

**USDA ARS, Mid South Area  
Workforce Diversity Committee (WDC)  
March 9 11, 1998  
New Orleans, LA**

7:00 p.m. Monday, March 9, 1998

(Agenda, Behind Tabs 1, 2, and 3 of your EEO Committee Notebook)

Dinner meeting of the Mid South Area Workforce Diversity Committee (WDC) and Training and Team Building Facilitators, Ms. Lolita L. Hickman and Mr. Leonard Pinkney. Ms. Hickman is President, Organizational Resource Group, North Potomac, MD.

Dr. King opened the dinner meeting with a welcome and review of logistics. The Facilitators (Hickman, Pinkney, Hicks) were introduced. Participants introduced themselves, were asked to state their expectations in serving on the Committee, and the purpose and objectives of the workshop were given.

Persons in attendance included:

Edgar G. King, Chairperson and Associate Director, Stoneville, MS  
Patricia A. Brown, Member and Secretary to AAD, Stoneville, MS  
Archie Tucker, Member and Area Administrative Officer, Stoneville, MS  
Rita Keeling, Member and Personnel Assistant, Stoneville, MS  
Carlos Alonso, Member and Research Leader, Oxford, MS  
Brian L. Brazil, Member and Research Physiologist, Stoneville, MS  
Gay G. McCain, Member and Secretary, Mississippi State, MS  
Herbert Pack, Member and Soil Scientist, Baton Rouge, LA  
P. Jordan, Member and Center Director, New Orleans, LA  
David Ambrogio, Member and Technician, New Orleans, LA  
Betty Shepherd, Member and Location Admin. Officer, Auburn, AL  
S. O. Duke, Member and Research Leader, Oxford, MS  
Barbara J. Smith, Member and Research Horticulturist, Poplarville, MS  
Korona Prince, Director, Civil Rights Staff, Washington, DC  
Leonard Pinkney, Independent Consultant, Pinkney Consulting  
Charles J. Hicks, Maryland State Board of Examiners

8:00 a.m., Tuesday, March 10, 1998

The Workshop was opened by the Chairperson, Dr. Edgar King.

Dr. Carlos Alonso reviewed the activities of the USDA Hispanic Committee. The Facilitators proceeded with the training session using a customized workbook Training and Team Building Workshop. Following a series of introductory exercises and questionnaires, the following topics were addressed:

- Valuing Diversity
- Role and Responsibilities of EEO Committee
- Establishing the EEO Committee
- Action Planning (Plan of Operation, Charter, etc.)
- Measuring Committee Results

8:00 a.m., Wednesday, March 11, 1998

Workshop continued with a team building exercise. The EEO Committee was retitled as the Workforce Diversity Committee. The following organizational features were established:

- Membership: Three standing members were established on the Committee (Chairperson, Secretary to the Chairperson, and Personnel Assistant). These three members will be from the Mid South Area

Office. The Vice Chairperson and other members will be rotating members, representing each of the MSA locations.

- Meetings: After discussion by all members, it was decided that meetings/teleconferences will be held on a quarterly basis. There will be two (2) face to face meetings (semi annually) and two (2) teleconferences (semi annually) held each year; a combined total of four (4) each year.

The meeting site for the next meeting was discussed. Two locations were addressed: Auburn, Alabama, and Oxford, Mississippi. It was decided the next scheduled meeting would be held in Auburn, Alabama, with a tour of Tuskegee University. Betty Shepherd (Vice Chairperson) will take the lead in organizing since she is located at this site.

The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for late June, but will now occur sometime in July.

- Agenda Items for Next Committee Meeting:
  - Parameters (Do's and Don't's)
  - Minutes of First Meeting Chairperson
  - Measuring Progress
  - Resolution of HEP to WDC
  - EEO Procedures
  - Plan of Action for the Committee
  - Base line data Rita Keeling
  - Recruitment Progress
  - Education
  - Web Site for Workforce Diversity Committee and Maintenance
  - Status of Area Hispanic Committee David Ambrogio
- Charter of the ARS Mid South Area Workforce Diversity Committee (See attached)

USDA ARS  
Mid South Area  
Workforce Diversity Committee

I. PREAMBLE

Discrimination, based on stereotypes, limits diversity of people within the organization as well as productivity, because some of the best and brightest people will be missed. Diversity enriches research and administrative programs, often resulting in new, higher quality products. The effects of diversity and productivity are amplified as successful personnel diffuse through the organization. Minorities, women, and the physically challenged represent the majority of the potential U.S. workforce population, but their actual numbers are substantially less. These numbers decrease further with rank advancements in the private sector and government. This is true within the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Agricultural Research Service.

A national and agency policy on equal employment opportunity is essential. The Workforce Diversity Committee will work with the ARS Civil Rights office in developing training and solutions to ensure that the agency and Area EEO mandates are being met. Full participation on employment and career development will be encouraged.

II. NAME OF THE COMMITTEE

The name of this Committee shall be the USDA, ARS, Mid South Area, Workforce Diversity Committee (WDC).

III. MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the Mid South Area WDC is to enhance human diversity in ARS within Mid South Area workplaces, emphasizing equitable representation of minorities, women, and the physically challenged.

The Mid South Area Workforce Diversity Committee provides advice and recommendations to the Area Director on a variety of issues associated with equal employment opportunity to achieve equitable representation of the diversity of the U.S. population in our workforce. This Committee will work in conjunction with the ARS Civil Rights office in developing training and solutions to ensure that the Agency and Area EEO mandates are being met by encouraging full participation in employment and career development.

IV. BY LAWS

A. Officers:

There will be four (4) standing members and at least one representative from each MSA location. The standing members will be the Chairperson, AAO, Personnel Specialist, and Secretary to the Chairperson. Members will be appointed for a 3 year term and may be reappointed by the Area Director; the Vice Chair will be selected by the Committee.

B. Membership:

The Committee will consist of four (4) standing members and rotating members representing each location within the Mid South Area. Standing members seats will be held by the Associate Area Director (or Area Director designant), Area Administrative Officer, Secretary to the Associate Area Director (or Area Director designant), and the Personnel Assistant. At least one representative for each Location will occupy a rotating member seat for a period not to exceed three (3) years. Location representatives can be reappointed at the discretion of the Area Director. Membership nominations will be submitted by the Committee to the Chair for final approval by the Area Director.

C. Meetings:

Meetings and/or teleconference calls are to be held on a quarterly basis. Two (2) face to face meetings (semi annually) and two (2) teleconference calls (semi annually).

D. Amendments

Amendments may be proposed by any member. Approval is by consensus of the Workforce Diversity Committee.

E. Findings, Advice, and Recommendations: Minutes, Advice, and Recommendations from the WDC will be provided to the Area Director (AD) for approval and action. Cleared minutes will be distributed.

Proceedings and draft material developed by WDC will remain confidential until final approval is received from the AD.

V. PROGRAM INITIATIVES:

Promote Aggressive recruiting; go to advertise in person

1. Utilize Upward Mobility and Career Enhancement
2. Sensitize/inform supervisors/managers on the value of a diverse workforce benefit to his/her/research;
3. Expand publication and distribution of Vacancy Announcements
4. Acknowledge the value and celebrate the cultural diversity within the community; provide cultural awareness;
5. Encourage the use of IDP's as a tool for improving careers;
6. Develop an ongoing liaison between the WDC and other ARS community groups;
7. Target local elementary/high schools and universities to make them aware of opportunities at ARS; and
8. Encourage the use of the award recognition system. WDC's Motto: Caring Enough to Make a Difference

Caring + Diversity = Productivity