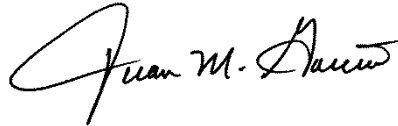


For: FSA Employees

Special Emphasis Program (SEP)

Approved by: Administrator



1 Overview

A Background

SEP is a:

- major component of Presidential Executive Order 13583 (Establishing a Coordinated Government-wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion)
- critical component of the Secretary’s Cultural Transformation Initiative and Diversity Road Map.

FSA is committed to maintaining a workplace that provides equal opportunity in employment for all employees and applicants regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, marital or family status, political beliefs, parental status, and genetic information. OCR will:

- lead the charge of structuring and implementing the SEP/Diversity Council organizational structure as required by the Presidential Executive Order according to USDA’s Diversity Roadmap, 29 CFR 1614, Section 102, and Departmental and Agency Directives
- collaborate with senior management and HRD to ensure that leadership and accountability for hiring and retaining a diverse workforce are accomplished.

The Diversity Road Map requires the Department to strategically establish a special emphasis working group infrastructure through SEP/Diversity Advisory Councils to enable uniform communication and collaboration throughout the Department.

OCR is responsible for providing overall leadership and direction in developing and implementing all EEO programs, inclusive of SEP’s, including coordinating and monitoring EEO and SEP best practices, policies, and procedures.

Disposal Date	Distribution
September 1, 2013	All FSA employees; State Office relay to County Offices

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1 Overview (Continued)

A Background (Continued)

SEP's diversity networks are established to address the unique concerns of the following individual groups in achieving diversity, inclusion, and equal opportunity in employment actions and activities:

- African/Black Americans
- American Indian/Alaska Natives
- Asian American/Pacific Islanders
- Hispanics
- persons with disabilities
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender
- women.

Note: For information about SEP areas and observances see Exhibit 3.

B Purpose

This notice:

- provides guidance and direction on the establishment and administration of SEP's throughout the Agency
- discusses full-time SEP Manager and Collateral Duty SEP Coordinator (CDSEPC) positions
- communicates:
 - SEP goals
 - Agency-wide SEP responsibilities
 - selection and/or appointment of CDSEPC's.

C SED Action

SED's are required to appoint CDSEPC's.

D Kansas City and St. Louis Directors and APFO Action

Directors in the Kansas City and St. Louis complexes are required to jointly appoint a CDSEPC at each complex and APFO is also required to appoint a CDSEPC.

APFO is required to appoint a CDSEPC.

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1 Overview (Continued)

E Contacts

Contact the following for information or questions about this notice.

OCR Contacts		
Contact Name	Telephone Number	E-mail Address
MyaMya Myaing	202-401-7150	myamya.myaing@wdc.usda.gov
Marsha Young	816-926-3419	marsha.young@kcc.usda.gov
Michelle Cain	816-926-6149	michelle.cain@kcc.usda.gov

F Labor Management Obligations

Where contract language addresses these policies and procedures for bargaining unit employees, contract language prevails.

2 SEP Goals and Responsibilities

A SEP Goals

The goals of SEP are to:

- encourage groups to build networks that cross traditional social boundaries to racial, ethnic, cultural, gender, sexuality, nationality, religious, disabilities and all other sources of barriers to workforce diversity
- establish effective working relationships with and gain the confidence of managers and supervisors at all levels of the Agency, as well as with employees regardless of their occupation, race, sex, heritage, or socioeconomic background
- recruit from a diverse, qualified group of potential applicants to secure a high performing workforce drawn from all segments of our society
- cultivate a culture that encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness to enable individuals to contribute to their full potential and further retention
- perpetuate increases in early complaint resolution rates
- foster a decrease in employment complaints and findings of discrimination
- develop structures and strategies to equip leaders with the ability to manage diversity and accountability, measure results, and refine approaches based on this data, and subsequently institutionalize a culture of inclusion.

2 SEP Goals and Responsibilities (Continued)

B SEP Responsibilities for Senior Leadership

Senior Leadership shall support and ensure:

- Agency-wide SEP and/or diversity networks to foster diversity initiatives
- leadership accountability for hiring and retaining diverse workforce areas
- support for strategic diversity outreach and partnership initiatives to hire and develop a skilled and diverse workforce to meet the needs of the Agency
- quality leadership training for managers and supervisors on retention strategies, wellness, and work life balance
- human and financial resources necessary for successful and results-oriented SEP's
- performance requirements that establish the role, responsibilities, and participation of all managers and supervisors in support of SEP efforts.

C OCR Responsibilities

OCR officials, including Agency office of Civil Rights Director, shall:

- administer guidance and direction for SEP's to ensure:
 - support at all levels of the Agency
 - that all SEP duties and responsibilities are performed according to regulations
- design results-oriented SEP's, and appraise the effectiveness of SEP's in meeting the Agency's overall civil rights employment program goals and objectives
- appoint full-time OCR SEP Managers to support the Agency in providing technical guidance and support for diversity awareness, training, and outreach.

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2 SEP Goals and Responsibilities (Continued)

D OCR Full-Time SEP Manager Responsibilities

According to DR 4230-002, the Agency full-time SEP Manager will:

- represent the Agency on the Department's SEP Committee
- serve as the point of contact (POC) and resource for:
 - the SEP community
 - supervisors, managers, and employees
- advise Departmental and Agency management on the unique concerns of all SEP employment groups by analyzing employment data and recommending actions to increase representation of these groups within a given organization, if appropriate
- monitor employment policies, practices, and procedures to determine whether barriers to equitable participation within the workplace exist and report findings to the appropriate officials with recommendations for corrective actions
- participate in developing and monitoring the organization's various civil rights programs, plans, and reports (including EEOC MD-715 Report)
- participate in studies and compliance reviews to identify possible systemic forms of discrimination and barriers to equal opportunity in employment activities
- educate supervisors, managers, and employees on the goals and objectives of SEP's through developing articles for organizational newsletters related to SEP issues, programs, and activities
- coordinate or sponsor educational programs and/or SEP observances (seminars, workshops, etc.) on a variety of subjects including career planning, interviewing techniques, supervisory development, and team building skills
- collaborate with HRD in identifying training needs and recruitment sources for minorities, women, and persons with disabilities
- coordinate and/or conduct forums on issues and concerns to a particular SEP group both internal and external to the Agency

2 **SEP Goals and Responsibilities (Continued)**

D OCR Full-Time SEP Manager Responsibilities (Continued)

- coordinate various activities with the appropriate offices, which enhance opportunities for all employment groups (recruitment and training)
- work collaboratively with USDA recognized employee organizations, DR-4020-251-01, toward common goals (Federally Employed Women; Immigrant Mexican American Government Employees; Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Employees of the Federal Government; Blacks in Government; Federal Executive Boards)
- evaluate the effectiveness of activities and programs toward achieving SEP objectives.

E CDSEPC Responsibilities

CDSEPC's shall **assist** (as ambassadors) in accomplishing diversity and inclusion under the guidance of **full-time SEP Managers** (OCR EEO practitioners) technically trained to provide guidance for the following initiatives:

- coordinate educational programs and/or SEP observances (seminars, workshops, or other types of programs) on a variety of subjects including career planning, interviewing techniques, supervisory development, and team building skills
- encourage groups to build networks that cross traditional social boundaries to racial, ethnic, cultural, gender, sexuality, nationality, religious, disabilities, and all other sources of barriers to workforce diversity and assist in implementing external and internal recruitment programs
- develop and maintain a network with SEP Managers and other CDSEPC's, including those within and outside FSA
- develop a rapport with local and national SEP organizations
- perform as liaison between recruiters and organizations, which can assist in recruitment efforts and activities
- develop and maintain positive working relationships with community professional and national organizations, and colleges and universities
- establish effective working relationships with managers, supervisors, and employees at all levels of the Agency, regardless of their occupation, race, sex, heritage, or socioeconomic background

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2 SEP Goals and Responsibilities (Continued)

E CDSEPC Responsibilities (Continued)

- evaluate and identify barriers to the hiring, development, and advancement of minorities and women according to the EEO Management Directive-715 Report
- elevate unique concerns of SEP barriers (appropriately documented) to the OCR full-time SEP Manager
- encourage career counseling and participation in self-development and continuing education
- develop and coordinate implementation of SEP initiatives that will enhance SEP awareness as well as employment and advancement of various SEP groups.

3 CDSEPC Position Selection

A Incumbent CDSEPC Positions

All employees who are currently serving in CDSEPC positions are encouraged to remain in those positions.

B New Applicants for CDSEPC Positions

Employees seeking to expand their knowledge and acquire new skills on EEO and civil rights are encouraged to apply for CDSEPC positions by submitting FSA-497 (Exhibit 1) to the first line supervisor for review and approval. SED's have final approval authority for CDSEPC positions in each State. SED's have final approval authority for CDSEPC positions in each State.

These positions provide leadership and direction for all activities related to SEP's. Successful applicants should expect to devote **no more than** 20 percent of their time to the position. For additional information on CDSEPC competencies and skills see Exhibit 2.

C Management Appointment of CDSEPC's

CDSEPC's may be appointed by managers as follows:

- appointment by management
- management approval of applications as submitted by employees
- extension of expiring terms for CDSEPC's who are currently active.

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3 CDSEPC Position Selection (Continued)

D Timeframe for Selection and Required Notification

Selections and/or appointments of CDSEPC's must be completed within 30 calendar days from the date of this notice.

Notification of selections and/or appointments of CDSEPC's must be e-mailed to the following POC's for OCR and DAFO within 7 calendar days of the selection and/or appointment.

Points of Contact		
Contact Name	Telephone Number	E-Mail Address
MyaMya Myaing, OCR	202-401-7150	myamya.myaing@wdc.usda.gov
Barbara Boyd, DAFO	202-720-7890	barbara.boyd@wdc.usda.gov

E Documenting CDSEPC Positions

Collateral duty assignments shall be documented in an addendum to the employee's official position description and include the following:

- size and scope of the organization (including employee population, organization, and geographical coverage)
- percentage of employee's official duty time to be spent performing SEP duties
- scope of responsibilities and assigned SEP duties.

Note: When documenting CDSEPC's duties, include Exhibit 4 as an addendum to each CDSEPC's position description.

3 CDSEPC Position Selection (Continued)

F Documenting CDSEPC Performance

When documenting CDSEPC performance, the following standards (exact wording) will be incorporated as part of each AD-435A submitted. The standards, elements will be included as part of an existing performance standard, elements such as Special Projects, Execution of Duties, or Program Management.

- **Standard**

Coordinate at least 2 educational programs during FY 2013 (seminars, workshops, other types of programs, such as special emphasis observances) on a variety of subjects including diversity inclusion, career planning, interviewing techniques, team building skills, and supervisory development.

- **Standard**

Meet with other SEP Managers bi-annually and facilitate the development and maintenance of a SEP network.

- **Standard**

Host a minimum of 1 information session with managers, supervisors, and employees during FY 2013.

G Required Training for CDSEPC Positions

Newly appointed CDSEPC's are required to be trained. Additionally, all CDSEPC's are required to review the EEO laws and regulations, and understand the mission of the organization and also become fully aware of existing policies, programs, and organizational objectives. OCR has introductory "SEPM" training available for CDSEPC's.

CDSEPC Application (FSA-497)

The following is an example of the CDSEPC application.

<p>This form is available electronically.</p>		
<p>FSA-497 (10-01-12)</p>	<p align="center">U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE Farm Service Agency</p>	
<p align="center">COLLATERAL DUTY SPECIAL EMPHASIS PROGRAM (SEP) COORDINATOR</p>		
<p>NOTE: Employees seeking to expand their knowledge and acquire new skills on EEO and Civil Rights are encouraged to apply for Collateral Duty Special Emphasis Program Coordinator (CDSEPC) positions by submitting an application to their first line supervisor for review and approval. This position provides leadership and direction for all activities related to SEP's. Successful applicants should expect to devote no more than 20 percent of their time to the position. For additional information on CDSEPC competencies and skills.</p>		
<p>1. EMPLOYEE NAME</p>	<p>2. SERIES, GRADE AND TITLE</p>	
<p>3. OFFICE ADDRESS (Include Zip Code)</p>	<p>4A. TELEPHONE NUMBER (Include Area Code)</p>	<p>4B. FAX NUMBER (Include Area Code)</p>
<p>5. WORK EXPERIENCE (<i>BRIEF DESCRIPTION</i>): INCLUDE ANY ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE SPECIAL EMPHASIS AND CIVIL RIGHTS AREAS. USE SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY:</p>		
<p>6. COMMENTS (<i>INCLUDE YOUR INTEREST IN APPLYING FOR THIS POSITION</i>):</p>		
<p>7. STATEMENT OF CONCURRENCE FROM YOUR SUPERVISOR:</p>		
<p>8A. EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE</p>		<p>8B. DATE (MM-DD-YYYY)</p>
<p>9A. FIRST LEVEL SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE</p>	<p>9B. FIRST LEVEL SUPERVISOR'S TITLE</p>	<p>9C. DATE (MM-DD-YYYY)</p>
<p>10A. SECOND LEVEL SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE</p>	<p>10B. SECOND LEVEL SUPERVISOR'S TITLE</p>	<p>10C. DATE (MM-DD-YYYY)</p>
<p><small>The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all of its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, genetic information, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Stop 9410, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call toll-free at (866) 632-9992 (English) or (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (English Federal-relay) or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish Federal-relay). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.</small></p>		

Competencies and Skills Needed for SEP Collateral Duty Assignments

Note: The competencies and skills addressed herein cover Federal SEP collateral duties only. Employees assigned these collateral duties must possess certain competencies and skills for the occupational series and grade levels to which their positions are classified.

Definition of SEP Collateral Assignments

SEP collateral duty assignments are official EEO duties and responsibilities assigned to an employee in addition to the primary duties and responsibilities of the position the employee occupies.

Documenting EEO Collateral Assignments

Official EEO duties and responsibilities assigned to employees on a collateral basis must be described in the official position description that covers the position the employee occupies. This documentation reflects the requirements imposed on the position by the EEO collateral assignment and permits a determination that there is no grade-level effect of the collateral assignment.

Before SEP collateral duties are assigned to an employee, the agency should make a reasonable effort to determine if the assignment will affect the classification of the position including grade level, or otherwise, if it will constitute a non-collateral assignment.

Competencies and Skills Needed for SEP Collateral Duty Assignments (Continued)

Employees who receive SEP collateral duty assignments shall possess the following competencies and skills.

- Oral and written communication skills.
- Understanding how agency policies and practices affect the equal employment opportunities of all employees.
- Understanding the intent of the laws and regulations governing Federal equal employment opportunity.
- Personal commitment and demonstrated good judgment and ingenuity.
- Understanding the employment problems of underutilized persons and classes in the workforce and labor market, particularly, racial and ethnic minorities, women, older workers, people with disabilities, or the economically disadvantaged.
- Ability to analyze statistical data and make necessary recommendations.
- Ability to establish effective working relationships with and gain the confidence of managers and supervisors at all levels of the agency, as well as with employees regardless of their occupation, race, sex, ethnic heritage, or socioeconomic background.
- Potential to acquire the following:
 - knowledge of the general structure of the Federal personnel system, including classification, staffing, recruitment, performance evaluation, career development, labor relations, appeals, grievances, adverse actions, and employee rights and responsibilities
 - general knowledge of the missions, organizational structure, and distribution of responsibilities within the agency
 - understanding of the current labor market including types of jobs available, supply and demand for certain types of skills, recruiting methods, sources of recruitment, and projected employment needs of the agency.

SEP Areas and Observances

Required SEP Areas

The following 3 SEP areas are specifically required by regulation:

- Hispanic Employment Program
- Federal Women's Program
- People with Disabilities Program.

In addition, USDA has identified and incorporated four additional SEP areas, which include:

- African American/Black Employment Program
- Asian/Pacific Islander Program
- Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgendered Program
- Native American Program.

SEP Observances

The following special observances fall within the scope of, and support the objectives of the Department's current SEPs:

- Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Celebration (January)
- Black History Month (February)
- Women's History Month (March)
- Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month (May)
- Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgender Pride Month (June)
- Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15-October 15)
- Disability Employment Awareness Month (October)
- Native American Heritage Month (November).

Note: Other optional SEP observances may include:

- Cinco de Mayo (May 5)
- Women's Equality Day (August 26)
- Days of Remembrance/Victims of the Holocaust (April)
- Veterans Day (November 11).

SEP Collateral Duty Statement Addendum

The following SEP Collateral Duty Statement shall be attached as an addendum to each CDSEPC's position description.

Note: SEP collateral assignments are official SEP duties and responsibilities assigned to an employee *in addition* to the primary duties and responsibilities of the position the employee occupies. FSA Collateral-Duty personnel are authorized up to, but no more than 20 percent of official duty time to perform assigned collateral duties. The assigned SEP collateral duties and responsibilities will have no impact on the grade level of a position. SEP collateral duties will be evaluated as part of the duty execution element.

Duties: Participates in the planning, organizing, and/or development of SEP's on a variety of subjects. Develops and maintains networks that cross traditional social boundaries such as racial, ethnic, cultural, gender, sexuality, nationality, religion, disabilities and any other barriers relative to workforce diversity. Actively participates in SEP meetings and events. Prepares and submits final SEP reports. Partners with full-time SEP Coordinators, managers, and other stakeholders to perform collateral assignments and to achieve USDA SEP goals and objectives.