

USDA Forest Service – Harassment-Free Workplace

Senate Report 115-276 directs the Department of Interior, Forest Service, and Environmental Protection Agency to report to the Committee on agency actions to address harassment of employees, including plans to improve monitoring, training and enforcement, and implement policies that prevent retaliation. The report shall include a detailed list of any actions taken or expected to be taken during fiscal years 2018 and 2019. USDA Forest Service has taken the following actions in fiscal years 2018 and 2019 to address harassment of employees:

Date	Action
November 2017	<p><u>Launched the Harassment Reporting Center</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A single office dedicated to receiving all reports of any type of harassment. • Open 7 days a week from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Eastern. • Operated by skilled and trained, contracted representatives.
January 2018	<p><u>Launched the Anti-Harassment Program Intranet Web Page</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created a new intranet page committed to the Anti-Harassment Program. • Provides a single, dedicated resource for all employees and contractors. • Page answers frequently asked questions such as: what is harassment, how to report it, what to expect once reported, and what to expect regarding the inquiry or investigation. <p><u>Message to employees from Chief on Women’s Special Emphasis Program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership message on importance of reinvigorating a program to ensure the needs of women in the Forest Service are being met, and that they have a broad, strong voice in the agency.
March 2018	<p><u>Outreach to all Forest Service employees</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The agency published a column in the online newsletter Inside the Forest Service to reinforce the commitment to change the culture of the agency and share actions we will take in the future. The column reflected the Secretary’s Civil Rights message. <p><u>Stand Up for Each Other Action Plan Developed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initially conceived as a 30-day plan to create a work environment in which people are treated with respect and dignity, the Stand Up Plan evolved into a strategic document guiding agency actions as we strive for a work environment characterized by mutual trust, valuing difference and inclusion, listening to understand and learning from each other.
April 2018	<p><u>Listen and Learn from Employees Sessions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the month of April, Senior Agency Leaders held open forum listening sessions on work environment. Employees were given the opportunity to meet and talk about their experiences working for the Forest Service. <p><u>Established an Employee Advisory Group on Workplace Improvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group represents of all levels, backgrounds and subcultures of the agency. • This group encourages peer-to-peer engagement and support to empower employees. • This group advises the Chief and senior leadership on additional practices or policy steps needed to eliminate harassment and promote safe and respectful work spaces.

Date	Action
June 2018	<p><u>Stand Up for Each Other Day-long Event:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the week of June 11 all Forest Service employees participated in a training/engagement session designed to address workplace behaviors. • Components of the day-long event include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Anti-Harassment Training - The training addresses the five key points of our new, stricter anti-harassment policy while stressing that every employee has a responsibility for doing their part when it comes to eliminating harassment. ○ Code of Conduct for All Employees – A set of expectations for workplace behavior to ensure every employee is treated with dignity and respect, and can work safely in a harassment-free, discrimination free environment. It reinforces stance that employees will be held accountable to uphold a new standard of behavior. <p><u>Transforming Forest Service Women’s Special Emphasis Program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest Service created a Special Emphasis program of work that truly encapsulates the needs of women in the Forest Service. • There are some elements of a Special Emphasis Program that are required by law – but there are specific things women are asking for that they see as needed and highly beneficial for the organization.
August 2018	<p><u>Bystander Intervention Training</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Forest Service is working to broaden its knowledge about how to deal with some deficient situations through partnerships with other Federal agencies. Peace Corps provided a “train the trainer” session on Bystander Intervention to 30 Forest Service employees. Efforts to bring the training to additional Forest Service employees are underway.
September 2018	<p><u>Work Environment and Performance Office Created</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This new office focuses on efforts to improve and sustain a culture in which all employees feel safe, secure, valued, respected, and supported in delivering the priority work of the agency. The staff seeks to diagnose and address the root causes and cultural barriers to emotional and physical safety, security, diversity, and inclusion in the work environment. Long-term benefits of this new office will include greater safety and security, and a more productive work environment with increased capacity to deliver mission critical work.
October 2018	<p><u>Employee Advocacy Support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The agency contracted support to conduct a baseline review of its anti-harassment policy and program; provide consulting and training development and delivery on victim-centered, trauma-informed approach to harassment, sexual harassment and related retaliation. <p><u>Retaliation Awareness Training Developed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed a training module on retaliation; such as what is retaliation and what can be done to prevent it from happening. The session was delivered to members of the Southern Research Station leadership team. The agency is making modifications to the module and will deliver training more widely in Fiscal Year 2020.

Date	Action
January 2019	<p><u>Post-Furlough/Government Shutdown Employee Engagement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed guides for employees and supervisors to ensure an orderly resumption of operations following the 35-day lapse in appropriations. • Senior Executives held employee engagement session agency-wide allow employees to share their experiences during the 35- day lapse in appropriations • Chief Christiansen held a national all-employee conference call laying out agency priorities for the remainder of fiscal year 2019
February 2019-Present	<p><u>Bystander Intervention Training</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Forest Service has trained several hundred employees to deliver Bystander Intervention training throughout the agency. An estimated 3,000 employees have attended the training and report that it provides excellent, hands-on tactics to interrupt bad behaviors and improve the work environment.
March 2019	<p><u>Measuring Success of Anti-Harassment Activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USDA Inspector General and Forest Service are researching ways to measure progress to address workplace concerns regarding sexual harassment and misconduct and improve this aspect of our work environment. USDA OIG will assess the state of oversight work in this area over the next 3 months. We will engage multiple OIG disciplines to conduct this inquiry and analysis to include: canvassing the oversight community (e.g., the Inspectors General and the Government Accountability Office) and conducting research to identify the universe of work that has been done in the last 5 years (i.e., since 2013) related to sexual harassment and misconduct. We plan to review related findings and recommendations to help identify standards, guidance, or best practices that agencies can use to measure progress in this area.
April 2019	<p><u>Alcohol Ban in Shared Government Quarters</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is well-documented that alcohol is often a contributing factor in cases of assault, sexual assault, harassment, and other inappropriate behaviors. Continuing to permit alcohol consumption in government quarters potentially puts employees at risk. For the safety of Forest Service employees, the agency implemented a ban on alcohol in shared government quarters.
Anticipated July 2019	<p><u>Conduct Agency-wide Work Environment Survey (WES)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This survey is the first Forest Service-wide survey to assess employee perceptions of various aspects of the work environment and it contains unique content from the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS). Results from the 2019 WES will provide information on employees' experiences of diversity and inclusion, workplace satisfaction and environment, unwanted behaviors and experiences with existing training and programs.