

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20250

September 23, 1969

SECRETARY'S MEMORANDUM NO. 1662

USDA- Policy on Civil Rights

It is imperative that we renew and strengthen our efforts to insure equal access and opportunity in all aspects of our programs without regard to race, color, or national origin to the full extent of the law.

In the day-to-day carrying out of these responsibilities, the Assistant Secretary for Administration, under my direction, is assigned staff responsibility, working with my Special Assistant for Civil Rights, for the general direction, coordination, and implementation of all aspects of the Civil Rights program at the Department level.

Each program Assistant Secretary and Director, together with his respective line administrators, is assigned line responsibility for developing and implementing a comprehensive civil rights program to insure that the intent of the law and President Nixon's equal opportunity policy is effectively carried out in all our programs and activities.

I am, therefore, asking each program Assistant Secretary and Director, together with his agency heads, to take the following steps after appropriate consultation.

Training

To assist in fulfilling the intent of the law and in carrying out the President's policy, it is important that my staff, agency heads, and supervisory officers of the Department at all levels be given appropriate training in this important area.

The Director of Personnel will be responsible for developing adequate and appropriate training in the civil rights area for my staff, the agency heads, and their deputies.

Each agency head, after consultation with the Director of Personnel, will be responsible for developing and conducting training courses in this area for his division heads and regional, State, and major field office heads.

All of the training at this level of management is to be completed by June 30, 1970.

At the close of Fiscal Year 1970, a report will be submitted by Each agency head through the Director of Personnel to the Assistant Secretary for Administration, indicating that this training for top management has been completed, together with a proposed program of civil rights training, to reach all other personnel during Fiscal Year 1971.

This report will be submitted no later than July 15, 1970.

Evaluation

It is crucial that we develop a system for establishing base data and for measuring progress from that base in all our important and sensitive program areas to the end that we will know the quantity and quality of our services being delivered to minority groups.

Again, this effort will be the responsibility of the program Assistant Secretaries and Directors and the responsible agency head after adequate consultation with appropriate representatives of my staff so as to insure the highest degree of adequacy, consistency and uniformity possible in the data developed.

The Assistant Secretary for Administration will report to me on September 30, 1969, and each quarter thereafter on the work planned, underway, and accomplished in this area.

Compliance

All employees of this Department are charged by law and regulation to conduct official business in such a manner that the Department does not directly or by implication:

- (1) Support, encourage, or condone the practice of segregation or other forms of discrimination.
- (2) Conduct programs in ways that permit economic barriers or social inhibitions to limit participation: or
- (3) Provide separate services for reasons of race, color, or national origin.

To insure this, I ask that you:

(1) Correct programs in which practices bar integration and thus allow or lead to participation only on a segregated basis. Each agency will review the activities of all offices for the existence of any practices that are or might lead to segregation and take immediate action for their elimination. Complete elimination of segregation and discrimination with regard to meetings, office space, and related facilities must be achieved now.

(2) Correct programs that have been conducted in ways that permit economic barriers or social inhibitions to limit participation of certain racial, color, or nationality groups, even though such programs are announced as available to all persons. Each agency head shall review every program of his agency to (a) identify those programs in which participation by members of minority groups is restricted because of economic barriers or social inhibitions: (b) develop and implement plans for changing existing programs or for creating new programs to remove or overcome these barriers and inhibitions.

(3) Correct programs in which service to specific racial, color, or nationality groups is inferior because of the failure of Department employees or cooperators to work across racial lines regardless of their own race, color, or nationality. Each agency head will immediately review the activities of all personnel to determine whether or not there are conditions preventing any employee from fully carrying out his assignment because of his own race, color, or nationality. Where these conditions exist the agency head will be responsible for: (a) identifying specific personnel and the circumstances involved. And (b) taking action to develop plans to overcome the conditions. The individual concerned must participate in identifying the barriers and in developing the plan of action to overcome them. The extent of this participation should be reported.

Each agency head will assign necessary staff to accomplish these reviews, and the agency head will submit a report to me through my Special Assistant for Civil Rights and the Assistant Secretary for Administration not later than March 31, 1970, stating that the three steps outlines above have been accomplished in his agency.

Similar reports will be submitted thereafter on June 30 and December 30 – showing that these standards are continuing to be met and if not, why.

Employment

It is the policy of this Department to provide equal opportunity for all persons, to prohibit discrimination in employment because of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, and to promote the full realization of equal employment opportunity through a continuing affirmative program in each agency.

Special efforts must be made to assure that job opportunities in the Department are made known to men and women of all races, religions, and ethnic backgrounds.

Equal employment opportunity must become an integral part of every aspect of personnel policy and practice in the employment, development, advancement, and treatment of employees of the Department.

Provide for the prompt, fair, and impartial consideration of all complaints of discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Agencies shall provide access to counseling for employees who feel aggrieved and shall encourage the resolution of employee problems on an informal basis. Procedures for the consideration of complaints shall include an impartial review within the agency and shall provide for appeal to the Civil Service Commission.

Audits

The Inspector General will continue concerted efforts in the audit of significant program activities that have civil rights implications involving the various agencies. Audit efforts will encompass an evaluation of equal opportunity in both employment and program activities. Follow-up audits will verify the adequacy of corrective action directed by appropriate line officials.

Investigations

The Inspector General will investigate complaints or other information which warrant such action.

Law

Each agency head will use the appropriate legal resources of this Department whenever necessary to reach the goals as outlined in this policy.

Organization

Each agency head will organize to accomplish the objectives outlined above most effectively, and review the current Civil Rights procedures for his agency to insure conformance with this policy. In any case, however, each administrator will assume personal responsibility to insure that the intent of the law and the President's policy are carried out.

The following Secretary's Memorandums are hereby superseded:

Memorandum of May 3, 1961, signed by J.M.R.

"Federal Participation in Segregated Meetings" of
June 23, 1964.

Secretary's Memorandum No. 1560 of July 10, 1964.

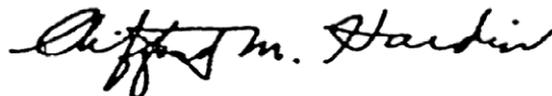
Secretary's Memorandum No. 1572 of April 22, 1965.

"Use of Racial Data" of May 18, 1965.

Secretary's Memorandum No. 1560, Supplement 4 of
January 17, 1966.

"Federal Participation in Segregated Meetings" of
September 28, 1967.

Secretary's Memorandum No. 1574, Revised of
February 8, 1968.



Secretary of Agriculture