

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Between

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

And

NATIONAL HISPANIC LEADERSHIP AGENDA

This Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) is made and entered into as of May 22, 2014, between the U.S. Department of Agriculture (“USDA”) and the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (“NHLA”). For purposes of this MOU, USDA and NHLA will be collectively referred to as “the Parties.”

USDA embraces the ideals of inclusion and diversity, seeks to ensure that its programs reach all the communities that might benefit from them, and strives to create a diverse, well-trained workforce and be the provider and employer of choice.

NHLA is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) and nonpartisan coalition comprised of the 37 leading national Hispanic organizations in the country. As the pre-eminent national Hispanic coalition in the United States, NHLA’s mission calls for unity among Hispanics around the country to provide the Hispanic community with greater visibility and a clearer, stronger influence in our Nation’s affairs. NHLA brings together Hispanic leaders to establish policy priorities that address, and raise public awareness of, the major issues affecting the Hispanic community and the Nation as a whole. NHLA coalition members represent the full diversity of the Hispanic community—Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Central Americans, South Americans, and other Hispanic Americans.

USDA and its agencies and offices currently partner with a number of NHLA member organizations on a variety of issues that impact Hispanics, and USDA works to provide full access to USDA programs and enhance Federal career opportunities for the entire Hispanic community.

Article I: Purpose

The purpose of this MOU is to engage in and sustain a mutually beneficial partnership between USDA and NHLA. It provides the framework to identify mutual policy and programmatic issues and concerns, and to develop and implement solutions. This MOU seeks to promote equality of opportunity in USDA policies and programs, as well as access to employment and career enhancement opportunities. Further, one priority goal of this effort is to increase awareness of USDA as an employer of choice, especially for Hispanic Americans, in order to promote the recruitment, hiring, and retention of a diverse workforce at all levels.

This MOU is intended solely to supplement, not supplant, any existing MOUs and productive relationships USDA has with other Hispanic organizations, whether NHLA members or non-members.

Specifically, this MOU initiates a:

High-level, ongoing, substantive, comprehensive, results-oriented dialogue and engagement process between NHLA and USDA so the parties can discuss a broad range of Hispanic-related topics at USDA and its various agencies and offices. These topics include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Employment outreach, recruitment, retention, and promotion to increase the participation of Hispanics in the Federal workforce;
2. Education—including internships, fellowships, scholarships, research grants, STEM programs, agriculture education, and conservation education initiatives;
3. Youth programs and youth jobs;
4. Overall Hispanic outreach and media/communications programs, both broad and targeted efforts;
5. Partnerships with Hispanic led and operated organizations and entities, i.e., the NHLA member organizations;
6. Minority and small business contracting opportunities with Hispanic owned and operated businesses;
7. Minority-serving institutions, especially Hispanic-Serving Institutions; and
8. USDA policies that impact Hispanics generally, but especially those topics that distinctly affect USDA's Hispanic stakeholders. These topics include, among others: food and nutrition assistance programs; food safety; farmer and rancher financial and technical assistance; farm worker assistance; natural resource, conservation, and energy programs; rural housing; rural infrastructure, utilities, and business opportunities; sustainable management and recreational use of public and private lands; access to trade and markets; research, education, and STEM programs; and community outreach activities.

Article II: Objectives

This MOU is designed to meet the following objectives for both USDA and NHLA:

1. Focus on policy, personnel, and programs regarding Hispanics.
2. Create a high-level, comprehensive, collaborative, results-oriented, multi-year framework through regular dialogue, engagement, and meetings with NHLA.
3. Discuss, propose, develop, and implement joint solutions, based on analysis of Hispanic-related data and metrics from USDA and other Federal sources that are regularly collected and publicly available, to be specifically implemented through partnerships with the national Hispanic organizations who are NHLA members.
4. Build the foundation for a strong working relationship with the Secretary of Agriculture, other top USDA officials, and NHLA leadership.
5. Promote diversity and remove barriers to equal employment opportunity for Hispanics, consistent with merit system principles, Executive Order (EO) 13583 (August 18, 2011), "Establishing a Coordinated Government-wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in the Federal Workforce," and the two EOs that specifically relate to Hispanics: EO 13171 (October 12, 2000), "Hispanic Employment in the Federal Government" and EO 13555 (October 19, 2010) "White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics."

Article III: Responsibilities

A. USDA seeks to do the following:

- 1) Solicit input from NHLA when developing USDA's annual diversity recruitment strategy.
- 2) Solicit input/feedback from NHLA when developing outreach strategies to potentially enhance such strategies so they will more effectively target and reach the Hispanic community.
- 3) Expand and support employee professional development activities to include developmental assignments to aid in employee retention and expand promotion opportunities.
- 4) Work in partnership with NHLA members by announcing and promoting USDA employee participation and attendance at:

- a. NHLA members' conferences, training programs, and events qualifying as training in compliance with 5 U.S.C. Chapter 41;
 - b. NHLA members' national training conferences, symposiums, institutes, and related events in a trainer capacity; and
 - c. NHLA members' national conferences, training programs, and related events to share USDA best practices in outreach, recruitment, training, retention, education, and advancement strategies and programs.
- 5) Work in partnership with NHLA members by providing information concerning USDA recruitment and outreach events, scholarship, education, grant opportunities, STEM programs, student internships, career enhancement programs, and developmental opportunities at USDA.
 - 6) Work in partnership with NHLA members by providing USDA and its various agency and office announcements for Federal Advisory Committee Act Committees and Board openings.
 - 7) Invite the NHLA Chairman and/or other top leaders from NHLA member organizations when USDA holds events to announce major USDA policies or programs that particularly affect or are targeted to Hispanic Americans.
 - 8) Share Web link to all USDA jobs posted on www.usajobs.gov so that NHLA will share with its member organizations and network.
 - 9) Maintain regular dialogue with NHLA leaders to discuss policy and programmatic issues as outlined above, and to assess progress in building and maintaining a substantive, results-oriented, collaborative partnership under this MOU with the participation of senior officials from USDA and its various agencies and offices.
 - 10) Share with NHLA the data/metrics related to Hispanic Americans that USDA and its various agencies and offices regularly collect and make publicly available, particularly prior to meetings between NHLA and USDA so this data can serve as a basis for discussions.
 - 11) Collaboratively discuss and set the agenda for meetings between USDA and NHLA.

B. NHLA seeks to do the following:

- 1) Advise NHLA member organizations about this MOU, and enlist their active participation in its implementation.
- 2) Assist USDA in providing information (through publications, success stories, and information of general interest, etc.) concerning USDA program services, policy changes, employment opportunities, and workforce diversity, available

to the Hispanic community in general and NHLA member organizations in particular.

- 3) Assist USDA in announcing and promoting vacancies for full-time or part-time positions, youth programs, student internships, seasonal, and SES career opportunities.
- 4) Assist USDA in fostering partnerships with organizations (i.e., schools, civic organizations, associations, faith-based organizations, etc.) that have similar mission and goals, for purposes of Hispanic networking, outreach, and recruitment.
- 5) Provide USDA the opportunity to participate in exhibit booth space at NHLA member organizations' national, regional, and local training programs and conferences, to further USDA's various outreach, policies, and program objectives.
- 6) Recommend speakers on diversity, inclusion, EEO, and Civil Rights issues for internal programs, (e.g., Special Emphasis Programs).
- 7) Consistent with each NHLA members' policy and programmatic priorities, as well as their position on relevant issues, provide assistance and support to USDA on policies and programs that further the mission and objectives of mutual interest to this MOU.
- 8) Disseminate USDA invitations to events that particularly affect or target Hispanic Americans to NHLA members, and strive to have top leaders participate, so Hispanic diversity/representation is present.
- 9) Disseminate announcements received for Federal Advisory Committee Act Committee and Board openings at USDA and its various agencies and offices. NHLA will disseminate these announcements to NHLA members to help ensure qualified Hispanics are recommended and forwarded to USDA.
- 10) Maintain regular dialogue with senior USDA officials to discuss policy and programmatic issues as outlined above, and to assess progress in building and maintaining a substantive, results-oriented, collaborative partnership under this MOU, with NHLA leadership.

Article IV: Principal Contacts

The principal contacts for this MOU are the following:

- A USDA senior official to serve as the key Point of Contact
- The NHLA Chair

Discussion/Meeting Composition:

- A. Senior USDA officials, such as the Secretary of Agriculture.
- B. Various and key USDA agency and office heads, such as the Agricultural Research Service, Departmental Management, Farm Service Agency, Food and Nutrition Service, Forest Service, National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, Rural Development, etc.
- C. The leadership of NHLA members, to specifically include the NHLA Chairman and Co-Chairs of the NHLA Government Accountability Committee.

Article V: Miscellaneous

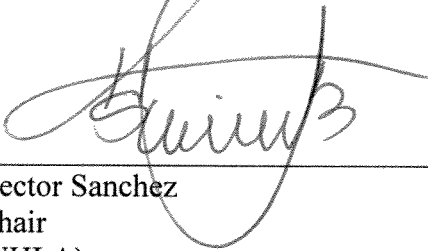
- A. USDA and NHLA and their respective agencies and offices will handle their own activities and utilize their own resources, including the expenditure of their own funds, in pursuing these objectives. Each Party will carry out its separate activities in a coordinated and mutually beneficial manner.
- B. Nothing in this MOU shall obligate either USDA or NHLA to obligate or transfer any funds. Specific work projects or activities that involve the transfer of funds, services, or property among the various agencies and offices of USDA, NHLA, and/or NHLA member organizations will require execution of separate agreements and be contingent upon the availability of appropriated funds. Such activities must be independently authorized by appropriate statutory authority. This MOU does not provide such authority. Negotiation, execution, and administration of each such agreement must comply with all applicable statutes and regulations.
- C. Supplements may be developed for special programs and initiatives. USDA and NHLA, upon mutual agreement, will provide or arrange for such additional activities, facilities, equipment, materials, information, and arrangements as may be required to achieve common objectives.
- D. This MOU takes effect upon the signature of USDA and NHLA and shall remain in effect for 5 years from the date of execution. This MOU may be extended or amended upon written request of either USDA or NHLA and the subsequent written concurrence of the other Party. Either USDA or NHLA may terminate this MOU with a 60-day written notice to the other Party.
- E. This MOU is not intended to, and does not create, any right, benefit, or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity, by a party against the United States, its agencies, its officers, or any person.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have caused this MOU to be executed by their respective duly authorized officers as indicated below.



Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
(USDA)

Date: 5.22.14



Hector Sanchez
Chair
(NHLA)

Date: 5/22/14.