

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
Between The
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
And
THE NATIONAL COALITION FOR EQUITY
IN PUBLIC SERVICE (NCEPS)

**Memorandum of Understanding
Between The
United States Department of Agriculture
And
The National Coalition for Equity in Public Service (NCEPS)**

Preamble

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) values the contributions of all its employees and strives to create a diverse, well-trained workforce and become an employer of choice. This document establishes an agreement between the parties specified below for mutual benefit and support. The parties enter into this agreement freely and without reservation. For the purpose of this agreement, the following definitions are provided:

National employee organization is an established organization comprised of or in support of Federal employees, other than a labor organization, Supervisory/Managerial Association, or Professional Association, whose purpose may include providing information, views and services that contribute to improved workplace quality of life, human resources management, and employee effectiveness and satisfaction in support of USDA's mission and goals. Such an organization may be a group of employees focused on matters related to civil rights, social, consumer, cultural, health and safety, or similar issues. Similar issues may include recruitment, retention, outreach, communication, and accountability initiatives for obtaining and securing a diverse, high performing workforce.

USDA employees, for the purposes of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), means both Federal employees who work for USDA, as defined under 5 U.S.C. 2105, and USDA county committee employees, as defined under 16 U.S.C. 590h.

I. PARTIES

The parties of this MOU are the USDA and The National Coalition For Equity in Public Service (NCEPS)

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this MOU is to establish a commitment to engage in and sustain a partnership between USDA and NCEPS, a national employee organization and Coalition. It provides the framework to identify mutual issues and concerns and help develop and implement solutions to ensure equality of opportunity, access to employment and career enhancement opportunities, and improved workplace quality of life for USDA's workforce.

The intent of this effort is to increase awareness of USDA as an employer of choice, its programs and service delivery, and to address recruitment, hiring, and retention of a diverse workforce at all levels.

III. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this MOU shall be to coordinate and facilitate activities that are responsive to the needs of USDA's mission and its employees. In this regard, NCEPS shall make recommendations to USDA on initiatives that address concerns affecting the recruitment, on-boarding, training, career development, promotion, under-representation, and retention of USDA's workforce. Collaborative efforts under this MOU may include, but are not limited to, the following areas:

- Building an efficient and effective diverse workplace by ensuring that our workforce mirrors the nation we serve
- Utilization of all available hiring authorities and flexibilities (e.g., alternative work schedules, telework, excepted service appointment authorities)
- Targeted recruitment efforts
- Employee recognition programs
- Professional development and certification programs

- Training opportunities for all USDA employees
- Enhanced outreach and communication to underrepresented groups and other communities

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES

USDA will:

- 1) Assign to the USDA, Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM), responsibility for coordinating activities, programs, and events with NCEPS under this MOU. In addition to collaborating with the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, the Mission Area Human Resources Directors, and Civil Rights Directors, OHRM will collaborate with employee organizations in the development of strategic approaches for recruitment, retention, outreach, training, and marketing.
- 2) Solicit input from NCEPS groups when developing our annual diversity recruitment strategy.
- 3) Expand and support employee development activities to include developmental assignments to aid in employee retention and expand promotion opportunities.
- 4) Announce and promote USDA employee participation and attendance at conferences qualifying as training in compliance with 5 U.S.C. Chapter 41 (e.g., NCEPS Diversity Summits).
- 5) Promote and participate in national training conferences to provide training and workshops covering employee development opportunities, career advancement, leadership skills, and coaching and mentoring.
- 6) Promote and participate in national training conferences to share USDA best practices in recruitment, hiring, promotion, training, retention, and advancement strategies and programs.

