



Secretary Bucke L. Rettens

Washington, D.C. 20250

January 08, 2026

USDA ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY STATEMENT

To the dedicated servants of American agriculture:

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) stands as a beacon of service to the American people, and under my leadership, we are committed to maintaining the highest standards of professionalism, respect and merit-based excellence. The USDA will foster a workplace where every individual is valued for their contributions to American agriculture and our nation's food security.

This policy applies to all USDA employees, contractors, and individuals working with or representing the USDA in any professional capacity. We serve the American farmer first, and that service begins with treating each other with dignity and respect.

USDA has zero tolerance for harassment or retaliation based on protected characteristics including race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age (40+), disability, genetic information, marital or parental status, income from public assistance, political beliefs, or protected EEO activity. This includes all forms of unlawful Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA)-based preferences or actions that undermine merit-based principles or create preferential treatment contrary to equal opportunity.

Harassment becomes unlawful when it is severe or pervasive enough to interfere with work performance, results in tangible employment actions, or creates a hostile work environment. Such conduct has no place in the USDA, whether committed by supervisors, colleagues, or external partners including clients and contractors.

Examples of prohibited conduct that will result in immediate action include:

- Sexual harassment, including unwelcome advances, remarks, or conduct
- Derogatory language, gestures, or imagery not protected by law
- Cyberbullying or digital harassment through electronic communications
- Retaliation against individuals who report harassment or participate in investigations

Every member of the USDA team has a responsibility to uphold these standards. Any employee who witnesses or experiences inappropriate conduct is expected to take immediate action by reporting it to their supervisor, manager, designated Anti-Harassment Coordinator, or Human

Resources. Reports may be verbal and informal, but any allegation of harassment will trigger a formal management inquiry.

USDA will respond swiftly and decisively to all reports. Management officials must initiate an inquiry within 10 calendar days of receiving an allegation and may implement protective measures as needed. Any allegations of sexual violence will be immediately referred to law enforcement.

Employees may also pursue formal Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) complaints if they believe the conduct constitutes EEO-based harassment, including retaliation. These complaints must be initiated with an EEO Counselor within 45 calendar days of the alleged incident.

All reports of harassment will be thoroughly investigated with integrity and impartiality. Confidentiality will be maintained to the fullest extent possible under law.

Make no mistake: unlawful harassment, including DEIA discrimination or retaliation for reporting DEIA discrimination, is a serious offense that will be met with appropriate consequences. Any employee who reports harassment or participates in an inquiry is protected from retaliation. Those who violate this policy or, who in a position of authority, fails to act on credible allegations will face corrective or disciplinary action.

Additional procedures are detailed in USDA Departmental Regulation (DR) 4200-003 and the Anti-Harassment Procedure Manual. Grievance procedures are available in DR 4070-771-001 and through applicable negotiated agreements.

Under President Trump's leadership and my direction, USDA will continue to serve as the most efficient, effective, and respectful department in government. USDA is committed to upholding a workplace grounded in respect, unity, and merit, and unwavering service to the American people and the farmers who feed our nation. Together, we have a historic opportunity to strengthen American agriculture while maintaining the highest standards of professional conduct. That is our mission, and that is our commitment.

Sincerely,



Brooke L. Rollins
Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture