



EQUITY COMMISSION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ELIGIBILITY

Question: Would this appointment exclude the committee member from being able to receive grants from the USDA?

Answer: This appointment would not exclude committee members from being able to receive grants and services from the USDA.

Question: If you/your organization is currently a USDA grantee (i.e. receiving grant funding from a USDA agency) are you eligible to apply to serve on the Commission or sub-committee? Or would it be considered a conflict of interest and therefore disqualifying.

Answer: This appointment would not exclude committee members from being able to receive grants and services from the USDA, so existing grant recipients are eligible to apply.

Question: Are elected officials or USDA employees allowed to serve on the Commission or its sub-committees?

Answer: The legislation establishing the Equity Commission and the Equity Commission Charter **do not prohibit** elected officials, congressional staffers, or USDA personnel from serving on the Equity Commission. However, in order for USDA to best represent historically underserved communities, it does not intend to appoint elected officials, congressional staffers, or USDA personnel to the Commission or Sub-Committees. It is USDA's interest to work closely with these groups throughout the process as the Equity Commission makes recommendations on advancing racial justice and equity. All Equity Commission members who are ultimately appointed must comply with ethics requirements and mitigate any conflicts of interest.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Question: How do you submit your submission?

Answer: Although the current deadline of November 30, 2021 has passed, the next call for nominees will be in 2023. A new Federal Register announcement will be placed at that time. Please send summary of requirements, resume, and AD-755 to equitycommission@usda.gov or postmarked by the deadline to:

Office of the Secretary
Attn: Dewayne L. Goldman, Ph.D.
1400 Independence Avenue SW, Room 6006-S
Washington, DC 20250

Question: Are letters of support or endorsement required?

Answer: Letter of recommendations or endorsement letters are optional, but could be helpful in our ability to better understand one's potential to be an effective member of the Equity Commission.

Question: Do you prefer to have the endorsement letters submitted with all the other documents, or should the letter writers submit them directly by email? Do all of the letters of endorsement need to be submitted as one package with the nominee's application, or can we submit the letters separately?

Answer: We've seen endorsement letters submitted in multiple ways, both with the application package, or separately by your endorser. We prefer endorsement letters be submitted with the application if possible.

Question: Should candidates specify interest in serving on commission versus sub-committee?

Answer: Yes, candidates should specifically include their interest in which positions they wish to serve on, as well as the preference to serve on the Equity Commission and/or the Agriculture Sub-Committee.

Question: Does the resume need to follow the NIFA Biographical Sketch format limited to 2 pages?

Answer: No.

Question: What time does the window close to apply?

Answer: The application window closed on November 30, 2021. The next application window will be announced via Federal Register and Equity Commission website.

Question: Who is on the selection team?

Answer: The selection team is a diverse group of USDA senior executives.

COMMISSION SELECTION & MEMBERSHIP

Question: Can you give us a sense of the Commission's and sub-committee's meeting? Full day/multiple days, virtual/in person, during the business day/evening, etc.?

Answer: The public meetings will be held over a one-to three-day timeframe dependent upon committee activities and the need for public deliberations.

Question: Is there an estimated date for an announcement of the individuals who are selected?

Answer: It is expected that an announcement will be made by January 2022.

Question: Will commission members be compensated for their time and travel to official meetings?

Answer: Compensation is not permitted under the Federal Advisory Committee Act. However, travel expenses are reimbursed for all committee members.

Question: Will the Federal Government provide per diem coverage for the costs of in-person participation in USDA's Equity Commission?

Answer: Travel per diem costs and personal expenses will be reimbursed for Equity Commission and Sub-Committee members.

Question: How many sub-committees would be under the Equity Commission?

Answer: There is currently only one sub-committee; the Agriculture Committee. It is possible in the future that additional sub-committees may be organized.

COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Question: What is the definition of a Community Based Organizations (CBOs) for national organizations?

Answer: The term "community-based organization" means a public or private nonprofit organization of demonstrated effectiveness that—

(A) is representative of a community or significant segments of a community; and

(B) provides educational or related services to individuals in the community .

There is a preference towards "national" CBOs due to the maximized reach of geographical diversity, opposed to a CBO that works in one particular community or state.

MORE INFORMATION

Visit usda.gov/equity-commission, or email equitycommission@usda.gov or Equity Commission DFO Cecilia Hernandez at cecilia.hernandez@usda.gov.