



Civil Rights Responsibilities for Partners Checklist

NRCS is required to deliver USDA Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity requirements and information with institutions that participate in or administer USDA federally conducted and/or federally assisted programs. To fully comply with Federal, Departmental, and Agency governing Civil Rights laws and regulations, this checklist serves as an internal guide to assist with the Civil Rights responsibilities and expectation discussion between NRCS and Partners.

Board Membership Responsibilities

- Annual review of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) and/or Cooperative Agreement between NRCS and Board.
- SWCD Board Demographic Information - NRCS Plan of Action for Representation on Boards, Councils, and Committees, requires States to annually review current Board membership data with state conservation agencies and discuss the opportunities and benefits of having minority and female representatives on local board/councils who are impacted by the board/councils decisions regarding conservation programs.
- Prohibition disclosure of certain information by the USDA and its Cooperators - Applicants, participants, location, and all privacy information is not to be disclosed without a FOIA request. Upon Board membership ending, former Board members have the responsibility to protect any information.
- New and existing partners are invited and should attend NRCS sponsored Civil Rights Training.

Federally Assisted and Federally Conducted Program Delivery Responsibilities

- 1964 Civil Rights Act - Title VI is a federal law that prohibits discrimination based on race, color or national origin in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance. Unlawful/prohibited discrimination is unfair or unequal treatment based on a prohibited basis.
- NRCS employees and partners who work with USDA programs are required to guarantee fairness and equal treatment to all customers eligible to receive USDA/NRCS programs and services regardless of any of the cited prohibited bases enforced by USDA:

race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, familial/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program Outreach

- NRCS State and Field offices are required to establish and maintain outreach programs at the local level to ensure that all persons know about the availability of USDA/NRCS program services effectively and are encouraged to participate: Board membership includes willingness to reach out to others, to reach out farther than others, to exceed normal communication expectation, or to go beyond existing limits to communicate with the under-served or under-resourced (women, minorities, persons with disabilities, historically underserved, limited resource, etc.)



Public Notification Responsibilities

- Governing documents relative to required equal employment opportunity public notification requirements that conservation partners must review are:

Secretary of Agriculture Civil Rights Policy Statement	USDA 'Sexual Harassment is Illegal' poster
USDA Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Policy Statement	FPAC EEO Counseling poster
USDA Anti-Harassment Policy Statement	FPAC LEP Translation and Interpretation Services Guide
USDA Nondiscrimination Statement	USDA LEP Services poster & Ispeak Card
'And Justice for All' posters	

- The public notification requirements must be prominently and visibly displayed in all offices where there is a USDA presence and where viewing is accessible for employees and customers.
- Compliance with Section 504¹ and Section 508² of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- Access public notification required documents on the Minnesota SharePoint under 230. These notifications have been consolidated from the USDA, FPAC, and NRCS Office of Civil Rights websites.
- Public notification documents attached: *(Review descriptions with partners)*

- Secretary of Agriculture Civil Rights Policy Statement** - affirms USDA's commitment to equality and civil rights for program delivery and employment with emphasize on USDA's zero tolerance for any form of discrimination or reprisal.
- USDA Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Policy Statement** - affirms USDA's commitment to conflict prevention to increase customer satisfaction and employee morale.
- USDA Anti-Harassment Policy Statement** - affirms USDA's commitment to maintaining an environment free from unlawful harassment (sexual and non-sexual).
- USDA Nondiscrimination Statement** - must be posted in all USDA offices and included on all materials produced by USDA for public information, public education, or public distribution. In addition to Section 504 and Section 508 requirements, the statement shall be made available in other languages appropriate to the local population served or directly affected by USDA program or activity.
- 'And Justice for All' posters** - primary method utilized to inform customers or their civil rights. Institutions participating or administering USDA programs are required to display the appropriate poster in respective facilities where poster can be viewed by customers. (NRCS applicable versions: Form AD-475-A, relevant to assisted programs; and Form AD-475-C, relevant to conducted programs.)
- USDA 'Sexual Harassment is Illegal' poster** - general preventive tips and guidance on filing sexual harassment claims.
- FPAC EEO Counseling poster** - employee information and guidance on filing an EEO complaint.

¹ Federal facilities and locations must be accessible for the public to guarantee access to persons with a disability.

² Public and employee notices regarding events and activities sponsored, co-sponsored, hosted, and or co-hosted by USDA, NRCS contain NRCS POC information including name, telephone number, email address, and a respond by date for persons to request accommodations (for example - an interpreter, translator, seating management, etc.) materials in an alternative format (for example - braille, large prints, audiotape - captioning, etc.)



8. **FPAC Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Translation and Interpretation Services Guide** - Federal agencies are required to provide meaningful access for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) customers in federally assisted and conducted programs. LEP customers are those who are not proficient in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language. FPAC offers translation and interpretation services to help customers and staff with overcoming language barriers.

9. **NRCS LEP Services poster & Ispeak Card** - provides notice to customers that LEP oral interpreter and written translation services are available at no cost to customer relative to NRCS federally assisted and federally conducted programs. Every service desk should have a copy of the I Speak card, which identifies languages available for interpretation or translation. The I Speak card and the poster help employees identify the language needs of the customer.

Affirmation of Review

Field Office _____ SWCD Board _____

	Printed Name	Signature
Board Member 1		
Board Member 2		
Board Member 3		
Board Member 4		
Board Member 5		

	Printed Name	Signature
NRCS Representative		

Date Affirmation signed: