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GIPSA Anti-Harassment Policy Statement

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GIPSA is committed to preventing and elimination all types of workplace harassment based upon race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin, disability, reprisal, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, marital, parental or familial status, protected genetic information, or receipt of public assistance. USDA's Cultural Transformation initiative is a call to action to transform our policy into practice as we create a workplace where all employees are treated with dignity and respect. Creating this inclusive workplace culture is the responsibility of each and every GIPSA employee. Any actions that are contrary to this mission, vision, and shared values of the Agency are unacceptable.

Harassment is verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual; has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment; unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or otherwise adversely affects employment opportunities. Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts, and written or graphic material that denigrated or shows hostility or aversion oward an individual or group.

Employees seeking relief from harassment based on sex, with or without sexual conduct, race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, marital or parental status must contact the Civil Rights Staff at (202-720-1748) within 45 calendar days of an alleged incident. All other allegations of harassment should be reported to a supervisor or manager.

Complaints of harassment may be expressed by an employee, applicant, or beneficiary of a GIPSA program or activity without fear of retaliation. All acts of retaliation must be reported immediately through the appropriate forum indicated in the previous paragraph. All allegations will be investigated, and any individual(s) found to have violated prohibitions on harassment will be subject to disciplinary action.

Enforcement guidance from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission on employer liability for acts of harassment states that "An employer is always liable for harassment by a supervisor on prohibited basis that culminates in a tangible employment action." Tangible employment actions include: hiring and firing; promotion and failure to promote; demotion; undesirable reassignment; a decision causing significant change in benefits; compensation decisions; and work assignment. The guidance also provides that "in some circumstances, an employer may be subject to vicarious liability for harassment by a supervisor who does not have actual authority over the employee."

This policy statement must be posted and disseminated to all employees. Prevention is the most effective tool to successfully eliminate harassment in the workplace.

Larry Mitchell
Administrator