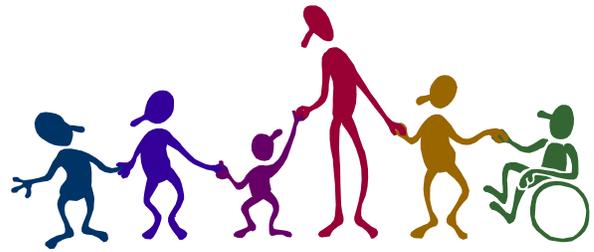


## **Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action in Cooperative Extension**



*Purdue Extension is committed to nondiscrimination, equal opportunity, and affirmative action to advance cultural diversity, and is committed to the excellence of its workforce and program delivery.*

“It is the policy of the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service, that all persons shall have equal opportunity and access to the programs and facilities without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, or disability.”

### **Educator Role**

As an employee of the Cooperative Extension Service and Purdue University it is inferred that not only will you abide by all the attendant Civil rights rules and regulations but that you will assure these rules and regulations are carried out in your assigned program responsibility. In short, you are legally responsible for the Civil Rights compliance of your respective program area.

A number of acts passed by the Congress of the United States attempt to create equal opportunity in employment practices, provision of services, and education. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was the backdrop law of Civil Rights regulations which prohibited discrimination in programs with respect to race, color, and national origin. Later regulations added the other critical minority categories. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 is the most far-reaching of such legislation. It forbids discrimination in employment and employment-related activities, and in the provision of services and educational programs.

The whole area of Civil Rights and Affirmative Action in Extension programs can be justifiably defined as an integral part of the program development process integrated into our regular Extension endeavors.

### **Affirmative Action Plans**

In 1965, President Johnson issued Executive Order 11246. As amended by Revised Order No. 4, this Executive Order requires that all federal contractors – whether private firms, state or local governments, or parts of the federal government itself – pledge to obey the civil rights legislation of the United States. Because change tends to come slowly in organizations and agencies, these contractors must adopt and follow an approved Affirmative Action plan.

An Affirmative Action plan is a statement of the agency’s stance on providing equal opportunity in employment and program. The plan includes a discussion of how the firm or agency expects to continue or to increase its commitment to equal opportunity in employment and program. The plan includes a discussion of how the firm or agency expects to continue or to increase its commitment to equal opportunity. It identifies places where the firm or agency has been remiss, or where there appears to be problems, and explains who such problems may be corrected.

It is not enough to have simply developed an Affirmative Action or Equal Employment Opportunity plan. It must be reviewed periodically, along with actions taken within the plan. Periodic reports to the Federal Government are required, based upon each state Extension

Service's plan. Federal Compliance Reviews, which cover both equal program opportunity and equal employment opportunity, are conducted periodically.

### **Affirmative Action and You**

Much of the documentation and procedures needed because of affirmative action also promote efficient, fair, and honest management. The Executive Order does not explicitly require any of these actions, but the following procedures make it much easier to demonstrate compliance.

- Personnel actions should be clearly documented, and follow standard procedures.
- Written performance reviews should be done each year on every employee. This provides a mechanism for supervisor-employer communication on deficient and on satisfactory aspects of an employee's work performance. It gives the employee information needed to improve, and provides a chance to clear up misunderstandings about job expectations.
- Trying new and innovative programs in an attempt to fulfill Affirmative Action requirements can revitalize Cooperative Extension efforts. It can increase the base of support of the entire program.
- New programming may provide exciting opportunities for Extension personnel.

In the final analysis, Affirmative Action assures all individuals an opportunity to participate in Cooperative Extension. This is not a new idea, but a significant part of the original spirit and philosophy, mission and mandate of Cooperative Extension.

All Civil Rights and Affirmative Action requirements and regulations are on file in each county office and academic department. It is each staff member's responsibility to be acquainted with the requirements.

### **Civil Rights Terms/Clarification:**

**Affirmative Action** is a set of proactive measures to counteract the effects of past and present discrimination, intended or unintended, in employment and program delivery. The law identifies affected groups who have been historically underprivileged or underserved. They are women, Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, Native Americans, Vietnam era veterans, special disabled veterans and individuals with disabilities. By law, we must act affirmatively toward people of affected groups in both employment and program delivery. We view affirmative action as an opportunity to contribute to the development of an increasingly diverse society.

**Equal Opportunity** is the right of individuals to be judged on the basis of relevant education/training, skills, experience and previous performance, but not on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, gender, disabilities, age, or sexual orientation, or other personal differences.

### **Parity**

An Extension program is in parity when the participation of individuals of minority groups reflects the proportionate representation in the population of the potential recipients. A program will be considered in compliance when its participation has reached 80% of parity.

### **Potential Audience/Recipients**

Potential recipients are persons or groups within your defined geographic area who might be interested in or benefit from the educational program.

Potential recipients are estimated by using a combination of county demographic data and the Extension educator's knowledge and information about the population of the county. When a target audience is defined during program planning, it should be inclusive of the entire potential recipients as defined by demographic data.

**Valuing Diversity** means recognizing and appreciating that individuals are different, that diversity is an advantage if it is valued. While equal opportunity has had to battle discrimination and prejudice, valuing diversity moves toward reaping the benefits that differences bring. While equal opportunity and affirmative action are under legal mandates, valuing diversity is a philosophical concept evolving from employment opportunity and affirmative action principles. Changing demographics, a shrinking labor pool, and an increasingly global marketplace have created a new kind of work place in which a rich diversity of racial, cultural, gender, age and other backgrounds are the norm. It is vital that the members of the work force learn to understand and appreciate each other.

### **Adequate Public Notification**

Letting people know our Extension program is open and available to the public is called public notification. Public notification activities are the extra efforts you plan for advising minorities of program availability on a non-discriminatory basis and usually consists of a series of various communication methods which advise the public about program availability.

Some of the basic "public notification" activities:

- Extension program outreach should use the most diversified possible communications to attract persons of all races, colors, religions, genders, and national origins to participate. Examples include posters, flyers, minority organization bulletin board notices, and stuffers in utility, or other public mailings.
- Prominently **display the** *Justice for All* poster in all Extension offices and facilities.
- **Provide** information on Extension programs to *grass roots* organizations which relate to Protected Class of your county, via mail, personal visits, newsletters, phone calls, etc.
- Use **the** *non-discriminatory statement* or phrase in all news releases which announce an Extension program and explain how to participate.
- **Place** the name of persons of a Protected Class on appropriate mailing lists so that individuals and/or families will receive information regarding Extension programs for which they are potential recipients.
- In Extension *programs* that may traditionally attract only males or only females, **use** words, phrases, or statements in the program announcements which clearly indicate that participation of both males and females are encouraged and appropriate.

### **All Reasonable Efforts**

Affirmative Action means those creative actions or steps that are being taken to accomplish compliance with the intent of the Civil Rights Act. As an Extension employee you must make all reasonable efforts to comply with our Civil Rights regulations. All reasonable effort activities are

required efforts you need to use when programming with members of one race who function in a multi-racial community.

Some of the required steps in implementing *All Reasonable Effort* include:

- **Determine by community**, neighborhood, or minor civil division, the multi-racial communities in your county.
- **Determine by club or group name** program area groups functioning in these neighborhood or communities.
- **Determine from participation data** if the club or group membership reflects the racial composition of the neighborhood or community.

The minimum *All Reasonable Effort* required for county Extension staff members for any identified clubs or groups whose membership is all one race, includes the following items:

1. **Use all available mass media**, including radio, newspaper, and television to inform potential recipients, with the multi-racial communities, of the program and of the opportunity to participate.
2. **Personal letters** and flyers/publications addressed to potential recipients inviting them to participate, including dates and places of meetings or other planned activities.
3. **Personal visits** by the county Extension staff to a representative number of defined potential recipients in the geographically defined areas to encourage participation.

### **Documentation**

For clubs and groups whose membership continues not to reflect Protected Class, and in those situations where a *program area's group* is of one race and located in a Protected Class community, and the three-part minimum *All Reasonable Effort* has been implemented, the process of documenting your efforts should be handled in this manner:

- **Document** the *situation* of the group and its membership and the AA/EEO policy committee (i.e. 4-H Advisory Council, Extension Board, etc.), and the need to take action; **document** the *methods* and approaches used to inform, invite, and encourage Protected Class members to participate in the group and its programs.
- **File** a copy of the documentation with a memo indicating that all reasonable effort has been made.
- **Note the situation and effort** made in the *Annual Civil Rights Report* that CED's send each fall.

Examples of memo to be attached to documentation:

"I have made 'all reasonable effort' to implement the AA/EEO policy to assure that our program is available to people of all races in our neighborhoods."

"Personal letters have been sent to Hispanic families inviting them to attend program sessions. They are included on our member list to receive the newsletter. I have invited them personally and discussed programs with them.

"Telephone contacts were made with some. Posters have been placed in public places announcing meetings. All extension groups in the county have been informed of the AA/EEO policy by letter, telephone, and at meetings.

Some additional definitions and guidelines:

- A community is defined as multi-racial when one or more persons of a racial minority live in a community and are potential members of a specific extension program.
- The Extension educator who is most directly responsible for the program effort will be held responsible for the *all reasonable effort* requirements.
- Volunteer leaders may be effectively involved in *all reasonable effort*, but their involvement doesn't relieve the extension professional of responsibility.

### **Your Rights as a Purdue Extension Employee:**

- \* Fairness in hiring, firing, feedback and performance appraisal
- \* Avenues for expressing concern/grievance
- \* Access to university resources concerning AA/EEO
- \* A work environment free of discrimination
- \* Equal access to developmental training and work assignments
- \* Protection and reasonable accommodation according to the Americans with Disabilities Act
- \* Freedom from sexual harassment
- \* Access and privacy of information

### **Your Responsibilities under Civil Rights:**

- \* To insure nondiscrimination in programming and services
- \* Use of AA/EEO statements on printed materials
- \* Display of signs concerning AA/EEO
- \* Provide access for disabled people wherever possible or provide a suitable accommodation
- \* Use gender neutral language in written and oral communications
- \* Respect and value difference of other employees and clientele
- \* Maintain records for Affirmative Action accountability