

DEPARTMENTAL REGULATION		Number: 1020-005
SUBJECT: Native American Working Group	DATE: January 10, 1992	
	OPI: OPA, Office of Intergovernmental Affairs	

1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this regulation is to set forth the responsibilities of the Native American Working Group (Working Group) and to identify the methods by which the Working Group will operate.

2 SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

This regulation supersedes Department Regulation No. 1312-1 of December 6, 1983.

3 POLICY

It is the policy of USDA to improve opportunities for all rural Americans by providing for effective and efficient coordination of Federal agricultural and rural development programs within each of the individual states and territories. In view of such policy, departmental agencies have the responsibility for directing resources to the Native American segment of the rural population on an equal basis with the rest of the rural population.

4 DEFINITION

"Native American" means a member of any American Indian tribe, band, group, or nation, including Alaska Indians, Aleuts, Eskimos, and Alaska Native villages of the United States.

5 BACKGROUND

The majority of the Native American population of the United States resides in rural areas. Nearly half of the total Native American population of up to 2 million people live on rurally located tribal reservations.

In the past, individual USDA agencies have taken the initiative in finding ways to serve Native Americans as a group. However, it is essential that there be Departmentwide direction and coordination to assure this clientele access to the services and programs of USDA agencies.

Therefore, on January 15, 1983, the Secretary ordered the establishment of the Native American Working Group (Working Group) within the Governmental and Public Affairs Committee of the Secretary's Policy and Coordination Council to assist the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs (OIA), Office of Public Affairs, in carrying out policies established by the Secretary. Departmental Regulation 1312-1 set out the Working Group's responsibilities.

6 RESPONSIBILITIES

The Working Group will provide such advice, support, and other assistance to OIA and the Director of Native American activities (Director) as may be required to ensure the effective coordination and guidance of all USDA policies and programs regarding Native Americans. The Secretary retains authority for establishing Departmental Policy relating to coordination of USDA activities of interest to the Native American population.

7 OPERATIONS

a The Director will serve as Chairperson of the Working Group and may designate a USDA employee to serve as Executive Secretary of the Working Group. In addition, the Director may establish such subgroups as he or she deems necessary to carry out the activities of the Working Group.

b The working group will consist of senior USDA officials as selected by the Director of Public Affairs. Each representative may select an employee of his or her agency who works with Native Americans to serve as his or her alternate on the Working Group.

8 MEETING

The Working Group will meet at the call of the Chairperson as a group at least quarterly to address the objectives and interests of the respective USDA activities involving Native Americans. The Chairperson is authorized to meet with individual members of the Working Group as he or she deems necessary. Other persons, agencies, or groups may be invited to attend specific meetings when the Chairperson deems it appropriate.

9 REPORTING

Before the end of each fiscal year, the Working Group will summarize its activities during the preceding year and will submit a report to the Secretary of Agriculture.

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