



Secretary Brooke L. Ritter
Washington, D.C. 20250

January 08, 2026

USDA EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY POLICY STATEMENT

To the dedicated servants of American agriculture:

As Secretary, I want to be crystal clear about our commitment to unity, equality, merit, and the values that make the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and this nation great. The USDA stands as a beacon of excellence, where every employee and applicant is treated with dignity and respect. That's not just our policy, that's our promise.

Merit matters. Performance matters. Results matter. Our mission is straightforward: To serve America's farmers, ranchers, and producers while ensuring every USDA employee has the opportunity to succeed based on their skills, dedication, and commitment to our shared agricultural mission.

To achieve that mission, we will not tolerate unlawful discrimination. No employee or applicant for employment will be denied opportunities based on race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, disability, genetic information, marital status, parental status, political affiliation, receipt of public assistance, pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, or any other non-merit based factor. Equal employment opportunity applies to every aspect of our work together, all personnel programs, management practices, and decisions including, but not limited to, recruitment and hiring, merit promotion and transfer, reassignments and training, career development and benefits, separation, and all other employment actions. We are also committed to providing reasonable accommodation for disabilities under the Rehabilitation Act and for sincerely held religious beliefs. Employees and applicants must contact the agency EEO office or EEO counselor within 45 calendar days of the alleged discriminatory act to preserve administrative remedies under 29 C.F.R. Part 1614. Complaints will be processed consistent with EEOC procedures.

We have taken bold actions to eliminate all DEIA programs including Special Emphasis Programs not required by law. This reflects our commitment to unity, equality, and color-blind policies. We will not use taxpayer resources to promote identity-based events or initiatives. Instead, we focus on what unites us as Americans and as public servants.

Any form of workplace harassment, unlawful discrimination, or retaliation will not be tolerated. Retaliation against individuals who oppose discriminatory practices or participate in administrative or judicial proceedings involving civil rights statutes is strictly prohibited.

Together, we will continue building a department that serves American agriculture with excellence, integrity, and unwavering commitment to equal opportunity and merit-based service to our farmers, ranchers, and producers. America First. Agriculture First. Merit First.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brooke L. Rollins".

Brooke L. Rollins
Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture