



November 30, 2015

Rural Development

Office of the
Under Secretary

1400 Independence
Ave SW
Washington, DC
20250
Voice 202.720.4581
Fax 202.720.2080

RURAL DEVELOPMENT
ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY STATEMENT

Rural Development (RD) is committed to ensuring a workplace free of all forms of harassment and upholds the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) zero-tolerance policy for any form of harassment or discrimination. This includes the actions of supervisors, co-workers, contractors, customers, and non-employees.

Harassment is defined as unwelcome and/or offensive treatment or conduct (whether physical, verbal, or otherwise) that a reasonable person would find hostile, abusive or intimidating and adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities and/or work performance. Harassment based on an individual's protected bases of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 and over), disability (mental or physical), genetic information, or in retaliation for participation in any part the Equal Employment Opportunity process; and where applicable, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, marital status, family/parental status, or political beliefs is illegal under Federal civil rights law and in violation of USDA civil rights regulations and policies.

Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to, bullying, epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, threats, intimidation, hostile acts, written or verbal disrespectful comments, and graphic material that may be deemed offensive by an individual or group.

All employees and others performing official work for the Agency must fully support and adhere to this policy and refrain from engaging in harassing conduct. As Under Secretary, I will apply this policy equally among all RD employees and will hold managers and supervisors accountable for maintaining a work environment free of harassment. When managers and supervisors become aware of incidents involving any type of harassment, they must take immediate and appropriate corrective action. Managers and supervisors are subject to disciplinary or adverse actions for tolerating harassment and/or failing to take appropriate and immediate action.

Any employee who is subjected to or witnesses harassment in the workplace should immediately notify their manager, supervisor or the RD Office of Civil Rights at 1-800-787-8821 or by email at rd-crs@wdc.usda.gov. Employees are encouraged to inform the harasser directly that the conduct is unwelcome and must stop. If an employee or former employee believes he/she has been subjected to harassment based on one or more of the aforementioned protected bases, he/she should contact the RD Office of Civil Rights at 1-800-787-8821 within 45 calendar days of the alleged incident. Failure to do so may result in dismissal of the complaint for untimeliness.

Reports of harassment are addressed through a prompt and impartial investigation. Any employee who initiates a complaint of harassment or provides information related to a complaint of harassment can do so without fear of retaliation. All allegations will be taken seriously and any individual(s) found to have violated

prohibitions on harassment will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including reprimand, suspension, demotion, or removal.

Questions regarding this policy should be directed the RD Office of Civil Rights at 1-800-787-8821 or by email at rd-crs@wdc.usda.gov.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Mensah', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lisa Mensah
Under Secretary