

ADMINISTRATOR'S OUTREACH, DIVERSITY, AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AWARDS PROGRAM

PURPOSE

To annually recognize employees for exemplary achievements in promoting a diverse workplace free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation; and for their demonstrated commitment to workforce diversity through actions that clearly exceeds responsibilities of their positions or assignments in ARS.

CATEGORY

This program recognizes outstanding achievements in the following two categories:

Category I - Supervisory/Managerial

- a) An individual employee officially designated as a non-SES supervisor or a manager, or
- b) a group of employees officially designated as supervisors or managers. SES supervisors or managers may be recognized as group members, but not receive monetary recognition.

Category II - Non-Supervisory/Non-Managerial

- a) An individual non-supervisory or non-managerial employee, or
- b) a group of non-supervisory or non-managerial employees.

NOTE: *Groups made up of both categories of employees will be considered in the category where the majority is represented, however, if the group's majority consists of supervisors and plays an advisory role, the group would be considered non-supervisory. If the group has the same amount of supervisory and non-supervisory employees, it is the Area Director's responsibility to determine the category.*

ELIGIBILITY

Nominations (individual or group) may be made to include any ARS employee that have clearly demonstrated performance that exceeds responsibilities of their position or assignments for exemplary achievements in promoting a diverse workplace free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation; and for their demonstrated commitment to workforce diversity. Employees responsible for outreach/recruitment, workforce diversity, and equal employment opportunity objectives and goals are not eligible for individual nominations; however, they may be part of a group nomination. Group nominations should include only members who have played a substantial or significant role in the accomplishment. Nominees must have sustained performance at the *Fully Successful* level or above (will be confirmed by the Human Resources Division (HRD)). **NOTE:** Non-Federal or SES employees may be recognized as group members but will not receive monetary award recognition.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Nominations must demonstrate how an individual or group pro-actively excelled in promoting and/or supporting outreach, workforce diversity, and equal employment opportunity objectives and goals, and/or a commitment or awareness to workforce diversity (the outcome/impact must be **within the past year**). Nominations must fully describe the following:

1. The outstanding achievement, accomplishment or contribution that has enhanced outreach, workforce diversity, and equal employment opportunity. The significance of the achievement, as well as the results, impact and/or outcome (i.e., savings, new policy, improvements, pro-active resolution/avoidance of complaints, etc.).
2. The scope and breadth of achievement. Who was impacted by the achievement, i.e., ARS, the Department, or other organizations or persons?
3. How the achievement was an outcome of outstanding leadership, skill, ability, or creativity.

The *following are examples of* possible achievements of *supervisors/managers*: (Achievements in outreach, workforce diversity, and equal employment opportunity may also be shown in other ways):

1. Providing on-going career counseling and orientation; and/or motivating employees through direct encouragement and assistance in developing their full potential and/or maximizing or enhancing their skills.
2. Enhancing career opportunities through training and development, job redesign, mentoring, and ensuring full consideration of eligible employees in recommending promotions, awards, and other forms of special recognition.
3. Promotion and use of a variety of special employment programs, i.e., student employment programs (Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, 1890 Scholar Program, Workforce Recruitment Program for College Students with Disabilities, Student Career Experience Program, etc.); and recruiting from job fairs, etc., to further the agency's outreach, diversity, and equal employment opportunity objectives.

4. Diligent efforts to eliminate under representation by outstanding voluntary contributions to elementary and/or high schools with predominately minority students; minority serving institutions of higher education, i.e., Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), etc.; or minority and/or under-represented community organizations in the area of human/civil rights or services such as:
 - (1) Contribution of time and talent furthering ARS EEO/CR goals without monetary reimbursement during non-duty hours.
 - (2) Activities directed toward the constructive solutions to problems affecting outreach, diversity, and equal employment opportunity.
5. Successful promotion and oversight of the agency's Outreach programs, such as the Procurement Preference Program by actively assuring the assigned preference goals are pursued and met, and by supporting employees' or groups' active participation.

The *following are examples of* possible achievements of *non-supervisors*: (Achievements in outreach, workforce diversity, and equal employment opportunity and workforce diversity may also be shown in other ways):

1. Recognition by co-workers for commitment and efforts to further the efforts and spirit of outreach, workforce diversity, and equal employment opportunity showing how the action(s) impacted ARS/USDA and/or other organizations or persons.
2. Participation with management in the creative development of and assistance in training programs to enhance the skills of minority and underutilized employees and to maintain effective working relationships with minority and under-represented community organizations whose programs support outreach, workforce diversity, and equal employment opportunity in the federal government.
3. Providing outstanding leadership and full participation in activities that foster a better understanding of outreach, workforce diversity, and equal employment opportunity in the Federal government. For example: increasing partnerships and/or collaborations with minority educational institutions, organizations, and stakeholders; advance the agency's Outreach programs, such as the Procurement Preference Program by aggressively identifying firms for this program in terms of procurement activities; or participation on various Special Emphasis committees, such as the African American Program, American Indian/Alaskan Native Program, Asian American/Pacific Islander Program, Disability Employment Program, Federal Women's Program, and Hispanic Employment Program.

4. Diligent efforts to eliminate under representation by outstanding voluntary contributions to elementary and/or high schools with predominately minority students; minority serving institutions of higher education, i.e., Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), etc.; or minority and/or under represented community organizations in the area of human/civil rights or services such as:
 - (1) Contribution of time and talent furthering outreach, workforce diversity, and equal employment opportunity goals without monetary reimbursement during non-duty hours.
 - (2) Activities directed toward the constructive solutions to problems affecting outreach, workforce diversity, and equal employment opportunity.
5. Confirm with documented evidence that through individual or group efforts, significant accomplishments in reaching the agency's affirmative employment action goals were achieved and to provide counsel, guidance, and innovative ideas and approaches to enhance the agency's outreach, workforce diversity, and equal employment opportunity objectives beyond expectations of the assigned duties.
6. Provide leadership in developing and implementing outreach, workforce diversity, and equal employment opportunity affirmative action programs within the agency.

NOMINATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURES

Any ARS employee may submit a nomination using the attached form. Justifications must clearly and concisely describe the selection criteria.

Nominations for these awards are to be sent to the respective Area (includes NAL) and Headquarters Staff Directors. Headquarters Staff Directors refer to the Directors of the Office of the Administrator, National Program Staff, Office of Technology Transfer, Budget and Program Management Staff, Information Staff, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Office of Scientific Quality Review, Office of International Research Programs, and Administrative and Financial Management. Each Area will be responsible for gathering and reviewing nominations and selecting one individual or group nomination for each of the categories supervisors/managers and non-supervisors/non-managers. Areas will make their selections and send their nominations to the HRD by **June 29, 2007**.

Headquarters Staff Directors will be responsible for gathering and reviewing nominations and selecting one individual or group nomination from each of the categories and will send their nominations to the Headquarters Civil Rights Manager by **June 15, 2007**. The Headquarters Civil Rights Manager will panel the Headquarters nominations and send one Headquarters nomination from each category to HRD by **June 29, 2007**.

All Area and Headquarters nominations must be received at the following address by **June 29, 2007:**

USDA/ARS/HRD

ATTN: Mary Oxner, Employee Development, Performance & Recognition Staff
5601 Sunnyside Avenue, GWCC, Room 3-1282C
Beltsville, MD 20705-5107

A selection panel will be appointed to evaluate the nominations and rank nominees in the respective category. In determining the winners, the selection panel will focus on the significance, impact and outcome of the accomplishments and achievements of those nominated. The panel's recommendations will be forwarded to the ARS Administrator for final approval.

NATURE OF RECOGNITION

Each individual selected as the winner in each category will receive a \$4,000 cash award and a plaque at the Annual ARS Recognition Program in February 2008. If a group is selected, the Administrator will determine the award amount. Non-Federal and SES persons are not eligible for cash awards, but may participate in the recognition event and receive an award plaque.

POINT OF CONTACT

Questions regarding this program may be directed to Mary Oxner (HRD) on (301) 504-1368 or Debra Vandergrift (ODEO) on (202) 720-2147.