

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

DEPARTMENTAL REGULATION		NUMBER: 4130-2
SUBJECT: Revised Criteria for the Secretary's Honor Awards Program	DATE: April 6, 1998	
	OPI: Office of Human Resources Management	

1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Departmental Regulation is to revise the *Guide for Employee Recognition* criteria addressing the Honor Award category for the Secretary's Award for Equal Opportunity. This criteria appears under Appendix B (1). This category has been amended to recognize those who demonstrate an outstanding level of accomplishment in achieving bottom-line results in making equal opportunity a reality in all facets of USDA. This category includes those achievements that help to increase work force diversity (including persons with disabilities), through recruitment and retention, accommodations and accessibility, and program delivery and customer service to all individuals regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, or sexual orientation.

2 SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

- a The distribution of this Departmental Regulation will be distributed with the distribution of Form AD-1097, *Guide for Employee Recognition*.
- b The criteria for the other award categories and the nomination guidelines and instructions provided in the July 31, 1997, memorandum announcing submission of the 1998 Honor Award nominations remain unchanged.
- c The information pertaining to the Secretary's Award for Equal Opportunity will be incorporated in the next printing of the *Guide for Employee Recognition*.

3 REVISED CRITERIA FOR THE SECRETARY'S AWARD FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

The elements listed below are not all inclusive; other factors may also be addressed. All nominees will be considered for the equal opportunity award on the basis of exceptional achievements in the following criteria:

DISTRIBUTION Special

a Recruitment and Retention

- (1) Recruitment and outreach activities which are successful in attracting minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities, including disabled veterans. For example, nominees who visit colleges and universities with large numbers of minorities, women, or persons with disabilities that result in the hiring of targeted individuals.
- (2) Highly successful methods to improve career advancement opportunities for minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities, such as the use of the USDA Career Enhancement Program.
- (3) Innovative actions to enhance employee retention, such as the use of rotational or developmental assignments, spousal placement, job sharing, part-time employment or flexiplace.
- (4) Creative initiatives to remove barriers to the employment of minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities, including disabled veterans. For example, nominees' use of volunteer assignments that lead to employment for targeted persons.
- (5) Liaison activity with outside groups which successfully refer minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities, including disabled veterans. For example, nominees' liaison activities with the 1890 Institutions, Hispanic Association of Colleges and University Institutions, the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, and state vocational rehabilitation centers that lead to employment of targeted persons.

b Accommodations and Accessibility

- (1) Initiatives which result in substantial progress in achieving special accommodations and accessibility for individuals with disabilities, including disabled veterans. These initiatives may include, but are not limited to, the establishment of model USDA Service Centers with program access for persons with disabilities.

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- (2) Creative initiatives such as job restructuring or redesign to facilitate the employment of individuals with disabilities, including disabled veterans.
- (3) Innovative and substantial use of technology to enhance the capability and productivity of persons with disabilities, including disabled veterans. Include contacts with technology resource centers such as the USDA Technology Accessible Resources Gives Employment Today Center, and the Job Accommodations Network, etc., which provide information on technology that assist employees in performing their jobs.
- (4) Exceptional efforts to support the initiatives of USDA advisory committees and the Association for Persons with Disabilities in Agriculture.

c Program Delivery and Customer Service

- (1) Significant efforts to develop public outreach techniques, mechanisms, or program information to small and disadvantaged businesses, minority and women-owned businesses, contractors, minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities, resulting in increased business and program delivery to these groups. For example, nominees' participation in procurement fairs to small and disadvantaged businesses, small minority and women-owned businesses and contractors that lead to contracts with these targeted groups.
- (2) Highly successful initiatives to develop new and improved means of delivering programs to clients in a fair and equitable manner, including examples of prompt action to resolve complaints.
- (3) Highly successful action to increase the representation of minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities on state advisory committees, or on local boards, councils, and committees.

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