1. **PURPOSE**

This Departmental Regulation (DR) establishes the training policy for USDA civil rights programs and equal employment opportunity (EEO). It also establishes oversight and accountability responsibilities for Federal employees and Agencies delivering Federally assisted and Federally conducted programs for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (Department or USDA). Annual training plans must comply with the requirements of this DR, but nothing in the DR precludes Agencies, Staff Offices, National Appeals Division (NAD) or Office of Inspector General (OIG) from conducting additional and supplemental civil rights training throughout the year.
2. SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

This regulation supersedes DR 4120-1, Annual Departmental Civil Rights Training, dated September 18, 1998.

Any exceptions or variations to mandatory civil rights training must be approved by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OASCR).

3. SCOPE

This DR covers civil rights training responsibilities for USDA Agencies, Departmental Management, Staff Offices, NAD, and OIG. OASCR will provide guidance, oversight, and accountability over all civil rights training outlined in their annual training plans. Annual training plans must comply with the requirements of this DR, but nothing in the DR precludes Agencies, Staff Offices, NAD or OIG from conducting additional and supplemental civil rights training throughout the year.

4. POLICY

All Federal employees, including contractors, political appointees, and appointed representatives, as well as, those who represent USDA, those who administer USDA programs, and recipients who distribute USDA program benefits, are accountable and expected to understand, comply with and abide by USDA’s civil rights policies, procedures and practices as these pertain to employment and program delivery.

OASCR is responsible for providing overall leadership, direction, oversight, and accountability for USDA’s annual civil rights training programs and for ensuring that training is designed in a manner that fully enables all USDA employees, those who represent USDA, those who administer USDA programs, and recipients who distribute USDA program benefits, to understand, prevent, and correct practices which could result in discrimination or have a discriminatory effect.

5. DEFINITIONS

a. Accountability. The obligation of holding agency officials, managers, supervisors, and other employees responsible for complying with the requirements contained in this DR.

b. Ad Hoc Training. A special request for training or certification due to emerging or unanticipated civil rights issues.
c. Agency. For purposes of this directive, agency is defined as a major program organizational unit of the Department with delegated authorities to deliver agricultural or food programs, activities, benefits, or services. The term “agency” does not include Departmental Management or Staff Offices.

d. Agency Head. The administrator, chief, or director of an Agency who is the official named or designated to have primary responsibility for the management of the Agency as delegated under 7 C.F.R. Part 2.

e. Agency Head Assessment. The annual assessment of Agency Heads and Staff Office Directors by OASCR, utilizing the Civil Rights Performance Plan and Accomplishment Report (the Plan), to evaluate and rate each Agency and Staff Office for effectiveness and compliance with the Department’s civil rights policies and regulations. The Plan requires the Agencies and Staff Offices to annually assess their civil rights activities and accomplishments and submit a report to OASCR to ensure civil rights accountability throughout USDA. The civil rights accomplishment rating issued by OASCR serves as a representative rating of the Agency Heads and Staff Office Directors.

f. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). Any number of conflict resolution techniques that assist employees, managers, supervisors, Agencies, and USDA customers in resolving disputes.

g. Annual Training. Begins on the first day of the fiscal year (October 1); and is to be completed by the last day of the fiscal year (September 30) or as determined by OASCR.

h. Assisted Programs and Activities. Program services, benefits or resources delivered through a recipient of USDA funding or assistance to an ultimate beneficiary.

i. Conducted Programs and Activities. Program services, benefits or resources delivered directly to the public by USDA.

j. Departmental Management. USDA’s central administrative management organization that provides support to policy officials of the Department, and overall direction and coordination for the administrative programs and services of USDA. In addition, Departmental Management manages the Headquarters complex and provides direct customer service to Washington, D.C. area employees.

k. EEO Complaint Process. All actions and procedures undertaken in an EEO complaint, including but not limited to, counseling, acceptance, dismissal, investigation, ADR, hearing, final agency decision, appeal, remand, and the right to file a civil action.
l. Employee. An individual employed in any position within USDA. Contractors, interns, and volunteers may be included under this definition; however, specific criteria must be met in order for them to be classified an “employee” for EEO purposes.

m. Federal Financial Assistance. Includes (1) grants and loans of Federal funds, (2) the grant or donation of Federal property and interests in property, (3) the detail of Federal personnel, (4) the sale and lease of, and the permission to use (on other than a casual or transient basis), Federal property or any interest in such property or the furnishing of services without consideration or at a nominal consideration, or at a consideration which is reduced for the purpose of assisting the recipient, or in recognition of the public interest to be served by such sale, lease or furnishing of services to the recipient, and (5) any Federal agreement, arrangement, or other contract which has as one of its purposes the provision of assistance.

n. Managers. Employees in positions with vested authority to direct the work of an organizational unit, and are held accountable for the execution of specific line or staff functions, monitoring and evaluating the progress of the organization toward meeting goals, and making adjustments in objectives, work plans, schedules, and commitment of resources. Such individuals may serve as head or assistant head of a major organization within a bureau; or direct a specialized program of marked difficulty, responsibility, and national significance.

o. Partners. Individuals or entities not employed by USDA who have a role in administering USDA funded programs including those who represent USDA, those who administer USDA programs and recipients who distribute USDA program benefits and contractors.

p. Program Complaint Process. All actions and procedures undertaken in a discrimination complaint involving conducted or assisted programs and activities, including but not limited to, acceptance, dismissal, investigation, ADR, final agency decision, closures and where applicable, appeals and the right to file a civil action.

q. Supervisors. Employees that accomplish work through the direction of other people. Those directed may be subordinate Federal civil service employees, whether full-time, part-time, intermittent, or temporary; non-Federal workers; unpaid volunteers; student trainees, or others.

r. Supplemental Training. Training provided beyond the mandatory training required by this DR that offers more opportunity for in-depth knowledge and understanding of specific EEO topics, programmatic civil rights obligations or non-discrimination policies as determined by OASCR or other Federal oversight entities. Training of this type addresses emerging or perennial issues or corrects deficiencies found as a result of compliance reviews, assessments, or other investigations.
s. **Staff Office.** An administrative office with a specialized support function. All Staff Offices report to the Secretary of Agriculture, with the exception of NAD, and OIG which are in the Secretary’s reporting chain but have independent authority and reporting responsibilities. Examples of Staff Offices are The Office of the Chief Financial Officer and Office of the General Counsel.

t. **Training.** A program of instruction based on a course or courses related to an employee’s civil rights, job responsibilities, or professional development. Training is inclusive of traditional classroom, correspondence courses, self-study, online courses, university/college courses, professional conferences, seminars, and workshops that are educational or instructional in nature. Training is intended to improve individual and organizational performance and assist in achieving the agency’s mission and performance goals.

u. **USDA Civil Rights Training Community.** USDA Agencies, Departmental Management, Staff Offices, NAD and OIG collectively partnering on civil rights training and related initiatives.

6. **RESPONSIBILITIES**

a. **OASCR**

OASCR has lead responsibility for the guidance, oversight, and accountability of USDA’s training on civil rights. Specifically, OASCR is responsible for:

(1) Providing:

(a) by April 1 of each year, a notice to USDA Agencies, Departmental Management, Staff Offices, NAD and OIG, of the criteria/standards for preparing the proposed annual training plans for the ensuing fiscal year;

(b) direction for the preparation and submission of the proposed annual civil rights training plans;

(c) a response to USDA Agencies, Departmental Management, Staff Offices, NAD and OIG proposed annual training plans by August 1;

(d) assistance and oversight for special events and commemorative civil rights educational programs and activities for the benefit of USDA employees and partners;

(e) leadership and guidance to ensure collaboration and information sharing within the USDA civil rights training community;
(f) annual mandatory and supplemental civil rights training for Departmental Management, Staff Offices, NAD and OIG, upon request.

(g) an approval or disapproval decision no later than September 15 of each year to all USDA Agencies, Departmental Management, Staff Offices, NAD and OIG annual training plans;

(h) training in response to emerging or ad hoc civil rights issues; and

(i) an assessment of Agency, Departmental Management, Staff Offices, NAD and OIG compliance with their training plan(s) and this DR, including the Agency Head Assessment process.

(2) Assessing:

(a) all USDA Agencies, Departmental Management, Staff Offices, NAD and OIG proposed annual training plans to ensure:

1. accountability for training activities;

2. anticipated training outcomes are in sync with their respective mission and civil rights objectives, and the intent of the DR on Training; and

3. availability of adequate resources for conducting training activities.

(b) the effectiveness and consistency of all USDA civil rights training plans (on EEO issues, conducted programs, and assisted programs including training of recipients), on an annual basis, and whether it supports the Department’s civil rights goals and helps to improve USDA’s record on civil rights and projects future training needs; and

(c) USDA Agencies, Departmental Management, Staff Offices, NAD and OIG compliance reports, agency head assessments, complaint histories and other sources of pertinent information to identify areas where mandatory or supplemental training is required to correct deficiencies or address emerging issues.

(3) Establishing:

(a) civil rights training objectives which must be met by USDA Agencies, Departmental Management, Staff Offices, NAD and OIG;
(b) completion dates;

(c) partnerships with diverse professional and educational organizations to enhance USDA’s overall civil rights training program;

(d) credentialed OASCR trainers (long-term and temporary) to assist with the development and implementation of USDA civil rights educational initiatives; and

(e) a process that ensures all USDA Agencies, Departmental Management, Staff Offices, NAD and OIG certify all mandatory or other required civil rights training by the announced completion date.

(4) Collaborating with:

(a) USDA Agencies, Departmental Management, Staff Offices, NAD and OIG to ensure that they:

1. achieve common civil rights goals through joint effort;
2. create an evolving and dynamic body of knowledge;
3. validate their employees have received appropriate training;
4. establish a cadre of credentialed subject-matter experts to provide training;
5. use a variety of training methods and techniques (e.g., classroom, webinar, USDA electronic learning systems, online, etc.) to deliver and monitor the effectiveness of civil rights training; and
6. achieve civil rights training that results in transformative practices.

(b) other Federal Departments, USDA Agencies, and entities (such as land-grant institutions), on civil rights training initiatives.

b. USDA Agencies

In conducting annual civil rights training, all USDA Agencies shall be held responsible for:

(1) Providing:
(a) annual mandatory and supplemental civil rights training to their respective employees, managers and supervisors, civil rights practitioners, employees who deliver conducted programs, employees who administer assisted programs, and recipients of assistance or benefits pursuant to the Agency’s OASCR-approved annual civil rights training plan; and

(b) a cadre of credentialed trainers (long-term and temporary) for the development and implementation of all civil rights training outlined under their OASCR approved training plans.

(2) Assessing:

(a) training activities to ensure support of the Department’s civil rights goals;

(b) capacity to provide mandatory civil rights and other required training;

(c) methods for tracking, recording, and certifying that all employees have completed mandatory and other required civil rights training requirements by the announced completion date;

(d) civil rights compliance reports, agency-head assessments, complaint histories and other sources of pertinent information to identify areas where supplemental or mandatory training is required to correct deficiencies or potential problems; and

(e) effectiveness of the annual civil rights training, and the number of employees trained and/or expected to be trained.

(3) Holding Agency Heads, Supervisors and Managers accountable through their performance review appraisal for:

(a) ensuring that their training plans are implemented and effective; and

(b) carrying out all of the responsibilities as required in this this DR.

(4) Preparing:

(a) a proposed annual civil rights training plan, for the ensuing fiscal year, that is submitted to OASCR no later than June 1 of each year;
(b) a final OASCR approved annual civil rights training plan, for the ensuing fiscal year, that is ready for implementation no later than September 30 of each year; and

(c) and submitting ad hoc civil rights training requests to OASCR within 15 business days of when the need arises.

(5) Offering:

(a) civil rights training opportunities to program participants in the assisted programs and activities administered by the Agency and to partners that assist the Agency in delivering assistance or benefits.

(6) Collaborating with OASCR:

(a) before and during the development and submission of the Agency’s proposed annual civil rights training plan;

(b) to implement all training that OASCR requires to correct and/or prevent civil rights issues;

(c) and other Departmental offices in designing, developing, and delivering the annual civil rights training, ensuring a variety of training methods and techniques are used to effectively deliver civil rights content and respond to a variety of learning styles; and

(d) in supporting the Department’s annual civil rights training with funding, staff assistance, onsite coordination of training delivery, and by encouraging employees to apply the principles learned in civil rights training in the workplace.

(7) Appointing a representative to:

(a) serve as a primary point of contact to OASCR for all civil rights training;

(b) serve on temporary teams and advisory groups to assist in USDA civil rights training initiatives, and to provide recommendations on a variety of related civil rights training priorities and actions; and

(c) monitor results, impacts and effects of civil rights training to reduce compliance problems and the overall number of complaints.
c. Departmental Management, Staff Offices, NAD and OIG

To ensure annual civil rights training occurs, Departmental Management, Staff Offices, NAD and OIG, in collaboration with OASCR, shall be held responsible for:

(1) Providing:

(a) annual mandatory and supplemental civil rights training to their respective employees, managers and supervisors, and civil rights practitioners pursuant to the OASCR-approved final annual civil rights training plan.

(2) Assessing:

(a) training activities to ensure support of the Department’s civil rights goals;

(b) capacity to provide mandatory civil rights and other required training;

(c) methods for tracking, recording, and certifying that all Departmental Management, Staff Office, NAD and OIG employees have completed mandatory and other required civil rights training requirements by the announced completion date;

(d) civil rights compliance reports, agency-head assessments, complaint histories and other sources of pertinent information to identify areas where supplemental or mandatory training is required to correct deficiencies or potential problems; and

(e) the effectiveness of the annual civil rights training, and the number of employees trained and/or expected to be trained.

(3) Holding Supervisors and Managers accountable through their performance review appraisal for:

(a) ensuring that their training plans are implemented and effective; and

(b) carrying out all of the responsibilities as required in this DR.

(4) Preparing:

(a) a proposed annual civil rights training plan, for the ensuing fiscal year, that is submitted to OASCR no later than June 1 of each year; and
(b) a final OASCR approved annual civil rights training plan, for the ensuing fiscal year, that is ready for implementation **no later than September 30** of each year.

(5) **Engaging OASCR:**

(a) before and during the development and submission of the proposed annual civil rights training plan;

(b) to implement all training that OASCR requires to correct and/or prevent civil rights issues;

(c) and other Departmental offices in the design, development, and delivery of the annual civil rights training to ensure a variety of training methods and techniques are used to effectively deliver civil rights content and respond to a variety of learning styles; and

(d) in supporting the Department’s annual civil rights training with funding, staff assistance, onsite coordination of training delivery, and by encouraging employees to apply the principles learned in civil rights training in the workplace.

(6) **Appointing a representative to:**

(a) serve as a primary point of contact to OASCR for all civil rights training.

7. **REQUIREMENTS**

a. **General Requirements.** Annual civil rights training for USDA programs and employment is based on the non-discrimination requirements set forth by current civil rights laws and USDA policies and authorities. The training is to:

(1) begin on the first day of the fiscal year (October 1); and is to be completed by the last day of the fiscal year (September 30). Agencies may submit a request to OASCR for an extension of time to complete the training. Written approval may be given on a case-by-case basis.

(2) be delivered through a variety of training methods and techniques (e.g., classroom, webinar, online and via USDA’s electronic learning systems). For those employees unable to access the electronic learning systems, alternative delivery systems will be used, and information as to each employee’s completion of the training in an alternative manner will be documented by the agency in the USDA electronic learning system.
be provided to all Federal employees including contractors, political appointees, and appointed representatives, as well as those who represent USDA, and those who administer USDA programs, and recipients who distribute USDA program benefits.

be specific to the agency’s program delivery, outreach responsibilities, compliance with the applicable program and employment civil rights laws, and other issues as determined by OASCR.

be provided to recipients of federal financial assistance in assisted programs.

comply with relevant Office of Personnel Management guidance and Congressional mandates.

be accessible to individuals with disabilities and compliant with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.


be tied to the agency’s civil rights goals based on its strategic plan and other civil rights evaluations.

be documented in each USDA agency’s annual civil rights training plans and reports with measurable goals, anticipated outcomes and results.

be consistent with the Training Elements outlined in Section 8 below.

b. Each annual training plan will also contain a report:

(1) assessing the effectiveness of the prior fiscal year’s training;

(2) showing internal compliance with the actions in the Agency, Departmental Management, Staff Office, NAD and OIG prior fiscal year’s training plan; and

(3) showing compliance with the elements of this DR.
The plan should be formatted in accordance with the sample plan provided by OASCR. USDA Agencies, Departmental Management, Staff Offices, NAD and OIG may satisfy more than one of the requirements for the training elements in Section 8 below if a detailed curriculum is included with their proposed annual civil rights training plan.

8. TRAINING PLAN ELEMENTS

All USDA Agencies, Departmental Management, Staff Offices, NAD and OIG training plans must meet the following training elements in addition to any civil rights training tailored to their specific needs. The section below identifies the minimum requirements for each audience.

a. All USDA Employees

All USDA employees including contractors, political appointees, appointed representatives and interns, and volunteers (where applicable) must participate in annual civil rights training.

Participation in the trainings is mandatory. New employees should be trained no later than 180 days after the date of their Entrance on Duty (EOD). Individuals whose appointments are less than 180 days should be trained within 30 days of the date of their EOD. Interns and students should be trained within two to four weeks of the date of their EOD.

Employees will be required to take courses from these two categories:
Foundations of Civil Rights and Civil Rights Special Emphasis.

(1) Foundations of Civil Rights

This category sets the foundation for all civil rights training for the Department; it must include the following topics: (1) origins and foundations of civil rights, (2) cultural sensitivity and diversity, (3) non-discrimination in Federally Assisted and Conducted programs, (4) EEO laws and regulations, and (5) the EEO and Program complaint process.

(2) Civil Rights Specialized Training

Select trainings from the special training category will be taken annually. Examples of special trainings are: LEP, Gender Identity and Expression, Reasonable Accommodation in Employment and Program Activities, Religious accommodation, Age Discrimination in Employment and Program activities, Anti-harassment, Sexual Harassment, Alternative Dispute Resolution, and Environmental Justice.
b. **All USDA Agency Heads, Supervisors and Managers**

Agency Heads, supervisors and managers must participate in any additional annual training on civil rights topics relevant to their positions. Examples include, but are not limited to, Anti-harassment, Bullying, Retaliation, No FEAR, ADR, LEP, Reasonable Accommodation in Employment and Program Activities, Religious Accommodation in Employment and Program Activities, Age Discrimination in Employment and Assisted Program Activities; Civil Rights Impact Analysis (CRIA), EEO Discrimination Complaint Process and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT).

Participation in this training is mandatory.

c. **All Employees Who Work in Civil Rights**

All employees who work in civil rights including political appointees, and collateral duty and full-time civil rights practitioners.

These employees must participate in any additional annual civil rights training to remain current in their respective area of expertise (practice area) and knowledgeable of civil rights authorities. Examples include, but are not limited to, Anti-harassment, LGBT, LEP, Reasonable Accommodation in Employment and Program Activities, Religious Accommodation in Employment and Program Activities, Age Discrimination in Employment and Assisted Program Activities, New EEO Counselors and Investigators, Refresher Training for Experienced EEO Counselors and Investigators, CRIA, Data Collection, Civil Rights Compliance Reviews, Management Directive (MD) 715, CRES System (Database) Management, and ADR.

Participation in this training is mandatory.

d. **All Employees Who Deliver USDA Conducted Programs**

All employees who deliver USDA Conducted Programs include employees that have direct contact with USDA customers, including but not limited to, loan officers, forest rangers, food inspectors, etc.

These employees must participate in any additional annual training on civil rights topics relevant to the conduct of their duties in delivering the Department’s conducted programs. Examples include, but are not limited to, CRIA, Outreach, Demographic Data Collection, Anti-harassment, LEP, Reasonable Accommodation in Program Activities, Cultural Sensitivity, and LGBT.

Participation in this training is mandatory.
e. **USDA Employees Who Administer USDA Assisted Programs and Recipients of Federal Financial Assistance**

All employees who administer USDA Assisted Programs include employees that implement program services, benefits, or resources delivered through a recipient of Federal Financial Assistance.

Employees who administer assisted programs and recipients must participate in any additional annual civil rights training on topics relevant to the delivery of the Department’s assisted programs. Examples include, but are not limited to, CRIA, Outreach, Demographic Data Collection, Anti-harassment, LEP, Reasonable Accommodation in Program Activities, Age Discrimination in Assisted Program Activities, Cultural Sensitivity and LGBT. Agencies are required to include in their annual civil rights training plans, training for recipients.

Participation in this training is mandatory.
APPENDIX A

AUTHORITIES

a. Statutory Authorities
   a. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
   (6) Section 307 of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978.
   (7) Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.
   (16) 5 U.S.C. 301, Authority to Prescribe Departmental Regulations (January 3, 2007).

b. Regulatory and Executive Orders
   (1) 7 CFR Part 2 – Delegation of Authority by the Secretary of Agriculture and General Officers of the Department


(4) 28 C.F.R. 42.401 et seq., Department of Justice Guidelines for Coordination of Enforcement of Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs.

(5) 7 C.F.R. Part 15, USDA Nondiscrimination Regulations.


(7) 5 C.F.R. Part 720, Affirmative Employment Programs.

(8) Executive Order 12898 (February 16, 1994), Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations.


(10) Executive Order 13145 (February 8, 2000), To Prohibit Discrimination in Federal Employment Based on Genetic Information.


(14) DR 4300-005 (January 14, 1998), Agency Civil Rights Programs.

(15) DR 4330-003 (October 15, 2015), Nondiscrimination in USDA-Conducted Programs and Activities.

(16) DR 4300-004 (May 30, 2003), Civil Rights Impact Analysis.

(17) DR 4710-001 (April 5, 2006), Alternative Dispute Resolution.

(18) DR 4330-005 (June 4, 2013), Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Persons with Limited English Proficiency in
Programs and Activities Conducted by USDA.


(22) EEOC MD-715 (October 1, 2003), EEO Reporting Requirements for Federal Agencies.

(23) Office of Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights Directive (November 12, 2013), Section 508 Policy.

(24) The annual Civil Rights Policy statement published by the Secretary of Agriculture.

(25) Any other published regulations, policies, staff instructions, executive orders, statues, or directives related to non-discrimination.