



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Office of the
Assistant Secretary
for Civil Rights

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TO: All USDA Employees

FROM: Margo M. McKay *Annabelle Rennie for*
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

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SUBJECT: USDA's Diversity Mission Statement

In January 2007, I issued a Workplace Diversity and Inclusion statement that emphasized the need for all of us to do our part to promote a diverse workplace. Since then, the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OASCR) has taken significant steps to achieve this goal. One such step is the establishment of USDA's Diversity Mission Statement. Each of us should strive:

To embrace diversity and inclusion as core values that will spur growth and change across the Department; to ensure leadership accountability in the cultivation of a workplace culture where the uniqueness, background, and experience of every employee is trusted, valued, and respected; to strengthen our diversified workforce so we can continue to effectively serve our diverse customers, recruit the best talent, stimulate an environment of productivity, and eliminate underrepresentation, discrimination, and harassment throughout the Department.

The responsibility to carry out this mission statement falls on not just one person, or one office, or one agency – but on all of us. Never before has our workforce been comprised of employees with such diversity - diversity of backgrounds, diversity of thought, and diversity of age. We must be ready to become change-agents within our workplace if USDA is to succeed in today's rapidly shifting environment. Moreover, we must be willing to reexamine and even reinvent our approach to diversity and inclusion to ensure an effective outcome in this global marketplace. OASCR, through its Office of Diversity, will continue to provide guidance and opportunities for dialogue, learning, and change to empower each of us to take responsibility for creating and maintaining the most productive work environment.

No matter where you are in your diversity efforts, I want to applaud you for your achievements. I also, however, want to challenge you to seek ways to improve. We, as a Department, not only should tolerate our differences but understand them and embrace them. The time for diversity is now – the success of USDA's mission depends on it.