

Guidance for Implementing Policy for Ensuring Effectiveness of Pre-Decisional Involvement (PDI) Efforts within USDA Labor-Management Forums

I. The New Policy

On June 25, 2013, the USDA Labor-Management (LM) Forum adopted a new policy, and reporting form, for the purpose of ensuring the effectiveness of PDI efforts at agency-level forums.

Going forward, all Agency level forums must submit a jointly endorsed Metrics & Goals Report at the start and close of every reporting year, and a jointly endorsed Cultural Transformation (CT) PDI initiative report every quarter throughout the reporting year. All reports may be submitted electronically to the designated Labor Relations Specialist within the Department's Labor Relations Program Office.

The quarterly PDI initiative report may be submitted in any format that the parties agree to, provided that the report clearly indicates that it is being submitted jointly, and that the parties agree to the accuracy of all information contained in the report.

If any report is submitted without the required signatures, the report will be rejected and the agency will not receive recognition for its PDI and/or Forum Metrics & Goals on the Secretary's CT Report Card. Continued failure to submit a quarterly PDI initiative report or Metrics & Goals Report will be reported to the respective Agency Administrator by the USDA Chief Human Capital Officer for follow-up action.

II. How an Agency's PDI efforts will be graded on the Secretary's Cultural Transformation (CT) Report Card.

The parties must list and engage in more than 3 PDI initiatives per year in order to qualify for the 5 point scoring on the Secretary's CT Report Card at the close of the reporting year. The first quarterly PDI initiative report will be due on or before October 10, 2013. At the end of the 2013 reporting year, an Agency's score, or "color", e.g., green, yellow, or red, will be carried over into the Secretary's 2014 CT Report Card and will be used to track progress throughout the reporting year.

An Agency's score may increase, decrease, or remain the same depending on the results of the jointly submitted quarterly PDI initiative reports. For example, if a quarterly PDI report indicates that the parties engaged in PDI initiatives, depending on its initial score, an Agency's score may increase or remain the same. However, if a quarterly PDI report indicates that the parties did not engage in PDI initiatives, but could have, then an Agency's score will be decreased.

As before, there will be two categories for evaluating the effectiveness of PDI: (1) Those relationships where the Union & Management agreed to participate in a LM Forum and (2) those where the Union has affirmatively declined to participate in LM Forums. For purposes of being graded on the Secretary's CT Report Card, the new PDI policy will be applicable to both relationships. For the later relationship, this means that an Agency will have to submit a jointly endorsed quarterly PDI initiative report that it took affirmative steps to offer a PDI initiative to the union and encouraged its participation to help shape Management's decision.

III. What next?

Applying specific metrics and scores for evaluating the effectiveness of PDI efforts of labor and management is a new undertaking. It is anticipated that the PDI policy and reporting forms may change as the process is informed by experience. Consequently, our office anticipates that the USDA Labor-Management Forum may issue updates and revisions from time to time. To facilitate this process, any suggestions from forum members throughout the Department on how to improve on the PDI policy or measurements are always welcomed.