

EEOC FORM
715-01 PART E

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

FEDERAL AGENCY ANNUAL EEO PROGRAM STATUS REPORT

Department of Agriculture

For Period Covering October 1, 2004, to September 30, 2005.

Executive Summary

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Introduction

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) submitted its first report under the newly-issued EEO Management Directive 715 (MD-715) on January 31, 2005, covering Fiscal Year (FY) 2004. In that report, the Department conducted a critical analysis of its efforts in the areas of employment discrimination complaint processing and affirmative employment. For FY 2005, USDA's report responds to feedback received from EEOC on last year's report and refines the analyses of areas in which improvement could be made. In particular, the barrier analysis has been modified to reflect the four goals that are most significant to achieving a model EEO program. Progress on the action items contained in the FY 2004 report is included in this report, and amendments to the plans of action are set forth. USDA remains committed to achieving model employer status, as defined by MD-715, and submits this report on its achievements to date, workforce analysis, objectives and planned activities.

Department's Mission and Mission-Related Functions

The mission of the U.S. Department of Agriculture is to provide leadership on food, agriculture, natural resources, and related issues based on sound public policy, the best available science, and efficient management.

The USDA strives to:

- Expand international trade for agricultural products and support international economic development;
- Expand domestic marketing opportunities for agricultural products and strengthen risk management, use of financial tools, and provide sound information to help farmers and ranchers in their decision-making process;
- Further develop alternative markets for agricultural products and activities;
- Provide financing needed to help expand job opportunities and improve housing, utilities, and infrastructure in rural America;
- Enhance food safety by taking steps to reduce the prevalence of foodborne hazards from farm to table, and safeguard agriculture from natural and international threats;
- Improve nutrition by providing food assistance and nutrition education and promotion; and
- Manage and protect America's public and private lands working cooperatively with other levels of government and the private sector.

Summary of Department's Self-Assessment (Parts G and H)

Part G of MD-715 defines the 6 essential elements of a model EEO program through a list of 122 measurement items. In the prior year's MD-715 report, USDA determined that improvement in its operations could be achieved in 18 of the measures, in 5 of the 6 essential elements. During FY 2005, action was taken to meet 4 of the objectives, and progress was made toward meeting the remaining 14. The challenge relating to timely complaint processing in Part I was eliminated from the barrier analysis and is addressed as a program deficiency in 2 objectives in Part H. The 18 objectives identified in the FY 2004 report and the 2 objectives added in this year's report are discussed in Part H. The following summarizes USDA's efforts to meet the essential elements of a model EEO program.

A. Demonstrated commitment from agency leadership

In reviewing USDA's FY 2004 MD-715 report, EEOC recognized the Department's commitment to equal employment opportunity in the following areas: the establishment of an Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights position; the issuance of a Civil Rights Policy Statement by the Secretary of Agriculture; and the inclusion of a critical civil rights performance element in the performance appraisal plans of all supervisors. We are pleased to report that the Department's leadership continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to equal opportunity for all employees and applicants. Secretary Johanns has issued a Civil Rights Policy Statement that includes reprisal as a prohibited basis for personnel decisions. Planned activities for FY 2006 include issuance of a memorandum to all Agency Heads, Staff Office Directors, Civil Rights Directors, and Personnel Officers reminding them of the requirement under Departmental Regulation 4300-6 that a separate critical civil rights performance element be included in the performance plans of all supervisors and asking them to address specific criteria in evaluating the supervisor's civil rights performance.

B. Integration of EEO into the agency's strategic mission

In response to our FY 2004 report, the EEOC recognized the briefing provided by the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights to the Secretary and Subcabinet Officials on the Department's efforts in meeting the model EEO program criteria. The Department continues to refine and strengthen its civil rights training program, making use of information technology tools to ensure that the training is accessible by all employees.

C. Management and program accountability

The EEOC complimented USDA's efforts to comply with MD-715 and encouraged USDA to collect and analyze all workforce data required by the report. USDA implemented a new enterprise solution in FY 2005 for preparing the workforce data tables required to complete the MD-715 report. This information management system will allow the Department and second-level reporting components to

prepare more accurate, complete and consistent workforce data tables. The FY 2005 report includes data in Workforce Data Table B10, which was not provided in last year's report.

On August 30, 2005, OPM issued a new Standard Form 181, *Ethnicity and Race Identification* (July 2005), as the government standard for reporting ethnicity and race information. USDA put the new form into use on January 1, 2006. The availability of the data for analysis purposes will be subject to NFC's reconfiguration of its systems to accept the new codes. Collection of race, ethnicity and disability status data from applicants for employment is pending OPM issuance of a revised OPM form 1386B, *Applicant Race and National Origin Questionnaire*. OPM has not required a resurvey of current employees. The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights is discussing with the Office of Human Capital Management how such a resurvey might be accomplished, given the size and geographic dispersion of the USDA workforce. It appears that FY 2007 is the earliest that USDA will have the data needed to provide complete workforce data tables.

D. Proactive prevention of unlawful discrimination

EEOC focused much of its feedback in this area on USDA's ADR program. One of the challenges faced by USDA is the decentralized way in which ADR services are provided. The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights has taken steps in FY 2006 to place greater emphasis on the coordination and monitoring of subcomponent ADR programs to ensure that all programs are effective and in compliance with any external requirements. The Conflict Prevention & Resolution Center within the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights is responsible for this effort. USDA will soon issue a new ADR Departmental Regulation. This regulation will create uniform standards for certain aspects of ADR programs and also reaffirm the obligation to provide ADR as an option during the EEO pre-complaint process. We are pleased to note that the rate of acceptance of ADR during the pre-complaint process increased in FY 2005, as compared with FY 2004. We continue to emphasize ADR training for supervisors and managers in our planned activities.

E. Efficiency

USDA has made significant improvement in the area of EEO complaint processing. The new Civil Rights Enterprise System for tracking and monitoring employment discrimination complaints was fully implemented by December 31, 2005, and has resulted in greater transparency, better coordination, more accurate data, and improved reporting. In reviewing USDA's FY 2004 MD-715 report, EEOC expressed concern about the timeliness of investigations and final agency decisions. USDA made improvement in both areas during FY 2005. In FY 2005, 47.6 percent of all investigations were completed on time, and 12.6 percent of final agency merit decisions were issued on time. While this progress seems incremental, it is important to note that the average days to complete investigations went from 364.2 days in FY 2004 to 245.9 days in FY 2005. Similarly, for final

agency merit decisions, the average number of days was reduced from 582.1 days in FY 2004 to 422.3 days in FY 2005. The Office of Civil Rights continues to address old cases in its inventory, which negatively impacts average processing times, while increasing the percentage of cases processed within the regulatory timeframes.

F. Responsiveness and Legal Compliance

Our self-assessment did not identify any deficiencies in this area for either FY 2004 or FY 2005. EEOC recommended that some priority be given to compliance processes, which was consistent with the FY 2004 initiatives of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights. A reorganization of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights resulted in the creation of an Equal Opportunity and Compliance Division within the Office of Civil Rights. One of the primary functions of this new division is to attend to compliance functions, including compliance reviews and providing compliance reports to EEOC. In addition, the responsibility for preparing decisions on allegations of non-compliance was moved to the Complaints Adjudication Division, which further streamlined the compliance process. USDA plans to focus greater attention in the area of compliance as it continues to reduce its complaint processing workload.

Analysis of Workforce Profiles

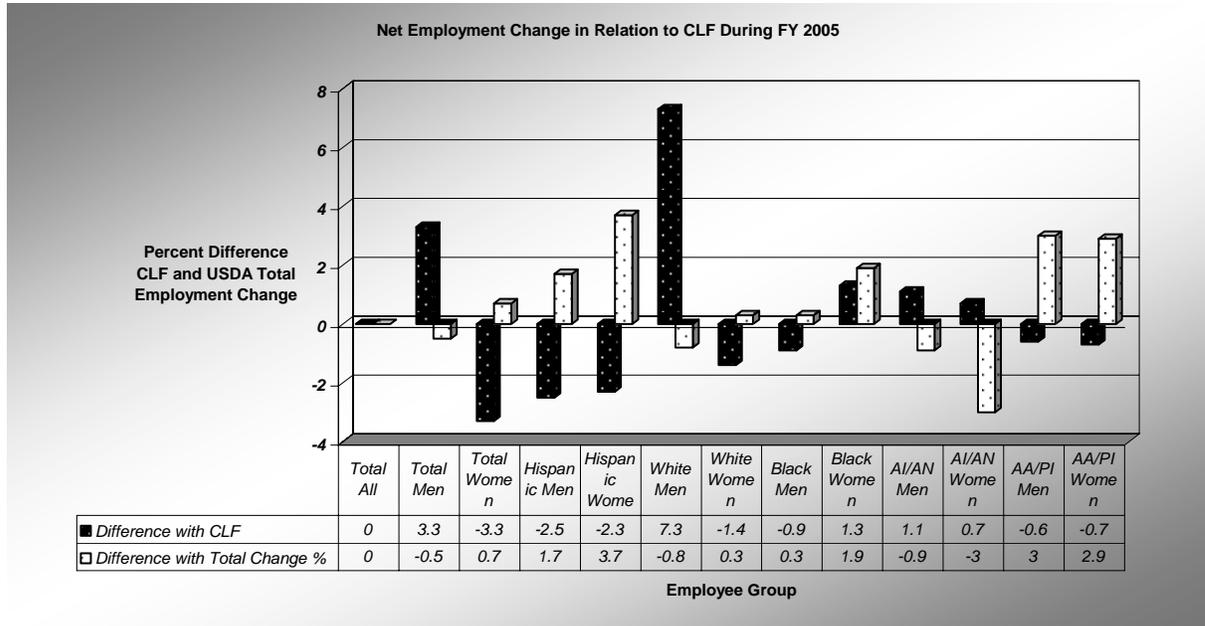
At the close of FY 2005, USDA's total employment was 103,554, including 90,255 permanent and 13,299 temporary employees (see Table 1 below and Table A1). The permanent workforce of 90,255 consisted of 50,961 (56.5 percent) men and 39,294 (43.5 percent) women.

Table 1						
Permanent, Temporary, and Total Employment FY 2005 and FY 2004						
Number/(Percent)						
	Permanent		Temporary		Total	
	FY 2005	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2004
Total All	90,255 (100.0)	91,983 (100.0)	13,299 (100.0)	14,070 (100.0)	103,554 (100.0)	106,053 (100.0)
Total Men	50,961 (56.5)	52,214 (56.8)	7,232 (54.4)	7,508 (53.4)	58,193 (56.2)	59,722 (56.3)
Total Women	39,294 (43.5)	39,769 (43.2)	6,067 (45.6)	6,562 (46.6)	45,361 (43.8)	46,331 (43.7)
Hispanic Men	3,298 (3.6)	3,304 (3.6)	708 (5.3)	650 (4.6)	4,006 (3.9)	3,954 (3.7)
Hispanic Women	2,023 (2.2)	1,987 (2.2)	628 (4.7)	609 (4.3)	2,651 (2.6)	2,596 (2.4)
White Men	41,775 (46.3)	42,943 (46.7)	5,560 (41.8)	5,937 (42.2)	47,335 (45.7)	48,880 (46.1)
White Women	29,188 (32.3)	29,666 (32.2)	3,855 (29.0)	4,251 (30.2)	33,043 (31.9)	33,917 (32.0)
Black Men	3,472 (3.8)	3,528 (3.8)	588 (4.4)	574 (4.1)	4,060 (3.9)	4,102 (3.9)
Black Women	6,321 (7.0)	6,318 (6.9)	1,311 (9.9)	1,421 (10.1)	7,632 (7.4)	7,739 (7.3)
AI/AN Men	1,259 (1.4)	1,295 (1.4)	140 (1.0)	125 (.9)	1,399 (1.4)	1,420 (1.3)
AI/AN Women	868 (1.0)	913 (1.0)	102 (0.8)	104 (0.7)	970 (1.0)	1,017 (1.0)
AA/PI Men	1,157 (1.3)	1,144 (1.2)	236 (1.8)	222 (1.6)	1,393 (1.4)	1,366 (1.3)
AA/PI Women	894 (1.0)	885 (1.0)	171 (1.3)	177 (1.3)	1,065 (1.0)	1,062 (1.0)

Women and minorities made up 53.7 percent of the FY 2005 permanent workforce—39,294 (43.5 percent) women, 5,321 Hispanic employees (5.9 percent), 9,793 Black employees (10.9 percent), 2,127 American Indian/Alaska Native employees (AI/AN) (2.4 percent), and 2,051 Asian American/Pacific Islander employees (AA/PI) (2.3 percent).

Between FY 2004 and FY 2005 there was a net change in permanent employment of -1,728 (-1.9 percent) employees. In FY 2005, participation rates for several protected employee groups were below their comparable Civilian Labor Force (CLF) rates (see Table 2 and Table A1).

	Net Change Number	Net Change Percent	Percentage of Total FY 2005	CLF	Difference with CLF (+ over or - under)
Total All	-1,728	-1.9	100.0	100.0	0.0
Total Men	-1,255	-2.4	56.5	53.2	+3.3
Total Women	-475	-1.2	43.5	46.8	-3.3
Hispanic Men	-6	-0.2	3.7	6.2	-2.5
Hispanic Women	36	1.8	2.2	4.5	-2.3
White Men	-1,168	-2.7	46.3	39.0	+7.3
White Women	-478	-1.6	32.3	33.7	-1.4
Black Men	-56	-1.6	3.9	4.8	-0.9
Black Women	3	0.0	7.0	5.7	+1.3
AI/AN Men	-36	-2.8	1.4	0.3	+1.1
AI/AN Women	-45	-4.9	1.0	0.3	+0.7
AA/PI Men	13	1.1	1.3	1.9	-0.6
AA/PI Women	9	1.0	1.0	1.7	-0.7



USDA Agencies and Staff Offices

There are significant differences in the size of USDA agencies and staff offices, ranging from the larger agencies such as the Forest Service (31,314) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (12,324) to some of the smaller components such as the Economic Research Service (388) and Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (374) (see Table A2). There also is a wide variance across agencies in the participation rates for women and minorities. For example, White males make up 58.4 percent of permanent employees at the Natural Resources Conservation Service and 51.6 percent at the Forest Service. On the other hand, White males make up 24.2 percent of the 1,481 employees at the Food and Nutrition Service and 18.7 percent of the 1,459 employees at the Office of the Chief Financial Officer. Consequently, while the largest number of women and minorities are employed at USDA's larger agencies, the participation rates in those agencies have not kept pace with Department-wide and CLF rates.

Occupational Groups

Of the nine occupational groups, most USDA employees (33,359), or nearly 4 out of 10, are in the professional category (see Tables A3-1 and A3-2). White males hold 53.3 percent of professional positions (compared with a CLF rate of 37.1 percent) and 42.6 percent of all White male workers are employed in the professional category (see Table 3). Similarly, a high percentage of AA/PI males (59.0 percent) and AA/PI women (44.4 percent) are employed in the professional category. Hispanic women (2.8 percent), Black men (4.2 percent), Black women (9.8 percent), AI/AN men (0.8 percent), AI/AN women (1.1 percent), and women as a whole (52.6 percent) fare well in the Officials and Managers category, exceeding the CLF rates for their groups (see Table 3 and Table A3-1).

Table 3				
Specific Occupational Groups - FY 2005 - Comparison to CLF				
	Officials and Managers		Professionals	
	CLF	USDA	CLF	USDA
Total All	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total Men	61.4	47.4	46.3	63.5
Total Women	38.6	52.6	53.7	36.5
Hispanic Men	3.3	3.1	2.3	3.1
Hispanic Women	2.4	2.8	2.8	1.6
White Men	52.1	38.3	37.1	53.3
White Women	30.6	38.0	42.3	28.4
Black Men	2.8	4.2	2.7	3.8
Black Women	3.5	9.8	4.9	4.5
AI/AN Men	0.2	0.8	0.2	1.2
AI/AN Women	0.2	1.1	0.3	0.8
AA/PI Men	2.1	1.0	3.2	2.0
AA/PI Women	1.3	0.9	2.6	1.2

Grade Levels

Women (particularly White, Black, Hispanic, AI/AN women) tend to be overrepresented in grades GS 1-8 positions, which often have limited promotion potential. Women make up 43.5 percent of the permanent workforce, and hold 55.7 percent of the GS 1-8 jobs. To look at it from a different perspective, of all General Schedule permanent jobs held by men, 28.7 percent are in the GS 1-8 range, but of all General Schedule permanent jobs held by women, 45.3 percent are in the GS 1-8 range (see Tables 4 and A4-1). Roughly half of all Black and AI/AN women held jobs in the GS 1-8 range.

Women and minorities tend to be underrepresented in the higher-grade WG 11-15 jobs. Of the 81 permanent WG 11-15 positions, 81.5 percent (66) of them are held by White men. Women hold only 9.2 percent of all permanent WG jobs (161 of 1,755) and do not hold any WG 11-15 positions. Of the 11 WG 12-15 positions, only one is held by a minority (see Table A5-1).

	Total GS	GS 1-8	Percent	Total WG	WG 11-15	Percent
Total All	88,225	31,787	36.0	1,755	81	4.6
Total Men	49,148	14,095	28.7	1,594	81	5.1
Total Women	39,077	17,692	45.3	161	0	0.0
Hispanic Men	3,149	1,369	43.5	140	7	5.0
Hispanic Women	2,000	1,042	52.1	17	0	0.0
White Men	40,382	10,943	27.1	1,216	66	5.4
White Women	29,033	12,774	44.0	113	0	0.0
Black Men	3,275	1,074	32.8	171	5	2.9
Black Women	6,292	3,134	49.8	26	0	0.0
AI/AN Men	1,205	510	42.3	54	3	5.6
AI/AN Women	862	446	51.7	5	0	0.0
AA/PI Men	1,137	199	17.5	13	0	0.0
AA/PI Women	890	296	33.3	0	0	0.0

Major Occupations

Of the seven major occupations identified in this report, only the Soil Conservation (457) position consistently *exceeds* the CLF rates for all women and minority groups, while the participation rate of White men is below the CLF (see Table A6). The Soil Conservation position accounts for 5.0 percent of the total permanent workforce. Of the remaining six major occupations, in all but one instance, AA/PI men and AA/PI and Hispanic women are represented below CLF rates (see Table 5).

Occupation	AA/PI Men		AA/PI Women		Hispanic Women	
	USDA	CLF	USDA	CLF	USDA	CLF
Forestry Tech. 462	0.8	4.1	0.2	4.3	1.1	3.4
Loan Specialist 1165	0.4	1.2	0.6	1.9	2.6	4.3
Gen. Bus. & Ind. 1101	0.2	2.6	1.0	2.3	4.6	5.3
Info. Tech. Spec. 2210	2.4	7.4	2.2	2.9	1.6	1.6
Food Inspection 1863	0.8	2.2	0.6	0.8	2.3	5.7
Gen. Biol. Sci. 401	1.7	4.1	0.8	4.3	1.2	2.1

The most widespread discrepancy occurs in the Forestry Technician (462) occupation, which is the largest occupational category at USDA with 8,341 employees (9.2 percent of the permanent workforce). 81.8 percent of all Forestry Technician jobs are held by males. White, Hispanic, Black, and AA/PI women and Black and AA/PI men are all employed below CLF rates in this major occupation. Participation rates for White, Hispanic, Black, and AA/PI women and AA/PI men are below CLF rates in the Loan Specialist (1165) and General Biological Science (401) occupations.

Employees With Disabilities

In FY 2005 there were 6,206 (6.85 percent) permanent employees with a reported disability (see Table B1). The number of employees with targeted disabilities totaled 894 (0.99 percent), as compared to the Federal high benchmark rate of 2.27 percent. Five agencies or offices exceeded or came close to matching the Federal high rate (see Table B2)—Office of the Executive Secretariat (3.85 percent), Departmental Administration (3.35 percent), Office of the Chief Financial Officer (2.19 percent), Rural Business and Cooperative Development Service (2.13 percent), and Food and Nutrition Service (1.96 percent).

One of the challenges is that the separation rate for employees with targeted disabilities has exceeded the hiring rate over the past three fiscal years, resulting in an overall employment decline. Between FY 2004 and FY 2005, the number of permanent employees with targeted disabilities dropped by 61, from 955 to 894. This decrease took place in the context of an overall workforce decrease of 1,728 workers. The data suggests that agencies are underutilizing special authorities available to assist them in meeting hiring goals for employees with targeted disabilities.

People with targeted disabilities are clustered in the lower grade levels (GS-5-8), and in the Office & Clerical occupational group (27.63 percent compared with 8.90 percent for non-disabled employees).

Employee Recognition and Awards

Women consistently do better than men in the proportion of employee recognitions and awards they receive (see Table 6 and Table A13). Women and minority employees received recognitions and awards roughly in line with their proportion of the workforce (see Table 6). Some exceptions include time-off awards 1-9 hours to Hispanic men (2.0 percent vs. 3.7 percent of the workforce), time-off awards 9+ hours to Black and AI/AN men (2.8 percent vs. 3.9 percent of the workforce, and 0.9 percent vs. 1.4 percent of the workforce, respectively), and quality step increases to Black males (2.8 percent vs. 3.9 percent of the workforce).

	Total Permanent Employees	Time- Off Awards 1-9 Hours	Time- Off Awards 9+ Hours	Cash Awards \$100- \$500	Cash Awards Over \$500	Quality Step Increases
Total All	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total Men	56.5	40.0	40.0	51.0	53.3	51.3
Total Women	43.5	60.0	60.0	49.0	46.7	48.7
Hispanic Men	3.7	2.0	2.1	3.0	2.9	3.4
Hispanic Women	2.2	3.0	2.4	2.0	2.2	2.9
White Men	46.3	30.0	33.0	42.0	44.3	42.1
White Women	32.3	40.0	44.0	36.0	33.8	36.3
Black Men	3.9	6.0	2.8	4.0	3.7	2.8
Black Women	7.0	15.0	11.4	9.0	8.6	7.4
AI/AN Men	1.4	1.0	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.7
AI/AN Women	1.0	1.0	1.2	1.0	0.9	0.7
AA/PI Men	1.3	1.0	1.2	1.0	1.5	1.3
AA/PI Women	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	1.2	1.4

Hires and Separations

Women improved their relative proportion of jobs at USDA in FY 2005. Their percentage of hiring was above, and their percentage of separation was below, their percentage of the total workforce (see Table 7, Table A8, and Table A14). In absolute numbers, however, the number of women decreased slightly, as did the overall workforce. Both the number and proportion of White men declined the greatest during FY 2005. The greatest gains were made by Hispanic men and women.

Table 7							
Hires and Separations							
(Number and Percent Distribution Across Groups)							
	Total Permanent Employees		Total Hires		Total Separations		Net of Hires vs. Separations
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Total All	90,255	100.0	7,396	100.0	8,744	100.0	-1,348
Total Men	50,961	56.5	3,908	52.8	5,179	59.2	-1,271
Total Women	39,294	43.5	3,488	47.2	3,565	40.8	-77
Hispanic Men	3,298	3.7	385	5.2	379	4.3	+6
Hispanic Women	2,023	2.2	246	3.3	183	2.1	+63
White Men	41,775	46.3	3,056	41.3	4,277	48.9	-1,221
White Women	29,188	32.3	2,528	34.2	2,708	31.0	-180
Black Men	3,472	3.9	283	3.8	305	3.5	-22
Black Women	6,321	7.0	550	7.4	492	5.6	+58
AI/AN Men	1,259	1.4	80	1.1	122	1.4	-42
AI/AN Women	868	1.0	54	0.7	92	1.1	-38
AA/PI Men	1,157	1.3	104	1.4	96	1.1	+8
AA/PI Women	894	1.0	110	1.5	90	1.0	+20

Summary of EEO Plan Objectives to Eliminate Barriers (Part I)

Part I of MD-715 provides a summary of challenges USDA faces in attaining the status of a model EEO agency. USDA has identified four challenges and proposed a plan to address each challenge. In refining the analysis of trends in separations and hires, the plan related to increasing the representation of minorities and women was revamped to encompass the planned activities relating to retention of minorities. In addition, the challenge relating to timely complaint processing was eliminated from the barrier analysis and instead addressed in Part H as a program deficiency. By carrying out the action items in each plan, USDA intends to meet the following objectives:

1. Increase Representation of Minorities and Women in the Workforce

Work with agency personnel directors to develop targeted recruiting efforts to increase the representation of minorities and women in the workforce. Encourage managers to take affirmative steps to recruit, hire, train and promote employees from diverse backgrounds. Undertake comprehensive equal employment opportunity compliance review activities to monitor employment policies and practices.

2. Increase Advancement Opportunities for Minorities and Women

Ensure that promotions are made in an even-handed and non-discriminatory manner, and that opportunities and training are provided to allow employees to develop.

3. Establish and Meet Hiring and Retention Goals for Employees with Targeted Disabilities

Assist USDA components in setting goals for hiring of individuals with targeted disabilities. Encourage agencies to recruit individuals with targeted disabilities by networking with professional and nonprofit organizations that can identify qualified candidates. Identify factors contributing to the high attrition among employees with targeted disabilities. Provide disability awareness training for managers and supervisors to improve recruitment, employment, advancement and retention of people with targeted disabilities.

4. Promote a Workplace Free of Reprisal or Harassment

Provide civil rights training to managers, supervisors, and other employees, and encourage the use of ADR techniques to resolve workplace disputes. Implement the new accountability procedures. Promote a climate of tolerance, mutual respect and cultural sensitivity.