



United States
Department
of Agriculture

Research,
Education, and
Economics

National Institute
of Food and
Agriculture

1400 Independence
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Washington, DC 20250

NIFA-15-005

February 25, 2014

TO: All NIFA Employees
FROM: Sonny Ramaswamy, Director
SUBJECT: Civil Rights Accountability Policy and Procedures

As the Director of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), I fully support the Department's policy on Civil Rights Accountability as outlined in the Departmental Directive (DR) 4300-010, "Civil Rights Accountability Policy and Procedures." I believe that equal opportunity in both employment and programs is essential to the success of our Agency and the welfare of our Nation. It is our Agency policy, and my personal goal, that each employee, job applicant, customer, and program participant be treated fairly and equitably, with dignity and respect, regardless of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or any program or activity conducted or funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) or NIFA.

This DR establishes the civil rights accountability policy and procedures for ensuring appropriate disciplinary or corrective actions are taken when discrimination, retaliation, civil rights violations, or related misconduct occurs. While managers and supervisors are responsible under this DR for a work environment free of discrimination and retaliation as well as a duty to uphold the civil rights of employees, customers, and program participants; I expect all employees to contribute to such a work place environment. Agency managers, supervisors, and employees will be held accountable for discrimination, retaliation, civil rights violations, or related misconduct, according to this policy and other applicable laws and regulations.

This DR is available on the USDA Office of Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OSCAR) web site along with other associated equal opportunity and civil rights laws, regulations, and policies (e.g., Departmental Regulations) at http://www.asec.usda.gov/directives_regs.html.

Any questions concerning this policy or requests for information about civil rights and equal opportunity may be made to NIFA's Director of the Equal Opportunity Staff or the USDA Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights.

The contents of this document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.