to ensuring all Risk Management Agency (RMA) employees are provided with a workplace that is free from unwelcome sexual advances and from reprisal for reporting incidents of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is illegal and is a form of prohibited sex discrimination that violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. RMA's sexual harassment policy also applies to vendors, contractors and third parties.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome conduct that is sexual in nature; sexual advances; requests for sexual favors when submission to or rejection of such conduct is a term or condition of employment or the basis for employment decisions; verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment; unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance; or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Examples of prohibited sexual conduct includes, but is not limited to, sexual innuendoes or comments about a person's clothing, body or sexual activities; obscene gestures; requests and/or demands for sexual favors in exchange for favorable treatment (i.e., promotion, work assignments, awards, etc.); continued employment; pressure for dating, romantic or intimate relationship; stalking or whistling; sexually-oriented jokes; email, photos, posters, and internet use that is sexual in nature; and physical contact of a sexual nature such as inappropriate touching, patting, pinching, massaging, fondling, kissing, or grabbing.

All RMA employees must maintain a work environment free of sexual harassment. Any RMA employee, including managers and supervisors, who is found to have engaged in prohibited sexual harassment will be subject to immediate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

RMA managers and supervisors are responsible for enforcing this policy and must take immediate, appropriate and corrective action to stop the prohibited sexual harassment. Any RMA manager and/or supervisor who tolerates, knows about or should have known of such prohibited sexual harassment and fails to take immediate, appropriate and corrective action will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Any employee who believes he or she has been subjected to any form of prohibited sexual harassment should, within **45 calendar days** of the alleged incident, immediately report the incident to a manager, supervisor or someone in the employee's supervisory chain who must take immediate, appropriate and corrective action to stop the sexual harassment. If the sexual harassment continues after it has been reported, or if immediate, appropriate and corrective action is not taken, the employee must contact RMA's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Counselor or Civil Rights Director to report the sexual harassment. It is expected that employees may exercise their rights of reporting prohibited sexual harassment without fear of reprisal.

/s/ Michael A. Alston for
Brandon C. Willis
Administrator

3/29/2016
Date



United States Department of Agriculture
Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services
Risk Management Agency

RISK MANAGEMENT AGENCY ACCOUNTABILITY AND PROCEDURES POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Risk Management Agency (RMA) to treat employees, applicants and customers fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, gender identity, age, disability, reprisal, sexual orientation, marital and familial or parental status, political affiliation, protected genetic information, or receipt of public assistance. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

As your Administrator, I strongly support Civil Rights, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), Diversity and Inclusion, and a workplace that is free of any harassment and discrimination of any kind.

Accountability and transparency are key for RMA to ensure compliance with this policy. This means that RMA managers, supervisors, and employees will be held accountable for Civil Rights violations, discrimination, retaliation, or related misconduct. RMA's accountability and procedures policy also applies to vendors, contractors, and third parties.

RMA managers, supervisors and employees who are found to have engaged in any Civil Rights violations, including discrimination, retaliation or related misconduct, will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

RMA managers and supervisors will be held accountable for failure to take appropriate action in response to any findings of Civil Rights violations, including discrimination, retaliation or related misconduct. Annual performance appraisals for managers and supervisors shall include an evaluation of their contributions to RMA's commitment to Civil Rights and equal opportunity, and adherence to its Civil Rights policy. Managers and supervisors are responsible and accountable for maintaining a Civil Rights program that will accomplish the strategic Civil Rights goals.

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Civil Rights Office has established Departmental Regulation (DR) 4300-010, "Civil Rights Accountability Policy and Procedures" to strengthen existing Civil Rights policies within the USDA. The DR can be found at <http://www.ocio.usda.gov/document/departamental-regulation-4300-010>. Managers and supervisors must provide a copy of this policy to each employee under their management authority.

It is expected that all RMA managers, supervisors and employees demonstrate respect towards all employees and customers and comply with RMA's Civil Rights, EEO, diversity and inclusion, and accountability and procedures policies.

This policy should be posted in conspicuous locations throughout the workplace.

/s/ Michael A. Alston, for
Brandon C. Willis
Administrator

3/29/2016
Date