

Charter: Beltsville Area Diversity Taskforce

BELTSVILLE AREA (BA)

USDA, ARS

Approved by BA Diversity Taskforce on July 2008

ARTICLE I: Committee Name:

Beltsville Area Diversity Taskforce

ARTICLE II: Purpose and Mission

The Beltsville Area (BA) strives to recruit and retain a workforce that is representative of the nation's increasingly diverse population. The recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce will improve the research capability of BARC. The BA works to advertise and announce every position vacancy in appropriate publications and websites to promote the recruitment of a diverse workforce. The Beltsville Area Diversity Taskforce will provide guidance and serve as an extension of the commitment to diversity that originates from the Beltsville Area Management Leadership.

The Beltsville Area Diversity Taskforce will recommend recruitment "Best Practices", increasing minority and promoting communication to raise awareness of diversity and equal employment. The taskforce will advise the Area Director, Dr. Joseph Spence. The mission of the Taskforce will include, however not be limited to the following:

- Determining which initiatives and programs can be implemented that will encourage students of local colleges and high schools from diverse backgrounds to engage in modern agricultural science which emphasizes advanced math and science educational curricula.
- Encouraging students from diverse backgrounds to pursue education in science through speaking opportunities at high schools, colleges and universities, personal interaction, technical development and mentoring experiences.
- Identifying barriers that may exist that will prevent the BA from becoming a workplace that attracts diverse candidates;

The Diversity Taskforce will assist the Area Director in fulfilling objectives of the EEO and Affirmative Employment Program by helping to formulate and recommend activities and processes that have a primary objective of educating, changing or improving diversity within the Beltsville Area. The Diversity Taskforce objectives are: 1) to increase emphasis on minority recruitment efforts for all levels of employment in the Beltsville Area; 2) to increase recruitment efforts in the BA by partnering with USDA 1890 Liaisons, ARS Recruitment Team, HBCUs, HSI and other resources or collaborations; 3) to retain a diversified workforce that is reflective of the communities in which we serve and live; and 4) to increase employee awareness of diversity through special emphasis programs, EEO training, and inclusiveness.

ARTICLE III: Vision Statement

The vision of the Beltsville Area Diversity Task Force is to ensure that BARC performs the research mission of ARS at the highest scientific level possible through the recruitment and retention of a culturally diverse workforce. We will assist the Area Director in fostering and sustaining an inclusive work environment that empowers all members of the Beltsville Areas to achieve their highest potential without fear of prejudice or discrimination. An important part in the development and implementation of this vision is the establishment of the Beltsville Area Diversity Taskforce.

As a part of our long term vision of the future of the Beltsville Area, the taskforce supports BA Management Leadership in creating and maintaining a workforce that represents the diverse surrounding community. We envision the Beltsville Area as a place where the recognition and awareness of its employees' cultures, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientation and physical and mental abilities will improve the scientific performance of the research center.

ARTICLE IV: Task Force Objectives

The Task Force has three primary objectives:

1. Achieve a more diverse workforce through recruitment at the high school, college and professional levels.
2. Identify and recommend actions and programs that will focus upon retention of valued employees, including minorities, by establishing practices that promote open communication between and feedback from employees which respects their diverse backgrounds.
3. Recommend, coordinate and support special emphasis activities that will raise employee awareness of diversity of the workforce at BARC.

ARTICLE V: Organizational Structure, Meeting Schedule, Membership, and Scope

Organizational Structure: The organizational structure of the Diversity Taskforce shall consist of three – Sub-Committee teams. The Area ODEO Program Manager/EEO Specialist will serve as Coordinator of the Taskforce. All Committee members will have full voting rights. In the case of a tie vote, the Coordinator shall cast the deciding vote. The Chair and Co-Chair shall serve one year. The Area Director, Coordinator and Diversity Taskforce Chair will work closely to plan the activities of the Diversity Taskforce meetings and course of direction.

Meeting Schedule: Meetings of the Task Force shall be held on a monthly basis, the second Tuesday of each month. Members shall alert the Chair in advance if they will be unable to attend a meeting. A majority of the Diversity Taskforce shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of conducting business.

Membership: The members of the Diversity Taskforce shall be representative of the BA workforce and include employees from all job categories, regardless of race, color, sex, national origin, disability, religion,

political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. Members of the Diversity Taskforce will be allowed to volunteer as communicated by the Area Director in his initial announcement to revitalize the Diversity Taskforce. The volunteers agree to a commitment of service for one year. Members who have continued, excessive absences may face removal from the Diversity Taskforce.

Members will be granted official time to attend Diversity Taskforce meetings. Members will also be given reasonable time to conduct Diversity Taskforce activities, with “reasonable time” determined and approved in conjunction with the member and his/her Supervisor, Research Leader or Center Director.

Scope and Boundaries: Task Force recommendations and activities shall not be constrained by the boundaries of existing processes. The Task Force shall define the best processes that: 1) satisfy the objective, 2) are plausible in the BA, and 3) conform to existing law and USDA-EEO policy. The Task Force shall recommend and help implement innovations in established processes that will accelerate progress toward the Taskforce’s vision, mission, and EEOC requirements.

ARTICLE VI: Sunset Clause

The Task Force members will serve a one year committee volunteer commitment with an option of serving a second year; however the committee can be dismantled at any time if the Area Director decides that its efforts are no longer adding value to the stated objectives of the Beltsville Area.

BA Diversity Taskforce Chair

BA Director