

**Plant Protection & Quarantine  
Civil Rights Strategic Plan  
2006-2009**

**Introduction**

In September 2005, PPQ's National Civil Rights Leadership Committee (NCRLC) met in Frederick, Maryland to plan for the Strategic Planning meeting that was held in January 2006 at the historic Martin Luther King Center in Atlanta, Georgia. In September, the NCRLC developed PPQ's vision for Civil Rights and a set of Guiding Principles that would support that vision, and identified key organizational players who should participate in creating the goals, strategies and objectives for the PPQ Civil Rights Strategic Plan. The charge to the planning participants in Atlanta was to develop a plan that would ensure civil rights initiatives and activities would become an integral part of PPQ's way of conducting business as it strives to accomplish its mission- not just a set of activities seen and experienced as something independent from day-to-day operations. This plan fully supports the PPQ Strategic Plan's Goal: Management Improvements and Organizational Performance and the two strategies within that goal: Value and Invest in Employees and Facilitate Civil Rights.

Below are the Vision and Guiding Principles for Civil Rights in PPQ developed by the NCRLC in September 2005 and adopted by the PPQ Executive Team in 2006:

**PPQ's Vision for Civil Rights**

PPQ is a recognized leader dedicated to creating and sustaining a diverse workforce and a positive work environment, valuing all employees and instilling in them a sense of true belonging as they provide fair and impartial program delivery.



**Civil Rights Guiding Principles**

This statement of Civil Rights Guiding Principles reflects the values that guide all PPQ employees in what we do and decide as individuals. These Principles contribute to creating and sustaining a positive work environment where all employees' civil rights are fully recognized and supported. In these values, we must remain constantly vigilant and strive for improvement in ourselves, our organization and our contributions to the American public.

**Valuing Diversity**

PPQ seeks to embrace the many dimensions of diversity that PPQ employees bring: gender, race/ethnic group, religion, age, and physical abilities. PPQ does not tolerate discrimination on these and other aspects of diversity, such as sexual orientation and marital status. All dimensions of difference, including work and communication styles, educational levels, educational disciplines and organizational positions enrich our work environment in much the same way bio-diversity ensures the vitality of the natural world.

For PPQ to create and sustain a diverse workforce, the men and women who work for PPQ throughout the world must:

- Foster a curiosity to learn more about people who are different from ourselves and learn to appreciate the differing perspectives and life experiences that they bring to the workplace; (Inclusion, Personal Growth)
- Be aware of and set aside any judgments, opinions and feelings generalized to a group of people that may predetermine our relationship to individual employees in that group in an adverse way; (Fairness & Integrity)
- Expand our awareness about our own shortcomings and lack of knowledge or understanding of others that may adversely influence the actions we take; (Honesty & Integrity)
- Take responsibility to resolve the conflict that can arise in a diverse workforce as an opportunity to learn more about what makes us different and to grow in our appreciation and mutual respect for these variations. (Acceptance, Inclusion & Personal Growth)
- Demonstrate a willingness to explore issues honestly and in depth to understand root causes as a means to finding creative solutions that meet the mutual needs of all persons concerned; (Honesty, Creativity & Collaboration)

### **Creating & Sustaining a Positive Work Environment**

PPQ recognizes and values the dedication that PPQ employees demonstrate day-in and day-out to accomplish the PPQ Mission. PPQ knows for this commitment to continue, it must create and sustain a work environment where all of its employees will grow and thrive. For PPQ to create and sustain a positive work environment, the men and women who work for PPQ throughout the world must:

- Learn and practice active listening skills, seeking first to understand and then communicating to be understood; (Competence)
- Have equal opportunity to develop needed skills, including the skills required to practice these Guiding Principles and to grow professionally through classroom and on-the-job training, developmental assignments, and new work experiences. (Fairness and Inclusion)
- Celebrate and recognize the contributions of every employee; (Fairness & Inclusion)
- Look for creative solutions to provide opportunities for all employees, making accommodations as needed, to increase the diversity in task forces, special projects, and TDY assignments in order to draw and build on the strengths of a diverse workforce; (Fairness, Inclusion, Creativity & Flexibility)
- Actively seek or liaison with expanded networks beyond PPQ to bring fresh new ideas, information and approaches to enhance PPQ's civil rights efforts; (Flexibility & Creativity)
- Find creative solutions to organizational practices that inadvertently act as barriers to a diverse workforce's access to opportunities in the organization, using all the available tools to further the civil rights goals in PPQ. (Flexibility & Creativity)

### **Providing Fair and Impartial Program Delivery**

PPQ provides programs that serve a diverse population in the United States and certainly PPQ's work touches many different countries in the world. For PPQ to provide fair and impartial program delivery, the men and women who work for PPQ throughout the world must:

- Share all relevant information with employees to ensure all employees can contribute equally to achieve PPQ's mission; (Communication, Commitment)
- Recognize and demonstrate respect for the cultural and language differences of the diverse communities PPQ serves; (Acceptance & Inclusion)
- Actively reach out to underserved communities; (Communication, Public Service)
- Demonstrate the ability to adapt to different situations encountered in the field; (Flexibility & Creativity)
- Actively solicit and seriously consider ideas from all PPQ employees and stakeholders on ways to improve PPQ program delivery and PPQ's work environment. (Communication & Collaboration)

### **PPQ: The Federal Workplace Where Every Employee has a Sense of True Belonging**

For PPQ to establish and maintain a dynamic and strong civil rights environment, every employee must commit to actively use these Principles as a guide to take the most appropriate action that will ensure everyone in PPQ is treated fairly. Only then will PPQ become the premier Federal workplace where every employee has a sense of true belonging and has equal access to all the opportunities, resources, support, legal rights and remedies they deserve as members of the organization.



### **Strategic Environmental Scan**

Like all strategic planning efforts, the planning group scanned the external and internal to PPQ environments to identify the threats and opportunities that the external world presents and PPQ's internal strengths and weakness to be addressed to fully realize the Civil Rights Vision and Guiding Principles.

The picture of the external world is one of turbulent change in the agricultural industry, global trade, technological developments and changing demographics in the United States. The 2000 census notes that 51% of the population is women and 40% are people of color. In addition, more women are earning college degrees than men and the percentage of Hispanics are increasing at a more rapid rate than any other ethnic group. These demographic changes will impact PPQ more directly as large numbers of "Baby Boomers" retire over the next ten years. PPQ will need to attract into government service younger people, who come into the workplace with a whole different set of expectations. These demographic trends and global challenges demand PPQ to build an inclusive work environment to leverage diversity as a critical success factor in achieving its mission now and in the future.

PPQ is facing more complex challenges than ever before with the increasing number of trade agreements involving agricultural commodities, an increasing number of emergency programs, an increasing number of plant diseases affecting significant crops, an increasing number of plant pest issues associated with non-agricultural products and bio-terrorism. All of these complex issues require rapid and ever increasing sophisticated responses from PPQ in order to meet these complex challenges effectively. PPQ must foster a work environment that enables “all employees to do their best work and to continually improve their skills so that they can do even better work tomorrow.” PPQ needs “everyone to bring all their talents and energies to the workplace, working together to create something greater than any individual group could do alone.” PPQ cannot afford to do otherwise.

The discussion of PPQ’s specific internal strengths and weaknesses will be included in the presentation of each of the strategic goals included in this plan. Overall, one strength PPQ has is a reinvigorated National Civil Rights Leadership Committee who demonstrated the strength of their leadership by creating a bold vision, developing of Guiding Principles and creating an collaborative process, involving leaders from all levels of the organization to develop PPQ’s Civil Rights Strategic Plan. Their leadership already has set the direction for PPQ to leave behind a Civil Rights effort that was previously negatively marked by a complaint process that was viewed as ineffective by both employees and managers and a set of rote reporting and training requirements that sometimes feel irrelevant and extraneous. In its place, the committee has provided PPQ with their vision, Guiding Principles and Strategic Plan that has the potential to engage and energize each and every PPQ employee to bring all that they have to offer to the workplace to meet PPQ’s challenges and to be valued for doing so. This strategic plan offers a road map for PPQ to leverage diversity in the context of an inclusive work environment and positions PPQ to set a new and innovative direction for Civil Rights in APHIS.

Note: the sentences and phrases in quotes in the above discussion and throughout this plan came from *The Inclusion Breakthrough: Unleashing the Real Power of Diversity* by Frederick Miller and Judith Katz.

## **Strategic Goals**

To ensure the full realization of the Civil Rights Vision and Guiding Principles, the planning group developed five Strategic Goals:

1. To make a shift in the PPQ work environment from one that tolerates diversity to an inclusive one that actively embraces and values the diversity present in its workforce and stakeholder community.
2. To construct a PPQ workforce at all levels of the organization that utilizes and reflects the diverse demographics found in the American general population by 2009.
3. To enhance PPQ’s training and development programs to support the creation of an inclusive work environment where each and every employee has a true sense of belonging.
4. To identify and address the underlying root causes of PPQ employee grievances and improve or develop strategies that results in a 20% reduction of the total number of EEO complaints related to non-selection, reasonable accommodation and retaliation by 2009.

5. To strengthen the Special Emphasis Program Manager's role in promoting PPQ's Civil Rights Vision of creating a diverse workforce, to ensure a positive inclusive work environment is developed and supported, and to ensure impartial program delivery.

### **Strategic Goals and Objectives**

The following presents the Strategic Goals, performance measures, and objectives for each strategic goal.

**Strategic Goal 1: To make a shift in the PPQ work environment from one that tolerates diversity to an inclusive one that actively embraces and values the diversity present in its workforce and stakeholder community.**

#### **Summary of PPQ's Internal Strengths and Weaknesses:**

The new reality is that PPQ is a much smaller organization after the reassignment of a large number of its employees to DHS. This creates a new climate full of opportunities for all employees especially minorities to make a more meaningful contribution to the organization and to advance in their careers. The availability of civil rights and leadership training in addition to new programs such as the 360 degree feedback process for all PPQ supervisors are among PPQ's current strengths. At the same time the planners recognized that there are still obstacles in the system, such as, the organization's tendency to repetitively tap and utilize the same people for special project work groups; and not routinely soliciting or listening to input from the broad range of experiences and expertise represented within the organization. The planners embraced the Civil Rights Vision and Guiding Principles as opportunity to shape a goal to address these and other obstacles and put a mechanism in place to create this inclusive work environment that goes beyond mere Civil Rights compliance. This goal seeks to reinvigorate the current civil rights program to play a more vital role in creating the inclusive work environment that leverages its diversity and where every employee has a sense of true belonging.

#### **Performance Measures:**

- Two alternatives to the direct filing of a complaint through the APHIS EEO process exist: Conflict, Prevention, and Resolution (CPR) Program and Administrative Grievance (AG) Process.
- Increased diversity represented on task forces or special projects.
- The reduction in overall EEO complaints.
- Increased percentage of diverse populations represented at all grade levels of the organization.
- Increased employee morale and satisfaction.
- Increased productivity

**Objectives:**

**Objective 1:** Engage the PPQ Executive Team to gain their full and active support for this diversity strategy, recognizing people in the organization take their cues from the top of the organization.

**Objective 2:** Establish an infrastructure to support the organization's (PPQ) and individual employee's ability to establish an inclusive work environment that fully embraces and leverages diversity as a strategic advantage by the end of 2006.

**Objective 3:** Conduct "an organizational assessment to carefully study the organization-its culture, opportunities, challenges, long-term potential and possibilities for maximizing performance; to identify what people need from the organization to contribute more effectively to its current and future success, what people need to do their best work and what the organization needs from them."

**Objective 4:** Develop an effective "roll-out", communication or "marketing campaign" to communicate "Diversity Initiative" to shift from tolerance to acceptance of diversity in the work environment.

**Objective 5:** Develop and implement a roll-out of Guiding Principles for Civil Rights.

**Objective 6:** Ensure the appropriate training and development opportunities are made available to PPQ employees at all levels to learn and effectively demonstrate the Civil Rights Guiding Principles to support the new PPQ culture of inclusiveness.

<p><b>Strategic Goal 2: To construct a PPQ workforce at all levels of the organization that utilizes and reflects the diverse demographics found in the American general population by 2009.</b></p>
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**Summary of PPQ's Internal Strengths and Weaknesses:**

When more than 2500 PPQ employees were transferred to the Department of Homeland Security, PPQ's workforce no longer sufficiently represented the diversity of the American population. At the same time, the diversity in the pool of qualified applicants for higher grade levels within the organization has diminished. In recent years, PPQ's Professional Development Center has experienced a reduction in applications from people of color applying to their leadership development programs. As a result, PPQ must remain vigilant and strive for improving the many dimensions of workforce diversity through recruitment, workforce and succession planning and individual development planning.

**Performance Measures:**

Each PPQ work unit reflects the surrounding area's demographics of the population by 2009. There is an increased percentage of diverse populations represented at all levels of the organization.

**Objectives:**

**Objective 1: To increase diversity in the organization to reflect the diverse populations in PPQ work unit's surrounding area.**

**Objective 2: To maintain a recruitment program that is: responsive to and representative of managements needs, meets annual diversity goals; and draws upon the talents and participation of current PPQ employees.**

**Objective 3: To utilize a variety of learning opportunities (shadowing, action learning, etc) to increase skills within PPQ to ensure a well-trained and well-rounded workforce from which to fill future vacancies.**

**Objective 4: To ensure Supervisors are working with employees to identify career goals and helping them identify and document in their learning contracts any training and developmental activities to help them reach their career goals.**

**Objective 5: To ensure succession planning remains a PPQ priority.**

<p><b>Strategic Goal 3: To enhance PPQ's training and development programs and EEO/CR training initiatives to support the creation of an inclusive work environment where each and every employee has a true sense of belonging.</b></p>
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**Summary of PPQ's Internal Strengths and Weaknesses:**

At this time, Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) does not have a training plan that includes topics related to EEO and diversity and all the competencies needed to support the inclusive work environment described in the Civil Rights Vision and Guiding Principles. The current EEO training provided is issued by the Civil Rights Enforcement and Compliance (CREC) staff, following the direction set at the Department level, usually one time per year. Often this training is offered at the end of the year when time becomes a factor and many employees are faced with missing the training requirement altogether.

New employee orientation provides nothing more than a link to the APHIS non-discrimination statement. The mandatory New Supervisory training lightly touches on the APHIS non-discrimination policy. While some attention is given to improving interpersonal communication skills, not enough attention is given to building other competencies for *all PPQ employees*. For the Civil Rights Guiding Principles to become a reality and not a set of empty words, PPQ employees need to build skills in such competencies as conflict management, personal flexibility, effectively managing ambiguity, ability to speak a second language, cultural sensitivities, giving and receiving feedback and ability to engage in "straight talk" with one another. This goal is aimed at closing the gap in what is currently offered by APHIS and PPQ and what is needed to successfully achieve the Civil Rights Vision and Guiding Principles.

**Performance Measures:**

- Enhancements in the way PPQ provides EEO/CR training
- Decreases in complaints;
- Balanced, diverse workforce;
- Ability to retain a quality and diverse employee population.

**Objectives:**

**Objective 1: Develop dual training plan for supervisors & employees within 6 months of implementation/end of FY06.**

**Objective 2: Develop tracking system to assess the progress of the training plan/training within 1 year of implementation/end of FY07.**

**Objective 3: Assess the impact of the training by the end of FY '09.**

**Objective 4: Integrate all needed competencies to support the Civil Rights Guiding Principles into current and newly developed training to complement the mandated EEO/CR training by the end of FY '09.**

**Strategic Goal 4: To identify and address the underlying root causes of PPQ employee grievances and improve or develop strategies that results in a 20% reduction of the total number of EEO complaints related to non-selection, reasonable accommodation and retaliation by 2009.**

**Summary of PPQ's Internal Strengths and Weaknesses:**

When PPQ employees feel that they have been treated poorly by management, it is not clearly understood to what extent PPQ employees are knowledgeable of or actually utilize the programs available to them as avenues for resolving complaints.

Since mandatory postings of the APHIS EEO complaint process are required, this method may be perceived by employees as the more readily available and the accepted procedure to pursue. Yet there are two alternatives to the direct filing of a complaint through the APHIS EEO process: Conflict, Prevention, and Resolution (CPR) Program and Administrative Grievance (AG) Process. These alternatives are not utilized as often as the EEO Complaint Process.

Despite a reduction in the number of APHIS EEO complaints filed during FY '05, the trends for the complaints that are filed continue to indicate that non-selection and retaliation are among the most common reasons. Issues related to non-selection stem from inconsistencies in how the application and interview processes are communicated and conducted and the lack of feedback to non-selected employees. Training opportunities in the areas of completing job applications and interview skills are currently limited. Retaliation is a poorly understood area, and there is currently little information or training available to managers. Complaints filed for reasonable accommodation issues are not a significant number, and there is an established process for handling requests for reasonable accommodation. However, it does not appear to be fully



understood by managers and employees, and minimal training and information is readily available.

Employees who feel that they have been subjected to discrimination always maintain the right to file an EEO complaint. The intent of this goal is not to undermine that right. However, since there have been no findings of discrimination by the agency during the past 2 fiscal years, this process may not be capable of fully addressing and resolving the root causes of complaints, which may lead to additional and/or chronic complaint filing. The following goal, objectives, and action steps were developed to identify and address root causes in order to determine suitable approaches to obtaining mutual satisfaction for all parties involved without feeling the need to seek resolution by immediate filing as an EEO complaint.

**Performance Measures:**

- PPQ tracks its performance in achieving this goal by monitoring:
- Progress toward completion of a baseline survey of PPQ employees to determine the general employee knowledge and satisfaction in the areas of civil rights (CR) and equal employment opportunity (EEO) processes available to them.
- Number of PPQ employees familiar with the Conflict Prevention and Resolution (CPR) and the Administrative Grievance (AG) processes for resolving complaints.
- Number of PPQ employees who utilize the CPR and AG processes as a method for resolving complaints.
- Number of EEO complaints related to non-selection, reasonable accommodation, and retaliation filed with APHIS Civil Rights Enforcement and Compliance (CREC).

**Objectives:**

**Objective 1: Obtain feedback from PPQ employees to determine the current levels of their feelings of value and fair treatment and their general knowledge and use of available tools and processes for Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity (CR/EEO) related issues.**

**Objective 2: Ensure that all PPQ employees are knowledgeable of the existence and use of the Conflict Prevention and Resolution (CPR) program and the Administrative Grievance (AG) process for resolving employee complaints as an alternative to direct filing through the APHIS CREC EEO process.**

**Objective 3: Reduce the number of EEO complaints filed for applicant non-selection.**

**Objective 4: Reduce the number of EEO complaints filed for issues related to retaliation.**

**Objective 5: Improve the knowledge base and reporting mechanism for PPQ managers and employees regarding issues related to requests for reasonable accommodation.**

**Objective 6: Champion the creation of a Career Coaching Unit to support employees' personal growth and career development by assisting them in finding productive ways to improve their skills and promotion potential through feedback, learning, and positive experiences.**

**Strategic Goal 5: To strengthen the Special Emphasis Program Manager's role in promoting PPQ's Civil Rights Vision of creating a diverse workforce, to ensure a positive inclusive work environment is developed and supported, and to ensure impartial program delivery.**

**Summary of PPQ's Internal Strengths and Weaknesses:**

One of PPQ's strengths is that Upper Management acknowledges and is aware of the Special Emphasis Program (SEP) which is a mandated program and position by the EEOC. The APHIS Civil Rights Enforcement and Compliance unit (CREC) and the PPQ NCRLC provide the infrastructure to support the SEP. Most recently the PPQ NCRLC has made a commitment to facilitate information exchange among the SEP Managers (SEPM) located throughout PPQ to share resources, program ideas and lead to enhanced problem resolution. This will allow the SEPM's to leverage the organizational infrastructure to provide better service to organization. The SEPM's provide a Quarterly Accomplishment Report to the organization. In eastern region they have a form that the State Directors fill out to report outreach, information awareness and distribution, SEP activities, EEO and CR training initiatives, conferences, and meeting etc. SEPM training widely available, curriculum has a sufficient focus on the workforce of the future.

At the same time the SEPM's are under utilized by management. This may be due to management's unclear expectations of the SEPM and a lack of clarity regarding the SEPM's role. For example, management does not address the concerns and barriers that hinder workforce diversity brought to their attention by SEPM's. At the same time management is not completely aware or fully utilizing hiring authorities available to them, which could promote workforce diversity. Most people's perception of the SEPM's role is to only coordinate observation activities. There are inconsistencies in the organization with regard to the implementation of SEP at the local level. Managers not held accountable for not providing required reports (accomplishments and outreach). There is a lack of communication intra-program (Management to SEPM and SEPM to SEPM, SEPM to NCRLC). SEPM's have limited access to employee and EEO data which is often inaccurate.

**Objectives:**

**Objective 1: Increase PPQ management's awareness of the SEPM 's roles and responsibilities.**

**Objective 2: To improve PPQ SEPM's ability to delivery SEP within PPQ.**

**Objective 3: Actively promote and assist management with achieving a diverse workforce.**

**Objective 4: Achieve impartial program delivery.**

**Objective 5: Actively promote and assist management with creating or enhancing an environment that embraces diversity and a positive work environment.**

**Action Plan to Implement the PPQ Civil Rights Strategic Plan**

**Actions Steps for Each Strategic Objective**

**Strategic Goal 1: To make a shift in the PPQ work environment from one that tolerates diversity to an inclusive one that actively embraces and values the diversity present in its workforce and stakeholder community.**

**Objective 1: Engage the PPQ Executive Team to gain their full and active support for this diversity strategy, recognizing people in the organization take their cues from the top of the organization.**

**Action Steps:**

1. Present the Civil Rights Vision, Guiding Principles and Strategic Plan to the PPQ Executive Team
2. Provide a compelling case for each goal of the Strategic Plan to secure the needed resources to implement the Strategic Plan.
3. Provide a learning opportunity for members of the Executive Team to better understand their role and responsibilities in creating and sustaining the desired future as expressed in the Vision and Guiding Principles: what it means to leverage diversity and inclusion as a way of doing business.
4. Ask for the Executive Team's full commitment and active support to create the desired future state for an inclusive work environment where all employees feel a true sense of belonging.

**Objective 2: Establish an infrastructure to support the organization's (PPQ) and individual employee's ability to establish an inclusive work environment that fully embraces and leverages diversity as a strategic advantage by the end of 2006.**

**Action Steps:**

1. Establish a temporary (2-3 year term, not to exceed 5 years) full-time position to take on full responsibility to work with PPQ management to creating this inclusive work environment and to serve as a "Diversity Coach".
2. Critically assess, plan for and provide a budget that supports this position (e.g. travel, training, resources, and administrative support) and determine where it should reside, giving strong consideration to PDC.
3. Clarify and establish the role of the Diversity Coach to
4. Serve as mentor to managers and workforce alike to develop skills and processes to enhance the effective integration of diversity in all facets of PPQ-making the diversity strategy part of everyone's job.
5. Serve as a train-the-trainer, train-the-coach, and/or mentor for others to carry out the diversity coaching role at other levels of the organization such as regional and work unit levels.

6. Either recruit an applicant from or invest in high quality, high level training for the selected Diversity Coach, such as the 2-year, Diversity Certificate Program of National Training Laboratories (NTL) for Applied Behavioral Science program (see Jane Berkow for more information on this program).
7. Select the position based on competencies critical to a position such as this including but not limited to: interpersonal skills, effective listening, effective communication, empathy, conflict management, ability to accept and work with ambiguity, personal flexibility, high degree of self-awareness, coaching skills, organizational change, etc. (Get input from qualified practitioners when identifying the critical skills set.)
8. Offer the opportunity to Diversity Coach to learn a second language and participate in a cultural sensitivity training, with time and costs supported by the agency. The language factor is critical for the coach in his/her mission due to the fact that large number of employees who are bilingual within the agency.
9. Continue to provide high level management “Champion” to encourage and provide support to the coach and help to link the Coach with the PPQ Executive Team.

**Objective 3: Conduct “an organizational assessment to carefully study the organization-its culture, opportunities, challenges, long-term potential and possibilities for maximizing performance; to identify what people need from the organization to contribute more effectively to its current and future success, what people need to do their best work and what the organization needs from them.”**

**Action Steps:**

1. Critically review existing recent PPQ assessments to determine if PPQ’s current culture and diversity dimension have been adequately considered. If not, consider, develop, and conduct an assessment which focuses on the diversity dimension in the PPQ culture. This assessment should not be viewed as an indictment against management but an opportunity to know where and how to focus the work to achieve this goal. *(Note: Jane Berkow strongly suggests PPQ secure a contractor, whose expertise is in creating an inclusive organizational culture, to conduct this assessment.)*
2. Based on findings, develop change management strategies to address shortcomings and leverage strengths. *(Again the same contractor used to conduct an assessment could take lead in the development of strategies.)*
3. Share findings with PPQ management, NCRLC and the “Diversity Coach” and workforce as part of the development of a diversity enhancement work plan and involve them in the development of strategies.
4. Develop a change management plan to systematically implement the desired changes needed to achieve the Civil Rights vision, incorporating strategies developed resulting from the organizational assessment.

**Objective 4: Develop an effective “roll-out”, communication or “marketing campaign” to communicate “Diversity Initiative” to shift from tolerance to acceptance of diversity in the work environment.**

**Action Steps:**

1. Use industry standard “marketing campaign” methodology to develop and communicate an effective message.
2. Consider a wide range of methods to deliver this message including but not limited to face-to-face communication such as focus groups and town hall meetings, and all manner of gizmos and gadgets such as pins, t-shirts and “Diversity Calendar” (see below);
  - a. Designate a Diversity Day for PPQ to celebrate our agency’s diversity to increase PPQ employees awareness of how leveraging diversity in an inclusive work environment can become a way of doing business.
  - b. Review and assess other programs’ roll-out processes and use best practices.
  - c. Invite full participation of Legislative and Public Affairs (LPA), PPQ’s Professional Development Center, National Civil Rights Leadership Council, Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPM) and others who have an important role in diversity enhancement and /or public communication.
3. Develop a process to evaluate the effectiveness of roll-out process as a whole.
4. Create a Diversity Calendar that the Diversity Coach would maintain:
  - a. The Calendar’s months could be divided based on all diversity groups (African American, Disability, Native American...etc.)
  - b. The calendar's months could exhibit different hand drawn pictures by school students to highlight diversity group heritage (School students may be limited to PPQ families within certain grades).
  - c. A Contest among kids could take place in order to choose the best pictures for the calendar and an award should be designed for all winners (*See Wally Sheta for more details*).

**Objective 5: Develop and implement a roll-out of Guiding Principles for Civil Rights**

**Action Steps:**

1. Develop a plan to introduce the Civil Rights Guiding Principles to PPQ.
2. Ask Dr. Dunkle to endorse and issue the Guiding Principles to the rest of the organization;
3. Identify other ways to reinforce the communication, such as posters, an abbreviated version on mouse pads, etc.
4. Incorporate them into PPQ employee’s performance elements
5. Have managers and supervisors set up meetings or incorporate a discussion in work unit meetings to introduce them to employees.

**Objective 6: Ensure the appropriate training and development opportunities are made available to PPQ employees at all levels to learn and effectively demonstrate the Civil Rights Guiding Principles to support the new PPQ culture of inclusiveness.**

**Action Steps:**

- See Strategic Goal 3

**Strategic Goal 2: To construct a PPQ workforce at all levels of the organization that utilizes and reflects the diverse demographics found in the American general population by 2009.**

**Objective 1: To increase diversity in the organization to reflect the diverse populations in PPQ work unit's surrounding area.**

**Action Steps:** Over the next three years:

1. Each year, the recruitment officer will analyze the Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Plan (FEORP) within the first quarter of the FY to determine targeted areas that PPQ will address because of identified deficiencies.
2. Each year, the recruitment officer will draft an action plan within 30 days of reviewing the FEORP that addresses how PPQ will meet the objectives identified in the FEORP and specific agency deficiencies.
3. Each year, the recruitment officer will send the draft action plan to designated regional and program recruitment personnel for review and to provide comments within 10 working days.
4. Each year, the recruitment officer will incorporate comments and finalize the action plan.
5. Each year, the recruitment officer will communicate the current year's action plan widely to PPQ managers.
6. Each year, the recruitment officer will implement and monitor the action plan, provide status reports to and meet with regional and program recruitment personnel, National Civil Rights Leadership Committee (NCRLC), and Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPMs) on a quarterly (or ad hoc) basis to update the action plan and report accomplishments.

**Objective 2: To maintain a recruitment program that is: responsive to and representative of managements needs, meets annual diversity goals; and draws upon the talents and participation of current PPQ employees.**

**Action Steps:**

1. The Associate Deputy Administrator will maintain function of the PPQ recruitment office in the PDC.
2. The recruitment officer ensures strategies for meeting the FEORP goals and objectives are integrated in the PPQ workforce plan.
3. The recruitment officer will develop, document, and maintain a recruitment infrastructure that identifies roles and responsibilities of recruitment functions at all levels of PPQ.
4. The recruitment officer will publicize the USDA Finders program to the PPQ workforce.
5. The recruitment officer will work with the regional and program recruitment personnel and MRPBS-HR to educate mgrs and employees on hiring practices including non-comp hiring authorities (i.e., student interns, VRA, etc) merit systems principles including prohibited hiring practices.

6. The recruitment officer and field subject matter experts will develop and maintain a marketing plan/strategy that will foster an environment where everyone in PPQ is a recruiter.
7. The recruitment officer will develop and maintain initiatives such as partnerships with Florida A&M Universities and the University of Hawaii.
8. The recruitment officer will work with Special Emphasis Program Manager's (SEPMs) to identify local sources of potential candidates within their Special Emphasis Programs.
9. The recruitment officer will attend key meetings (e.g., PPQ Executive Team meetings, State Plant Health Director meetings, etc) to inform PPQ of recruitment program strategies, accomplishments, etc.
10. Recruitment, Retention, and/or Relocation bonuses will be considered as additional tools to attract top applicants or to retain highly qualified employees. Ensure PPQ's workforce plan contains recruitment and retention strategies, such as, the repayment of student loans to recruit for hard-to-fill positions and as an option to retain highly qualified employees.

**Objective 3: To utilize a variety of learning opportunities (shadowing, action learning, etc) to increase skills within PPQ to ensure a well-trained and well-rounded workforce from which to fill future vacancies.**

**Action Steps:**

1. PDC will update the PPQ Learning Contract Handbook. The PDC will send annual reminders to all employees of the PPQ Policy on Learning Contracts.
2. Supervisors will provide all new employees with a copy of PPQ's Leadership Development Toolkit which includes PPQ's Leadership Development and Competency Guide, PPQ's Learning Contract Handbook, and PPQ's Mentoring Handbook.
3. Supervisors and Managers will inform PPQ workforce of developmental opportunities as they become available (e.g., TDY to regional office, working on PPQ special projects, etc.)
4. PDC will work with APHIS Training and Development Branch to ensure announcements for developmental programs for clerical and administrative personnel are being distributed to potential applicants in PPQ.
5. PDC will work with Supervisor's and Manager's to help them identify a variety of learning opportunities (i.e., coaching, TDY assignments, books, on-line learning, details, developmental assignments, etc.) for employees at all levels within PPQ.

**Objective 4: To ensure Supervisors are working with employees to identify career goals and helping them identify and document in their learning contracts any training and developmental activities to help them reach their career goals.**

**Action Steps:**

1. PPQ Management will hold Supervisors accountable for implementing PPQ policy on Learning Contracts (e.g., make requirement part of their HR performance element).



2. PPQ supervisors, managers, and executives will establish an environment that recognizes the benefit of long range investment in employees by ensuring a variety of learning opportunities are provided at all levels.
3. To enhance the diversity of our applicant pool, PPQ supervisors will announce some positions at grades below the full performance level.

**Objective 5: To ensure succession planning remains a PPQ priority.**

**Action Steps:**

1. PDC retains responsibility for succession planning in PPQ, involving PPQ management in its development.
2. The completed Succession Plans are communicated widely and PDC works with management to help them understand their role and responsibilities in implementing and supporting the goals and objectives of the plan.
3. The plan is routinely updated to reflect current reality of the organization and incorporates diversity goals in the plan as appropriate.

**Strategic Goal 3: To enhance PPQ's training and development programs and EEO/CR training initiatives to support the creation of an inclusive work environment where each and every employee has a true sense of belonging.**

**Objective 1: Develop dual training plan for supervisors & employees within 6 months of implementation/end of FY06.**

**Action Steps:**

1. Identify and evaluate current training and competencies developed in the current training curriculum.
2. Determine additional training based on a needs assessment framed by the competencies identified to support the full realization of the CR Guiding Principles.
3. Identify training resources needed based on:
  - a. Cost
  - b. Location
  - c. Competencies to be developed and topic
  - d. Time
4. Develop training plan for workshops and other developmental opportunities to develop the needed competencies for supervisors & employees.
5. Encourage employees to include learning activities aimed at building the competencies that support the CR Guiding Principles in their personal learning contracts.

**Objective 2: Develop tracking system to assess the progress of the training plan/training within 1 year of implementation/end of FY07.**

**Action Steps:**

1. Collect trainee feedback on their learning experiences

2. Analyze feedback
3. Continue/Modify/Replace and component of training or plan

**Objective 3: Assess the impact of the training by the end of FY '09.**

**Action Steps:**

1. Analyze EEO complaints to determine current patterns and trends have changed, i.e., if the number of complaints have been reduced and/or the complaints have been resolved through other means, such as mediation.
2. Evaluate program delivery to determine if it is delivered fairly and impartially.
3. Evaluate if PPQ employees more fully demonstrate the behaviors described in the Guiding Principles.
4. Evaluate the impact on awards: monetary vs. non-monetary
5. Track retention of PPQ employees

**Objective 4: Integrate all needed competencies to support the Civil Rights Guiding Principles into current and newly developed training to complement the mandated EEO/CR training by the end of FY '09.**

**Action Steps:**

1. Identify interpersonal skills necessary to ensure open communication and other necessary competencies to support the Guiding Principles
2. Identify the resources needed to improve these skills
3. Identify alternate means for management directed training

**Strategic Goal 4: To identify and address the underlying root causes of PPQ employee grievances and improve or develop strategies that results in a 20% reduction of the total number of EEO complaints related to non-selection, reasonable accommodation and retaliation by 2009.**

**Objective 1: Obtain feedback from PPQ employees to determine the current levels of their feelings of value and fair treatment and their general knowledge and use of available tools and processes for Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity (CR/EEO) related issues.**

**Action Steps:**

1. Identify an appropriate mechanism (online survey, focus group, etc.) to obtain information on the opinions and attitudes of PPQ employees regarding CR/EEO issues.
2. Develop a draft of questions and distribute to members of all PPQ Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committees (CREEOAC) for review and comment and work with other Civil Rights Strategic work groups in their survey initiatives for a combined effort.

3. Upon completion of the information-gathering period, results will be compiled by the PPQ National Civil Rights Leadership Committee (NCRLC).
4. The PPQ NCRLC members will prepare and submit a draft summary report of the results for review and comment by the PPQ Executive Team.
5. The final draft of the report will be distributed via “PPQ All Employees” and “PPQ PDC” email groups and posted on the NCRLC website

**Objective 2: Ensure that all PPQ employees are knowledgeable of the existence and use of the Conflict Prevention and Resolution (CPR) program and the Administrative Grievance (AG) process for resolving employee complaints as an alternative to direct filing through the APHIS CREC EEO process.**

**Action Steps:**

1. Clearly define the CPR and AG procedures as flow charts, post information and the process flow charts on the NCRLC website, and notify all PPQ employees via “PPQ All” and “PPQ PDC” email groups of its availability.
2. Develop and implement a PPQ policy that includes the requirement of mandatory posting of a CPR poster in conjunction with the required department and agency Civil Rights and EEO posters and policies.
3. Investigate the potential for establishing incentives for use of either the CPR or AG processes as the first alternative in resolving employee complaints (i. e., if CPR or AG was not initially chosen, then attorney’s fees may be disallowed if the EEO process is pursued and fails).
4. Obtain annual statistics for PPQ employees’ usage of CPR from program initiation through December 2005.
5. Determine the timeliness of CPR response and if a customer feedback mechanism is available.
6. Using information obtained from PPQ employees, identify and address the existing barriers to the use of CPR.
7. Publicize the availability of the Manager’s EEO Hotline managed by APHIS CREC for use in obtaining advice regarding potential EEO issues.
8. Investigate the potential for establishment of an EEO Information Hotline that would be available for use by all APHIS employees for comments, questions, or concerns.
9. Identify barriers that prevent managers from dealing with civil rights issues (i.e., shifting of the supervisor to employee ratio to ensure that a balance exists in time spent performing responsibilities as a manager and accomplishing program delivery).
10. Develop strategies to address the barriers identified

**Objective 3: Reduce the number of EEO complaints filed for applicant non-selection.**

**Action Steps:**

1. Define a process and implement through an official policy requiring feedback to applicants not selected during paper or interview panels regarding strengths and areas where improvement is necessary (including record forms, form letters, and checklists).

2. Define a process and implement through an official policy a consistent rating system for use in conducting applicant reference checks (including record forms and form letters).
3. Define the current selection process for vacancies under Merit Promotion and Case Exam, including flow charts and supporting information to explain each step, post the information on the NCRLC website, and notify all PPQ employees of the information and location.
4. Develop and deliver training in giving and receiving feedback to PPQ supervisors and employees.
5. Encourage the use of learning contracts to incorporate providing feedback for non-selection, especially for managers who are in position to do a lot of hiring and promoting.
6. Investigate the potential of amending the format of the official certificate of candidates to include a checklist for use by selecting officials to record the completion of tasks such as feedback to non-selected candidates, completion of reference checks, interviews, etc.

**Objective 4: Reduce the number of EEO complaints filed for issues related to retaliation.**

**Action Steps:**

1. Educate managers in what constitutes retaliation and provide case studies as examples in PPQ's supervisory training.
2. Post information regarding retaliation on the NCRLC website and send out periodic reminders on the subject.
3. Encourage dialog between management and employees at the earliest time and the lowest level.

**Objective 5: Improve the knowledge base and reporting mechanism for PPQ managers and employees regarding issues related to requests for reasonable accommodation.**

**Action Steps:**

1. Define and explain the guidelines and process for both management and employees and post the information on the NCRLC website.
2. Implement an official policy requiring that all requests for reasonable accommodation are documented in writing, including additional contacts made, decisions rendered, and actions performed.
3. Define a mechanism to collect data annually for issues related to reasonable accommodation.
4. Develop a list of specialists in the area of reasonable accommodation, including experienced PPQ managers, and post on the NCRLC website as resources who may be contacted for further information and advice.

**Objective 6: Explore the creation of a Career Coaching Unit to support employees' personal growth and career development by assisting them in finding productive ways to improve their skills and promotion potential through feedback, learning, and positive experiences.**

**Action Steps:**

1. Initiate discussions to brainstorm structure and function for development of a Career Coaching Unit under PPQ PDC to serve each of 3 areas (Headquarters, Riverdale, MD; Eastern Region & Center for Plant Health Science, Raleigh, NC; and Western Region, Fort Collins, CO).
2. Prepare and submit a proposal to the PPQ Executive Team for the Career Coaching Unit's creation and staffing (minimum of 6 staff years total, or 1 coach and 1 administrative support assistant for each of the 3 areas).

<p><b>Strategic Goal 5: To strengthen the Special Emphasis Program Manager's role in promoting PPQ's Civil Rights Vision of creating a diverse workforce, to ensure a positive inclusive work environment is developed and supported, and to ensure impartial program delivery.</b></p>
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**Objective 1: Increase PPQ management's awareness of the SEPM 's roles and responsibilities.**

**Action Steps:**

1. Distribute introductory letter within the individual EEOAC service units that introduces their SEPM's and individual, reporting requirement and consider additional communication options:
  - a. Individual letters to managers
  - b. Posters of SEPM in each unit
  - c. Distribution of new policies, remind recipients of SEPM's as a resource
2. Communicate objectives of the Special Emphasis Program, the role of the Special Emphasis Program Managers, as an ombudsman to make management aware of issues that might be potentially volatile and how they might be used as a resource to accomplish Program objectives, considering the following options to communicate:
  - a. Workshops for managers
  - b. SEPM awareness module in FAHRM and experienced supervisor training
  - c. SEPM presentation at PPQ leadership team meeting
3. Increase the awareness of midlevel managers that financial resources are available to implement SEP in their units.
4. Meet with managers quarterly to ascertain their EEO and CR objectives and discuss strategies and their implementation for their unit.

**Objective 2: To improve PPQ SEPM's ability to delivery SEP within PPQ.**

**Action steps:**

1. Identify barriers and present resolution alternatives to address potential civil rights issues and identified barriers (*SEPM could develop a SEP workplan: to achieve management goals, that is information driven targeting the removal of an identified barrier.*)
2. Allow SEPM access to data reporting systems to facilitate the generation of relevant workforce analysis reports (*Need accurate program and comparison data to identify program barriers.*)
3. Inform midlevel managers (by high level management) of their reporting requirements as they relate to EEO and CR and establish an accountability mechanism for SPHD's and Midlevel managers to submit required reports to SEPM.
4. Develop a consistent structure and standard guidelines to assure that SEP initiatives are implemented at the individual unit level to address observation month activities, potential issues and barriers; vehicle for information distribution and sharing; and - outreach contacts.
5. Assure that all SEPM have received appropriate training and are aware of their roles and responsibilities; i.e., workforce analysis, barrier analysis and determination; and developing outreach networks.
6. Develop a communication plan to assure that information is disseminated from SEPM to SEPM; SEPM to Management; and NCRLC to SEPM
7. Develop standard guidelines to be utilized PPQ wide for performing analysis of workforce data and evaluating program delivery to identify potential barriers to workforce delivery and impartial program delivery, including guidance on how to identify barriers.

**Objective 3: Actively promote and assist management with achieving a diverse workforce.**

**Action Steps:**

1. Provide high and mid-level managers with information about alternative hiring authorities in collaboration with Human Resources and the National Recruiter to promote workforce development and diversity.
2. Promote and encourage the use of novel or alternative hiring authorities, or internally with developmental assignments to address diversity issues.
3. Increase collaboration with the National Recruiter to expand the applicant pool for PPQ vacancies exploring the following potential roles:
4. SEPM could provide a source network for targeted recruitment, as well as information about PPQ's needs regarding targeted data driven recruitment;
5. Recruiter could provide Program information about the general organization, current opening, hiring authorities, and perhaps the ability to hire on the spot.
6. Assist managers with developing strategies to overcome identified barriers to workforce diversity and developing a positive work environment.

**Objective 4: Achieve impartial program delivery.**

**Action Steps:**

1. Provide assistance to managers in identifying PPQ EEO/CR training needs to enhance the organization's ability to embrace diversity and promote impartial program delivery
2. Participate in compliance review and port reviews

**Objective 5: Actively promote and assist management with creating or enhancing an environment that embraces diversity and a positive work environment.**

**Action Steps:**

1. Assist managers with identifying opportunities to promoting SEP observation month programs and other cultural events to enhance awareness and ways to link it to PPQ's ability to accomplish its mission most effectively. (This could also be accomplished through partnering with neighboring federal agencies and/or organizations.)
2. Assist managers with identifying and promoting cultural awareness training
3. Provide assistance to managers in identifying PPQ EEO/CR training needs to enhance the organization's ability to embrace diversity and promote impartial program delivery