



EVERY DAY IN EVERY WAY

USDA's Cultural Transformation Action Items

- LEADERSHIP
- RECRUITMENT & RETENTION
- TALENT MANAGEMENT
- EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT
- CUSTOMER FOCUS & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

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MyUSDA

A Progress Report for Employees on USDA's Cultural Transformation

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Try the FFF Gleaning Application!

By Linda Cronin, Farm Service Agency, and Emely Vargas, FFF Intern

Launched June 1, 2016, the 2016 Feds Feed Families (FFF) Gleaning application is now available. It features a mapping tool to locate and describe events across the nation and provides opportunities for Federal employees to participate in FFF, specifically as it relates to gleaning.

The USDA Forest Service Chief Information Office GIS Team, led by Jennifer McDowell, who managed last year's FFF campaign, developed this application during the 2015 Campaign in partnership with 2015 FFF Agency Chairs, Champions and partners. Training was provided to Chairs and Champions on the [2016 FFF Gleaning application](http://usfs.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=0d09cfcfe4ef402abd31a2da25b17636).

According to Jennifer McDowell, "The application locates and maps event sites, describes the types of events, local dates and times, and provides additional information, about gleaning, warehouse distribution, pet food donation, and other events for Federal employees to support food banks, pantries, and other non-profit agencies in their local communities throughout the campaign."

Many inter-agency events and activities have stemmed from the unveiling of the 2016 Feds Feed Families Gleaning Application. "We encourage agencies and departments to utilize this application which is a great asset. It ensures that gleaning opportunities are more fully realized and markets opportunities so that individual interested in gleaning will be able to participate, even if their agency is not able to specifically sponsor an event" said Linda Cronin, 2016 National Feds Feed Families Program Manager. The 2016 National Program office is committed to supporting Agency Chairs and Champions in making their campaigns as successful as possible while fulfilling the needs of our communities and partners within the D.C. metro area and all across the country.

For more information please visit www.usda.gov/fedsfeedfamilies and check us out on www.facebook.com/



Top photo: USDA Feds Feed Families Chair Sabrina Ferguson-Ward (center) works with National FFF Program Manager Linda Cronin and other volunteers to label 11,000 food products at the Capital Area Food Bank on July 14, 2016.



Bottom photo: Ferguson-Ward and Cronin were joined by FFF intern Emely Vargas (second from left) and volunteers from other local community organizations (pictured at each end.)

USDA Hosts National Special Emphasis Program Training

By Perry Stevens, Office of Human Resources Management

Nearly 275 of USDA's Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPM) participated in a Department-wide training June 28-29, 2016, to improve their skills and gather tools to better equip them to do their jobs. Fifty employees attended in person, and 221 employees took part remotely using Adobe Connect. The training was aimed at SEPMs representing all of USDA's programs: African-Americans; Hispanics; American Indians/Alaskan Natives; Asian-Americans/Pacific Islanders; women; lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender persons; veterans; and, persons with disabilities.

Pictured below, starting left: Assistant Secretary for Administration Dr. Gregory L. Parham speaks to participants.

Upper Right: USDA Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) employees hosted the training, with members of OHRM's Division of Diversity, Recruitment, and Work/Life leading the effort. Those participating in person included (L-R) *Front Row:* Michelle Jordan; Sabrina Ferguson-Ward; Ali Muhammad; Natalie Veeney. *Back Row:* Tina Hoellerer; Monshi Ramdass; Yetzenia Correa; Fred Cheng; and, Roseal Fowlkes.

Bottom Photos: Dr. Parham addresses the Special Emphasis Program Managers (left), and attendees stretch between training sessions (right).



Upcoming Observance at USDA Women's Equality Day Observance Thursday, August 25, 2016

10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at the Jefferson Auditorium in Washington, DC

View recordings from many of USDA's Special Observances at

<http://www.dm.usda.gov/employ/observances.htm>.

Employees receive one hour of diversity training for each USDA Special Observance attended.

Rural Development Receives Patriot Award from DOD

By Maureen Hessel, Rural Development



Pictured L-R: Samuel Ridders, Rural Business Cooperative Service; Mark Brodziski, Director of the Energy Division; Owenvbiugie Edoohonba, Energy Specialist; Lisa Mensah, Under Secretary Rural Development; and, Jacob York, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve. Department of Defense.

On June 14, 2016, the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), Department of Defense, presented the Patriot Award to Rural Development (RD) for their support to employees who are called into active duty with the National Guard and Reserve.

Rural Development Under-Secretary Lisa Mensah provided opening remarks commending the service of Owenvbiugie Edoohonba (Owen), who recently returned to RD from deployments with Operation Enduring Freedom, Inherent Resolve, and Spartan Shield.

Bill Schatzman spoke briefly about the ESGR, a Department of Defense program that develops and promotes supportive work environments for Service members in the Reserve Components through outreach, recognition, and educational opportunities.

Jacob York presented the Patriot Award on behalf of the Department of Defense to the Rural Business-Cooperative Service Administrator, Samuel H. Ridders, and to the Director

of the Energy Division, Mark Brodziski. They were recognized for the support they provided Owen prior to and throughout his deployment, and then again after his return to RD.

The DOD representatives awarded pins to both Administrator Ridders and Director Brodziski.

The presentation of the Patriot Award highlights the commitment and support that USDA provides to employees who have served, or who are called to serve, our nation.

Do you have an article to submit to *MyUSDA*?

You can email MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov with submissions. They may be in the form of a traditional article with a byline, a first-person account, or any work-related activity or event demonstrating the Secretary's Cultural Transformation Action Items.

- ◆ Leadership
- ◆ Recruitment & Retention
- ◆ Talent Management
- ◆ Employee Development
- ◆ Customer Focus & Community Outreach

NRCS-Arizona Reaches Out to AAPI Producers

By Cheryl Lambert, Natural Resources Conservation Service

Employees of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Arizona hosted a webinar in May based on the class, *Working Effectively with AAPI Producers*. Class members, pictured below, learned about the history and distribution of Asian American/Pacific Islander groups, demographics, cultural norms, overcoming barriers and stereotypes, and outreach to AAPI agricultural producers.



Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders make up less than five percent of the Arizona population, and most are located in metropolitan areas. According to the 2012 USDA Agricultural Census, Arizona has 112 farms and ranches operated by Asian Americans, and 23 farms or ranches operated by Pacific Islander producers. These operations are mostly in Central and Southern Arizona with a few in Northern Arizona. These farms and ranches focus on growing specialty fruit and vegetable crops, nursery plants and livestock.

The Lunch and Learn addressed the training and outreach objectives of the Arizona AAPI Outreach Plan, and provided information about the USDA's Limited English Proficiency (LEP) program. LEP provides language interpreters and translation services for outreach materials. These strategies help Arizona NRCS employees promote outreach for USDA financial and technical assistance programs.

USFS Team Wins Excellence Award

By David D. Vanderpool, United States Forest Service

The New Mexico Federal Executive Board recently honored members of the USDA Forest Service, Albuquerque Service Center (ASC) Civil Rights, DC Service Team (DCST) in a ceremony consisting of several area Federal Agencies. They received the "Team Excellence" award. The Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPMs), former Director, Teresa A. Cordova, and Senior EEO Specialist, David Vanderpool were awarded the prestigious "Team Excellence" award held at the Forest Service facilities in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The Team Excellence Recognition was awarded in support of the staff's USDA Cultural Transformation effort, the seven-member team of 20% Collateral Duty SEPM, with the support of Teresa and David. They have provided cultural sensitivity and cultural awareness events and activities throughout the year to ASC employees. These activities focused on recognizing and supporting cultural diversity in the workforce, increasing community involvement, improving communication, and educating employees about the services the SEP Managers provide. The SEPMs develop partnerships in the community, raise employment awareness, and provide effective outreach training.

Forest Service Albuquerque Service Center Special Emphasis Program Managers and DC Service Team Staff, including (L-R) Antoinette Marshall, Native American Emphasis Program Manager; Lupe L. Rodrigues, Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager; David Vanderpool (seated), Senior EEO Specialist; former branch chief Teresa A. Cordova; Kimberly Palacios, Federal Woman's Program Manager; and, Ann Ganster, LGBT Program Manager. Not pictured: Lori Salazar, Veterans and Disability Emphasis Program Manager and Sonja Newcombe, African American Emphasis Program Manager.



FSA Launches Summer Wellness Challenge

By Anne (Sheree) Pryor, Farm Service Agency



The objective of the Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Summer Wellness Challenge is to inspire and encourage FSA employees to increase their participation in wellness activities while building a sense of camaraderie by working together as a team to accomplish our mission of getting to Rio de Janeiro!

Blazing Our Way to Rio (BOWR) evolved from a wellness challenge and quickly exploded into an epic Agency-wide workforce engagement and teambuilding activity! There are 409 teams representing 2,913 employees from all States, territories, and Deputy areas within FSA taking part in the challenge, a wellness "journey" to Rio! So far, the total racked

up by employees totals more than 480,000 miles! That's even more than the goal, and we're not done yet!



This wellness activity was designed to "carry the FSA torch" between all the cities that previously hosted the Summer Olympics, which covers nearly 134,354 miles, before arriving in Rio. The challenge began on June 6th and will end on August 5th, to coincide with the 2016 Summer Olympics Torch Run. Teams will participate in physical and nonphysical wellness activities to earn miles in route to Rio, and even though we have passed our goal, the health challenge is still on. The wellness challenge promotes friendly competition, and the top three performing teams in each of three categories will be awarded either a Gold, Silver, or Bronze medal.

We wanted to be inclusive and provide the opportunity for ALL employees, even those who may be physically limited or restricted. We developed several alternative non-physical activities that can be converted to miles to carry the FSA torch to Rio. Weekly mini-challenges encourage participants to share their journey and what they have learned through photos, recipes, and personal stories. From field offices across the Nation to Headquarters, we are coming together as ONE FSA to accomplish this mission—getting to Rio TOGETHER in time for the Summer Olympics!

FSA Employee Engagement: A Plant In Every Office

By Norman Cummins and Andrew Clote, Farm Service Agency

Let's think outside the box and put a plant in it instead! As part of the Food Service Agency's (FSA) Workforce Engagement initiative, we are promoting "A Plant in Every Office." Studies show that adding a plant into an office environment can enhance indoor air quality, reduce stress, increase productivity, and make your office space more comfortable.

To encourage interest in this initiative, we made it a part of the Wellness Challenge: "Blazing Our Way to Rio." For one of our weekly mini challenges, we asked participants to bring a plant to the office or take a picture of an existing plant and post it on USDA Connect. Employees have submitted several great pictures and stories of their plants.

During the Farm Service Agency's "A Plant in Every Office" initiative, FSA employee Marcie Scipio poses with the plant she named Seymour. The other photos were submitted by FSA employees participating in the initiative.



FNCS Recognizes Employee Service

By Susan Siemietkowski, Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services

In an effort to recognize employees who make a significant contribution to the mission or workplace, the Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services (FNCS) hosted its fifth annual FNCS CARES (Celebrating and Recognizing Employee Service) awards ceremony on June 28, 2016. The program has grown significantly since its inception and now includes eight distinct subcategories under the "Improving the Administration of the Agency or FNCS Programs" category. The event's theme was "Reach for the Stars" and featured presentations from HQ and the regions. Some photos and a list of awardees follow. The complete slide show from the ceremony has been posted to the FNCS intranet as well.



(Left) Christopher Lipsey receives the Lifetime Achievement Award from Chief Financial Officer David Burr. (Center) Team members receiving the Labor Management Collaboration Group Award included, from L-R, Diana Limbacher, Debbie Mansfield, Nickolas Matarazzo, Lynne DiReda and Melvin Moore. (Right) Kaushalya Yasanika Heedeniya won the award for Innovative Customer Service, Individual Award.

Welcoming New USDA-Hispanic Association Interns

By Michael Cadena, HACU Intern, Office of Advocacy and Outreach

With over 92 interns in attendance, this year's USDA-Hispanic Association of College and Universities (HACU) Internship Orientation was one of the most successful in USDA-Office of Advocacy and Outreach (OAO), Hispanic-Serving Institutions National Program (HSINP) history! On behalf of this year's interns, we would like to thank the OAO Director, Carolyn Parker; Associate Director, Christian Obineme; Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration, Yeshimebet Abebe; Director of the Office of the Chief Scientist, Kim Green; and Under-Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs, Edward Avalos for sharing their professional growth, experiences, and insightful remarks to this year's summer intern cohort. This year's interns are a very talented and diverse group from various colleges and universities with a wide-array of majors and career goals. Among these great attributes, one thing is certain: These young men and women have chosen the absolute best opportunity to expand both their professional and networking skills by choosing USDA. HSINP prides itself in providing students with the best opportunity to succeed within the USDA and in life. For more information regarding HSINP, this year's interns, or how to get involved, please contact Jessica Castro, USDA, National HACU Internship Program Manager at Jessica.Castro@osec.usda.gov.



USDA Hosts E. Kika De La Garza Fellows

By Dan Wueste, Office of Advocacy and Outreach

The Office of Advocacy and Outreach's (OAO) Hispanic-Serving Institutions National Program recently hosted the 19th class of the E. Kika De La Garza Fellowship. The fellowship brings faculty and staff from Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) to Washington, DC, where they learn about USDA's many programs and opportunities. The education fellows spent two weeks in Washington, DC, and the science fellows spent one week in DC before traveling to an Agricultural Research Service facility in the field to collaborate with USDA researchers.

This year, 12 diverse fellows were selected based on their interest in USDA and the value their experience would add to their institutions' educational capacities. They were provided skills to better address educational challenges faced by the Hispanic community and to promote services and employment opportunities offered by USDA agencies. The fellowship's briefings with USDA agencies culminated in a recognition ceremony on the Whitten Patio.



From left to right: Tony Hernandez (USDA RHS), Valerie J. Mellano (2016 Fellow, Cal Poly Pomona), Adeola Coker (2016 Fellow, University of the Incarnate Word), Mary Willis (2016 Fellow, Fresno State), Waverly Ray (2016 Fellow, San Diego Mesa College), Irma Lawrence (USDA NIFA), Mario Castaneda (2016 Fellow, Gateway Community College), Karlease Kelly (USDA), Christian Obineme (USDA OAO), Jaclyn L. Shaw (2016 Fellow, UT San Antonio), Yuchou Chang (2016 Fellow, University of Houston-Downtown), Michelle Neyman Morris (2016 Fellow, Cal State, Chico), Jairo R. Ledesma (2016 Fellow, Florida International University), Phil Karsting (USDA FAS), Sanhita Datta (2016 Fellow, San Jose City College), Kristina Hunt (2016 Fellow, Humboldt State University), Jiaxin Zhao (2016 Fellow, West Hills College Lemoore), Dan Wueste (USDA OAO), Jacqueline Padron (USDA OAO).

USDA's HACE: Hispanic American Cultural Effort

By Ken Melton, Agricultural Marketing Service

On June 1, the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Dairy Program's Benny Seda-Galarza was sworn in as the Vice President of USDA's Hispanic American Cultural Effort (HACE) employee organization. HACE is a voluntary, non-profit organization, dedicated to the employment, development, and advancement of current and aspiring Hispanic professionals in USDA.

Seda-Galarza said he hopes to use his position to help the organization be recognized as a platform that promotes better employment opportunities for Hispanics in USDA and the Federal government. For more information, or to be part of HACE, contact Benny at benny.seda-galarza@ams.usda.gov.

New Board with leadership. Pictured L-R: Karlease Kelly (OHRM), Jeffrey Prieto (OGC), HACE President Cynthia Cuellar (FSA), Ed Avalos (MRP), HACE Treasurer Rocio del Arroyo (FS), HACE Vice President Benny Seda-Galarza (AMS), HACE Secretary Angelica Marrero (FSIS), and Jaqueline Padrón (OHRM).



If you'd like to share your feedback about Cultural Transformation, telework, diversity, or any other aspect of work/life at USDA, send an email to: MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov or visit USDA's [Work/Life and Wellness](#) community website if you have access to [USDA Connections](#).



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If you have ideas for future articles, contact us at MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov

Submit Your Article to MyUSDA

The monthly deadline for submissions is the end of the first week of each month.

Guidance on Submissions to MyUSDA

Submissions to MyUSDA should indicate progress that you, your agency, or your mission area have achieved toward implementing the Secretary's Cultural Transformation (CT) Initiative. The ideal submission includes photos or graphics along with a brief description of the event. The ideal word count for articles is 150-200. All submissions are subject to editing and Departmental review.

Submissions may be in the form of a traditional article with a byline, a first-person account, or any work-related activity, event, or observance demonstrating the Secretary's Cultural Transformation Action Items: Leadership; Recruitment & Retention; Talent Management; Employee Development; and, Customer Focus & Community Outreach.

Email submissions or further inquiries to MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov.