

Overview of Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity

The terms, "Civil Rights" and "Equal Opportunity" are often used interchangeably. However, the terms, though closely related, have somewhat different meanings. It may be helpful to consider the following informal definitions (these are **not legal** definitions).

Civil Rights is a term used to describe the broad range of responsibilities MRP has in reference to discrimination both in employment and delivery of programs and services.

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) is the right of all employees and applicants for employment to be treated fairly in all aspects of the employment process, on the basis of merit, and without discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, marital status, or disability.

The employment process covers all employment practices including, but not limited to:

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|-------------|-----------------------|
| Recruitment | Separation |
| Hiring | Job Assignment |
| Training | Performance Appraisal |
| Promotion | Transfer |
| Awards | Discipline |

USDA employees must maintain high standards of personal conduct at all times. Any employee engaging in sexually harassing activities is subject to disciplinary action. Managers and supervisors who tolerate such behavior, fail to take appropriate action on reports of sexual harassment, or retaliate against employees who report incidents or file complaints of sexual harassment will be subject to disciplinary action for failure to perform their supervisory or managerial duties.

The Department and Agency policy prohibiting sexual harassment applies to USDA employees in their working relationship with non-Federal persons and in their working relationship with all Federal employees. It also applies to persons employed under contract or other formal agreements with the Department of Agriculture.