

FY 2015 MD-715

Quarterly Report

October 1, 2014 – September 30, 2015

RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND ECONOMICS

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE

NOTE: Besides the data changes, highlighted are the changes from 3rd quarter.

The purpose of this report is to identify trends and barriers impacting the Agricultural Research Service's (ARS) efforts to be a model Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) employer. This report analyzes workforce data by race, gender, and employees with targeted disabilities (TD). One trend that we are not required to monitor, but provides a backdrop to our analysis, is age. **Eighty-one percent (4,512) of the ARS permanent workforce (5,574) is age 50 or over. Sixty (60) percent (3,365) of the total permanent workforce are eligible for retirement between 2015 and 2025. Of the 60 percent, 16 percent (538) are grades 13-SES in the identified major occupations.**

This report is more than just numbers. With each targeted group, we compared our numbers to the Civilian Labor Force (CLF). As this report explains in detail, **ARS continues to be underrepresented in Hispanic males and females, White females, African American males and females, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander males, American Indian males and females, Two or More Races males and females, and Persons with targeted disabilities (Persons with TD).**

MISSION AREA: Research, Education, and Economics (REE)

The ARS conducts research to develop and transfer solutions to agricultural problems of high national priority and provide information access and dissemination to ensure high-quality, safe food, and other agricultural products; assess the nutritional needs of Americans; sustain a competitive agricultural economy; enhance the natural resource base and the environment, and provide economic opportunities for rural citizens, communities, and society as a whole.

2015 Report (continued)

Workforce Composition (see A1 and B1 for details)

RACE	CLF 2010	FY15 Total	FY15 %	FY14 Total	FY14 %
HM	5.17	140	2.51	143	2.5
HF	4.79	90	1.61	90	1.57
WM	38.33	2,590	46.47	2,645	46.27
WF	34.03	1,706	30.61	1,790	31.32
BM	5.49	208	3.73	208	3.64
BF	6.53	314	5.63	326	5.7
AM	1.97	290	5.2	287	5.02
AF	1.93	170	3.05	168	2.94
NH/OPIIM	0.07	4	0.07	3	0.05
NH/OPIF	0.07	6	0.11	4	0.1
AI/ANM	0.55	25	0.45	19	0.33
AI/ANF	0.53	19	0.34	16	0.28
TMRM	0.26	1	0.02	8	0.14
TMRF	0.28	8	0.14	7	0.12
Persons with TD	2	62	1.11	62	1.08

PERCENTAGES BELOW THE CLF ARE ANNOTATED IN RED

Since 1st quarter, NH/OPIIM continues to be above the CLF.

WORKFORCE PROFILES

Variations are reported for the groups under the CLF, based on total permanent workforce 5,574. The number in parentheses is 3rd quarter 2015.

Groups below CLF	Variance
Hispanic male	149 (148)
Hispanic female	177 (178)
White female	191 (190)
African American male	99 (104)
African American female	50 (49)
American Indian male	6 (7)
American Indian female	11 (same)
Two or More Races male	14 (same)
Two or More Races female	8 (same)
Persons with TD	50 (51)

2015 Report (continued)

Grade Distribution – GS-13 – SES (Information from A & B4)

White males and females continue to dominate the GS-13 to SES positions.

Note: The single asterisk indicates that the groups were distributed in the subject grade level at less than their total workforce representation.

Grade	RNO/Gender	Number and Percent within Grade
13 (478 - decrease of 12)	White male*	212 (44.35)
	White female*	134 (28.03)
	Asian male	41 (8.58)
	Asian female	27 (5.65)
	African American female*	16 (3.35)
	African American male*	29 (6.07)
	Hispanic male	9 (1.88)
	Persons with TD	6 (1.22)
	Hispanic female*	6 (1.26)
	American Indian male	3 (0.61)
	American Indian female	1 (0.21)
	<i>Native Hawaiian male and female; and Two or More male and female not represented</i>	
<i>*Distributed less than total workforce representation</i>		
<i>Note 1: Since 2014, African American male are less than total workforce representation.</i>		
<i>Note 2: Since 3rd quarter, American Indian female has representation.</i>		
14 (617 - (same))	White male	346 (56.08)
	White female*	109 (17.67)
	Asian male	88 (14.26)
	Asian female*	21 (3.40)
	African American male*	19 (3.08)
	African American female*	13 (2.11)
	Hispanic male*	11 (1.78)
	Hispanic female*	6 (0.97)
	Persons with TD*	4 (0.65)
	American Indian male	2 (0.32)
	Native Hawaiian male	1 (0.16)
	Two or More Races female	1 (0.16)
<i>Native Hawaiian female; American Indian female, and Two or More Races male and female not represented.</i>		
<i>*Distributed less than total workforce representation</i>		

2015 Report (continued)

15 (732 – increase of 8)	White male	489 (66.80)
	White female*	104 (14.21)
	Asian male	84 (11.48)
	Hispanic male	20 (2.73)
	African American male*	10 (1.37)
	Asian female*	11 (1.57)
	Persons with TD*	6 (0.83)
	Hispanic female*	5 (0.68)
	African American female*	4 (0.55)
	American Indian male*	3 (0.41)
	American Indian female*	2 (0.27)
<i>Native Hawaiian male and female, Two or More Races male and female not represented.</i>		
<i>*Distributed less than total workforce representation</i>		
SES (32 – same)	White male	16 (50)
	White female*	7 (21.88)
	African American female	2 (6.25)
	African American male	2 (6.25)
	Asian male	2 (6.25)
	American Indian female	1 (3.13)
	Hispanic female	1 (3.13)
	Native Hawaiian male	1 (3.13)
<i>Hispanic male, Asian female, Native Hawaiian female, American Indian male, Two or More Races male and female, and Persons with TD not represented.</i>		
<i>Note: African American male has representation since 3rd quarter.</i>		
<i>*Distributed less than total workforce representation</i>		

Mission Critical Occupations

White males and females continue to dominate the mission critical occupations. The groups under each occupation are the groups that fall below the relative labor force (RLF)

Note: Since 3rd quarter, no increase or decrease of more than 2%.

- see tables A&B 6 for details:

0404, Biological Technician [1,287 or 23.08% of the ARS total current permanent workforce 5,574]

Hispanic male and female, White male, Asian male and female, American Indian male, and Persons with TD.

No representation for Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander male and female and Two or More Races male and female.

Note: Since 3rd quarter, African American male above the RLF.

0401, General Biological Science [324 or 5.8 percent (same)]

White male and female, African American male, Asian male, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander male, and Persons with TD.

No representation for Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander female, American Indian male, and Two or More Races male and female.

Note: Since 3rd quarter, White male, Asian male, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander female are below the RLF.

0440, Genetics [246 or 4.4 percent (same)]

Hispanic male and female, White female, African American male, Asian female, American Indian male, and Persons with TD.

No representation for African American female, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander male and female, American Indian female, and Two or More Races male and female.

1320, Chemistry [224 or 4.01 (same)]

African American male and female, White female, Asian female, and Persons with TD.

No representation for Hispanic female, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander male and female, American Indian female, Two or More Races male and female.

Note: Since 3rd quarter, White female, and Persons with TD are below the RLF.

0403, Microbiology [216 or 3.87 percent (same)].

Hispanic male, White female, African American male, Asian female, American Indian male, and Persons with TD.

No representation for Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander male and female, and Two or More Races male.

Note: Since 3rd quarter, American Indian males are below the RLF.

2015 Report (continued)

2210, Information Technology Management [186 or 3.33 (same)]

White male and female, Asian male, and Persons with TD.

No representation for Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander male and female and American Indian female, Two or More Races male.

Note: Since 3rd quarter, American Indian males are slightly above the RLF.

0201, Human Resources Management [92 or 1.65 percent]

Hispanic female, White male and female, and Asian female.

No representation for Hispanic male, Asian male, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander male and female, American Indian male, and Two or More Races male and female.

1102, Contracting [48 or 0.86 percent (same)]

White female and African American male.

No representation for Hispanic female, Asian female, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander female, American Indian or Alaska Native male and female, and Two or More Race male and female.

Note: Since 3rd quarter Hispanic male is above the RLF.

1101, General Business and Industry [24 or .43 percent]

Hispanic female and White male.

No representation for Hispanic male, African American male, Asian female, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander male and female, American Indian or Alaska Native male and female, Two or More Races male and female, and Persons with TD.

2015 Report (continued)

New Hires (207 permanent)

The following are being **hired less than their availability in the CLF** (*see tables A&B8 for details*): Hispanic male and female, White female, African American male, American Indian male, and Persons with TD.

No hires for Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander male and female, American Indian female, and Two or More Races male and female. Note: Since 3rd quarter, American Indian males were hired.

Total for FY 2015	Race/Gender
59	White female
93	White male
18	African American female
7	Hispanic female
10	African American male
5	Hispanic male
10	Asian male
4	Asian female
2	Persons with TD

Promotions

Total employees eligible for Career Ladder Promotions – *see Tables A&B 10 for details*)

2,162 (1,096 males and 1,066 females):

The following groups were distributed in separations at more than their availability in the ARS representation (groups underrepresented are bolded):

Hispanic female, White female, African American female, Native Hawaiian male and female, American Indian male, and Persons with TD.

Note: Since 3rd quarter, Asian male and female ARS representation is more than their separation distribution (same).

Time in grade in excess of minimum 1-12 months

190 (107 males and 83 females):

No promotions continue for: Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander female, American Indian female, and Two or More Races male and female.

Time in grade in excess of minimum 13-24 months

141 (64 males and 77 females):

No promotions continue for: Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander female, American Indian male, and Two or More Races female.

2015 Report - Promotions (continued)

Time in grade in excess of minimum 25+ months

1,606 (822 males and 784 females):

No promotions continue for: Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (NHOPI) female and Two or More Races male. No representation for NHOPI male or Two or More Races female.

Awards (*see Tables A&B13 for details*):

The following groups were distributed in the awards category at less than their ARS representation:

Time-off – 1-9 hours (357)

Hispanic male (1.68% vs. 2.51% in workforce);

Hispanic female (0.56 vs. 1.61);

African American male (1.40 vs. 3.73);

African American female (4.20 vs. 5.63);

Asian male (3.36 vs. 5.24);

Asian female (2.52 vs. 3.09);

Persons with TD (0.56 vs. 1.11)

Note: No representation for Native Hawaiian male and female, American Indian male, and Two or More Races male and female.

Time-off – 9+ hours (1,241 employees)

Hispanic male (1.53 vs. 2.53 in workforce);

Hispanic female (1.05 vs. 1.61);

White male (44.32 vs. 46.47);

African American male (3.14 vs. 3.73);

Asian male (3.38 vs. 5.22);

Asian female (2.82 vs. 3.09);

Persons with TD (0.97 vs. 1.13)

Note: No representation for Native Hawaiian male.

Cash Awards - \$100-\$500 (982 employees)

Hispanic male (2.14 vs. 2.51) – since 2014

White male (40.22 vs. 46.47)

Asian male (2.14 vs. 5.24);

Native Hawaiian female (0.10 vs. 0.11)

American Indian female (0.32 vs. 0.34)

Note: No representation for Two or More Races male and female.

2015 Report - Awards (continued)

Cash Awards - \$500+ (3,643 employees)

African American male (2.55 vs. 3.73);

African American female (4.69 vs. 5.63);

Asian female (2.72 vs. 3.09);

American Indian male (0.22 vs. 0.45);

Two or More Races female (0.03 vs. 0.14);

Persons with TD (0.63 vs. 1.11)

Note: No representation for Two or More Races male.

Quality Step Increases (420 employees)

Hispanic male (2.38 vs. 2.51);

White male (38.10 vs. 46.47);

African American male (2.62 vs. 3.73);

Note: No representation for Native Hawaiian male and female, American Indian female, and Two or More Races male and female.

SES AWARDS (2 cash awards)

Asian male (Group) – Asian male representation of total workforce – 6.25 percent or 2 of 32 SES employees

White male (Individual) – White male representation of total workforce – 50 percent or 16 of 32 SES employees

SES Representation from groups not receiving awards:

White female representation of total workforce = 21.89 percent or 7

African American male and female and Asian male = 6.25 percent or 2

Hispanic female, Native Hawaiian male, and American Indian female = 3.13 percent or 1

Note: Hispanic male, Asian female, Native Hawaiian female, American Indian male, Two or More Races male and female, and Persons with Targeted Disabilities not represented.

Separations (see Tables A&B14 for details):

Voluntary (378 compared to 380 in FY 2014) - The following groups continue to separate at more than their representation (underrepresented groups are bolded): **Hispanic female** (since 2014), **White female**, **African American female** (was lower in 2014), **Asian male and female**, **Native Hawaiian female**, **American Indian male**, and **Persons with TD**.

Note: Since 2014, White male ARS representation is more than their separation distributed; White female, Native Hawaiian female, and American Indian male separation is more than their availability.

Involuntary (8 compared to 15 in FY 2014) – 3 White males, 4 White females, and 1 Asian male.

2015 Report - Separations (continued)

In spite of a Departmental freeze regarding exit surveys, **ARS has made great progress in establishing a working prototype for a new Exit Survey.** Incorporating the effort into the larger project of upgrading and updating all Exit/Clearance Procedures, Policy and Procedure (P&P) 426-01 Exit Clearance procedures for REE, ARS has placed special emphasis on overcoming a Departmental level freeze on the initiative to produce a high quality Exit Survey. Besides meeting specific OPM requirements and objectives, additional care was taken to focus on the potential needs and concerns of the survey taker. On one hand a special emphasis was placed on ensuring a smooth functionality that led to a very efficient and clear experience by providing a logical order and flow to the questions and eliminating redundancy to shorten the time needed to complete the survey. Other steps were taken to emphasize and facilitate the anonymity of individual survey takers in order to increase their comfort level and encourage increased openness and frankness of the feedback acquired. **Survey results will provide a tool to be used to assess and manage turnover and retention. ODEO received draft questions to review and provided comments to HR in third quarter.** HR is working with the Office of the Chief Information Officer and currently testing SharePoint and eAuthentication as which vehicle to use. Varied entities' roles and responsibilities will need to be identified and collectively established. This part of the process is pending and will have impact on the deliverable of this action item. The tentative implementation date is December 31, 2016, however, that depends on the discussion of the roles and responsibilities.

When the tool is completed and its functionality validated, ARS will be moving on to organization-level discussions to resolve the administrative implementation. Issues of program ownership, data collection and interpretation, communication of lessons learned, and strategy development/ modification are on the table and being resolved in a way that will ensure that the data is not only collected, but ultimately utilized in a way that will have a profoundly positive impact on employee retention and organizational and individual development.

29 Veterans separated.

Recruitment and Retention of Veterans

1. Establishing a structure dedicated to employing Veterans

The Administrator issues the Diversity/Equal Employment Opportunity Policy Statement annually aligning with the Secretary's Civil Rights Policy Statement. The policy statement holds employees accountable to be proactive in creating and maintaining a competitive and qualified diverse workforce that reflects the diversity of today's society and states that disciplinary action will be taken for conduct or behavior that indicates discrimination, sexual or non-sexual harassment, and retaliation. The statement reflects the Agency's affirmative commitment to employment of eligible disabled veterans. It is ARS's policy to create a work environment which promotes and encourages the recruitment, hiring, retention, career development and advancement of all disabled Veterans.

2015 Report - Veterans (continued)

ARS ensures that disabled employees have accommodations needed to assist in carrying out the duties assigned for their positions. Employees with disabilities are regularly consulted on any barriers that may impair their ability to compete in the workplace because of disability.

Veteran Hires

28 veterans were hired [14 percent (same) of the 207 permanent total hires]. ARS currently employs 546 veterans. **ARS hired or converted 6 individuals under the Schedule A hiring authority.**

2. Providing employment counseling and skill training to transitioning service members

ARS includes a name and number of a human resources specialist on all of our vacancy announcements so applicants have someone to contact if they have questions or concerns or want to obtain reasonable accommodation for any part of the application process. Announcements include the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM's) Vet Guide web site address and directions on how to access veterans' information.

ARS allocates sufficient resources for training opportunities and education programs designed to provide maximum opportunities for disabled employees to advance. Supervisors and managers are very mindful of the ARS disability program obligation and continue to demonstrate a firm commitment to help disabled employees reach their potential. Career counseling is available.

ARS conducts periodic assessment to monitor progress, identifies areas where barriers may exist to exclude disabled employees, and develops plans to eliminate those barriers.

3. Implementing a marketing campaign to inform Veterans about ARS employment opportunities

ARS continues their partnership with Veteran Affairs for Vets/Veterans Employment Services Office to post job opportunity announcements which specifically target the veteran community. ARS has made 28 total hires (14 percent of the 207 permanent total workforce hires).

USDA held a non-competitive hiring event which targeted veterans. ARS hiring managers were in attendance and are expected to extend employment offers as a result of this event.

ARS continued to use a variety of recruitment sources such as conferences, hiring, fairs, briefings, vocational rehabilitation, Facebook and Twitter as outreach and recruitment sources to employ veterans and disabled veterans. An **Administrative and Financial Management (AFM) Communication was prepared and distributed** to ARS Leadership and Business Center Human Resources Staff on the Vets to Feds (V2F) Program. The OPM V2F Career Development Program was designed to help Federal agencies support our nation's veterans by developing them for careers with the Federal Government. This year V2F is focusing on Science,

2015 Report - Veterans (continued)

Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) opportunities for veterans. OPM is asking Federal agencies to consider participation in the V2F program by hiring veterans in entry level STEM positions, GS-5/7/9. This opportunity is a great way to achieve one of the Secretary's cultural transformation goals – that 25 percent of all FY 2015 hires will be veterans. **Goal not completed in FY 2015 – ARS hired 28 veterans of the 207 permanent hires (14 percent).** ARS employs approximately 546. **ARS sent out AFM Communications on “Non-competitive Appointment of Certain Military Spouses” and the “USDA Portal for Veterans and People with Disabilities”** which houses resumes for hiring managers to review and consider.

ARS is the only agency in the REE mission area that has the authority to recruit outside hires through the Demonstration Project (DEMO authority). The use of DEMO authority gives veterans greater preference than the preference given to them by standard OPM hiring procedures.

4. **Building a mechanism to provide timely employment information and resources to Veterans**

An **AFM Communication was developed and distributed** on the USDA Portal for Veterans and People with Disabilities which encouraged hiring managers to utilize this resource for hiring people with disabilities non-competitively. This opportunity is a great way to achieve one of the Secretary's cultural transformation goals – that 25 percent of all FY 2015 hires will be veterans. **Goal not completed for FY 2015 – ARS hired 28 veterans of the 207 permanent hires (14 percent).**

Developed and distributed AFM Communication on the Just-in-Time-Toolkit for the purpose of building a disability inclusive workforce in REE. Prior to this, collaborated with Departmental Disability Employment Program Manager and representatives from Cornell University to review the information contained in the toolkit and host a training session for the Business Service Centers Human Resources Specialists which unveiled the web site.

Conducted a webinar for REE hiring managers on REE Hiring Authorities and Flexibilities. The presentation fully documented all of the authorities and flexibilities available to hiring managers in one clear and concise document. There were 45 attendees. Positive feedback was received from three attendees, including the Associate Deputy Administrator, AFM Deputy Director, National Agricultural Library (NAL), and Administrative Officer, Southeast Area.

USDA held a non-competitive hiring event which targeted veterans. ARS hiring managers were in attendance and are expected to extend employment offers as a result of this event.

ARS includes a name and number of a human resources specialist on all of our vacancy announcements so applicants have someone to contact if they have questions or concerns or want to obtain reasonable accommodation for any part of the application process.

2015 Report - Veterans (continued)

Announcements include OPM's Vet Guide web site address and directions on how to access veterans' information.

ARS promoted the referral for noncompetitive consideration of all qualified disabled Veterans and supported Federal and Departmental initiatives, which included exploring all employment opportunities that integrated veterans into the workforce.

ARS will continue to:

- Ensure that recruitment efforts are consistently coordinated in order to obtain maximum effectiveness and efficiency where appropriate.
- Ensure that recruitment announcements and literature reflect the Agency's desire to reach all segments of potential workforce, including eligible disabled candidates.
- Proactively look for opportunities to use the Veterans Readjustment Authority to fill vacancies.
- Strengthen and expand resources for obtaining resumes of disabled veterans.
- Publish vacancy announcement that include information indicating expanded eligibility for preference eligible in accordance with the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act.

Persons with TD

Of the 5,574 permanent employees, 1.11 percent (62) are Persons with TD (increased 0.03 percent from 2014). Two Persons with TD were hired and 5 separated.

UPDATE OF ARS SELF-ASSESSMENT (Part G)

The following summarizes ARS's effort to meet the EEOC's six essential elements:

Essential Element A: Demonstrated Commitment from Agency Leadership

ARS continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to equal opportunity for all employees, applicants, and service recipients. The 2015 (dated 2014) Diversity/Equal Employment Opportunity, Anti-Harassment and Sexual Harassment Policy Statements were completed; however, they were placed on hold under the direction of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OASCR), Policy Division. Until this delay, on an annual basis, **ARS' practice has been to send the policies (in addition to the Secretary's statement and other USDA policies) to all ARS employees**, in addition to Areas posting the policies in a visible location, and **placed on the ARS home page**. Since 2014, the **statements are placed in each employee's AgLearn learning history**. Once the employees read the policy statements, the AgLearn accounts are updated stating that they read and understand the policies. All ARS employees are **to certify that they have read and understand the policies by April 15, 2015. As of September 30, 2015, 96 percent of the employees certified**. As of September 30, 2015, 28 percent have completed the USDA Anti-harassment policy via AgLearn which is due November 30. As requested by OASCR a progress report was sent.

2015 MD-715 Report (continued)

Managers and supervisors are evaluated through their performance plans regarding their commitment to ARS EEO policies and principles.

Training Plan:

No Fear Comprehensive Training

Targeted Audience: All new employees

Time Period: Ongoing

Delivery Methods: AgLearn; Hard-copy when necessary

No Fear Refresher Training

Targeted Audience: All Employees

Time Period: Every 2 years

Delivery Method: AgLearn; Hard-copy when necessary

Reasonable Accommodation Training

Targeted Audience: National Institute of Food and Agriculture Employees

Time Period: October 15, 2014

Delivery Method: Face-to-face

Reasonable Accommodation Webinar

Targeted Audience: USDA Employees, Managers and Supervisors

Time Period: October 22, 2014

Delivery Method: Webinar & Face-to-face

Disability and Legislative Reasonable Accommodation Training

Department Issued Training via AgLearn

Targeted Audience: All Employees

Time Period: Deadline December 2014

Delivery Methods: AgLearn; Hard-copy when necessary

Age Discrimination Training

Targeted Audience: All Employees

Scheduled Dates: Provided on an as needed basis and via Agency Policy

Delivery Methods: EEOC Sponsored Webcast; Future webinars; Agency Policy Statements; Hard-copy

Overview of EEO Topics (Complaints Processing, Reasonable Accommodation; Conflict Resolution (Mediation))

Targeted Audience: New Employees Orientation – Beltsville, Maryland

Time Period: Provided on Semi Annual Basis and as needed

Delivery Method: Face-to-face

ARS MD-715 Report – Training Plan (continued)

Reasonable Accommodation Training and EEO Overview

Targeted Audience: NAL Employees

Time Period: February 19, 2015

Delivery Method: Face-to-face

Overview of EEO Topics (Complaints Processing, Reasonable Accommodation; Conflict Resolution

Targeted Audience: Supervisory and Non-supervisory employees

Time Period: Provided on as needed basis

Delivery Methods: Webcasts; Webinars; Face-to-Face

Reasonable Accommodation Training

Targeted Audience: Supervisory and Non-Supervisory Employees

Time Period: Provided on Semi-Annual Basis; Also provided on an as needed basis

Delivery Methods: Webcasts; Webinars; Face-to Face

Reasonable Accommodation Training

Targeted Audience: All Employees

Time Period: October 2015

Delivery Methods: Webcasts; Webinars

Management Directive 715 Briefings

Targeted Audience: Supervisory and Non-Supervisory Employees

Time Period: Provided on an as needed basis

Delivery Methods: Webcasts; Webinars; Face-to-Face

The Bully At Work

Targeted Audience: All Employees

Time Period: Provided on an as needed basis

Delivery Methods: Webcasts; Face-to-Face; Webinars

Civility Matters

Targeted Audience: All Employees

Time Period: Provided on an as needed basis - Dates to be determined

Delivery Methods: Webcasts; Face-to-Face; Webinars

Working Styles/Strengthening Our Communication Skills

Targeted Audience: All Employees

Time Period: On an as needed basis

Delivery Method: Face-to-Face

Effective Communication

Targeted Audience: All Employees

Time Period: January – On an as needed basis

Delivery Method: Face-to-Face

ARS MD-715 Report – Training Plan (continued)

Special EEO Training – Topics Determined By EEO Complaint statistics and EEO-related issues

Targeted Audience: Supervisory and Non-Supervisory

Time Period: Dates Determined on an as needed basis

Delivery Methods: Face-to Face; Webcasts; Webinars

*Other designed topics and dates may be updated.

Trainings:

- The USDA Early Resolution and Conciliation Division sponsored a face-to-face *Brief Introduction to ADR* at Headquarters – 34 ARS employees attended.
- **ARS' completion percentage rates for the No Fear Comprehensive and No Fear Refresher Training remain at 100 percent.**
- **ARS sponsored a Reasonable Accommodation Webinar**, in conjunction with the USDA Target Center and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission - **130 ARS employees participated** nationwide. As an additional employee resource, a copy of the webinar has been downloaded in each employee's Aglearn account for review. The webinar was also shared with the Department as well as other USDA agencies. The webinar will remain in Aglearn indefinitely.
- ARS employees were requested to review and certify that they had read the Reasonable Accommodation Information Poster downloaded in each employee's Aglearn account. The Reasonable Accommodation Poster is also displayed in noticeable office locations throughout the agency. Deadline for completion of the review is October 1, 2015. **Currently 75 percent of ARS employees have completed the review.**
- The REE Reasonable Accommodation Program Manager conducted a Reasonable Accommodation Briefing for the Economic Research Service - 30 employees participated.
- Diversity Training and Awareness – Ninety-five percent of ARS employees completed the Department's mandatory Diversity and Inclusion Training.

Essential Element B: Integration of EEO into the Agency's Strategic Mission

ARS achieved 154 percent of the goals in the ARS Strategic Plan (increase was because the goal was met/exceeded in most of the underrepresented groups).

Updates:

Review and issue annual policy statements regarding EEO/civil rights, anti-harassment, and sexual harassment to promote an environment free from discrimination, sexual or non-sexual harassment, and retaliation to 100 percent of ARS employees:

Accomplished 100 percent:

ARS' practice has been to send the policies (in addition to the Secretary's statement and other USDA policies) to all ARS employees, in addition to Areas posting the policies in a visible location, and placed on the ARS home page. **The statements are placed in each employee's AgLearn learning history.** Once the employees read the policy statements, the AgLearn accounts are updated stating that they read and understand the policies. **100 percent employees certified** that they have read and understand the policies.

Develop and submit annual EEO Program Status reports to EEOC and the Department aimed at eliminating barriers to hire women, underrepresented groups based on the Civilian Labor Force (CLF) and persons with disabilities:

Accomplished 100 percent:

ARS submitted the FY 2014 within the requested timeframe to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OASCR) and the Equal Employment Commission. The report was also submitted electronically into EEOC's Federal Sector EEO Portal in the requested time frame. The quarterly reports were submitted by the OASCR due date.

The annual MD-715 Executive Summary is posted on the ODEO website <http://www.ars.usda.gov/AboutUs/docs.htm?docid=23090>.

The **MD-715 Program Manager developed a training module and coordinated with the AgLearn team to place MD-715 training into all ARS employee's AgLearn Learning History** to be completed by July 7, 2015. Mandatory Audience was All Hiring Managers, HR Personnel, Special Emphasis Program Managers, and Recruiters (MD-715 is included in the REE Recruitment Agreement Appendix A). Other employees were encouraged to take the training for their awareness. A total of **86 percent of all ARS employees** have completed the training (1,354 of 5,574 were managers/supervisors).

ARS MD-715 Report – Part G-Element B (continued)

Expand outreach activities in K-12 schools, universities/colleges, minority servicing institutions and organizations that cater to persons with disabilities providing education about scientific research to include percentage of underrepresented groups based on the CLF. ARS's goal is to increase the annual percentage of new hires by 75 percent of the following groups compared to the new hire FY 2011 data (goal is noted in parentheses): White female (49); Hispanic male (3); Hispanic female (2); African American/Black male (11); African American/Black female (18); and persons with targeted disabilities (1).

154 percent Accomplished - Although ARS continues to conduct activities in K-12 schools, universities/colleges, minority serving institutions and organizations that cater to persons with disabilities providing education about scientific research, the above goal to increase the annual percentage of new hires by 75 percent was *not accomplished for all groups under the CLF, however*, 5 groups exceeded ARS' hiring goals).

The following goals were accomplished:

- White females (59 or **120** percent);
- Hispanic males (5 or **166** percent);
- Hispanic female (7 or **350** percent);
- African American/Black female (18 or **100** percent); and
- Persons with targeted disabilities (2 or **100** percent).

The following lists the other hires based on the underrepresented groups: African American/Black male (10 of 11 – 91 percent).

There were no hires for the following groups: Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander males and females; American Indian female; and Two or More Races male or female. One hire for American Indian male. There was no goal established because in 2011, these mentioned groups were not underrepresented.

Use Schedule A hiring authority for persons with disabilities and Veteran Hiring Authorities as part of strategy to recruit and retain a diverse workforce. ARS' goal is to increase the annual percentage of veteran new hires by 75 percent or 62 veterans.

Not accomplished [73 percent accomplished because Schedule A is used (100 percent), however, 45 percent of the 75 percent hiring goal was accomplished]:

Throughout the fiscal year HRD has reminded hiring managers of the hiring flexibilities and resources available to them for hiring persons with targeted disabilities. The HRD Recruitment Staff developed a brochure (*TAB D*) and poster for job seekers with disabilities to be used at recruitment fairs and events targeting persons with disabilities and promoting ARS as the employer of choice. **28 veterans were hired** (14 percent of the 207 permanent total hires). ARS currently employs 546 veterans. **ARS hired or converted 6 individuals under the Schedule A hiring authority.**

Reporting to the Agency Head

The Director of the ARS, Outreach, Diversity, and Equal Opportunity (ODEO) reports directly to the Administrator. The Director serves as an advisor to the Administrator and Associates and retains a seat on the Administrator’s Council (senior management team), thereby preserving visibility and influence at the Agency level. The ODEO Director and staff (including Area ODEO Program Managers) continue to provide information to employees and customers regarding recruitment strategies, vacancy projections, succession planning, selections for training/career development opportunities, and other workforce changes.

The ODEO Director presented the State of the EEO program to the newly appointed Administrator (African American female).

Element C: Management and Program Accountability

- ARS holds managers and supervisors accountable for hiring and retaining a diverse workforce through the REE Recruitment Agreement, in particular, Appendix A, which requires the ARS hiring managers utilize the MD-715 in the recruiting process in efforts to increase diversity. The specific Area Outreach, Diversity, and Equal Opportunity Program Manager or staff member assigned pulls the MD-715 A&B1 to show the groups under the CLF; total number of Veterans by race, gender and targeted disability; and suggested institutions/schools to recruit depending on the specific groups under the CLF. If it is for a scientific position, scientific workforce is included.
- Since 2001, with the exception of 2013 because the ARS awards program was being revised, ARS recognizes its employees for exemplary achievements in promoting a diverse workplace free from discrimination, harassment, retaliation and demonstrated commitment to workforce diversity. There are two categories – supervisory and non-supervisory. Annual nominations are solicited and designed to provide an opportunity for all employees in different occupational series to fairly compete for the award. The award panels diverse and include minority representation. Requests for panelists are made to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights and all USDA Civil Rights Directors. The winners were determined in April 2015 by two USDA Special Emphasis Program Managers and the Economic Research Service Civil Rights Director. Recommendations was approved by the ODEO Director and the Administrator. The Administrator announced the award winners on July 9 and they were formally recognized at the ARS Annual Awards Ceremony on September 15, 2015.
- The Administrator established the ARS Engagement Council to provide coordination, guidance and leadership for employee engagement activities across ARS. Among the engagement actions include webinars where employees have the opportunity to discuss concerns with senior management. The Council is constantly updating the Administrative Council (Senior Leadership). One activity that the Council encouraged was to take “Flat Stanley” to various outreach events and publish on

2015 Report – Element C (continued)

Axon for all employees to see the activities conducted by scientists and other employees. **Note:** Axon is an ARS intranet, a central place where employees can find, access, and share information and resources needed to perform their jobs more effectively).

ARS Holding Managers and Supervisors Accountable for Achieving a Diverse Work Force

It is ARS's goal to ensure leadership accountability for hiring and retaining a diverse workforce. To achieve this goal, ARS has implemented the USDA Diversity Road Map by accomplishing the following:

1. Leadership Accountability and Commitment

Diversity Officer

Accomplished: The Outreach, Diversity, and Equal Opportunity (ODEO) Director is the ARS Diversity Officer.

Establish and Maintain Special Emphasis Working Group

Accomplished: ARS has National Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPM) serving on advisory councils for Asian American and Pacific Islanders; African Americans; Persons with Disabilities; Hispanics; Lesbian, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered; Native Americans; Women; and Veterans. The ODEO Area Program Managers serve as the Area SEPMs, except for the Pacific West Area, whom has SEPMs in each location. A LGBT representative was newly appointed upon the retirement of the previous representative, however, that position is currently vacant.

SES Incorporate Diversity Goals in Performance Plans

Accomplished: All GS-15 and below supervisors within ARS had goals related to the Secretary's Cultural Transformation and USDA Diversity Roadmap added to their performance requirements in the Supervision and Human Capital Management Performance Element.

Provide Monthly Reports to OHRM

Accomplished: ARS submits monthly reports by the 15th of each month to the Department on employee engagement efforts. Additionally, ARS submits quarterly reports to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights on overall demographics (total workforce including veterans and persons with disabilities), hires, promotions (competitive and non-competitive by grade only), separations, awards, executive Summary identifying the gaps in under-representation and action items that are being pursued according to the Part I of the MD-715. The quarterly reports are shared with the Administrative Council (ARS' senior management team).

2015 Report – Element C (continued)

Evaluate Staffing/Hiring Process

Accomplished: In compliance with the On-boarding requirements, all supervisors are utilizing the Supervisor’s On-boarding checklist to ensure all new employees are provided essential information. In addition, all new employees are being assigned a Sponsor to assist them and are provided access to the on-boarding website at www.dm.usda.gov/obp.

ARS continues to hold managers and supervisors accountable for hiring and retaining a diverse workforce through the REE Recruitment Agreement, in particular, Appendix A, which requires the ARS hiring managers utilize the MD-715 in the recruiting process in efforts to increase diversity.

To demonstrate our Agency’s commitment to diversity and EEO, the Administrator established a group that was comprised of staff from Administrative and Financial Management (including Human Resources Division) and the Office of Outreach, Diversity, and Equal Opportunity **to develop a Diversity Recruitment Plan to increase diversity in underrepresented populations throughout the Agency.**

Conduct Workforce Analysis

Accomplished: Through the MD-715 process, ARS conducts a workforce analysis to identify areas of underrepresentation at all grade levels and occupations, with emphasis on GS-13 to SES position and mission critical occupations. ODEO and HRD continue to work together to eliminate the barriers identified by conducting an analysis, that prevent diversity within the workforce.

Analysis shows variances needed for the following groups to reach the CLF: Hispanic male (149); Hispanic female (177); White female (191); African American male (99); African American female (50); American Indian male (6); American Indian female (11); Two or More Races male (14); Two or More Races females (8); and Persons with Targeted Disabilities (50).

Using End-of-Year Funds to Develop Initiatives to Enhance Professional Development

Not Accomplished: 97 percent of ARS employees have current Individual Development Plans. 85 percent of supervisors met/will meet with their employees to review their IDP progress within the fiscal year.

2. Outreach and Partnership

Establish Partnerships with Minority-Serving Groups and Employee Associations

Accomplished: ARS continues outreach activities at K-12 schools, 1862 colleges/universities, minority serving institutions and other organizations to educate students about ARS career opportunities. Activities are coordinated with the ARS Outreach and Recruitment Branch and the Information Staff K-12 Outreach Coordinator.

Provide Outreach and Funding to Minority-Serving Institutions (data is for FY 2014 because 2015 data will not be available until mid-December).

Accomplished:

ARS provided over \$13,421,021 million in cooperative research funding to minority-serving institutions.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) 16.75 percent increase	\$2,870,976
Hispanic Serving Institutions 31 percent increase from 2013	\$1,135,715
Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCU) 50 percent decrease	\$10,000
Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions 60 percent increase	\$5,625,383
American Indian and Alaska Native Serving Institutions 344 percent increase	\$3,778,947

3. Recruitment and Hiring

Develop Strategic Marketing Recruitment Tools and Advertisement of Employment Opportunities

Accomplished

The ARS Outreach and Recruitment Branch continues to utilize the 2012 creation of “Follow Your Dreams and Change the World” recruitment poster featuring Glenn Cason, a former USDA/1890 and student intern sponsored by ARS ODEO. As part of Mr. Cason’s internship, ARS was able to create/expand partnerships with land-grant institutions, OGC, and National Ag Law Center to help increase underrepresented groups in the ag law fields, including civil rights. Mr. Cason is currently working for USDA-Office of General Counsel on behalf of ARS.

2015 Report – Element C (continued)

To demonstrate our Agency’s commitment to diversity and EEO, the Administrator established a group that was comprised of staff from Administrative and Financial Management (including Human Resources Division) and the Office of Outreach, Diversity, and Equal Opportunity **to develop a Diversity Recruitment Plan to increase diversity in underrepresented populations throughout the Agency.** The plan contains several goals with several corresponding objectives which are accompanied by action/improvement strategies and fully supports the USDA’s Cultural Transformation Action Plan, the USDA Diversity Road Map, and OPM’s Guidance for Agency-Specific Diversity. This is in accordance with the requirements identified in Executive Order 13583, which focuses on cultivating a diverse and inclusive work environment through national policy, development, diversity programs, workforce analyses, and education and training to best serve the Agency’s employees, customers, and key stakeholders. Our Senior Executive Service members will be held responsible for specific goals within our plan to improve and further increase diversity and inclusion within our organization. Additionally, these points are also addressed and further emphasized in the ARS Human Capital Plan.

Areas/Locations continue outreach activities at K-12 schools, 1862 colleges/universities, minority serving institutions and other organizations to educate students about ARS career opportunities. Coordinate with the ARS Outreach and Recruitment Branch and the Information Staff K-12 Outreach Coordinator.

ARS requires workforce demographic data to be included in recruitment requests/approvals (REE Recruitment Agreement – Appendix A). Each permanent recruitment process requires that one of the ODEO Program Managers or ODEO staff serve as a non-voting member of the panel in the role of EEO Observer to ensure that the entire review process is fair, equitable and in alignment with CR/EEO policies.

On a weekly basis the ARS Outreach and Recruitment Staff submits vacancy announcements to a ListServe that reaches approximately 5,000 institutions/organizations which serve underrepresented groups and persons with disabilities.

Establish Strategies and Implement Programs to Target Recruitment Efforts Based on MD-715

Accomplished: 28 veterans were hired (14 percent of the 207 permanent total hires). ARS currently employs 546 veterans. **ARS hired or converted 6 individuals under the Schedule A hiring authority.**

Based on the MD-715 Plans to increase diversity, ARS will continue to conduct outreach activities in K-12 schools, minority serving colleges and universities and organization to increase the representation of the following groups that continue to fall below the Civilian Labor Force: Hispanics, African Americans, White females, American Indians, Two or More Races, and Persons with Targeted Disabilities.

2015 Report - Element C (continued)

ARS is actively working to ensure alignment to the recently shared Draft USDA Strategic Succession and Workforce Plan as well as use best practices to establish and formulate the ARS Succession Plan prior to the prescribed FY 2016 Quarter 1 deadline. ARS has also tasked ARS managers and supervisors to take proactive steps to eliminate “Single Points of Failure,” utilizing reorganization and/or cross-training to build redundancy requisite skills and minimizing the short-term impact of unplanned losses. ARS is also in the primary stages of evaluating the potential of Phased Retirements in minimizing the loss of corporate knowledge upon the career transition of our more experienced personnel.

ARS continues to encourage and support employee engagement in the active participation of the USDA Coaching Program. ARS has also tasked managers and supervisors to promote and encourage participation in this program to further support individual and organizational performance; provide adequate support to enable personal transformation and career role transition; support the development of future leaders for the organization by enhancing leadership and management competences; provide an environment to explore solutions to a specific challenge; and support and facilitate the creation of an organizational culture that values learning, creativity, and continuous improvement. ARS is actively researching and identifying training opportunities to enhance employees’ professional development.

The Succession and Workforce Plan outlines goals and strategies focusing on issues and strategies in each of the following four areas, all of which relate back to the Office of Personnel Management’s Human Capital Framework systems, a framework used to guide and evaluate federal human capital programs:

- Recruitment and Retention
- Employee Development and Training
- Work and Organization Change/Accountability
- Knowledge Management and Transfer

The Administrator established a group consisting of the Administrator’s Chief of Staff, Director of the Office of the Outreach, Diversity, and Equal Opportunity, and staff from the Administrative and Financial Management (Deputy Administrator and Directors of HRD, Budget, etc.). The group developed a draft recruitment plan titled “ARS Workforce Strategy for Increased Diversity” and submitted to the Administrator to be implemented during FY 2015.

ARS continues to utilize the DR-4020-250-002, Position Management and Vacancy Control. ARS expects all hiring managers to complete the associated checklist, which requires hiring managers to consider special hiring authorities; consult with the Area Office of Outreach, Diversity and Equal Opportunity Program Managers on hiring/recruitment efforts and outreach; to review current workforce profile data and stated agency diversity goals and the statement of efforts to address underrepresentation. In addition to the checklist required by the DR, ARS managers are being required to review the OPM Shared List of People with Disabilities before they can move forward with the competitive hiring process.

2015 Report – Element C (continued)

Publish Workforce Information

Accomplished: The MD-715 is shared with the Administrator’s Council (senior management), plus the Area Outreach, Diversity and Equal Opportunity (ODEO) Program Manager distributes to their hiring managers. The executive summary of the MD-715 plus general information about the MD-715 is posted at <http://www.ars.usda.gov/AboutUs/docs.htm?docid=23090>.

Agencies Survey Demographics Data on Quarterly Basis

Accomplished: ARS review demographics on a quarterly basis and shares those reports with the senior management, plus submitted to the Area ODEO Program Managers to distribute to their hiring managers. Quarterly reports are submitted to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights.

The A&B1, Veteran data from NFC Reporting Center, and scientific data from the Visual Powerfile EEO is provided to hiring managers when they start the hiring process using the REE Recruitment Agreement, Appendix A to determine the best recruitment strategy to increase diversity.

Establish and Implement Strategies to Increase Hiring People with Disabilities and Veterans

Accomplished: Based on the highly technical nature of our research scientist and scientific support positions, the agency receives relatively few qualified applications from individuals with targeted disabilities. In order to address this barrier, we have focused our outreach efforts on positions for which there is a larger pool of potential candidates with disabilities such as office support, technician, and wage system positions. Additionally, special initiatives will include continued participation on the “Workforce Recruitment Program” which targets college students and recent college graduates with disabilities and the use of open continuous vacancy announcements which specifically solicit candidates with non-disqualifying disabilities. Throughout the fiscal year, HRD has reminded hiring managers of the hiring flexibilities and resources, such as the Office of Personnel Management’s (OPM) Shared List of People with Disabilities, available to them for hiring persons with targeted disabilities. The HRD Recruitment Staff developed a brochure and poster for job seekers with disabilities to be used at recruitment fairs and events targeting persons with disabilities and promoting ARS as the employer of choice. **ARS hired or converted 6 individuals under the Schedule A hiring authority.**

28 veterans were hired for permanent positions – 14 percent of the 207 permanent ARS total hires.

Develop and Implement a Hiring Plan for 2015 Summer Intern Program

ARS utilized the Department’s request for summer student hiring statistics (including RNO data) to remind managers of the requirement to remain cognizant of diversity in their summer student hiring efforts. The following groups of students continue to fall below the CLF: Hispanic males, White females, and African American males and females. All other groups were slightly above or equal to the CLF which was about the same in 2014.

4. Retention and Promotion

Establish Baseline and Track Data and Monitor Results Regarding Hiring, Retention and Promotion of Employees in Underrepresented Groups

Accomplished: On a quarterly basis, ARS continues to monitor and track data regarding the hiring, retention, and promotion of employees in groups under the Civilian Labor Force (Hispanics, African Americans, White females, American Indians, Two or More Races, and Persons with Targeted Disabilities) utilizing FY 2011 as a baseline:

Hires:

Hispanic males	+66 percent (FY 2011 = 3; FY 2015 = 5)
Hispanic females	+133 percent (FY 2011 = 3; FY 2015 = 7)
White females	-7.8 percent (FY 2011 = 64; FY 2015 = 59)
AA/Black males	-33 percent (FY 2011 = 15; FY 2015 =10)
AA/Black females	-21.7 percent (FY 2011 = 23; FY 2015 = 18)
Persons with TD	+50 percent (FY 2011 = 1; FY 2015 = 2 - same)

Note: No hires for Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander male and female, American Indian female and Two or More Races male and female.

Separations (voluntary):

Hispanic males	-28.5 percent (FY 2011 = 7; FY 2015 = 5)
Hispanic females	-12.5 percent (FY 2011 = 8; FY 2015 = 7)
White females	+7.29 percent (FY 2011 = 137; FY 2015 = 147)
AA/Black males	-7.6 percent (FY 2011 = 13; FY 2015 = 12)
AA/Black females	+3.5 percent (FY 2011 = 28; FY 2015 = 29)
Am. Indian males	+200 percent (FY 2011 = 0; FY 2015 = 2 -same)
Am. Indian females	-66 percent (FY 2011 = 3; FY 2015 = 1 - same)
Two+ Races males	Same (0)
Two+ Races females	-100 percent (FY 2011 = 1; FY 2015 = 0)
Persons with TD	+67 percent (FY 2011 = 3; FY 2015 = 5)

Note: The following groups were distributed in separations at more than their ARS representation (**all are below the CLF**): Hispanic female, White female, African American female, American Indian male, and Persons with TD.

2015 Report – Element C (continued)

Promotions:

Hispanic males	-33 percent (FY 2011 = 9; FY 2015 = 6)
Hispanic females	-33 percent (FY 2011 = 6; FY 2015 = 4)
White males	-51 percent (FY 2011 = 250; FY 2015 = 123)
White females	-44 percent (FY 2011 = 219; FY 2015 = 123)
AA/Black males	-54 percent (FY 2011 = 22; FY 2015 = 10)
AA/Black females	-59 percent (FY 2011 = 61; FY 2015 = 25)
Asian males	-48 percent (FY 2011 = 29; FY 2015 = 15)
Asian females	0 percent (FY 2011 = 12; FY 2015 = 12)
Am. Indian males	- 100 percent (FY 2011 = 1; FY 2015 = 0)
Am. Indian females	Same (FY 2011 = 0; FY 2015 = 0)
Two+ Races males	+100 percent (FY 2011 = 0; FY 2015 = 2)
Two+ Races females	-50 percent (FY 2011 = 2; FY 2015 = 1)
Persons with TD	-50 percent (FY 2011 = 4; FY 2015 = 2)

At the end of the fiscal year, ARS gained access via One USDA eRecruit for the following worktables for the first time: *A&B7, Applications and Hires; A&B9, Selections for Internal Competitive Promotions for Major Occupations; and A&B11, Internal Selections for Senior Level Positions (GS 13/14, GS 15, and SES)*. A complete report will be provided in the 1st quarter FY 2016 report.

Conduct Exit Survey Interviews

NOT ACCOMPLISHED, however, process has begun to implement by December 31, 2016.

In spite of a Departmental freeze regarding exit surveys, **ARS has made great progress in establishing a working prototype for a new Exit Survey.** Incorporating the effort into the larger project of upgrading and updating all Exit/Clearance Procedures, Policy and Procedure (P&P) 426-01 Exit Clearance procedures for REE, ARS has placed special emphasis on overcoming a Departmental level freeze on the initiative to produce a high quality Exit Survey. Besides meeting specific OPM requirements and objectives, additional care was taken to focus on the potential needs and concerns of the survey taker. On one hand a special emphasis was placed on ensuring a smooth functionality that led to a very efficient and clear experience by providing a logical order and flow to the questions and eliminating redundancy to shorten the time needed to complete the survey. Other steps were taken to emphasize and facilitate the anonymity of individual survey takers in order to increase their comfort level and encourage increased openness and frankness of the feedback acquired. **Survey results will provide a tool to be used to assess and manage turnover and retention. ODEO received draft questions to review and provided comments to HR in third quarter.** HR is working with the Office of the Chief Information Officer and currently testing SharePoint and eAuthentication as which vehicle to use. Varied entities' roles and responsibilities will need to be identified and collectively established. This part of the process is pending and will have impact on the deliverable of this action item. The tentative implementation date is December 31, 2016, however, that depends on the discussion of the roles and responsibilities.

2015 Report – Element C (continued)

When the tool is completed and its functionality validated, ARS will be moving on to organization-level discussions to resolve the administrative implementation. Issues of program ownership, data collection and interpretation, communication of lessons learned, and strategy development/ modification are on the table and being resolved in a way that will ensure that the data is not only collected, but ultimately utilized in a way that will have a profoundly positive impact on employee retention and organizational and individual development.

OHRM Will Implement On-Boarding in First Quarter 2011

In compliance with the On-boarding requirements, all supervisors are utilizing the Supervisor's On-boarding checklist to ensure all new employees are provided essential information. In addition, all new employees are being assigned a Sponsor to assist them.

5. Diversity Training and Awareness

OHRM Will Provide to Enable Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPMs)

Accomplished:

The majority of the SEPMs are/have:

- are certified from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Training Institute for the EEO Training for New EEO Counselors.
- completed the ARS ODEO sponsored Civil Rights Impact Analysis Training conducted by the OASCR in FY 2012.
- completed the ARS ODEO sponsored Compliance Review Training conducted by the Natural Resources and Conservation Service (2013).
- completed SEPM training provided by the OASCR or Graduate School.
- All SEPMs with the exception of the newly appointed LGBT SEPM (appointed February 3, 2015, however, this is currently a vacant position as of September 2015) attended the August 13, 2014 SEPM training.

Conduct Diversity Training

Accomplished: Ninety-five (95) percent of ARS employees completed the Department's mandatory Diversity and Inclusion Training. See Training Plan details on pages 14-16.

Plan and Execute a Multicultural Day OHRM Will Provide Training to Enable Special Emphasis Program Managers

Not accomplished: ARS has not planned a multicultural day nor to our knowledge has OHRM provided training. ARS employees attend the Special Emphasis Program observances in person or via video (after the observance). Additionally, the five Areas/approximately 100 Locations sponsor events to educate employees of cultural differences and to value, respect, and be allowed to perform at their fullest potential.

ARS continues to participate in the annual Take Your Daughters and Sons to Work Day held at the Whitten Patio, educating the students about science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) academic disciplines. **ARS ODEO sponsors Take Your Daughters and Sons to Work Day for Headquarters employees, in particular for those located in the Beltsville**, which is more efficient for those parents

2015 Report – Element C (continued)

to bring students to learn more about the STEM academic disciplines. The attendance was approximately 77 students in 2015 (ranges between 75-100 – ages 8-18, plus at least one parent/guardian. Scientists are sought to display interactive scientific exhibits.

Establish New Category for Honor Awards that Recognizes Accomplishments in Diversity and Recruitment

Accomplished: Since 2001, with the exception of 2013 because the ARS awards program was being revised, ARS recognizes its employees for exemplary achievements in promoting a diverse workplace free from discrimination, harassment, retaliation and demonstrated commitment to workforce diversity. There are two categories – supervisory and non-supervisory. Annual nominations are solicited and designed to provide an opportunity for all employees in different occupational series to fairly compete for the award. The award panels diverse and include minority representation. Requests for panelists are made to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights and all USDA Civil Rights Directors. The winners were determined in April 2015 by two USDA Special Emphasis Program Managers and the Economic Research Service Civil Rights Director. Recommendations was approved by the ODEO Director and the Administrator. The Administrator announced the award winners on July 9 and they were formally recognized at the ARS Annual Awards Ceremony on September 15, 2015.

Establish a Multi-faceted Communications Plan Utilizing Social Media to Ensure Leaders, Supervisors, and Employees Understand USDA's Commitment to Diversity and Accountability

Accomplished:

Tools used to communicate with external customers:

- ARS Administrator's Blog: *The Administrator publishes a monthly blog highlighting various employees that cause a difference not only within USDA, but to our customers.*
- ARS Engagement Council: *The Council was created with all ARS employees in mind to provide coordination, guidance and leadership for engagement activities across ARS.*
- ARS and You: *ARS's monthly employee newsletter is designed to convey the vast diversity of ongoing and progressive activities in ARS. It's a tool to keep ARS employees in touch with one another.*
- ARS on Twitter: *Self-explanatory.*
- ARS Listening Session Notes: *Notes from the Listening Sessions are posted under the Administrator's Corner via Axon, available to all employees.*

2015 Report – Element C (continued)

- *Inform and Engage Webinars: Beginning in late May 2014, the new ARS Administrator and other senior leaders held monthly meetings with Area/Staff employees on various topics such as ARS Budget, Selling Your Research, Scientific Ethics, specific Area information, etc. These meetings were designed to allow employees and senior leaders to speak together in smaller groups than a large ARS-all webinar.*
- *Leave Transfer Program Listing: The Leave Transfer Program benefits employees who have experience a personal medical emergency or family medical emergency. This program gives all employees an opportunity to voluntarily donate annual leave or restored annual leave to leave recipients.*
- *Science 4 Kids (Sci4Kids): The work of ARS scientists reaches far beyond the crop field and barnyard. In fact, the Agency has a long history of helping protect U.S. military personnel from biting insects while deployed. Sci4Kids is a web site (<http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/kids>) that provides science spotlights; science projects; teachers' desk (Variety of teacher-ready activities to accompany the stories and other features in the Sci4Kids web site. Activities are designed not only to help kids learn about agricultural research but also to strengthen reading skills and stimulate creative thinking), and cool careers (explains the various scientific careers within ARS).*
- *StARS: ARS' informal peer recognition program designed to give employees a way to recognize anyone in ARS for exemplifying the best in USDA; a nomination shows appreciation for something done above and beyond regular business.*
- *Your Two Cents (Y2C): Your Y2C is a venue for employees to share their ideas, best practices and innovations for work, office and ARS. Y2C is not intended for the following topics: EEO" issues; Leave and Benefits; Alternative Dispute Resolution; and Waste, Fraud, and Abuse.*
- *ARS and REE Newsletters: ARS also contributes articles to the USDA Cultural Transformation (CT) newsletter.*
- *USDA Connect: Administrative and Financial Management uses USDA Connect (minimal use – has been determined that employees are not utilizing) and SharePoint to communicate with ARS employees regarding restructuring and other issues.*

6. Employee Development and Recognition

Track Participation Rate of Underrepresented Groups Who Have Individual Development Plans (IDPs) Through AgLearn and Virtual University

Accomplished: ARS has some very good mentoring programs. They are, as they should be, specific to local and area situations. ARS has established a draft directive for a Mentoring Program and is working towards implementation in FY 2016. The 2015

Report – Element C (continued)

Mentoring Program will be accessible to all employees in the agency for voluntary participation. As part of the new Supervisory Program in ARS, consideration for all new supervisors to establish a relationship with a mentor. ARS continues to adhere to the requirement of the On-Boarding Program, all ARS supervisors are required to assign “sponsors” to all new employees.

Track Participation Rate of Underrepresented Groups Who Have Mentors Through AgLearn and Virtual University

Accomplished: New employees are surveyed after approximately 120 days on the job. ARS is working with the Virtual University as a participant in its Coaching Workgroup to implement USDA coaching best practices and leverage USDA coaching resources at ARS. ARS continues to encourage and support employee engagement in the active participation of the USDA Coaching Program. ARS has also tasked managers and supervisors to promote and encourage participation in this program to further support individual and organizational performance.

Track Participation Rate of Underrepresented Groups Who Participate in Developmental Details through NFC

N/A: According to the OPM Guide to Processing Personnel Actions, details cannot be processed in NFC. Therefore, comprehensive data is not currently available on the participation rate of underrepresented groups who participate in developmental details.

Essential Element D: Proactive Prevention

- As of this reporting period, ARS has conducted the 7 scheduled compliance reviews in FY 2015. Based on the findings, the Areas/Locations have requested training from the Office of Outreach, Diversity, and Equal Opportunity regarding the MD-715, Reasonable Accommodation, EEO Complaint process, and the Cooperative Resolution Program (CRP) process.
- One (1) Civil Rights Impact Analyses (CRIA) was conducted under the 1010 process (renewal of the Biotechnology and 21st Century Agriculture Advisory Committee (not reported this FY). Another CRIA requiring 1010 authority (Fort Collins, Colorado and Cheyenne, Wyoming) was started at the end of the FY. The status will be updated in the FY 2016 1st quarter. Nine (9) CRIAs were completed that did not require 1010 approval (not reported this FY).
- Through the utilization of the ARS non-EEO early resolution ADR services, ARS makes every effort throughout the complaint process to educate employees about the benefits of utilizing ADR. The following displays the number of offers and acceptances regarding the ADR process for informal and form EEO complaints:
Informal: 22 offered, 1 accepted (no resolution)
Formal: 8 offered, none accepted

2015 Report – Element D (continued)

The ARS ODEO staff continues to educate all employees and customers about improving communication through the utilization of our non-EEO early resolution ADR services. The following trainings were conducted:

1st Quarter FY 2015

“Cooperative Resolution Program/Reasonable Accommodation Briefing”, Midwest Area

(MWA) Leadership Conference, Ames, Iowa
(80 supervisors)(12/2/14)

“Understanding Working Styles/Tools for Addressing Workplace Conflict”, MWA, Farm Management Unit, National Animal Disease Center, Ames, Iowa

(1 supervisor, 6 non-supervisors)(12/4/14)

2 sessions, 81 supervisors; 6 non-supervisors

2nd Quarter

“Strengthening Our Communication Skills/Cooperative Resolution Program Briefing”, Southeastern Area (SEA), Richard B. Russell Center, Athens, GA

(31 supervisors, 37 non-supervisors)(2/11/15) (2 sessions)

2 sessions, 31 supervisors; 37 non-supervisors

3rd Quarter

No trainings.

4th Quarter

“Cooperative Resolution Program Briefing”, National Agricultural Statistical Service (NASS) Administrative Management Workshop, Beltsville, MD

(45 supervisors, 0 non-supervisors)(7/22/15)

1 sessions, 45 supervisors; 0 non-supervisors

TOTAL FY 2015: 5 sessions, 156 supervisors; 43 non-supervisors

Conflict Coachings 10 (decrease of 30 percent from 2014)

Facilitated Dialogues 27 (increase of 3 percent from 2014)

Group Facilitations – 7 (same as 2014)

Mediations (non-EEO and Early Intervention) – 6 (2 resolved; 4 unresolved; 1 withdrawn – decrease of 60 percent from 2014)

2015 Report (continued)

Essential Element E: Efficiency

Until the end of the FY 2015, ARS did not have tracking capability, which was a deficiency.

Update: At the end of the fiscal year, ARS gained access via One USDA eRecruit for the following worktables for the first time: *A&B7, Applications and Hires; A&B9, Selections for Internal Competitive Promotions for Major Occupations; and A&B11, Internal Selections for Senior Level Positions (GS 13/14, GS 15, and SES)*. A complete report will be provided in the 1st quarter FY 2016 report.

Essential Element F: Responsiveness and Legal Compliance

ARS follows USDA EEOC reporting requirements and complies with EEO orders or directives. The NFC is responsible for payroll processing. Therefore, ARS has no control over the complaint payment process.

Status for FY 2015 Complaints

Informal complaints filed: 23

Formal complaints filed: 15

Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR):

Informal: 22 offered, **1** accepted (no resolution)

Formal: 8 offered, **none** accepted

Monetary Payouts: Informal: \$2,500 Formal: \$140,000

Investigative costs: \$52,729

CRP continues to take a more informal approach to addressing one-on-one issues by conducting more facilitated dialogues rather than mediation as mentioned above.

Counseling Process

In 2015, ARS continued to make progress in improving the efficiency of its complaint processing.

I. **Counseling**

- a. ARS timely processed 100 percent of the 22 **pre-complaint counselings ending for the reporting period.**
- b. ARS will continue to monitor the agencies’ counselor training requirements.
- c. The following displays the number of offers and acceptances regarding the ADR process for informal and formal EEO complaints:
 - Informal: 22** offered, **1** accepted (no resolution)
 - Formal: 8** offered, none accepted

II. **Bases of Complaints Filed**

- a. The bases of alleged discrimination raised in the 15 complaints filed was age, reprisal, and sex.

III. **Complaint Processing Times**

Note: Agency investigations are completed by Employment Investigation Division (EID).

- a. EID completed 8 investigations in the 180-day timeframe.
- b. ARS’s average processing time for all complaint closures **decreased from 504 days in FY 2014 to 322 in FY 2015** (3rd quarter).

Note: Closures include FAD, settlements, and withdrawals.

2015 Report – Element F (continued)

IV. **Cost**

ARS expended a total of \$52,729 for 16 complaint investigations for an average expenditure of \$3,295.

ARS Use of ADR for EEO Dispute Resolution in FY 2015	Complaints
Completed/Ended Counseling/Complaint Closures	22
Total Number Offered ADR	22
ADR Offer rate	100%
ADR Participation Rate	0
Total ADR Settlements	0 (informal)
Total ADR Settlements Amount	\$0.00

	Total #	#Timely	%
All Pre-complaint Counseling	22	22	100
All Investigations	16	8	
All Complaint Closures	16		
Merit Decisions (no AJ)	6	5	0
Dismissal Decisions (no AJ)	2	2	0

*APD = Average Processing Days

2015 Report - Element F (continued)

Outcome of Complaints in FY 2015						
	Complaint Closures		FAD* (no AJ Decision)		Final Order (AJ Decision Fully Implemented)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total Complaints Filed	15		0	0	0	0
Total Closures	15					
Settlements	7					
Withdrawals	0					
Total FADS	8					
Dismissals	2					
Merit Decisions	6					
Finding Discrimination	0					
Finding No Discrimination	6					

*FAD = Final Agency Decision

- A. FAD processing – FADs are administered by the Department’s Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights.
- B. EEO Investigations – Agency investigations are completed by Employment Investigation Division (EID).
- C. Settlement Agreements – ARS does not receive feedback from the Department. If a settlement is reached at the informal stage, the Agency obtains guidance from OGC. At the formal stage, an OGC representative works with management to finalize the terms of the agreement.
Note: ARS Civil Rights Office manages the EEO process completely separate from OGC.
- D. ARS submitted timely submissions of all reports associated with the requirement of the No FEAR Act. ARS’ No FEAR data can be accessed via ODEO’s website <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ODEO> with a link to the USDA’s website <http://www.usda.gov/nofear/ars/indexars.html>.
Note: Complaint processing data is based on the 462 report.

Summary of EEO Plan Objectives to Eliminate Identified Barriers (Part I)

Objective 1

Following the guidance of the USDA Diversity Roadmap, ARS will continue to encourage managers and supervisors to take affirmative steps to recruit, hire, advance and retain employees with low participating rates, including employees with targeted disabilities.

Accomplishments: Although Hispanic males and females, White females, African American/Black males and females, American Indian males and females, and Two or More Races males and females fall under the Civilian Labor Force, the following have increased in hiring since 2011 (baseline): African American/Black male and female; American Indian male; and Two or More Races female.

Hires:

Hispanic males	+66 percent (FY 2011 = 3; FY 2015 = 5)
Hispanic females	+133 percent (FY 2011 = 3; FY 2015 = 7)
White females	-7.8 percent (FY 2011 = 64; FY 2015 = 59)
AA/Black males	-33 percent (FY 2011 = 15; FY 2015 =10)
AA/Black females	-21.7 percent (FY 2011 = 23; FY 2015 = 18)
Persons with TD	+50 percent (FY 2011 = 1; FY 2015 = 2 - same)

Note: No hires for Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander male and female, American Indian female and Two or More Races male and female.

ARS hiring managers utilize the MD-715 in the recruiting process in efforts to increase diversity.

Status of Activities to above objective:

PLANNED ACTIVITY	TARGET DATE/ STATUS
HRD and ODEO to review and finalize the exit interview survey. During this reporting period, ODEO provided comments to HR. HR is working with the Office of the Chief Information Officer and currently testing SharePoint and eAuthentication as which vehicle to use. Varied roles and responsibilities will need to be identified and collectively established.	October 31, 2016 <i>Updated from April 1, 2016</i>
Implement the exit interview survey.	December 31, 2016

2015 Report – Part I (continued)

Objective 2

Increase advancement opportunities for women, employees with targeted disabilities, and groups with low participation rates.

Accomplishments: ARS managers and supervisors continue to promote leadership trainings. Four sessions were conducted FY 2015 with 8 participants (race and gender data not captured).

Status of Activities to above objective:

PLANNED ACTIVITY	TARGET DATE/ STATUS
ODEO develop a matrix for a baseline to assist in the evaluation of Area Directors on their commitment to removing barriers to workforce diversity through the annual review.	March 30, 2016
Area Directors continue to commit to utilizing the career enhancement and mentoring programs to ensure their employees are being trained for senior level positions within ARS.	Completed - will continue in 2016
Areas/Locations continue outreach activities at K-12 schools, 1862 colleges/universities, minority serving institutions and other organizations to educate students about ARS career opportunities. Coordinate with the ARS Outreach and Recruitment Branch. Note: ODEO was coordinating with the Information Staff K-12 Outreach Coordinator, however, that position has been abolished.	Completed - will continue in 2016

Summary of EEO Plan Objectives to Eliminate Identified Barriers (Part J)

ARS’s goal is to increase the number of hires for Persons with TD by 1 percent based on 74 (2011 baseline) - 1.

Accomplished: 2 hires as of this reporting period.

Updates:

- Part IV The USDA Portal for Veterans and People with Disabilities is a resource that has been frequently utilized by hiring managers to make selections for their positions.

2015 Report – Part I (continued)

- ARS hired or converted 6 individuals under the Schedule A hiring authority.
- The REE Reasonable Accommodation Program Manager continues to provide training to managers, supervisors and employees via classroom presentations, briefings and webinars on the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment guidelines as well as on the Reasonable Accommodation Program. The training also focused on the specifics of reasonable accommodation and the assistance it provides to qualified individuals with disabilities including veterans. As a result, many disabled veterans were able to continue to perform their job duties successfully when accommodations were provided.
- Developed and distributed AFM Communication on the Just-in-Time-Toolkit for the purpose of building a disability inclusive workforce in REE. Prior to this, collaborated with Departmental Disability Employment Program Manager and representatives from Cornell University to review the information contained in the toolkit and host a training session for the Business Service Centers Human Resources Specialists which unveiled the web site.
- Conducted a webinar for REE hiring managers on REE Hiring Authorities and Flexibilities. The presentation fully documented all of the authorities and flexibilities available to hiring managers in one clear and concise document. There were 45 attendees. Positive feedback was received from three attendees, including the Associate Deputy Administrator, AFM Deputy Director, National Agricultural Library (NAL), and Administrative Officer, Southeast Area.

	Y/N	Comments
CRD Reports to Agency Head	Y	Page 19
Succession Plan		In process - See page 24 – Implementation date is September 30, 2015
Barrier Analysis Conducted	Y	Pages 2-10
Applicant Flow Data Collected	Y/N	Not completely meeting the EEOC requirement – see page 27
Targeted Disability Goal Met	N	Met the Agency goal, however, not the EEOC goal of 2 percent nor the OHRM goal of 4 percent. See page 38 for details.