CARE FUNCTIONAL REVIEW – **Area Office**

ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT – GENERAL

1.0   <u>Administrative and Financial Management</u>

- Provide a summary of how administrative processes in general are functioning within the Area Office and the Area as a whole.

- How do the administrative and program personnel interact? Are monthly staff meetings conducted? If so, are they beneficial?

- Is the Area doing any "best practices" that can be captured and shared with other Areas?

1.01   <u>Area Administrative and Financial Management</u>

- Provide a summary of the level of interaction between the Area and the Locations. How does the Area Office staff interact with the Locations? What communication mechanisms are in place?

1.02   <u>Headquarters Administrative and Financial Management</u>

- Describe the interaction between the Area Office and Headquarters.

1.03   <u>Other</u>

- Describe any other processes that do not fit into the above-mentioned categories (i.e., program process issues).

CARE FUNCTIONAL REVIEW – **AREA OFFICE**
ACQUISITION OF SUPPLIES, SERVICES, AND EQUIPMENT

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Linda Wilson on 301-504-1733.

2.0   General Acquisitions

- Select 10 percent of orders from the purchase order log book for review. Look carefully at orders placed during the last 2 weeks of the fiscal year and at orders over $3,000. Select a sampling of closed-out orders/contracts for review as listed in Section 2.03-3 of these functional questions.

2.01   Requisitions

APD Issuances – http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/acquisitions/alerts.htm
Federal Acquisition Regulation – http://www.acqnet.gov/far/index.html
213.3M - REE Purchase Card Program - http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/purchase-cards/index.htm
DR 5013-6 - http://www.ocio.usda.gov/directives/doc/DR5013-006.htm
AbilityOne Program – http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/acquisitions/ability-one.htm

- Verify that the action was processed via the Integrated Acquisition System (IAS). If the action was processed external to IAS, a completed procurement request (PR) and FFIS RQ print screen is required. For orders external to IAS:

  - Ensure the file includes a PR complete with required sub-account, specifications, funding, estimates, justifications, and approval.

  - Verify that the PR is signed by an authorized individual.

  - Verify that the PR has a procurement request number and is properly dated.

  - Verify that an FFIS RQ print screen is included in the file.

  - Are OF 347's or other approved procurement vehicles and/or Purchase Orders, prepared in accordance with the instructions on IRS Form 1099 reporting requirements (NFC Manual Title II, Chapter 5)?

- Verify that a tracking system is in place to handle the administration of PR's, contracts, purchase orders, and assignments of requests for action. An example would be to have a manual or automated log. Verify that an action is traceable through the system, i.e., from PR to award document. Is there a management information system in place to report on status of sensitive actions?

2.02   Procurement

- Verify that current P&P's, Bulletins, etc., are readily available.

- Does the Area Office have a Location P&P review schedule? Are these reviews conducted as required (each Location every 5 years)?

2.02-1   Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPA's)

- Ensure that BPA's are replaced by using the purchase card when appropriate. Is the Area Office making progress in this migration?

- Ensure that existing BPA's have been converted to IAS effective 12/1/06 and contain all the necessary terms and conditions, including individuals authorized to place orders and extent of their authority, and securing maximum discounts. (FAR Subpart 13.303).

- Ensure BPA orders are only used by those individuals authorized on the agreement (FAR Subpart 13.303).

- Ensure that whenever possible, contractors invoice monthly rather than invoicing for each call order (FAR Subpart 13.303). This is to reduce paperwork and cost to the Government.

- Ensure BPA's are reviewed annually to reaffirm the need and proper usage (FAR Subpart 13.303).

- Ensure that call orders over $3,000 are documented to show that competition was obtained or notation for sole-source (FAR Subpart 13.303).

- Ensure that individual call orders do not exceed the maximum call order limit (FAR Subpart 13.303).

- Ensure that BPA's do not exceed the total dollar limitation or its stated time period (FAR Subpart 13.303).

2.02-2   Purchase/Delivery Orders

- For UNICOR purchases, ensure the file contains a comparability determination per FAR Subpart 8.602 and APD Alert 2005-13.

- Check logbooks for orders just under $100,000 representing split requirements that were broken down into several purchases merely to permit the use of simplified acquisition procedures. Look for open market purchase orders that exceed $100,000.

- Check logbooks for multiple orders to the same vendor/merchant broken down to remain under warrant authority.

- Check purchase orders for best value and/or price reasonableness determinations. Refer to Policy Memorandum 13-01 for information on best value determinations and FAR Subpart 13.106-3 for information on price reasonableness.

- Ensure there is an awareness of the procedures for ratification of unauthorized commitments. Does the Area Office maintain a ratification log? Can the office explain or demonstrate the contents and procedures for a ratification package? (P&P 212.16)

- Ensure that unpriced orders are documented to show the need for using this type of order (FAR Subpart 13.302-2).

- Ensure that the total value of the order is within the delegated authority of the contracting officer.

- Check to see that biobased products are purchased if comparable in price, quality and availability to non-biobased products. Refer to USDA's Web site for a list of biobased products (www.usda.gov/biopreferred) (FAR Subpart 23.4)

- Check to see that recycled products are purchased if the agency designated item exceeds $10,000 or the aggregate amount paid for designated items in the preceding fiscal year was $10,000 or more and can be acquired competitively within a reasonable time, meeting appropriate performance standards and at a reasonable price (FAR Subpart 23.4). Refer to EPA's Web site for a list of designated items (www.epa.gov/cpg).

- Check to see that Energy Star®, FEMP designated products, or other energy efficient products and water efficient products are purchased (FAR Subpart 23.2). Refer to the following Web sites for information on energy star products: www.energystar.gov/ and www.eere.energy.gov/femp/procurement.

- Check to see if the contracting specialists are using required sources properly, particularly, AbilityOne Program (formerly Javits-Wagner-O-Day (JWOD) Act) sources (FAR Part 8).

- Check to see if the Area has an established AbilityOne goal. Is there an awareness of the AbilityOne Program? What actions have the Area taken to meet REE AbilityOne goal and to increase REE's participation through contracting opportunities and program support (DR 5080-001).

- Check to see if procurement outreach efforts are being accomplished. Is there an awareness of the procurement preference program in terms of the need to locate small businesses, small disadvantaged businesses, women-owned businesses,

HUBZones, and service disabled veterans? (FAR Parts 13 and 19, DR 5090-002, DR 5090-003).

- Are there established procedures for accepting capability statements and/or market literature from small businesses? Are these small businesses being added to source lists? For open-market projects between $25,000 and $100,000 are there at least one each of the following small business concerns identified on the source list: small business, woman-owned small business, small disadvantaged business, and service-disabled veteran?

- Ensure that regulations on Set-Asides for Small Business are adhered to: Open-market purchases over $3,000 must be set aside for small businesses. The file should be documented as stated in FAR Subpart19.502-2 if the eligible requirement was not set-aside. Note: Orders under $3,000 (micro-purchases) do not have to be set aside for participation by small business.

- Check log book for multiple orders less than $25,000 that may have been broken down into several purchases merely to circumvent synopsizing requirements.

- Verify that all open-market requirements of $25,000 or greater were posted on FEDBizOpps (FAR Parts 5 and 13).

- Ensure that competition is obtained for requirements over $3,000? If not, the file should document why competition was not feasible or not obtained? For non-competitive purchases exceeding $3,000, ensure that the basis for price reasonableness determination is included in the file (FAR Part 13).

- Services over $2,500: If subject to the Service Contract Act, wage rates should be obtained through Wage Determinations On-Line (www.wdol.gov) and incorporated in the order. (FAR Subpart 22.1008-1, APD Alert 2004-04).

- Actions under the Small Business Competitiveness Demonstration Program: Verify a printout of the FPDS-NG action is in the file and that it reflects the contract award document/contract file. Confirm the FPDS-NG report was completed within three workdays after contract award and that it was processed in accordance with the procedures found in FPDS-NG User's Manual (FAR Subpart 4.6, https://www.fpds.gov/).

  Note: The Small Business Competitiveness Demonstration Program actions (construction, refuse, services, etc.) of any dollar value must be entered in FPDS-NG.

- Construction over $2,000: Ensure Davis-Bacon Wage Rates are incorporated in the order (FAR Subpart 22.404).

- Request for quotes: The file should document the method of solicitation (orally

or written and include information on offers, prices, discounts, and basis for determination of price reasonableness. A written solicitation is required for construction requirements over $2,000. (FAR Part 13).

- Ensure that source lists are maintained and used to select sources for simplified acquisitions. This includes GSA (FAR Parts 8 and 13).

- Defaults – In case of Termination for Default, did the office charge the excess costs of any reprocurement action to the defaulted contractor?

- Ceiling price: Are ceilings established for all estimated orders?

- Delivery date: Does the order contain a definitive or determinable date for delivery of supplies or performance of services.

- Check to see if procurement files are well maintained and organized. All pertinent data should be kept in the contracting officer's file.

- Ensure that as stated in FAR Subpart 4.805, the Area retains records as follows:

  - Construction contracts over $2,000 and all other contracts over $100,000 for 6 years and 3 months after final payment;

  - Signed construction contracts of $2,000 or less and all other contracts of $100,000 or less 3 years after final payment;

  - Contracts (and related records or documents, including successful proposals) at or below the simplified acquisition threshold ($100,000) for other than construction, 3 years after final payment.

- Verify that all proposed contract actions between $10,000 and $25,000 are displayed in a public place or placed on FEDBizOpps (FAR Part 5).

- Confirm that purchasing agents are aware of the CCR requirements prior to order issuance of purchase orders. Vendors must be registered in CCR to be eligible for contract award (FAR Subpart 4.11).

2.02-3   Purchase Cards

Obtain a list of cardholders and their supervisors/managers from the Area Agency Program Coordinator or Local Agency Program Coordinator. Select 10 percent of cardholders to review their purchase card logs. In addition, select 10 percent of the supervisors/managers to review their respective purchase card management review reports to verify oversight of cardholder's purchases are being performed.

- Check purchase card log to determine if cardholders are using AbiltyOne

(formerly JWOD) distributors and suppliers to obtain office supplies. http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/acquisitions/ability-one.htm.

- Check purchase card log for multiple orders to same vendor/merchant broken down to remain under cardholder's single purchase limit.

- Check purchase card log for transactions over $3,000 to ensure competition is obtained and that the file contains a contracting document in the form of either a purchase order or contract, including applicable clauses. Ensure a printout of the FPDS-NG action is in the file and that it reflects the procurement award document.

- Confirm that contracting officers are aware of the CCR requirements prior to paying with a card/check over $3,000 (FAR Subpart 4.11).

- Check purchase card log for checks over $2,500 to ensure that approval from the REE Agency Program Coordinator (APC) is in the file (AGAR Advisory No. 52 and APD Alert 2004-09)

- Check purchase card log for payments for recurring telecommunication services or telecommunication purchases over $350. These purchases are prohibited. Refer to APD Alert 2005-4 and AGAR Advisory 58A.

- Verify that the AAPC is in the 1102 series. For those not in the 1102 series, check to see what procurement training they have received to qualify them as a Level 1B Contracting Officer.

- Reference Tools

    - Check to see what tools the AAPC is using to manage and provide oversight of the purchase card program (i.e., Discoverer, PCMS, etc).

- Reports

    - Check to see if AAPC has submitted quarterly reports on Purchase Card/Check Use and Reconciliation to the REE APC. Report dates are as follows:

      Purchase Card
Reporting Date	Period Covered
January 31	October – December
April 30	January – March
July 31	April – June
October 31	July – September

      Convenience Check

<u>Reporting Date</u>	<u>Period Covered</u>
March 20	October – December
May 20	January – March
September 20	April – June
November 20	July – September

- Management and Oversight

o Check to see if the AAPC is conducting monthly physical reviews of Local Agency Program Coordinator (LAPC) files. (The LAPC file review is to be commensurate with the number of LAPC's in the Area.) AAPC's are to keep a separate file of the LAPC reviews with supporting documentation selected for review.

o Check to see if cardholder's supervisors are receiving and reviewing cardholder reports on a monthly basis in accordance with the guidance in 213.3M REE Purchase Card Program.

- Check to see if the AAPC is performing any random reviews of cardholder purchases.

2.02-4   <u>Training</u>

- Verify warrants are posted (FAR Subpart 1.602-1).

- Verify training plans are in place to maintain and enhance purchasing/contracting skills (FAR Subpart 1.603 and DR 5001-1).

2.02-5   <u>Federal Supply Schedule (FSS)</u> (FAR Subpart 8.404)

- Ensure that delivery orders used to purchase from the FSS

   - Is processed within IAS. If the purchase card is used, an OF-347 is used to document the transaction and is included in the purchase card file.

   - Have the special item number shown for each item.

- Ensure there is a printout of the FPDS-NG action in the file for delivery orders and delivery order modifications. Verify the FPDS-NG action reflects the delivery order document and contract award (FAR Subpart 4.6, https://www.fpds.gov/).

- Ensure that quotes have been obtained from at least three schedule contracts before placing an order with the FSS contractor. (FAR Subpart 8.405-1)

2.03   <u>Administration</u>

2.03-1   Simplified Acquisitions

- Ensure there is an effective tracking system and procedure for determining contract and order completion and final payment for closeout purposes.

- Scope of Order: If a modification increased the supplies or services ordered, it should be within the scope of the original order. Within the scope of the original order means that the added supplies and/or services could have been anticipated from the face of the original order and they are not materially different from the services and/or supplies currently produced under the original order. If not, it should be justified as a "new procurement" action (FAR Part 13).

- Supplemental agreement: Ensure that if a modification increased the total over $100,000 and it was by supplemental agreement, it incorporated the mandatory contract clauses.

2.03-2   Receiving Reports

- Receiving reports must be entered in IAS.

2.03-3   Invoice/Payments/Closeout

- Verify there is evidence of record of invoice/payment in the file and evidence of final payment. (FAR Subpart 4.804-3)

- Verify there is evidence of closeout in the file (FAR Subpart 4.804-5).

2.04   Personal Property

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Cheryl Brumback on 202-720-2359.

2.04-1   Organizational Structure

- Determine who has delegated authority as the Area's property management officer (APMO) and list additional staff positions that assist in personal property duties and responsibilities.

- List the names of any Location where the Area property staff provides direct operational support.

- Determine the number of designated Accountable Property Officers (APO's) the Area office has. If the Area provides direct operational support to a Location, list the number of APOs at the Location.

- Determine how the APMO ensures Location APO's are aware of their duties and responsibilities. (See REE Manual 221.1M, Section 2, Property Management Authority, Subsection "Accountable Property Officers.")

2.04-2   Training

- List the types of informal and formal training members of the Area's property office have had to ensure they are able to perform property management functions. Indicate whether the property staff needs additional training or support to adequately perform these functions.

2.04-3   Reference Material

- Determine whether the Area property staff has access to and uses the following personal property references:

  – REE Manual 221.1M, Personal Property, Motor Vehicle, & Aircraft Management, dated 8/3/99 (policy)

  – NFC Procedures Manual, Personal Property System (PROP), dated March 1998 (using PMIS/PROP)

  – Property Management Quick Guide, dated 2004 (overview of PMO duties)

  – Quick Guide to Using AAMS/GSAXcess, dated Oct 2007 (reporting and acquiring excess property)

  – Agricultural Property Management Regulations-AGPMR (USDA regulations)

  – Federal Management Regulations-FMR (GSA's Federal Policy)

2.04-4   File Management

- Ensure the APMO maintains official property management files. Determine whether the office uses consolidated files for each APO with a section for various property functions or separate files for inventories, excess, disposal, transfers, etc.

- Review the files to ensure they contain copies of current physical inventories, purchase documents for property on inventory, excess/unserviceable property forms, and completed disposal documents.

2.04-5   Inventory Management

- Review the Area office files to determine whether physical inventories are current. (USDA regulations require offices to conduct physical inventories every 2 years and when there is an APO change).

- Ensure the files contain the "working copy" of the current physical inventory. The "working copy" should include notations of items on-hand, excess, etc., and it is signed by the APO. (See REE Manual 221.1M, Section 4, Physical Inventories, and Agriculture Property Management Regulations, AGPMR 104-51.106

- Determine how often the APMO reviews the PROP28 Report, which lists the Area's physical inventory status. (Note: The PROP28 Report in PMIS/PROP will list the APO name, address, and latest inventory date to help determine current/delinquent inventories.)

- Explain how the APMO notifies APOs when physical inventories are due. Determine whether the Area office provides APO's with written instructions and how much advanced notice they routinely provide.

- Determine who reconciles the official property records in PMIS/PROP. Determine whether APO's submit documentation supporting inventory changes such as transfers, excess, disposals, and new acquisitions before the APMO makes inventory adjustments. (Documentation includes forms AD-107 Report of Transfer, SF-120 Report of Excess Property, AD-112 Report of Unserviceable, Lost, Stolen, or Damaged Property, and purchase documents.)

- Determine whether the APMO forwards a copy of the reconciled inventory to APO's (See REE Manual 221.1M, Section 4, Physical Inventories, and Subsection "Reconciling Physical Inventories").

- Determine how the APMO monitors inventory status at the Locations. Does the APMO perform audits at the Locations?

- Explain any problems that occur when requesting, performing, or completing physical inventories and how the APMO resolves the problems.

2.04-6   Property Accountability and Control

- Determine whether the APMO receives copies of purchase documents from the purchasing agent/contracting officer at the time of purchase for accountable property. Determine whether the APMO has to request purchase copies after the transaction appears on the Suspense Report.

- Explain how the APMO requests equipment descriptive information, serial number, etc., information from the APO, assigns the AG number, and updates new accountable property to PMIS/PROP. (See REE Manual 221.1M, Section 3,

Accountability and Control, Subsection "Receipt Documents for Accountable Property.)

- Explain how the Area office authorizes employees to remove property from the facility, including what type of documentation they use, such as memoranda, form AD-873, AD-107, etc; and who is authorized to approve property passes. (See REE Manual 221.1M, Section 3, Accountability and Control, Subsection "Removing Property from Government Offices".)

- Determine how the Area office ensures employees return property on loan to them

- Determine how the APMO distributes AG numbers to the Locations.

2.04-7   Property Suspense Reports

- Determine how often the APMO generates the Area Suspense Report and distributes it to the Locations. Explain how the APMO monitors suspense status to ensure Locations reconcile items no later than 60 days of appearing on suspense.

- Explain any problems that occur when reconciling Suspense Reports and how the APMO resolves the problem.

2.04-8   Sensitive Property

- Determine whether the Area office has any sensitive property, which are firearms and law enforcement badges. Ensure the office properly secures, bar codes, and lists sensitive property on the APO's inventory. (REE Manual 221.1M, Section 2, Accountability and Control, subsection "Sensitive Property.)

- Determine whether the APMO has declared, in writing, other types of property as sensitive. Ensure the office lists any other item declared "sensitive" on the inventory in PMIS/PROP.

2.04-9   Reporting Property Theft, Loss, or Damage

- Determine if the Area office has experienced any property theft, loss, or damage. Ensure the files contain documentation of incidents (form AD-112), including statements from the custodian, supervisor, APO, and appropriate law enforcement officials (for thefts).

- Verify whether the lost/stolen documentation contains signatures from the APO and that the APMO removes accountable property from PMIS/PROP as appropriate. (See REE Manual 221.1M, Section 9, Reporting Lost, Stolen, or Damaged Property.)

2.04-10   Property Trade-in/Exchange or Sale

- Determine whether the Area office evaluates property for possible reassignment or trade-in/exchange potential. Explain the method used to process trade-ins/exchange (such as direct trade-in with vendor or sale by GSA).

- Ensure the Area office is aware that USDA prohibits selling property to employees who are or were accountable for the property, used the property, or connected with its declaration as excess or sale. (See REE Manual 221.1M, Section 14, Agency Administered Sales, Subsection "Exemptions" and AGPMR 104-45.302.)

- Ensure the Area office follows Federal sale regulations, including an awareness of the list of ineligible property categories, follows the definition of similar items (within the same Federal Supply Classification Group), and applies the one-for-one rule. (See REE Manual 221.1M, Section 13, Exchange/Sale of Property and Federal Management Regulations, FMR 102-39 for the ineligible list.)

- Review the files to ensure the Area office documents the trade-in process by listing item descriptions, serial numbers, AG numbers, if accountable, and the trade-in amounts on the purchase document. Ensure the Area property office accurately removes the item in PMIS/PROP when the trade-in involves accountable property.

- Determine whether the Area office conducts sales of crops or animals. List the type of commodities/animals sold, the method of sale, the replacement crop/animal purchased, and who maintains the sales proceeds.

2.04-11   Acceptance of Gifts

- Determine whether the Area office has accepted any unconditional gifts and who has the authority to accept unconditional gifts for the Area on behalf of ARS/USDA. (See REE Manual 221.1M, Section 18, Acceptance of Gifts, Subsection "ARS Field".)

- Review the files to ensure all gift acceptances contain a letter from the offeror stating the gift is "unconditional" and the value of the gift.

- Determine how the Area ensures the unconditional gift is not from a prohibited source. Ensure the Area office documents acceptance of the unconditional gift on behalf of ARS/USDA and updates PMIS/PROP if the gift meets the accountability criteria. (See REE Manual 221.1M, Section 18, Acceptance of Gifts, Subsection "Unconditional Gifts".)

2.04-12   Excess Property

- Explain how the Area office determines whether excess property is available before acquiring new acquisitions (first source of supply, as applicable). Determine the methods the Area uses to view available excess property.

- What type of documentation does the APMO require for reporting excess property, such as form SF-120, AD-107, or e-mail.

- Review the files to ensure excess reports contain the APO's signature or approval (if e-mail) and lists the property condition code.

- Review the files to ensure the APMO reports excess property for required USDA and Federal screening using AAMS/GSAXcess, for both accountable and non-accountable property. (Federal regulations FMR 102-36 require agencies to report most all property as excess for potential reuse.) Verify whether the files contain documentation of required screening, such as screen prints from AAMS or file notations.

- Determine whether the APMO submits/uploads pictures of excess property to AAMS/GSAXcess for excess property meeting GSA's criteria, which includes all vehicles, tractors, medical equipment, and all accountable property. (See APD Alert 2007-12, Using Photos When Reporting Excess Property, dated May 2007.)

- Explain how Area APO's maintain accountability and control of excess property during the screening process and pending disposal. Determine whether the Area office identifies and labels excess pending disposal and whether the Area office has a storage facility. (See REE Manual 221.1M, Section 10, Reporting Excess Property, Subsection "Procedures".)

- Explain the circumstances when the APMO bypasses required screening and authorizes abandonment or destruction using form AD-112.

- Review the Area files to determine whether form AD-112 contains detailed information supporting condition codes of "unserviceable", "salvage", or "scrap" when reporting property as unserviceable. Ensure the documentation also contains signatures from the APO and PMO. (See REE Manual 221.1M, Section 16, Abandonment and Destruction).

- Explain any problems that occur when reporting excess/unserviceable and how the APMO resolves the problem.

2.04-13   Disposal

- Review the files to ensure that when the Area disposed of property by abandonment/destruction, the APMO authorized the action via signature, and the APO and a witness signed the AD-112 certifying the disposal.

- Review the files to ensure that when the Area office donated property in lieu of abandonment/destruction after USDA and Federal screening, the APMO authorized the action via signature, and the Area office donated property to a public body, which is an organization that receives Federal, State, or local funding. (Note: Non-profit organizations are not pubic bodies. See REE Manual 221.1M, Section 16, Abandonment and Destruction, Subsection "Donation to Public Bodies" and FMR 102-36.)

- Confirm whether the APMO posts the "Public Notice of Abandonment or Destruction" prior to abandonment/destruction, when disposing of excess property with an acquisition cost of $500 or more. (See REE Manual 221.1M, Section 16, Abandonment and Destruction, Subsection "Public Notice" and FMR 102-36.)

- Review the Area files to verify that the disposal process shows a clear audit trail from reporting an asset as excess to its final disposal. (See APD Alert 2007-10 Audit Trail for Reporting Excess and the Audit Trail, dated April 2007. A complete audit trail includes a signed excess report, proof of screening, signed transfer document or AD-112 signed by an APO and witness.)

- Explain how the Area property office ensures excess property that contains hazardous materials, including excess electronic equipment such as monitors, are disposed of in a safe and environmentally friendly manner.

- Explain any problems that occur with the disposal process and how the APMO resolves the problem.

2.04-14   USDA Donation Programs

- Determine whether the APMO uses one of USDA's Donation Programs, such as Computers for Learning (CFL), Stevenson-Wydler (S/W) Technology Act, FEPP Programs for 1862-Land Grant Institutions, and FAIR-1890 (Historically Black), 1994 (Native American), and HSI (Hispanic Serving) Institutions, to transfer excess property

- Review the files to ensure the APMO first reported property as excess for required USDA screening in AAMS/GSAXcess (required only for CFL and S/W). (See APD Alerts 2007-13, Stevenson-Wydler, dated May 2007, and 2007-14, Computers for Learning, dated July 2007.)

- Ensure the transfer document, contains signatures from the recipient and the APMO. (See APD Alerts 2007-13, Stevenson-Wydler, dated May 2007, and 2007-14, Computers for Learning, dated July 2007.)

- Ensure the APMO requests and submits an Area wide consolidated report to APD for the annual Non-federal Recipients Report for property transferred under the donation programs.

2.04-15   Motor Vehicles

2.04-15.1   Size and Composition

- Confirm that the APMO is aware of the limits on passenger vehicles (sedans/station wagons).

- Explain any fleet increases and review the files to ensure the APMO submitted an approved justification to APD for additions.

- Determine how the APMO ensures the Area only acquire vehicles that meet the Federal fuel average fleet economy standard, meet replacement standards, and are the minimum size necessary to accomplish the mission. (See REE Manual 221.1M, Section 19, Motor Vehicle Management, Subsection "Replacement Standards" and FMR 102-34.)

- Explain how the APMO ensures there is a continued need for a vehicle before it is replaced. Verify that all Location requests for new vehicles include the AG number or tag number of the vehicle the Location is replacing. Determine how the APMO ensures Locations report replaced vehicles as excess or sale upon receipt of the new vehicle.

- Verify whether the Area office has purchased alternative fueled vehicles (AFV's). (See ADP Alert 2007-9, Purchase of Alternative Fueled Vehicles and Fuel, dated April 2007. In FY2007, all offices are required to acquire an AFV when an AFV is available in the type and size needed. Also required by EO13423)

- Determine the types of hybrid vehicles the Area office has purchased. (EO13423)

- Explain how the APMO determines whether an AFV is available when submitting requests for replacement vehicles.

2.04-15.2   Vehicle File Management

- Verify whether the APMO maintains all official motor vehicle files Area wide or Area specific vehicles only. Review the vehicle files to ensure Area files contain vehicle requisition, maintenance and service records, and accident files.

2.04-15.3   Identification

- Ensure Area office vehicles are properly identified with Government tags, decal AD-792, For Official Use Only, AD-185, Penalty for Unofficial Use. (The new

version of Government tags are embossed with "For Official Use Only". When using these tags, the AD-792 decal is not required.) Verify whether Area vehicles have form AD-651, Accident Reporting Kit, in the glove box.

2.04-15.4   Vehicle Use

- Explain the type of vehicle dispatch records/logs the APMO requires to provide reasonable audit trails to track official use of vehicle. (See REE Manual 221.1M, Section 22, Use of Government Vehicles, Subsection "Supervisory Responsibilities" and AGPMR 104-38.301I (3)). Determine who is responsible for maintaining and overseeing dispatch logs.

- Explain how the APMO secures vehicle keys and fleet cards when they are not in use.

2.04-15-5   Fuel/Maintenance Costs

- Explain how the APMO tracks vehicle cost data for Government provided fuel and maintenance and when drivers do not use the Voyager Fleet Card. Note: Offices may use Booklet ARS-715, Operational and Maintenance Record or other methods to capture vehicle operational costs. (See APD Policy Memorandum 221.1-05, Motor Vehicle Reporting Requirements, dated 10/11/00, and REE Manual 221.1M, Section 23, Vehicle Operations, Subsection "Reporting Operational and Maintenance Data". EO 13423 also requires strict reporting of all fuel use.)

- Explain how often the APMO requests and updates Government provided fuel/maintenance costs and non-Voyager Fleet Card fuel and maintenance costs to PMIS/PROP, for Area specific vehicles and Location vehicles. (See APD Policy Memorandum 221.1-05, Motor Vehicle Reporting Requirements, dated 10/11/00, and REE Manual 221.1M, Section 23, Vehicle Operations, Subsection "Reporting Operational and Maintenance Data". EO13423 requires strict reporting of all fuel use.)

- Determine whether the APMO uses PCMS-Fleet and PROP to monitor fleet costs.

- Determine how the APMO ensures vehicles are mechanically inspected according to State/local requirements. (Note: If there is no State or local requirements, the office must follow the manufacturer's recommendations.)

- Determine how the APMO ensures vehicles undergo annual visual safety inspections. Verify how the office documents the process and promptly repairs any noted repairs or problems. (See REE Manual 221.1M, Section 23, Vehicle Operations, Subsection "Visual Safety Inspections" and APD Policy Memorandum 221.1-06, Motor Vehicle Visual Safety Inspections, dated 11/29/00.)

- Explain any problems that occur when tracking, requesting, or updating required operational and maintenance costs and how the APMO resolves the problem.

2.04-15-6   Home-to-Work Transportation Authority

- Determine whether the Area office has employees that use Government vehicles for Official Home-to-Work Transportation under the Home-to-Work Authority".

- Verify whether the employee is in a job series authorized for Home-to-Work. (See REE Manual 221.1M, Section 22, Use of Government Vehicles, subsection "Home to Work Transportation", and Department Regulation 5400-5, Use of Government Vehicle for Home-to-Work Transportation, Appendix A, for the list of authorized job series.)

- Explain any compelling circumstances for allowing home-to-work transportation for employee outside the authorized job series. Determine whether the Area received required USDA approval for any other occurrence. (See REE Manual 221.1M, Section 22, Use of Government Vehicles, subsection "Home to Work Transportation".)

- Explain the approval process for allowing employees, who are in "official travel status", entitled to per diem, and are using the Government vehicle rather than a rental vehicle, to temporarily store a Government vehicle overnight. Ensure overnight storage is to prevent employee hardship and increases Government efficiency and is not for employee convenience or comfort. (Temporary overnight storage may be approved when an employee must arrive/depart at an unusually early or late timeframe, determined on a case-by-case basis. (See REE Manual 221.1M, Section 22, Use of Government Vehicle, subsection "Temporary Home to Work Transportation While in Travel Status.)

2.04-16   Oversight

- Describe the method and processes the APMO uses to provide oversight to Location PMO's regarding the following aspects of property management, including the time frames.

  o inventory management (inventory status, proper documentation)

  o suspense reconciliation (timeliness, proper reconciliation)

  o reporting excess, (timeliness, proper documentation)

  o fleet management (vehicle replacement, AFV, fuel/maintenance costs)

- Explain any problems that occur when conducting oversight and how the APMO resolves the problems.

CARE FUNCTIONAL REVIEW-**AREA OFFICE**
FACILITIES MANAGEMENT, CONSTRUCTION, REAL PROPERTY
AND SAFETY, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

3.0   Facilities Asset Management

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Rommy Ignacio on 301-504-1191.

- Determine if the Area Office is aware of the requirements of Executive Order 13327 on Asset Management to track Operations and Maintenance (O&M) costs as well as the Repair and Modernization Cost at the individual building level.

3.0-1   Periodic Evaluation of Assets

- Determine if inventories of Area real property are completed every 5 years. *Ensure that all utilization data, condition index, deferred maintenance, and Operations and Maintenance data is reported accurately and entered into the Corporate Property Automated Information System (CPAIS). (For Area Office Care Review Only.)*

3.0-2   Multi-Year Facility Planning

- Is the Area aware of the ARS Capital Project and Repair Plan (CPRP) process to guide the planning and budgeting, acquisition, management-in-use, and disposition of Agency capital assets? (Bulletin 08-151, ARS Capital Project and Repair Plan CPRP).

- Does the Area have a multi-year plan for needed repairs and renovations to its buildings and facilities? Who provides direct input to the multi-year plan?

- How are facility needs identified? Determine if the Area uses the CPRP process to develop its multi-year facility plan. Ensure that the Area is aware that only projects meeting the following criteria are to be listed on the Area CPRP: Any project costing at least $25,000; any land acquisition, any project using construction authorities for Unlimited Small Buildings (USB), Ten Small Buildings (TSB), Headhouse/greenhouse (H/G) and Ten Percent Alteration (TPA).

- Determine if the Area maintains an up-to-date 3-year CPRP consisting of a prioritized list of all AMRB-validated and approved facility projects.

- Ensure the Area's Facility Plan contained in the ARMP correlates with the annually updated ARS Capital Project and Repair (CPRP) Plan per Bulletin 08-151, ARS Capital Projects and Repair Plan.

3.0-3   Pre-approval of Building Authorities Facility Projects

- Is the Area aware that a pre-approval from headquarters is required to use USB, TSB, H/G, and TPA building authority in excess of $25,000? (Bulletin 07-152, Facilities Construction Authorities).

- Determine if the Area is familiar with the descriptions and limitations of the Agency's construction authorities outlined in the ARS Policies and Procedures 242.2 - Facilities Construction Authorities.

- Is the Area aware that each building authority project should be assigned a special accounting code and tracked using a unique Program Type code that corresponds to the appropriate construction authority as follows: 71 (USB), 72 (TSB), 73 (H/G), 74 (TPA)?

3.0-4   Implementation of Project Design and Construction

- Determine Area compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements related to construction. Are required environmental assessments and all NEPA related documentation, including categorical exclusions, findings of no significant impacts, and records of decision on file?

- Assure that all realty interests associated with a project have been completed, including confirmation of Federal-ownership of the property or a lease agreement sufficient to cover the Federal Government's investment in the property. Ensure that easements, right-of-ways, or other land use agreements for roads and utilities in support of the projects have been executed.

- Assure Area project compliance with approved master plans, national historic preservation act, and threatened and endangered species act.

- Determine if Area Engineering staff is involved and participates in the process of commissioning of building systems, final inspections, acceptance, and closeout of construction projects.

3.0-5   Post Construction, Warranty and Maintenance Work

- Verify the method used by the Area and Location for accomplishing maintenance task upon completion of new construction and renovation.

3.0-6   Facilities O&M Management

- Determine if the Area has an organized system for the development of a yearly budget for the operation and maintenance (O&M) of physical assets. How are O&M costs identified with individual buildings or structures at the

each Area Location? Determine if the Area has developed a methodology for distributing O&M costs to the appropriate land/building/structure at each Location. Verify if the Area has established a new accounting code in FFIS to facilitate the capturing and reporting of O&M costs for each of the Locations.

- Does the Area have a formal Preventive Maintenance (PM) program? Do the Area Locations perform PM on a regular basis? Does the Area have a system for prioritizing maintenance needs uniformly throughout the Area Locations?

- Determine how historical data of completed maintenance work is recorded and maintained? Are record/as built drawings properly stored and protected? Are O&M manuals properly maintained and accessible to maintenance staff?

- Determine if the Location O&M cost data is being captured throughout the year for reporting purposes. Ensure that utilization data is reported accurately and entered into CPAIS.

- Determine if the Area uses specific performance measures to measure the effectiveness of the O&M program.

3.0-7   Deferred Maintenance Management

- Determine how the Area Office insures that Locations annually earmarks at least 4 percent of its base funds to accomplish routine repair and maintenance (R&M) needs or has received a waiver in accordance with Agency policy. (ARMS Manual, ARS Manual 245.1, Chapter IX).

3.0-8   Disposal of Unneeded Property

- Determine the Area's approach for identifying and disposing of unneeded real property asset. Are Area personnel aware of procedures for disposing of real property assets?

- Determine if a CERCLA 120 (h) environmental sites assessment and any follow-up investigation and/or cleanup work is accomplished prior to disposal of real property.

- Does the Area maintain disposal data and track actual disposal actions as they occur in CPAIS?

3.01   Energy Management

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Sandy Morgan on 301-504-4895.

- Determine if the Area Office is integrating energy and water conservation and sustainability into its regular operations and maintenance activities per EO 13423 and the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (EPACT 2005).

- When was the last energy audit performed? Have recommended energy conservation projects been implemented or included in the ARS Facility Plan? Does the ARS Facility Plan include future energy audits? Were energy projects recommended by the audits implemented?

- Determine if the Area Office maintains and monitors energy consumption records of its Locations.

- Determine if the Area uses employee incentive programs to reward exceptional performance for implementing EO 13423.

- Determine if the Area provides training and education in energy management requirements, promotion of Energy Star and other energy efficient and low standby power products, WaterSmart, EPEAT and purchasing recycled and biobased products for Federal purchase card holders. (EO 13423 and EPACT 2005)

- Ensure that the Area has a recycling program including paper, cardboard, cans, bottles and toner/ink cartridges. (EO 13423)

- Is the Area aware of, and does it have a policy of enabling Energy Star features on all computers, equipment and systems? Is the Location aware of what energy saving features have been incorporated into their buildings? Are they functioning? (EO 13423 and EPACT 2005)

3.02   Facility Accessibility for People with Disabilities

- Determine if the Area is aware of the requirements associated with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Does the Location have copies of the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS) or the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG)?

- Determine if the Area Office is ensuring that facilities at each Location meet the needs of individuals with physical disabilities. Have professional surveys been done at each Location to assess physical accessibility needs to conform to the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS) or the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG)? Does the Area Office have copies of the UFAS or ADAAG?

- Determine if physical accessibility projects identified by the assessments been implemented or included in the Facility Plan at each Location.

3.03   Architect-Engineering (A-E) Contracts

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Regina Herchak on 301-504-1179.

3.03-1   A-E Contracts

- Determine what the Area's level of A-E authority is.

- Determine if the Area has any concerns with A-E services provided under Headquarters contracts.

- Determine how the Area obtains A-E Services: through their own A-E contracts utilizing the procedures in FAR Part 36.6 or through Headquarters contracts.

- Verify that IAS (Integrated Acquisition System) is being used.

- If the Area acquires A-E services by issuing delivery/task orders against their own or Headquarters A-E contract, verify/determine the following:

  - that AD-700's or purchase requests, justifications, and all other required backup documentation (Government estimate, specifications, sketches, drawings, etc.) is maintained in the file. (FAR 4.803)

  - whether the delivery/task orders are issued in accordance with procedures for issuing delivery orders against established contracts which would include issuing a request for proposal that contains a statement of work to the A-E firm, evaluating the proposal and negotiating price, terms, and conditions; as well as documenting negotiations and the award rationale. (FAR 36.601-3)

  - whether modifications to delivery/task orders are properly executed. Are these actions documented in the file and the following information included: reason for the change, the contractual authority and FAR clause cites for the change (exercise of option, changes, differing site conditions, suspension of work, etc.), how these actions were priced (pre-priced or based on actual costs), how the price was determined to be fair and reasonable? Do the modification documents include the appropriate FAR clause cite for the change(s)? (FAR 13.106-3, FAR 13.302-3, FAR 36.609, and FAR 43.204))

  - if contract deliverables and performance periods are appropriately monitored. (FAR 4.803)

  - that significant discussions and/or issues are documented and copies maintained in the contract/task order file.   (FAR 4.803)

- that delivery/task orders are closed out properly (FAR 4.804) and are maintained in accordance with FAR 4.805(b)(3) or, if the basic contract total value exceeds the simplified acquisition threshold, FAR 4.805(b)(2).

- If the Area has A-E authority and acquires their own A-E services, verify/determine the following:

  - that AD-700's or purchase requests, justifications, and all other required backup documentation (Government estimate, specifications, sketches, drawings, etc.) is maintained in the file. (FAR 4.803)

  - that the evaluation criteria posted in FedBizOpps are the same criteria used to evaluate A-E's SF-330's (Architect-Engineer Qualifications). (FAR 36.601-1 and FAR 36.602-1)

  - that an evaluation board was established, that it evaluated all SF-330's, and whether the board's chairperson submitted a report to the Contracting Officer (CO) that contained the names of the three highest qualified (ranked) firms, at a minimum, in accordance with FAR 36.602. Determine if, once the report is received, negotiations are conducted with the highest ranked firm in accordance with FAR 36.606.

  - that award is made to the highest qualified (ranked)/most preferred firm. (FAR 36.606)

  - whether modifications are executed properly. Are these actions documented in the file and the following information included: reason for the change; the contractual authority and FAR clause cites for the change (exercise of option, changes, differing site conditions, suspension of work, etc.); how these actions are priced (pre-priced or based on actual costs); how the price is determined to be fair and reasonable? Do the modification documents include the appropriate FAR clause cite for the change(s)? (FAR 13.106-3, FAR 13.302-3, FAR 36.609, and FAR 43.204)

  - if contract deliverables and performance periods are appropriately monitored. (FAR 4.803)

  - that significant discussions and/or issues are documented and copies are maintained in the contract/purchase order file. (FAR 4.803)

  - that delivery/task orders/contracts are closed out properly (FAR 4.804) and are maintained in accordance with FAR 4.805(b)(3).

- Verify that all contracts/delivery/task orders for A-E services have been entered in the

FPDS-NG system. FAR 4.602(c)(2) – USDA is a participant in the Small Business Competitiveness Demonstration Program, FAR 19.10.

- Are invoices processed in accordance with the Prompt Payment Act (FAR 32.904(c))?

3.04   Construction Contracts

- Determine what the Area's level of construction authority.

- Verify that IAS (Integrated Acquisition System) is being used.

- Determine if large projects are being split to keep them within the Area's authority.

- Determine if commercial item procedures (FAR Part 12), rather than construction procedures (FAR Part 36), are being used for small dollar, uncomplicated tasks, such as installation of a hot water heater, replacement of one or two windows, small painting projects, routine carpet purchase and installation, replacement of small areas of drywall, simple electrical or plumbing tasks [replacement/installation of a light fixture or a water faucet], and similar small and noncomplex services. Refer to the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) Memo, Applicability of FAR Part 12 to Construction Acquisitions, dated July 3, 2003.

- Verify that AD-700's or purchase requests, justifications, and all other required backup documentation (Government estimate, specifications, sketches, drawings, etc.) is maintained in the file.

- Verify that construction requirements with an estimated cost between $10,000 and $25,000 are posted in a public place or on the Area's web site (FAR 5.101(a)(2)). Verify that requirements with an estimated cost greater than $25,000 have been publicized in FedBizOpps in accordance with FAR 5.101(a)(1).

- Verify that a full copy of the Request for Quote (RFQ)/Invitation for Bid (IFB)/Request for Proposal (RFP) (for all construction projects that exceed $2,000), with the appropriate clauses and wage determination, is maintained in the file. (FAR 4.803, FAR 13.101, FAR 13.302-5, and FAR 36.213-3).

- Verify that site visits (FAR 36.210) and/or optional pre-bid conferences (FAR 14.207) are conducted. Are uniform agendas utilized? Are the proceedings of these meetings documented and distributed to all parties? Verify that a copy is maintained in the file.

- Verify that the rationale for award is documented in the file. Is the award amount determined to be fair and reasonable? What is the basis for the determination? (FAR 13.106-2, FAR 13.106-3 and FAR 31.201-3)

- Verify that all purchase orders and contracts for construction, as well as modifications, have been entered in the FPDS-NG system. (FAR 4.602(c)(2) – USDA is a participant in the Small Business Competitiveness Demonstration Program, FAR Subpart 19.10)

- Verify that formal written Notices of Award are issued to contractors (FAR 36.213-4). Verify that formal Notices to Proceed (NTP) are issued to the contractors to establish the official commencement date of performance. Verify that a signed copy of the NTP is maintained in the contract/purchase order file. (FAR 14.408, FAR 36.212, and FAR 36.213-4)

- Verify, for projects between $25,000 and $100,000, that a valid Payment Bond (from a surety that is listed on the Department of Treasure Circular 570) or alternative type of payment protection has been submitted and is in the file. (FAR 28.102-1(b) and FAR 28.102-1(c))

- Verify, for projects over $100,000, that a valid Bid Bond from an individual surety or corporate surety that is listed on the Department of Treasury Circular 570, Companies Holding Certificates of Authority as Acceptable Sureties on Federal Bonds and Acceptable Reinsuring Companies was submitted by the successful offeror and is maintained in the file. (FAR 28.101 and FAR Subpart 28.2)

- Verify, for projects over $100,000, that the Performance and Payment Bonds submitted by the successful offeror are from a surety that is listed on the Department of Treasury Circular 570. (FAR 28.202)

- Verify that the documents submitted by the successful offeror's individual surety as a pledge of assets for bid, performance and/or payment bonds were reviewed by the Office of General Counsel and determined adequate and acceptable. (FAR 28.203(f)).

- Verify, for projects over $100,000, that valid performance and payment bonds (from acceptable corporate listed on the Department of Treasury Circular 570 or individual sureties), and certificates of insurance are submitted by the successful offeror prior to the issuance of a Notice to Proceed and are maintained in the file. (FAR 28.102 and FAR Subpart 28.2)

- Verify that Davis-Bacon Act (DBA) requirements (for projects exceeding $2,000) are being monitored in accordance with FAR Subpart 22.4. For example, wage determinations and DOL Form WH-1321 must be posted by the contractor (FAR 22.404-10) and weekly payroll records must be submitted and reviewed by the Contracting Officer (FAR 22.406-6 and FAR 22.406-7), etc.

- Verify that significant discussions and/or issues are documented and copies maintained in the contract/purchase order file. (FAR 4.803)

- Determine if the Contracting Officer has delegated any authority or responsibility to personnel at the job site. If so, was a formal letter(s) of delegation as Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) or Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR) issued that clearly describes the authorities, responsibilities, and limitation in accordance with FAR 42.202?

- Determine if change orders or contract modifications were properly issued. Were these actions documented for the file as follows:

  - What was the contractual authority for the change (changes, differing site conditions, suspension of work, etc.)?

  - Were these actions pre-priced or based on actual costs?

  - Was the price determined fair and reasonable? (FAR 13.106-3) (FAR 31.201-3)

- Determine if contract performance periods are appropriately monitored. If completion date passes, what action is taken?

- Are inspections conducted in accordance with FAR 46-312 and FAR 46.1? If so, are files documented to show the results of the final inspection?

- Is the Form ARS-371, Construction Progress and Payment Schedule, (or something similar) being used for individual projects involving multiple disciplines (HVAC, plumbing, electrical, etc.), larger dollar value projects, or lengthy projects? If so, is it being reviewed by the COR and approved by the CO; and is it also being used as a means of verifying contractor invoices?

- Are contracts/purchase orders closed out properly and maintained in accordance with FAR 4.804 and FAR 4.805(b)(4)?

- Are invoices processed in accordance with the Prompt Payment Act (FAR 32.904(d))?

- Are contracts/purchase orders closed out properly and maintained in accordance with FAR 4.804 and FAR 4.805(b)(4)?

3.05   Facility Security

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Terry Rupe on 301-504-1228

- Has the Area Office verified that each Location has an Occupant Emergency Program (OEP)? Program guidance in the form of an OEP should cover procedures to be followed during emergencies, such as fire, explosions, bomb

threats and natural disasters. (ARS P&P 240.3 Departmental Regulation 1650-002)

- Has the Area Office ensured that each Location has established and implemented fire protection standards for the protection of facilities and safety of employees, cooperators, and visitors?

3.05A   Homeland Security

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Jeff Hayes on 301-504-1182.

- Reference: P&P 240.3, June 2000, Physical Protection, Security and Conduct While on REE Facilities; P&P 243.4, January 2004, Issuing and Controlling ARS ID Badges.

- Has the Area Office prepared an updated Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)?

- Does the Area Office maintain emergency contact information for employees that are essential to critical Area and/or Location operational functions? Are the emergency contact information/numbers maintained by separate people on PDA's or flash drives to avoid single points of failure? (ARS Initiative with Pandemic and/or other disaster response)

- Has the Area Office verified that each Location has established and implemented appropriate physical protection and security measures? (ARS P&P 240.3, ARS Initiatives)

- Has the Area Office conducted physical security surveys? Are surveys conducted in conjunction with ARS Homeland Security Office (ARSHS)?

- Is the Area Office aware of the ARSHS Web site [http://arsnet.usda.gov/OHS/]?

- Determine if the Area Office has any Physical Security Countermeasure projects planned or under consideration. If yes, are they aware of ARSHS design and review role?

- Does the Area Office know to contact ARSHS (301-504-4831) should any of the following situations occur: all possible OIG investigations; vandalism to, or theft of, mission critical assets; workplace violence activities; and workplace death events?

- Does the Area Office maintain a current roster and call list of local and Federal law enforcement contacts incorporated in either their COOP or Pandemic Plans?

- Does the Area Office have any security related MOU's in place? If yes, with what

agency and for what specific service?

- Does the Area Office site utilize any outbound third-party security alarm monitoring and response mediums or services? If yes, who and what type?

  Examples:

  - Door contact alarms monitored and responded to by campus police between hours of 1800 – 0700 seven days a week.

  - Burglar alarms monitored by a third-party service that notifies a pre-determined entity (campus police, local police, contract guard services, Location employee, etc.).

- How often does the Area Office site review its security operation and administrative procedures?

- Is the Area Office issuing ID Badges in accordance with P&P 243.4?

3.06   Acquisition (Purchase, Donation, Exchange or Transfer) of Real Property

References Real Property Manual Draft Acquisition Chapter I, 2005, and 7 United States Code 2250(a).

- Has the Area Office acquired land in the last 5 years? If yes, does the Area Office have a copy of the applicable appropriation or law authorizing the land acquisition within the asset file? What is the Area Office's understanding of Agency policy regarding the acquisition of land (purchase, exchange, or otherwise), as well as non-Agricultural Research Service (ARS) construction on ARS-owned land?

- How are newly constructed facilities or capitalized improvements identified/tracked for entry or updating in the Corporate Property Automated Information System (CPAIS)? Is the Area Office forwarding its requests for the establishment of Unique Asset Identifiers for all capitalized assets to Headquarters for processing? Do financial and contracting files reference the UAI in addition to the project name and Asset ID(s)? Do Procurement Requests or Purchase Orders come through the Real Estate Warrant Officer (REWO) for review to ensure a UAI is or is not required, to review the Budget Object Class Code and/or to ensure a "R" accounting code is used for capitalized assets or improvements?

- Is the Area Office aware that copies of all prior year adjustments – for example for a capitalized structure that already exists and should have been on an inventory, but was overlooked during the last reconciliation cycle – must be forwarded through the Area Realty Specialist to the Real Property Management Branch on a monthly basis?

- Is documentation being tracked to capture Design, Design Review, Construction, Construction Management, Inspection, Materials and Force Account Labor costs for constructed facilities or capitalized improvements? Upon completion of an asset or improvement, are all final payments filed in the asset file and cross-referenced with the Subledgers in CPAIS? Are necessary adjustments to the Subledgers processed by the Area Budget and Fiscal Officer or the ABFO's Representative prior to the Area REWO forwarding support documentation to Headquarters?

- What information is being maintained within the asset files? There should be copies of acquisition documents, including deeds, leases, transfer documents, surveys, environmental documentation, etc.

- Is training or guidance needed in the area of Acquisition?

3.06-1   <u>Utilization, Accountability, and Control of Real Property</u>

Reference: Real Property Manual Accountability and Control Chapter 9, 2005; FMR 102-84.55; Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and AGPMR 110-85.55.

- At the Area Office, who is responsible for monitoring utilization of land and facilities and ensuring utilization, is in accordance with Agency policies?

- Is the Area Office providing copies of inventory printouts to its Locations, for verification and update, every 5 years? What procedures are in place for conducting physical inspections of real property holdings to verify that all land, buildings and structures are accounted and properly reflected on the inventory record/within CPAIS and effectively used in support of mission-related activities?

- What process is used to review owned and leased, and otherwise managed properties and to communicate any modifications necessary to the REWO for maintaining an up-to-date inventory in CPAIS?

- How is CPAIS being used at the Area Office to capture space utilization, within all space usage types requiring performance measure data (laboratory, office, housing and warehouse), including the number of workstations, number of personnel, number of scientists along with the design capacity of laboratory space? Are there procedures in place to ensure the capturing of University space covered under a Memorandum of Understanding, Special/Cooperative Agreements, etc. and the utilization of this space with CPAIS?

- Are records established and maintained with the following:

  - custodial responsibility for the real property assigned to the Area Office,

- physical inventories signed by the Accountable Property Officer along with documented recommendations for adjustments and processed adjustments,

- identification of Historical properties/sites and related Historic Preservation Plans. Are copies provided to Headquarters?

- acquisition files containing copies of short- and long-term leases, ASTM checklists, certificate of inspection and use,

- construction-related materials including "as builts" and floor plans,

- donation or transfer documents, and AD-107's for formal documentation for CPAIS updates, etc.,

- disposition documents, AD-107's, AD-112's, SF-118's, SF-118a,b,c's, if applicable.

- Are there internal procedures in place to address encroachments on ARS lands? If an encroachment is identified or brought to the Area Office's attention, how is this information relayed to the attention of the Area Office or REWO?

- Does the Area Office take an active role in the review process during Design/Construction? Is this review process coordinated with Headquarters? What is the process used at the Area Office for coordinating with any local "Referral Agencies" that must be involved, such as planning commissions, the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), etc? Are copies of all formal correspondence to and concurrences from consulting parties maintained within the project file and subsequently the asset file? Are copies of such correspondence provided to the REWO?

- Who is the responsible agency official to determine if a Design/Construction project is an undertaking as defined in Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act?

- Has the Area Office established a working relationship with the SHPO? Does the Area Office have a Programmatic Agreement in place?

3.06-2 Leasing Real Property – Land and Space – and Agreements

References: Real Property Manual 245.1 Draft Chapters 2 and 3, 2005; Departmental Regulation 1620-2, USDA, Space Management Policy and 7 United States Code 2250(a)

- Are copies of any space or land leases, Memorandums of Understanding, Unfunded Cooperative Agreements, Supplemental Agreements, Land Use

Agreements, etc. on file? Agreements may cover space in non-ARS-owned buildings, land for field plots, and the construction or placement of ARS-owned buildings.

- What procedures are in place for the periodic review of the above documents?

- Has the Area Office erected buildings or other structures on non-Federal lands without first obtaining the right to use the land through a lease or other document granting realty interest in the land for the estimated life of or need of or need of the improvement as described in 7 U.S.C.2250(a)? What procedures are in place to ensure the Area Office acquires the necessary realty interest prior to constructing a building or structure on non-Federal land?

- Has the Area Office made any capital improvements ($25,000 or more) to space not covered by a realty interest?

- How does the Area Office assure that it is complying with Departmental Regulation 1620-2 which establishes USDA policy on acquisition, management and disposition of office and related space for USDA-owned, leased and GSA-controlled space? The RPMB has under its direction a group of space and building management specialists should assistance in the area be required.

- What are the Area Office's procedures for tracking lease expiration dates and processing renewals? Is the Area Office aware that CPAIS can perform tracking?

3.06-3   Grants of Easement and Revocable Permits

References: Real Property Manual 245.1 Draft Chapters 5 and 6, 2005 and P&P 244.0-ARS, September 2003, Guidance and Instructions for the Collection and Use Fees for Revocable Permits and Easements.

- How does the Area Office verify that easements and revocable permits are in place as required? How are these periodically reviewed to ensure renewal prior to expiration, compliance with terms and conditions, that expired easements are vacated, etc.?

- When screening requests for easements or permits, how does the Area Office ensure that the request is a case of necessity and that the land or space requested does not exceed what is required? Are procedures in place to ensure that rights are not granted to ARS property that would be incompatible with the proposed use or encumber use of the property? Are current and future program needs and possible conflicts considered during the review process--prior to recommending such requests?

- Is the Area Office or Area REWO aware that requests for easements related to telecommunications projects use a special application process and if such projects

cross multiple ownership Federal lands, a lead agency contact shall be designated? (SF-299, Application for Transportation and Utility Systems and Facilities on Federal Lands – link is on FD Web site.)

- How are requests to occupy ARS-owned buildings or utilization of ARS facilities addressed at the Area Office? How does the Area Office ensure that a revocable permit is issued for all entities using ARS-owned/controlled space? Are inspections performed of tenant space to ensure compliance with terms and conditions of the agreement to occupy the space?

- How are requests for the installation of antennas addressed at the Area Office? Are these evaluated and coordinated to ensure that requests do not impact or interfere with existing research programs, future land development plan, "Referral Agencies", human exposure limits, etc.?

- How is the Area Office complying with P&P 244.0, Guidance and Instructions for the Collection and Use Fees for Revocable Permits and Easements?

3.06-4   Quarters Rentals

References: Real Property Manual 245.1 Draft Chapter 7, 2005; P&P 245.2, June 1993; Furnishings and Household Goods in ARS Controlled Living Quarters and Department of Interior Department Quarters Handbook 400 DM, June 1994

- If the Area Office has quarters, is it aware of the responsibilities regarding quarters management? How are rental fees collected and used in accordance with regulations?

- If quarters files are maintained at the Area Office, do quarters these contain support documentation to demonstrate that Government living quarters for ARS employees are properly managed and accounted for? Do files at a minimum include:

  - Copies of Revocable Permits, photos taken during the initial joint inspection with the resident, Certificates of Acceptance, Condition Reports, Report of Termination, records of maintenance and improvements, etc.

  - Documentation of annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) adjustments, any waiver or deferral documentation,

  - Copies of the most recent appraisal and/or regional quarters rental surveys along with any background documentation,

  - Documentation of Condition of Employment (must be reviewed every 5 years) or Convenience of the Government appointment,

- Sampling results from any screening tests performed (i.e., lead, asbestos, mold, etc.),

- Copies of lead disclosure statements signed by residents for homes constructed prior to 1970,

- Are Forms ARS-494's, ARS-4's and REE-16's prepared at the Location or Area Office? If prepared elsewhere, are they carefully reviewed for accuracy prior to having the employee who is renting the quarters sign the documents and then forwarding them to the REWO for execution?

- Do the Locations bring any rental collection problems incurred to the attention of the REWO?

- Are CPI adjustments made annually? Are employees provided with a minimum of 30 days advance notice of such adjustments?

- Are the Regional Quarters Rental Surveys and Sample Plans that are prepared by the Department of Interior reviewed to ensure that the information provided is correct, such as the nearest established community? Are comments/concerns brought to the attention of the National Business Center (NBC) Staff and Headquarters, Real Property Management Branch (RPMB)? If the inventory adjustments (increase or decrease of rental quarters) occur, are these brought to the attention of RPMB so that the Service Level Agreement with NBC can be adjusted?

- How does the Area Office ensure the inventory and accountability of furnishings provided in quarters?

- Is a physical inspection performed of the quarters prior to occupancy and a condition report prepared and signed by the inspecting official and employee who is renting the quarters? Are periodic physical inspections performed to identify maintenance, repair and safety and health conditions that need correction? How are items that need correction formally identified and documented? What tracking mechanism is in place to ensure these are corrected?

- Is a physical inspection performed at vacancy to ensure the quarters are vacated and left in a rentable and clean condition? Is a vacate notice required and filed? Is there a process in place to charge residents for any damage to Government property?

3.06-5   Disposal of Real Property

References: Real Property Manual 245.1 Draft Chapter 8, 2005 and P&P 246.1-ARS, September 1997

- Is the Area Office compiling packages for real property identified as excess or recommended for disposal?

- Is the Area Office developing the annual protection and maintenance costs for real property assets for such expenses to be incurred during the excess/surplus/disposal process?

- Does the Area Office prepare AD-107's, AD-112's, SF-118's, and etc. for all disposal actions, including disposal of ARS-owned buildings with a value of $50,000 or less? Are these documents forwarded to the Area Office upon completion? After review and write-off on the Real Property Management side of CPAIS, does the REWO forward a request for write-off of the asset to RPMB?

- Are the following screening surveys being addressed during the disposal process?

  - threatened and endangered species

  - hazardous building components such as lead, asbestos

  - associated underground or above ground storage tanks

  - environmental impact

  - McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

  - Section 106 review and consultation

  - site-specific requirements

- Has the Area Office established a working relationship with the SHPO?

- Does the Area Office have a Programmatic Agreement in place?

3.07   Safety, Health, and Environmental Management

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Pete Jovanovich on 301-504-1243. Reference: Manual 230.0, December 2005, Safety, Health, and Environmental Management Program available at the following Web site: http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ppweb/PDF/230-0m.pdf.

- Verify that the Area Office has assigned personnel to plan, organize, and administer a comprehensive safety, occupational health, and environmental management (SHEM) program for ARS employees in the Area. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 11)

- Verify that the Area Office is providing Area SHEM personnel with the necessary education/training, equipment, financial resources, and management support to develop and manage a comprehensive and viable SHEM program. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 11)

- Verify that Area SHEM personnel are assisting managers/supervisors by serving as the Area's technical advisor in the interpretation of pertinent legislation, regulations, standards, and policies related to safety, occupational health, industrial hygiene, and environmental management programs. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 11)

- Verify that the Area SHEM personnel provide safety, health, and environmental guidance and assistance to Location personnel in the administration of their SHEM program. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 11)

- Ensure that the Area Office is providing all supervisory personnel and employees immediate access to current applicable Federal, State, and local SHEM laws, regulations, codes, standards, policies, etc., available in paper, electronic, or other media formats. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 11)

- Verify that the Area Office has established annual Area goals and objectives for eliminating and/or minimizing losses as a result of accidents/incidents causing injury, illness, or property/environmental damage in the workplace. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 10)

- Does the Area Office annually verify that adequate funds are allocated for Location SHEM program requirements in the ARMPS?

- Verify that the Area Office monitors Hazardous Waste Cleanup (HWC) funds spending to ensure compliance with USDA HWC guidelines, ensure quality and accuracy of HWC Status of Funds reports for all Area wide projects, and ensure HWC activities are conducted and the findings reported to Headquarters as required. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 11)

3.07-1   Safety, Health and Environmental Education/Training

- Verify that the Area Office has assessed the workplace and identified appropriate job-specific safety, health, and environmental training for all employees. (ARS Manual 230, Chapters 14 and 26)

- Verify that the Area Office assists Location managers/supervisors in arranging for appropriate safety, health, and environmental education/training programs. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 11)

- Does the Area Office maintain a library of SHEM training materials (videos, DVDs, etc.)? Please note that the six SHEM videos are currently available on the

SHEMB Web site and AgLearn. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 11).

- Verify that Area SHEM personnel have received all appropriate safety, health, industrial hygiene, and environmental training required under their position descriptions. This training should be documented and kept in a centralized location. Verity training not yet completed is documented in the employee's Individual Development Plans (IDP), ARS Form 48, or equivalent. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 14)

- Determine if the Area Office has an Incentive Awards Program for recognizing SHEM performance at the Area or Location level. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 15)

3.07-2   Safety, Health, and Environmental Compliance Oversight

- Verify that the Area Office conducts periodic SHEM program management reviews, environmental audits, and oversees the performance of annual inspections of all workplaces. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 22)

- Verify that the Area Office has a comprehensive SHEM abatement program to correct safety, health, and environmental deficiencies. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 22)

- Verify the Area Office has developed a written 10-year compliance auditing plan for each of its Locations? This plan should include an explanation of the rationale for the type(s) and frequency of audits selected, as well as procedures for conducting the audit and for ensuring that deficiencies are promptly conducted. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 63)

- Verify that the Area Office, through the budget process, is requesting funding and resources needed to ensure continued compliance with new regulatory requirements to correct compliance problems, and for pollution prevention. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 41)

  - Verify that the Area Office has an Accident/Illness Reporting, Investigation, and Analysis Program in place. Have accident reporting and OSHA recordkeeping instructions been provided to Locations? Does the Area Office review Location accident injury and illness data, i.e., OSHA Forms 300 and 301? (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 11).

3.07-3   Industrial Hygiene

- Verify that the Area Office provides support to industrial hygiene (IH) programs at Locations. Are evaluations of chemical, biological, and physical potentially hazardous conditions that can cause adverse effects on the safety and health of employees being conducted? Are quantitative assessment of hazards (ex.

sampling, measuring), recommendations, data or records review and management, training, and program reviews being provided. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 31)

- Verify Location IH program reviews are being coordinated by the Area Safety Office? (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 31)

3.07-4   Environmental Management

● Verify that the Area Office provides technical support and makes formal recommendations for all construction and all research-related issues to the AD concerning environmental and building permit procedures and issues related to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for Area facility projects under $300,000 for construction and A-E requirements under $30,000. (ARS Manual 230 Chapters, 11 and 39)

● Verify that SHEM personnel prepare Statements of Work (SOWs) for preliminary assessments/site inspections or other preremedial/remedial work for all Area pollution prevention/abatement/remediation projects regardless of dollar value? (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 11)

● Verify that the Area Office coordinates resolution of environmental issues with appropriate Federal, State, and local environmental regulations associated with design projects and NEPA issues impacting facility design identified by A-E. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 11)

- Verify the Area Office assists Area/Location property personnel in addressing safety, health, and environmental concerns relating to the acquisition and disposal of real and personal property? (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 11)

- Verify that a comprehensive Environmental Management System (EMS) Areawide program has been established. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 11; ARS EMS Implementation Guide)

- Verify that the Area Office completed an EMS Self-Declaration checklist and verify that the necessary elements are in-place? (ARS Manual 230.0, Chapters 38 and 63).

For information on interpretation or clarification of the functional questions, please call the contact person whose name and phone number is shown next to each section.

4.0   Employment (Mary Weber, 301-504-1397)

- Verify the Area's procedures for receipt of applications. All applications should be either date-stamped or the date of receipt of the application should be notated in ink.

- Applications for permanent employment (competitive service): These applications must either be forwarded immediately to the servicing Branch, HRD, for response or the Area must return the application by letter informing the applicant to apply for permanent positions in response to specific vacancy announcements. These vacancies are advertised on the OPM Web site (USAJobs) and HRD Web site. Verify that the Area does not retain any applications for permanent employment.

- Applications for L/A and Student Positions (excepted service positions): If the Administrative Officer or Personnel Assistant has delegated employment authority, applications for L/A and student positions (nonpermanent positions in the excepted service) may be circulated and retained. Verify that the Area gives "veterans preference," if applicable, to applicants.

- Verify that the Area Office obtains proof of enrollment in school on a full-time or part-time basis from employees on student appointments. This may be done by requesting a copy of transcripts once or twice per year, or by requesting verification of enrollment through the registrar's office. Note: If a student stops going to school at least on a half-time basis as defined by the institution or skips more than one semester, the Area Office should initiate an SF-52 to terminate the appointment. [Reference P&P 413.8, Student & Volunteer Programs.]

- If volunteers are used at the Area Office, verify they have signed volunteer agreements on file, and records of service are being maintained. This includes documentation of days and number of hours worked. [Reference P&P 413.8, Student & Volunteer Programs.]

- Verify that HRD has approved the content of employment ads (paid and free) for recruitment. [Purchase order files should contain the necessary approvals. [Reference P&P 412.0, ARS Job Advertisements – Print and Online, dated July 23, 2007.]

- Verify that employee paper records are safeguarded in locked file cabinets with restricted access. Records should contain only current documents necessary to the

function of the office. Note: there should be no attempt to duplicate an Official Personnel Folder. No information other than "public information" (i.e., Name, Title, Pay Plan, Series, Grade, Pay Rate and Duty Location) may be released without the employee's consent. [Reference P&P 158.1, Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act Guidelines and P&P 411.7, Releasing Information About REE Employees.]

- Verify that the Area Office understands when an SF-52, Request for Personnel Action should be prepared, i.e., name changes, position redescriptions, reassignment of employees to another management unit, etc. Verify that detail actions of employees (those who are "Detailed" to other positions for more than 30 days) are being documented in a timely manner with an SF-52.

4.01   Time and Attendance (Ted Nykiel, 301-504-4426)

- Verify all employees (with the exception of intermittents who should not have a regular work schedule) have an established tour of duty approved by the supervisor (example REE-331).

- Verify employees and timekeepers are initialing and that supervisors are signing and dating each T&A, unless determined to be impracticable.

- Verify all credit and/or compensatory time is being recorded on T&A's. Credit hours are initiated by the employee versus compensatory time, which is ordered/required by the supervisor. Compensatory time cannot be forced on an employee earning less than GS-10, step 10 or if these employees are non-exempt from FLSA. These employees, however, may decide to accept compensatory time in lieu of overtime. If so, the statement on the bottom of time sheet should be initialed by both the employee and the supervisor.

- Verify that credit hours accrued (especially on Saturdays and Sundays) were worked on the employee's own initiative. If the work was assigned/ordered/directed/etc., by management, the hours worked must be recorded as overtime or compensatory time, not credit hours. See bullet item above.

- Review T&A information for leave used under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and Sick Leave Usage for Family Care, Adoption and Bereavement as follows:

    o FMLA is an entitlement for up to 12 weeks of Leave Without Pay (LWOP) (annual and/or sick leave may be substituted as appropriate) during any 12 month period to care for a family member. LWOP is coded as Transaction Code (TC) 71 for processing and all time must be maintained in a cumulative manual or automated record.

- o Sick Leave for Family Care and Bereavement: Sick leave provision allows employees to use up to 480 hours of sick leave for serious medical conditions (prorated for part time employees) each leave year. TC 62 (sick leave used) with the prefix 62, Sick Leave for Family Care, is used for time and attendance processing. The Sick Leave for Family Care should also be identified by a Transaction Code Descriptor ("03 – General" for a non-serious medical condition and "04 – Extended" for a serious medical condition). A maximum of 104 hours of family sick leave can be used for non-serious medical situations. The total amount of family sick leave, both serious, and non-serious combined, cannot exceed 480 hours in a leave year.

- Verify in the T&A records for callback overtime work situations. If an employee is called back to work unexpectedly for additional duty later in the workday or on a day that was not originally scheduled as a workday, overtime is credited for a minimum of 2 hours – whether 1 minute or 2 hours is actually worked. After the first 2 hours the individual would earn overtime for the number of hours actually worked. [Reference P&P 402.3, Premium Pay.]

- Verify that Transaction Code 32, with prefix 78 is used for compensatory time for travel earned. And Transaction Code 64, with prefix 78 is used for compensatory time for travel used.

- Verify that timekeepers are keeping track of employee's comp-time for travel. An employee has 26 pay periods to use or lose comp-time for travel. If not used within 26 pay periods the timekeeper must remove the unused comp-time travel hours, because Star-Web will not.

- Verify that timekeepers are keeping track of employee's regular comp-time. An employee has 26 pay periods to use or receive payment for comp-time. If not used within 26 pay periods the timekeeper must remove the unused comp-time from the T&A system and have the employee paid through an AD-581 (Lump Sum Payment).

- Check to see if any employees are listed on the STAR Web Leave Error Report. The timekeeper can provide the report showing the employees in leave error or a report indicating that no leave errors exist. If a leave error(s) exist, inform the timekeeper that an AD-717, Leave Audit (or electronic counterpart) must be completed to resolve the leave error. Note: Leave reconciliation/audits must be conducted when an employee has a discrepancy in leave balances between the NFC database and the STAR database.

- All Leave audits must be prepared from original documentation (Typically from the REE 331). To certify correctness of an audit, the audited employee's supervisor must sign and date the leave audit. The supervisor's signature on the leave audit certifies correctness of the audit consistent with their personal

knowledge. Leave audits should also indicate the name of the audit preparer (normally the timekeeper) and her/his phone number. An accurate leave audit includes explanatory notes as necessary. Leave audits should start with pay period 01 or the first pay period of a new employee; through the last pay period which was paid/employee separates. Timekeepers may fax leave audits to the party responsible for making changes to the NFC database (TINQ function).

- Verify that certified T&A reports and their supporting documentation are being retained for 6 years. [Reference NFC Procedures: Title I, Payroll/Personnel Manual, Chapter 7, Time Procedures, Section 1, Time and Attendance Instructions.]

- Verify with timekeepers and supervisors that changes in types of employment and work schedules are not made in the STAR Web T&A system unless a personnel action (SF-52) requesting the change has been processed.

- Review backup documents for T&A's such as ARS-331, Military or Court orders, Medical Certificates, and approvals to work overtime or earn compensatory time. Military and Court leave should only be used if documented with specific orders. Medical Certificates may be required if sick leave used exceeds 3 consecutive days or if otherwise required by the supervisor.

- In the event of an on-the-job injury or job-related illness, verify the timekeeper understands how to code the T&A. The day of the injury is coded TC-66. Work days missed after that would be coded TC-67 while the OWCP case is being processed.

4.02   Pay and Leave (Ted Nykiel, 301-504-4426)

- Review that employees and supervisors understand the differences between overtime, compensatory time in lieu of paid overtime (work required by management) and credit time (work initiated by the employee) as follows:

    Overtime worked and compensatory time in lieu of paid overtime must: Exceed 8 hours in a day or 40 hours in a week; and

    1. be officially ordered or approved (employees cannot approve their own overtime);
    2. be actually performed by an employee;
    3. be documented in writing and attached to the T&A log (REE-331).

- Credit hours are:

    o Hours worked in excess of an employee's basic work requirement.
    o The employee elects to work and the supervisor approves so as to vary the length of the workweek or a workday.

- o Must be earned before they can be used.
- o Cannot be earned on a holiday during the hours that correspond to the employee's regularly scheduled hours for that day.
- o Cannot be earned by SES or intermittent employees. [Reference P&P 402.3, Premium Pay, and P&P 402.1, Flexible Work Schedules.]

- Verify that full time employees only earn 8 hours of administrative leave on a holiday, even if they are scheduled for more than 8 hours on that day. Verify that part-time employees only earn administrative leave for the number of hours they are scheduled to work on the holiday, (not to exceed 8 hours.)

- Verify with supervisors that they know that advancing leave is at their discretion, it is not an employee entitlement. Advanced sick leave and advanced annual leave must be requested with justification. Advancing sick leave for an employee is limited to 240 hours. Note: Employees with NTE dates are eligible for advance annual or sick leave not-to-exceed the amount of annual or sick leave they will earn in the remaining period of employment. Advancing annual leave is limited to what an employee can earn back by the end of the leave year. If too much annual leave is advanced, the employee will not be paid for those extra hours.

4.03   Performance Management (Theresa Bailey, 301-504-1452)

Reference the HRD Web site - topic "Performance Management"

- Review the following for employees covered by the Agency appraisal program:

- Verify performance plans were put in place within 30 days of the beginning of the rating cycle or position change,

- Verify there are 3, but not more than 10 performance elements, of which one must be critical, but not all,

- Verify performance plans include an alignment statement or otherwise indicate the agency/organizational goals to which the employee contributes (i.e. ARS Strategic Plan goals, National Program or CRIS project goals, business plan goals or other organizational work plan goals),

- Verify performance plans include specific expectations or specific goals that contribute to the Agency/organizational goals listed,

- Verify a separate critical element addressing EEO/CR is included in each supervisor's performance plan. (Positions classified as supervisor usually include the term Supervisory, Supervisor, Manager, Officer, Director, or Administrator in the title.),

- Verify EEO/CR objectives are incorporated in a critical element (typically communications or customer service) in each non-supervisor's performance plan,

- Verify performance plans of supervisors include a critical element addressing supervisory responsibilities and expectations. (May be a separate critical element or incorporated in a related critical element.),

- Verify performance plans include a health and safety element where job related or required by the Area,

- Verify performance plans are reviewed and approved by a person at a higher organizational level than that of the Rating Official,

- Verify mid-year reviews are conducted and documented in a timely manner,

- Verify performance plans have been in place at least 90 days before an employee has been given a rating of record,

- Verify annual appraisals are reviewed and approved by a person at a higher organizational level than that of the Rating Official, and

- Verify ratings of record are being conducted and submitted within 60 days of the end of the rating cycle or within timeframes prescribed by the union/labor management agreement.

4. 04   Awards (Mary Oxner, 301-504-1368)

Reference the HRD Web site - topic "Awards"

- Review awards and hold discussions with employees for the following:

- Verify the incentive awards program (including Performance, Spot, Extra Effort, Time-Off, and Non-Monetary awards, and Quality Step Increases {QSIs}) is being used by the Area Office,

- Verify incentive awards are being initiated after an accomplishment or achievement has occurred,

- Verify true accomplishments and achievements are being recognized,

- Verify employee, managers, supervisors and team/groups are recognized for demonstrating superior equal employment opportunity accomplishments,

- Verify the ARS Delegation of Authority for approval of awards or any other Area approval policy is being followed,

- Verify written justifications are attached to AD-287-2 forms for all awards, for Time-Off awards, and for QSIs. (Performance accomplishment reports may be submitted in lieu of the written justification for Performance awards, QSIs, and Time-Off awards given for performance recognition.)

- Verify AD-287-2 forms are signed with two levels of approval. (Must have signatures of the Recommending Individual and the Approving Official.),

- Verify awards are approved at a management level higher than that of the Recommending Individual,

- Verify performance awards are being submitted within 60 days of the end of the rating cycle, and

- Verify through discussions with employees: Is there a pattern in the approval of awards (same employees/higher graded always receiving awards)? Are top performing employees being recognized for their performance and for their accomplishments and achievements? Are there unusual differences in the amounts of awards among awardees?

4.05   Training (Kit Hoyle, 301 504-1438)

- Review a sampling of Individual Development Plans (IDPs), which are required by the Agency. Determine if the IDP is a joint effort on the part of the supervisor and employee and if it is updated annually. [Reference P&P 440.1, Employee Training and Development.]

- Review the employee orientation procedures followed at the Area Office. Reference P&P 412.2, Appointment and Orientation of New Employees and the New Employee Orientation Program Guide. Ensure that each orientation package includes:

    - A copy of "Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch" and "Employee Responsibilities and Conduct"

    - The USDA Handbook on "Workplace Violence Prevention and Response"

    - A copy of the publication, "Handling Diversity in the Workplace"

    - A copy of the publication, "Sexual Harassment"

- Review how new research supervisors are oriented to the Research Position Evaluation System (RPES). Verify they been instructed to bookmark the RPES Home Page (http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/rpes/), particularly the "Tips for First-Timers" page.

4.06   Position Description/Management (Tina Voglesong, 301-504-1407)

- Verify supervisors understand their responsibility for assigning work and for certifying to the accuracy of the position description. Do they know whom to call with questions on writing position descriptions, requesting desk audits, and on appeal procedures? [P&P 431.1, Position Management and Position Classification, 10/02/02]

- Verify that the Area Office is maintaining the official position description copies certified by Headquarters, and all employees have position descriptions that reflect current duties and responsibilities. Verify collateral duty statements contained in position descriptions when appropriate. (Collateral duties should be identified in position descriptions if they are regular and recurring.) [P&P 431.1, Position Management and Position Classification, 10/02/02]. If employee has questions, please refer them to the HR Servicing Specialist.

4.07   Employee Relations (Mary Byrd, 301- 504-1349)
              (Ethics, Sue Mutchler, 301 504-1442)

- Verify supervisors, managers and employees understand procedures for addressing conduct and performance issues. Are supervisors aware that the authority to propose and to decide conduct and performance actions has been delegated to the Area?

- Verify the Area Office follows the USDA Supplemental Standards of Ethical Conduct regarding the prior approval requirement for outside employment or activities for those employees required to file either a public or confidential financial disclosure report (SF-278 or OGE Form 450). Employees seeking to engage in employment/activities for which advance approval is required shall submit form REE-101 to their immediate supervisor and REE Ethics Advisor for approval.

- Verify Ethics Advisor contacts (names and phone numbers) are either posted or readily available to all employees, and are updated at least annually.

4.08   Other

              (Exit Clearance Procedures, Bill Duggan, 202-720-7638)
              (Occupational Medical Surveillance Program, Ann Lucas, 301-504-1505)
              (Telework, Tonya Morris, 301-504-1489)

- Determine if there are any problems with retirement/separation procedures. [Reference P&P 426.1, Employee Exit Clearance Procedures, October 22, 1998.] Specifically,

    - Verify AD-581's for lump sum payments are forwarded for processing

within 2 weeks of the employee's last day of work;

- Verify all separating employees are given an SF-8 and a copy of the separating employee's SF-52 is faxed to the Frick Company.

- Determine if the Occupational Medical Surveillance Program (OMSP) is being utilized at the Area Office? (Employee participation is not required but should be encouraged). Are OMSP results of employee medical examinations being forwarded to the Medical Review Officer (USPHS-DFOH) by the local provider? (P&P 235.0-ARS, ARS Occupational Medial Surveillance Program, April 3, 2002)

- Determine whether all active teleworkers at the Area Office have current, approved agreements on file with the designated Area telework recordkeeper (i.e. Exhibit 1 of P&P 402.5, the REE Telework Program dated January 1, 2005.)

CARE FUNCTIONAL REVIEW – **AREA OFFICE**
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ACTIVITIES

In addressing the IT section, keep in mind the process and how an Area Office handles providing guidance, assistance, and oversight to administer these systems for an Area Office and their Locations.

While addressing the Information Technology (IT) section of the CARE report, keep in mind the CARE process and how the Area Office provides guidance, assistance, and oversight by administering these systems for the Area Office and the Locations.

5.01   Voice/Data/Video Telecommunications (For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Brenda Katulski, ARS/OCIO, on 301-504-1100.)

- Has the Area Office received approval from Brenda Katulski, the ARS Telecommunications Mission Area Office Control Officer (TMACO), and, if appropriate, an approved Department Unplanned Change Waiver or IT Acquisition Waiver before ordering dedicated telecommunications equipment or services per the REE Centralized Telecommunications Management Plan (CTMP) dated 04-30-97, the USDA Telecommunications Network Stabilization and Migration Program (TNSMP) dated 04-04-97, the USDA DR-3300-1 dated 03-23-99, and the USDA CIO IT Acquisition Moratorium Memo dated 05-13-03? How does the Area Office administratively handle these types of approvals for its Locations?

- Per Departmental policy, dedicated telecommunications purchases, regardless of dollar value or source, are subject to strict planning and procurement processes. Dedicated telecommunications includes routers, servers, switches, hubs, multiplexers, PBXs, KSUs, video equipment, certain kinds of wireless equipment (not cell phones or pagers), circuits, network management contracts, software management programs, etc. used for long distance data, voice, and/or video. The CARE Team should review dedicated telecommunications purchases to ensure that there is documentation that the AITS and the ARS TMACO have approved the purchases and that any appropriate waivers have been approved.

  As indicated in Bulletin 06-001, Information technology (IT) Acquisition Waivers for Significant IT Acquisitions, the USDA/OCIO requires prior to purchase, each agency to obtain an approved waiver for IT acquisitions (including dedicated telecommunications purchases) of $25,000 or greater prior to purchase. The Area Office should submit all draft waiver requests and supporting documentation to Gary Rich, ARS/OCIO. Gary then reviews the waiver request, circulates it for internal review and comment within OCIO, and prepares the final draft for signature by the Administrator and submission to the USDA/OCIO for approval.

The CARE Team should review dedicated telecommunications purchases over $25,000 to ensure that a waiver request was submitted and approved per this policy as well as document how the Area Office administratively handles these types of approval for its Locations.

- Per the Department's TNSMP dated 04-04-97, dedicated telecommunication purchases regardless of dollar amount must be entered into the Forecasting Inventory Reporting System (FIRS) by the TMACO prior to purchase. FIRS is open three times a year for the TMACO to enter this information. If it is not open at the time a purchase is desired, the Area Office must submit an Unplanned Change Waiver request to the ARS TMACO for Department approval prior to purchase. The CARE Team should review all dedicated telecommunications purchases regardless of dollar amount to confirm that they have either been entered into FIRS or have an approved Unplanned Change Waiver.

- Does the Area Office use (and advise its Locations to use) GSA's FTS2001 contract for intraLATA (also called "local toll"); interLATA (also called "long distance"); and international voice, data, and video telecommunications services? What is the process the Area Offices uses to establish new voice, data, and video service for its Locations? If any non-FTS2001 services are being provided, does it have an approved exception from the ARS TMACO?

  Departmental policy requires that the FTS2001 contract be used for these services. However, some Area Offices may not be able to comply with some provisions of this requirement because they are using university or state services that are mandatory for that Area Office. The CARE Team should review telephone bills to see whether the Area Office is being billed for local toll, long distance, and/or international calls via another vendor (not MCI's FTS2001).

  The CARE Team should note exceptions in the report and give the reason the Area Office is not using the FTS2001 contract.

- Has the Area Office or its Locations consulted the GSA Federal Wireless Contract prior to acquiring cellular or pager services or the FTS2001 contract to acquire pager service?

  The GSA Federal Wireless and the GSA FTS2001 contracts are not mandatory for these services but Area Offices are required to compare these contracts prior to ordering equipment or service elsewhere. Contact Tony Koontz, ARS/OCIO/Infrastructure Branch, on 301-504-1097 for cost benefit analysis support.

- Does the Area Office or its Locations use radio frequencies? If so, how does the Area Office administer these use and are they authorized Government frequencies issued by the National Telecommunications Information Administration (NTIA)? If yes, has the radio, telemetry, or Global Positioning System (GPS) equipment

been certified for narrow banding? If no, when does the Area Office plan to replace/upgrade this equipment? Contact Maureen Harris, ARS/OCIO, on 301-504-1077 for assistance.

If the Area Office uses radios, telemetry*, or GPS equipment* to transmit data, it must have authorization for a Government radio frequency on file (per USDA DR 3300-1 and ARS Directive 260.1).

Due to the upcoming mandatory transition to narrowband, the NTIA has instituted a program whereby all Government agencies that operate land mobile radio systems in the 162-174 MHz (VHF) and 406-420 MHz (UHF) frequency bands must convert from the present 25 KHz channel spacing to 12.5 KHz channel spacing by January 1, 2005 and January 1, 2008, respectively. As of these dates, the equipment must be able to operate at 12.5 KHz (narrowband) on either side of the assigned frequency. (Equipment purchased after 1995 should already meet these requirements.)

After receipt of a request for a frequency assignment, the REE Frequency Manager is responsible for requesting a Radio Frequency Authorization (RFA) from the NTIA.

Prior to using the radio frequency, an Area Office or its Locations must have the Radio Frequency Authorization (RFA) in hand. Ideally, the Area Office should have the RFA prior to purchasing equipment. NOTE: Requests for new radio frequency assignments take at least 6 months and often much longer.

Area Offices or its Locations may not use non-Government (FCC) frequencies, such as those utilized by radios purchased from Radio Shack. Use of non-Government (FCC) radio frequencies that are licensed to local public safety or university organizations is allowed ONLY with a mutually-approved arrangement. As part of this arrangement, the Government agency must obtain, from the non-Government licensee, written certification that the Government operation of these radios is necessary. A copy of this certification should be forwarded to the REE Frequency Manager.

In accordance with NTIA and USDA directives, all RFAs must be reviewed every 5 years from original approval or modification so that frequencies no longer required can be released for use elsewhere. The Radio Frequency Manager is in charge of this review and will contact Area Offices when respective RFAs are due for review.

Please ensure that the Area Office has RFAs in their possession for any equipment they operate as listed above.

*Examples of telemetry and GPS equipment: transmitters on cattle that send information to data collection systems; wireless hydrologic measurement tools;

GPS systems on tractors; weather condition measurement tools sending information back to a central collection point using wireless modems.

- Does the Area Office have a need for secure telephone/fax or GETS cards? If yes, does the person/persons who would have access to the secure phone/fax have appropriate security clearances? Are these items secured according to regulation?

  These communications options are used primarily in a COOP situation. While most Area Offices would have no need for such items, there may be some Area Offices/persons (i.e., top Area Office Administration) that would find them beneficial for continuity of operations in an emergency situation. DR3300-1, Appendices D and J define the requirements for National security and emergency preparedness telecommunications. Contact Maureen Harris, ARS/OCIO, on 301-504-1077 for assistance.

5.02   <u>Information Collection from the Public</u> (For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Yvette Anderson, ARS/OCIO Information Collection Officer, on 202-720-4030.)

- Does the Area Office or its Locations obtain OMB approval before conducting surveys to the public?

  The Paperwork Reduction Act and OMB regulations require advance OMB approval before collecting information from 10 or more persons outside the Federal Government. This includes questionnaires, surveys, and applications for services, regardless of the media. For example, Web sites are now used to gather information. For further information and assistance, first contact the Area Office, then the Information Collection Officer in OCIO.

5.03   <u>Records Management</u>   If there are questions of a functional nature or you need assistance interpreting this section, please contact Jim Neal, Records Manager on 301-504-4567.

- Does the Area Office and its Locations establish, maintain, protect, retire and/or dispose of records according to current National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Departmental, and Agency policies and procedures? If yes, does Area Office staff periodically review these Regulations, Policies, and Procedures for changes?

  According to ARS P&P 251.8 (http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ppweb/PDF/251-08.pdf), documentary materials created or received by Agency employees that qualify as records are the property of the U.S. Government. They must not be removed from Agency custody or destroyed without the approval of NARA. Employees may only dispose of records in accordance with the General Records Schedules (GRS) or a NARA-approved records control schedule for the Agency. Additional USDA Records Management Regulations can be found at

(http://www.ocio.usda.gov/records/policy.html#regulations).

- Does the Area Office or its Locations retire or transfer eligible records to a Regional Records Facility?

  Instructions for retiring/transferring records are contained in REE Records Management Manual 251.8M (http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ppweb/PDF/251-08M.pdf). To determine which facility services the Area Office visit the NARA Web site (http://www.archives.gov/locations/) or contact Jim Neal on 301-504-4567.

- Does the Area Office or its Locations have material that would be categorized as Sensitive Security Information or "National Security Classified," "Confidential", "Secret," or "Top Secret"? If so, is it maintained in accordance with Departmental Regulations DR-3400-002, DR 3440-001 and/or Departmental Manual DM-3440-1 (Records Management Policy)? Contact Jim Neal on 301-504-4567 for further assistance.

5.04   Policy and Procedures Management (For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Jackie Sharp-Hendrix, ARS/OCIO REE Issuances Manager, on 202-720-5507.)

  See http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ppweb/ for information on this subject. For information about the REE Administrative Issuances system, consult P&P 010, "The REE Administrative Issuances System," dated May 25, 1999. When new issuances are added to the P&P Web site or when major changes are made to issuances, the REE Issuances Manager will notify ARS DADs and Administrative Officers via e-mail.

- Is the Area Office using the latest version of administrative issuances that are on the P&P Web site? If not, why not? Are these issuances in a format that is usable by the Area Office and or its Locations? If the Area Office is using issuances that have been canceled or replaced, the CARE Team should list the number, title, and date of these issuances as well as the reason. This will be used to help rewrite existing issuances so that they will better serve the organization.

- Does the Area Office establish or issue Area-wide Policy Memoranda? If so, are they located in a central site accessible for each of its Locations? What types of Policy Memoranda are being established and would they be beneficial to the organization?

5.05   Printed Forms (For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Yvette Anderson, ARS/OCIO, on 202-720-4030.)

- Is the Area Office or its Locations encountering any problems ordering forms from the Beltsville Services Center, Beltsville, MD?

Any Area Office needing paper copies of forms can order them from the Beltsville Service Center, Beltsville MD. These orders may be placed either via a paper copy of AD-14 or CFPDC-1 or through the electronic ordering system.

- Are printed envelopes or letterhead ordered?

  Offices that have a need for letterhead design, envelope design, etc. should contact the representative for their Area Office. (Please see ARS P&P 256.2, "Printed Letterhead, Envelopes, Postcards, Mailing Labels," dated 05/15/06.)

5.06   Mail and Messenger Services (For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Yvette Anderson, ARS/OCIO, on 202-720-4030.)

   See http://pe.usps.gov/text/DMM/P030.htm and http://pe.usps.gov/text/qsg/q024.htm for further information.

- Does the Area Office and its Locations maintain accountability records of the postage meter activity? How is this monitored?

  If the Area Office or its Locations are metering its own mail, ARS P&P 263.3, dated 04/02/91, and the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) require manual or automated accountability records of postage meter activity. Either PS Form 3602-A, "Daily Record of Meter Register Readings," or an in-house automated system should be used. Accountability records must be maintained for 6 years before disposition in accordance with the General Records Schedule.

- Does the Area Office and its Locations properly secure the postage meter?

- Is the postage meter inspected according to postal regulations (see above Web sites for table)?

5.07.1 IT Resource Planning (For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Doug Page, ARS/OCIO Chief Technical Officer, on 301-504-5600.)

- The CARE team should verify that the unit ARMP includes IT purchases planned and required for the fiscal year, including hardware/software replacements and purchases, dedicated telecommunications acquisitions (circuits, routers, telephone systems), maintenance and support contracts, Web-page development, support, etc.

  The Area Office and its Locations are required to forecast planned acquisitions of dedicated telecommunications services and equipment in its annual ARMP package (see Administrator's annual ARMP "kickoff" letter). Due to special

Departmental mandates for telecommunications, all such equipment, regardless of cost, must be included in the forecast. The CARE Team should review the Area Office's last ARMP package to see if any dedicated telecommunications services and equipment were forecasted and make a note of that on the report.

- Verify that all planned acquisitions which are $25,000 or greater are supported by an IT acquisition waiver request.

    As indicated in Bulletin 06-001, Information technology (IT) Acquisition Waivers for Significant IT Acquisitions, the USDA/OCIO requires each agency to obtain an approved waiver for IT acquisitions of $25,000 or greater. All draft waiver requests and supporting documentation are forwarded to Gary Rich, ARS/OCIO. Gary then reviews the waiver request, circulates it for internal review and comment within OCIO, then prepares the final draft for signature by the Administrator and submission to the USDA/OCIO for approval.

5.08   Telecommunications Billing and NFC (For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Brenda Katulski, ARS/OCIO TMACO, on 301-504-1100.)

- Does the Area Office pay for recurring local telecommunications service bills through the TELE for commercial services or an MO (for local GSA services and FTS2001) at the National Finance Center (NFC)?

- Are non-recurring telecommunications equipment and services being procured and paid for through the NFC PRCH payment method if over $350?

- Per Bulletin 03-001 dated 11-24-03 and AGAR Advisory 58 dated 10-3-03 regarding telecommunications purchases, purchase cards can only be used to purchase telecommunications equipment under $350 unless the purchase is necessitated by an emergency as defined in the bulletin and the advisory. All non-recurring telecommunications equipment over $350 must be purchased with a purchase order. All recurring telecommunications services must be paid with a TELE account created via TUMS (for commercial services) or an MO (for GSA telephone lines and FTS2001). Telecommunications purchases necessitated by an emergency must be documented and forwarded to the ARS TMACO per the bulletin instructions for approval or disapproval. Check purchase card transactions and purchase orders for compliance of this policy. If a purchase card was used for an emergency purpose, check to ensure that the ARS TMACO was notified and approved the emergency transaction.

- Does the Area Office review and update its TELE accounts via TUMS at least annually to make sure the account information is accurate – such as the T&A contact point, the service Area Office address, the service and toll dollar limits, etc.? Does the Area Office cancel TELE accounts via TUMS that are no longer active?

TUMS access is via www.nfc.usda.gov and requires a user id and password. Nicole Oliver-Coleman, the ARS NFC Security Officer, should be contacted on 301-504-1074 to obtain a user id and password if needed. TELE accounts should be monitored via TUMS to ensure that agencies know what NFC is paying on these accounts every month and to ensure that NFC has a current contact person if they have a billing question regarding one of these accounts.

- Does the Area Office have their recurring TELE telecommunication bills sent to them first for review prior to sending to NFC for payment? Per Bulletin 03-001 and AGAR Advisory 58, they should be receiving their telecommunications bills first for review so that they can notify NFC if the bill is incorrect and should not be paid in its entirety until they address the issue with the vendor.

- If the Area Office has GSA telephone lines, does it review its GSA TOPS account monthly to ensure that the telephone line inventory and billing are correct? The NFC MO payment system is for GSA services provided through the Federal Telecommunication Service (FTS) consolidated switch sites, which are usually located in a Federal building – but not always. The GSA TOPS system may be used for verification of services and billing. It can also be used to track GSA orders. The ARS TMACO, Brenda Katulski, must approve access to TOPS.

5.09   Web Sites (For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Pete Lombardo, ARS/OCIO Web Branch Chief, on 301-504-1073.)

- Does the Area Office have a public-facing Web site?

  Provide the following information for the Area Office's public-facing Web site(s). If there is more than one public-facing Web site, please duplicate requested information.

  Web Site Base URL: _____

  – Responsible Area Office (and Mode Code)
  – Is this the primary organizational site for this Area Office?
  – Primary contact(s):
      Name:
      E-mail address:
  – Technology/Platforms (such as Server-side Includes, ASP, JSP, or ColdFusion)
  – Key Word Phrases

  Is the Web site compliant with USDA regulations?

  USDA Directive "Home Page Development and Maintenance," DR3430-001 can

be found at http://www.usda.gov/directives/files/dr/DR3430-001.htm. Particular attention should be paid to Accessibility in accordance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.

- Does the Area Office make best use of existing Web/Internet communication services rather than duplicating them?

  The ARS Web Site presents information on all ARS employees as well as all research projects, Area Offices, publications, and patents approved for public disclosure. The data for these come from the ARIS and REE Directory databases. For more information, send an e-mail to webmaster@ars.usda.gov.

  In addition, e-mail list services (aka listserve) are available for use in communicating with both the public and workgroups who span across agencies. For more information, send an e-mail to webmaster@ars.usda.gov.

  Is the Area Office experiencing any problems getting information updated on the ARS Web Site? Each Area Office should verify its relevant information and submit needed updates as outlined in http://www.arsnet.usda.gov/web/arsredesign/faq/faq.htm. For assistance, send an e-mail to webmaster@ars.usda.gov.

- Does the Area Office make best use of existing Collaboration/Intranet communication services rather than duplicating them? Each Area Office should look to the ARSIntranet/ Sharepoint platform for its online collaboration needs. Users should contact their Area IT Specialist or e-mail sharepoint@ars.usda.gov for assistance.

- Is the Area Office or any of its Locations experiencing any problems updating information in the REE Directory?

  The REE Directory contains information on all ARS employees. Each Area Office should verify personnel and locator information on http://isbprod.ars.usda.gov/dir2/viewemp$.startup and submit needed updates.

5.10   eAuthentication (For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Michael Witles, on 301-504-1071.)

- Many Federal services and applications are available to USDA employees and customers electronically. In order to access certain systems USDA employees must establish their eAuthentication credentials and acquire a standard username and password.

  Are employees at the Area Office aware of the Federal Government's eAuthentication credentialing process and that these credentials must be

established prior to accessing systems such as the AgLearn on-line training management system?

The data required for credentialing are available on the employee's most recent Earnings and Leave Statement (AD334) which is mailed by the National Finance Center (NFC) and also on the Personnel Action Form SF-50. If the employee does not have the most recent versions of these documents, they should contact the Area Human Resources Assistant or their HQ servicing human resources assistant.

The USDA eAuthentication Web Site is located at http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov. The USDA Directive 3610-001 (11/04/04), "USDA eAuthentication Services," is located at http://www.ocio.usda.gov/directives/files/dr/DR3610-001.htm.

- Are employees at the Area Office or its Locations experiencing any problems getting an eAuthentication credential established?

  The Frequently Asked Questions for the USDA eAuthentication are located at http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov/eauthFAQ.html. For assistance with the employee credentialing implementation process, contact the eAuthentication Help Desk at eAuthHelpDesk@usda.gov or call toll free 1-800-457-3642. In the event the eAuthentication Help Desk is unable to provide assistance, ARS employees should contact their Area IT Specialist or the ARS Help Desk at 1-866-802-4877.

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in the following section, please contact Lisa Baldus on 301-504-1300.

6.0   Budget and Fiscal (General)

- In the interview process, determine whether management officials believe that adequate support (e.g., guidance/instructions/Agency P&P issuances, financial reviews for dealing with problems or issues, etc.) is given from ARS Headquarters to manage and control Agency programs, assets, and resources.

6.01   CRIS Accountability

- Make sure that the Area Budget & Fiscal staff understands and correctly interprets the Agency's Current Research Information Budget System (CRIS) accountability policy, and that they are spending dollars by CRIS in accordance with the Budget and Program Management Staff (BPMS) approved allocation.

  In order to do so, review the Area's most current CRIS Activities Module (CAM) report. Determine whether there are deviations in planned versus actual expenditures of more than plus or minus 5 percent or $50,000, whichever is less. If so, determine whether approvals were obtained for these expenditure variances. If approvals were not obtained, cite what CRIS is not in compliance, and the percentage or amount in variance. (Policy and Procedure Number 315.0)

- Identify the process the Area Office undertakes to ensure the Locations are CRIS accountable. This includes reviewing and transferring allocation amounts from "dummy" CRIS, and transferring back funds to terminated CRIS. Document the process the Area Office uses to ensure financial plans reconcile to the allocation for their Locations.

6.02   Research Cost

6.02-1   Indirect Research Costs (IRC) and Shared Research Costs (SRC)

- Review Area Office procedures for reviewing/capturing IRC, SRC, O&M and "All Other" fixed costs. Is it according to established Agency policy?

  Wherever possible, costs should be assigned based on actual usage of resources. Cost accounting prorations based on FTE, SY's or dollars are acceptable but should only be used after ruling out other, more precise methods of assigning common support costs (i.e., space occupied, number of telephones, etc.) (The ARMS manual; P&P 329.5) If IRC and SRC worksheets or other documentation

are not available to support the assessment methodologies used, explain.

6.03   ARMPS Preparation/Implementation

- Inquire whether the ARMP process adequately allows the Area Office to prepare and update a comprehensive detailed annual operating plan for spending funds and accomplishing program objectives. Document any suggestions for improvement.

- Document the process the Area Office uses to manage the development of the ARMPS for their Area. For example, what process does the Area use to develop IRC/SRC or communicate with their Locations specific requirements of the ARMPS.

- Does the Area Office have the latest ARMPS instructions? Do they feel the instructions are clear, concise, timely, and easy to understand?

6.04   Allocations

- Ensure that official allocations are adhered to in establishing CATS financial plans at the Management Unit level and for CRIS subaccounts. Document the process the Area takes to ensure that financial plans are in sync with allocations and FFIS.

6.05   Salary Estimates/Tracking

- Determine if any problems are encountered by the Area Office in using SAMS to account for salaries or in supporting their Locations when using SAMS. If so, explain.

6.05-1   Salary Lapse Reporting

- Identify the process the Area Office uses to ensure the Locations are following salary lapse policies and procedures. (Reference Ground Rules to Salary Lapse)

6.06   Period-End Estimates

- Determine whether the Area Office fully understands ARS' Year-end Closing Instructions and Procedures, including preparation of period-end estimates. Inquire whether the Area Office has any ideas on improving the year-end instructions and procedures. Identify the process the Area Office uses to ensure their Locations are following the year-end instructions and preparing period-end estimates appropriately.

6.07   Prior-Year Funding

- Review prior year funds requests approved at the Area Office level. Inquire whether the Area Office is aware of the P&P for prior-year fund approval requests. Document any issues encountered. (P&P 323.8, as amended) For requests exceeding $25,000, FMD approval is required.

6.08   Prompt Payment

- Document which transactions the Area Office is processing directly in FFIS and determine if they are experiencing problems with interest penalties.

- Document the process the Area Office uses to review items in FFIS-SUSF to ensure transactions are processed in a timely manner so as not to incur interest penalties.

6.09   Claims for and Against the Government

- Ensure that the Area Office has access to instructions for processing and disposition of claims (P&P 328.0 – Claims for the Government; P&P 227.1 – Claims against the Government).

6.10   Collections

In accordance with procedures in the FMM, Chapter 2600; P&P326.0; and Bulletin 02-314:

- Ensure that a collections official has been properly designated by inspecting their letter of designation from the Area office. Ensure that they are aware of all responsibilities.

- Ensure that all collections (cash, checks, etc.) received are properly secured and that they are promptly deposited/credited into the lock box to the proper miscellaneous receipt or appropriated fund account.

- Ensure that proper vendor codes are being used and that the Area pseudo code is used as little as possible. The pseudo code should never be used when depositing trust fund or reimbursable agreement checks.

6.11   Accounting/CATS

- Determine how often the Area Office accesses FFIS-SUSF. Document the process the Area Office uses to ensure that SUSF transactions are processed in a timely manner.

- Ensure that there is effective coordination between CATS and other Agency systems (e.g., ARMPS, FFIS, SAMS, ARIS, etc.). The Current Year column of the ARMP should be the initial financial plan amount in CATS. CATS must be

reconciled with FFIS reports on a monthly basis. The "Reconciled" column on the Status of Funds Report should be tied into the cumulative obligations of the FFIS OCP Report. Budget documentation provided by the ABFO must be used to update MU financial plans in CATS. SAMS should be used to incorporate salary obligations and projections into CATS.

- Ensure that the information/data produced by CATS is verifiable; i.e., that the information/data can be traced to the source documents.

  In order to do so, review CATS posted and unposted obligations on transaction listings. Select a random sample of transactions and verify that corresponding obligation documents are found in the files.

- Ensure that funds control records are reconciled monthly with FFIS reports, and that unusual or unidentified items are followed up on with the ABFO. The local funds control records should be thought of as a "check book" and the FFIS reports should be thought of as an "official bank statement." Transactions appearing in the FFIS reports must be "posted" in local funds control reports in order to maintain accurate account balances.

6.12 Status of Funds

- Ensure that fundholders receive monthly status of funds reports from CATS in accordance with Directive 325.1. Although not required, it is suggested that fundholders also receive SAMS "Liability to MU" reports.

- Inquire whether the reports are adequate for the fundholder's needs. If not, explain.

- Ensure that each fundholder reviews detailed financial transactions charged against their accounts from CATS printouts at least three times a year to determine if the documents belong to the MU. If there have been invalidly charged obligations, explain.

6.12-1 CRIS Activities Module (CAM)

- Determine if the Area Office encounters any difficulties in the use of CAM for downloading year-end planned versus actual CRIS subaccount data into special reports for BPMS. If so, determine the issues to be resolved, and explain.

6.12-2 Cuff Records

- What efforts does the Area Office employ to ensure their Locations are using CATS and providing adequate financial support to their fundholders so that cuff records are not maintained? ARS P&P 325.1, CATS will be used by employees throughout ARS as the only funds control system. No other system (either manual

or automated) will be used or supported.

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in the following section, please contact Diane Eggert on 301-504-1260.

6.13   <u>Travel</u>

- Verify that Area Office personnel know how to access policies and procedures related to travel (http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ppweb/).

- Ensure that delegations of authority for approving travel are in writing, that they are accessible, and that responsibilities are effectively discharged. In order to do so, review the Area Office travel files.

- Determine if controls are in place to ensure that personal travel, when commingled with official travel, is not charged to the Government.

  In order to do so, review travel authorizations and travel vouchers for cases of mixed travel and make sure days of personal expenses were not charged to the Government.

- VERY IMPORTANT. In accordance with the General Records Schedule, paper copies of transmitted transactions (bearing the original signatures of all parties) and supporting documents (e.g., receipts) must be retained for a 6-year and 3-month period. Agency offices that use the online data entry component to enter travel transactions are the official record keepers of the original paper copies of the transmitted transactions. These offices must follow the record retention requirements established by the National Archives and Records Administration in the "General Records Schedule". These original vouchers shall be kept in a central locked file. Check with the Area Transportation Assistant as to the procedures within their Area Office. In some Area Offices all the vouchers are kept in a central location but, in others each section keeps their authorizations and vouchers.

6.13-1   <u>Travel Authorizations</u>

- Ensure that all travel orders are reviewed by properly designated individuals, other than the traveler, to determine that travel is official in purpose and nature and clearly stated, absolutely necessary, consolidated with other trips if feasible, and amounts estimated are reasonable.

- Ensure that the use of Types B and N travel authorizations are limited only to individuals whose frequent, routine, repetitive travel requirements make individual trip authorizations (Type C) unrealistic and those positions have been pre-determined by the Administrator to be issued the Type B or N travel authorization.

- Determine if there were more than three instances during the last fiscal year of fund holders (or supervisors) post approving their subordinates' travel. (This procedure indicates a breakdown in the proper pre-approval process for authorizations) If yes, explain.

6.13-2   Travel Advances

- Ensure that employees leaving the Agency have paid back any outstanding travel advance balances.

- Ensure that travel advances are only issued in conjunction with an approved travel authorization; and returned promptly when a trip is completed, canceled, or delayed past a reasonable time (P&P 342.3). Emphasis should be made on travel advances open to non-Government persons traveling for the Government. NOTE TO CARE TEAM: The number of travel advances should have decreased with the use of the Automated Teller Machines under the travel charge card program.

- Ensure that employees that have had their travel charge card canceled for misuse or non-payment are not obtaining travel advances from NFC. These individuals may only obtain travel advances when they perform foreign travel or if a financial hardship exists. If a travel advance is provided to individuals who have had their travel charge card cancelled, check to ensure that a signed waiver from the CFO is on file with the travel authorization and the advance is processed through the Area Office.

- Effective July 20, 2004 with REE Bulletin 04-307, Use and Management of Travel Charge Cards, travel advances may only be given to travel charge cardholders whey they are approved by the Chief Financial Officer or for foreign travel.
- Ensure that managers are notified of outstanding travel advance balances on a regular basis. The Area Office receives a monthly report from NFC, but employees performing the travel function should be monitoring outstanding travel advance balances. Inquire whether they are.

6.13-3   Travel Vouchers

- Interview the employees performing the travel function to determine if the Area Office is experiencing any problems with processing travel vouchers. If so, explain. Review the travel files to ensure that vouchers are being prepared accurately and according to prior authorization.

- The FTR requires travelers to file travel vouchers within 5 working days of the completion of travel. Check travel vouchers examined to determine if the Area Office is experiencing any delays in meeting this requirement. Delay in filing vouchers has a direct effect on the delinquency rate for the Agency.

- Review travel vouchers to ensure that registration fees for meetings or conferences are not being claimed on travel vouchers. Registration fees shall be paid using the Government Purchase Card.

  See REE Bulletins, 04-307, Use and Management of Travel Charge Cards, and 04-303, Non-Travel Related Employee Reimbursements.

- Ensure that applicable receipts are attached to the travel voucher for common carrier tickets, lodging, and any expense of $75 or more.

6.13-4   <u>Relocation Allowances</u>

- Ensure that obligations/adjustments are being properly accounted for. The authorized amount on the travel authorization appearing in TRVL must be deobligated, based on actual reimbursements and reflected in the Area's accounts maintenance records. There must be a review by accounts maintenance personnel to ensure that TRVL has properly deobligated relocation amounts.

- Ensure that the Area Office is enrolling transferees into relocation services programs promptly (move management and relocation services program). Relocation services programs must be elected at the time of the authorization.

6.13-5   <u>Mandatory Use of Contracted Travel Management Centers</u>

- Ensure that all tickets are being purchased through a contracted travel management center.

- Ensure that Area Office secretaries/travel preparers are NOT using traveler IDs and PIN numbers to access FedTraveler. USDA policy is that only the traveler may access FedTraveler using their own ID and PIN. Travel arrangers must use the call in center when making arrangements for others.

- Review files to determine if Area Office has requested waivers of the use of the TMC for cash purchases of airline tickets. If more than three instances have occurred in the prior year, inquire about procedures to determine if they are adhering to the requirements of the FTR. (Area officials should be reminding their employees that the uses of online booking engines such as Orbitz, Cheapseats, etc. are not authorized for official travel.)

- Area Transportation Assistants are responsible for entering new traveler profiles into EDS. Ensure that profiles are being entered according to procedures and that the ATA does not share access to the profile administration function with unauthorized users.

- Ensure that there are sufficient internal controls at the Area Office for

safeguarding undistributed paper tickets. Determine if a safe or a suitable locked file cabinet is available to store the tickets. (P&P 343.4, Use of Contract Air Services.) Paper tickets are only allowed for foreign travel.

- Ensure that the government contract airfares are used unless an exemption applies. (41 CFR §301-10.107)

- When restricted and/or penalty fares are used, ensure that the requirements of §301-10.108 and REE Bulletin 05-312 are met.

- Determine if procedures are in place to ensure that the TMC is not used for leisure travel.

- Determine if a review of travel authorization/itineraries is made before tickets are given to travelers. Inquire this of both travelers and employees performing the travel function.

- Determine whether unused/partially used tickets (eTickets or paper tickets) are promptly returned and canceled for credit to the cardholder or Government. Review procedures with employees performing the travel function. When unused tickets are non-refundable, ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the ticket and ensure that the ticket is used/exchanged for future travel. Since tickets are usually non-transferable, ensure that non-refundable tickets that remain in the name of the traveler are not used for personal travel and used for future official travel.

6.13-6 Travel Charge Cards

- Ensure that employees with travel charge cards are using them to the fullest extent and only for official reimbursable travel expenses.
- Ensure that employees leaving the Agency turn in their travel charge cards. In order to do so, request to see the Exit Clearance form and check list (in accordance with P&P 426.1, Employee Exit Clearance Procedures). In most cases the Area Travel Office will not have the Exit Clearance form because it is completed at the Location or by the Area Human Resources Assistant. If the employee is going to another USDA agency, the travel charge card shall be transferred. If not, the card must be cancelled.

- Ensure that new travel card applicants complete the new Bank of America forms and elect whether to authorize a credit check or not. New employees are required to complete GSA's online travel card training and provide a certificate of completion with their application. Area Office Agency/Organization Program Coordinators are required to maintain the training certificate on file with a copy of the application. Ensure that this process is taking place. (REE Bulletin 06-302)

6.13-7 Foreign Travel

- Inquire whether the Area Office experiences any problems in processing foreign travel requests (e.g. HQ/Area approvals, passports, visas, etc.). If so, document the specific issues involved. (P&P 345.3)

- Inquire whether the Area Office experiences any problems using the Foreign Travel Information System (FTIS) via ARIS. If so, document the problems.

- Ensure that official passport receipts and a passport log are maintained in accordance with Agency guidelines.

- Ensure that all passports and documentation are secured in a suitable locked fireproof cabinet/safe. (Not all Area Offices hold official passports.)

- Ensure that all foreign travelers have received a county clearance prior to embarking on travel.

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in the following section, please contact Lisa Baldus on 301-504-1300.

6.14 Utility Accounts

- Ensure that the Area Office knows how to establish utility accounts with NFC through the use of the NFC TUMS system.

- Determine if the Area Office is encountering any problems with utility payments or reconciliation of accounts. If so, explain.

- Ensure that obligations for IPAC, GPO, GSA, etc., are appearing on the Transaction Detail Listing (TDL). If not, determine if the Area Office is taking corrective action with NFC and/or the appropriate Government vendor agency.

6.15 Agreement Accounting

6.15-1 Research Support Agreement (RSA) Expenditure Tracking

- Ensure that the Area Office is establishing information in the HHS-PMS system to authorize obligation/payment of RSA's. When funds have been fully expended, ensure the Area is closing out the account in a timely manner to minimize the chare from HHS to the Agency for managing these accounts.

6.15-2 Trust Funds and Reimbursable Agreements

Refer to Bulletins 02-316, 02-314, and 03-309.

- Ensure that reimbursable accounts coded as Type 63 have been approved by the

Director, FMD, and are being billed by the AFBO in accordance with Bulletin 03-309.

- Document the process the Area uses to communicate authorization to spend funds to the Locations. Trust fund agreements require an up front payment from the cooperator and documentation in FFIS before work may begin.

- Review agreement files and ensure the following:

  - There is a copy of the fully executed agreement.
  - The appropriate tables have been completed in FFIS (VEND, ACXT, PGMT, DVAL).
  - Funds have been posted in ARIS.
  - Checks have been received and deposited appropriately (for trust funds or type 63 Reimbursables) and an A2/A3 has been processed through SUSF (FFIS).
  - Funds have been allocated by BPMS.
  - A BL has been created in FFIS for the allocated amount. NOTE: A $0 BL is required in order for the A2/A3 to process and reflect correctly.
  - A CAN (common agreement number) has been identified for all USDA cooperators (found on the agreement and in the VEND record)
  - IPSC transfer has been completed or waiver received

- When an agreement is expired, document the process the Area takes to close out the account.

- Document the process the Area takes to ensure funds are carried over correctly to the new fiscal year and that all years of the agreement reconcile to the carry over balance.

6.15-3   Sales/Exchange Funds

- Ensure that the Area Office is following the required exchange/sale procedures. In the acquisition, sale, or exchange of property, both the item to be acquired and the item to be replaced must fall within a single category identified in the Federal Property Management Regulations. Proceeds from the exchange/sale of property are available for obligation to purchase replacement property during the year in which the property was sold plus one additional fiscal year. (FMM Chapter 2400, Section 2415.5) Separate accounts are established for suspense (sales proceeds) and reimbursement (repurchases) and are tracked by fiscal year of availability. (FMM Chapter 2400 and Section 2470). Review the files to determine if requirements for sale/exchange funds are being met. If not, explain.

6.15-4   Quarters

In accordance with the FMM, Chapter 2400, Section 2480:

- Review files to ensure that employee quarters payments are made through proper coding of Time and Attendance reports to accomplish payroll deductions. (Collections that are not received through payroll deductions must be paid into the Treasury Miscellaneous Receipt Account and thus are not available to the Location for obligation.)

- Review files to determine whether quarters rental receipts are used only for upkeep of the Government residences, as required. If not explain.

6.15-5   Revolving Fund

- Determine if the Area Office has a university (or cooperator) administered "revolving fund" composed of proceeds from the sale of Location animals, crops, or related by-products. If yes, provide the dollar amount, and describe the record keeping responsibilities between ARS and the university (or cooperator).

- Ensure that the anticipated funding amount is annotated on the ARMP.

- Determine if ARS employees have the authority to authorize (or cause) expenditures to be made from this fund. If yes, explain if they are doing so according to the terms of the MOU or agreement. An ARS official may not, under any circumstances, approve by signatory authority any obligation documents covered under a revolving fund. Review the files to determine whether this may be happening. If so, explain.

6.16   Reference Manuals

- Ensure that budget/fiscal external procedures (including ARS P&P's) are complete, readily accessible, up-to-date, and are being properly followed.
- Ensure that references are readily available for each of the following subject areas and that they are being fully utilized and understood: CATS; FFIS; FMM; SAMS; ARMPS; NFC Procedures Manuals; & Travel

6.17   Training

- Through the interview and review process, determine whether employees are adequately trained in budget/fiscal operations to perform their duties, and whether the Area Office has competent and sufficient staff to carry out budget/fiscal functional responsibilities.

- Document the training activities that the Area Office provides to their Locations.

6.18   Budget/Fiscal Records Management

- Ensure that budget/fiscal records are maintained and disposed of in accordance with P&P 251.8, which provides records distribution schedules for administrative

and financial management files.

CARE FUNCTIONAL REVIEW – AREA OFFICE

OUTREACH, DIVERSITY, and EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

For information on interpretation or clarification of the functional questions in this section, please contact Debra Vandergrift, Office of Outreach, Diversity, and Equal Opportunity (ODEO), 202-720-6161.

NOTE: References include Departmental Regulation No. 4300-6, "Civil Rights Policy for the Department of Agriculture; current USDA and ARS Policy Statements.

7.0   Special Emphasis Programs

●   Verify how the Area Office initiates and conducts programs or other activities as one method to increase awareness/representation in an effort to build and maintain a diverse and high-quality workforce. (This includes special observance programs, display of special observance month posters, and other educational and awareness activities).

●   Verify how the Area/Location employees are informed of the programs.

•   Verify how management encourages attendance to the Special Emphasis Programs and EEO/Diversity Committee activities (e-mails, posters, etc.).

7.01   Recruitment and Outreach Efforts

●   Verify recruitment and outreach efforts conducted by the Area to increase awareness of ARS programs and activities to increase diversity in the workplace. **NOTE**: This includes visits to schools, tours, direct contact with local community resources, cooperative efforts with universities, and professional public and private organizations, etc. Verify results of those efforts (reports, etc.).

●   Verify the utilization of the ARS ODEO (Outreach and Recruitment Staff) for materials used to conduct recruitment and outreach activities (e-mails, etc.).

●   Verify efforts made to develop personal contacts with regional offices or local chapters of minority organizations, college placement centers, local disability and placement centers, etc., to recruit qualified individuals to ensure a diverse workforce. If applicable, verify results of those efforts (reports, etc.).

●   Verify the utilization of the Special Emphasis Program Managers or the EEO/Diversity or other Committees in recruitment efforts (e-mails, rosters of events, etc.).

●   Verify how the Area Management Directive 715, Annual EEO Program Report is utilized to increase diversity in the workforce when recruiting for positions.

● Verify the documentation of identified barriers to diversity in the workplace and the status of the plans developed to eliminate those barriers.

● Verify coordination of the Human Resources Division or other ARS entities in the efforts to eliminate identified barriers to diversity in the workplace.

7.02   Reasonable Accommodation for Persons with Disabilities

● Are you aware of the reasonable accommodation process? If so, who would you contact to request a reasonable accommodation?

● Verify how employees are made aware of the reasonable accommodation process.

● Verify activities that have fostered or facilitated the employment of persons with disabilities including making reasonable accommodations for known physical or mental limitations of qualified applicants and employees with disabilities.

7.03   Communication

● Verify that the following are displayed on all official bulletin boards/display cases:
   - Current fiscal year ARS/Area (if applicable) policy statements for EEO/CR
   - "Discrimination in Employment is Illegal" and "And Justice for All" posters
   - Current Anti-Harassment Policy Statement
   - Documents regarding diversity and reasonable accommodation

● Verify that the following are included in new employee orientation packages (hard copy or on-line):
   - Current FY ARS and Area (if applicable) and USDA EEO/CR Policy Statements
   - ARS Sexual Harassment Policy Statement
   - Reasonable Accommodation Brochure
   - EEO Complaint Process (informal and formal)
   - DR-4300-010, Civil Rights Accountability Policy and Procedures
   - EEO Mediation/Alternative Dispute Resolution

● Verify that the commitment and support of the USDA/ARS/ODEO Strategic Plan objectives have been communicated to all employees.

● Verify that outreach, diversity, and equal opportunity expectations are communicated to employees.

● Are the Web sites for the ODEO (ARS and Area) user friendly? What additional information would be helpful?

7.04   Training

- Verify that all Area employees have completed the current mandatory Civil Rights training?

- Are there additional EEO/CR topics where training is needed? If so, please specify.

7.05   Recognition

- Verify how employees are made aware of the Administrator's ODEO Awards Program and Area's Award program (if applicable)?

- How are employees, managers/supervisors, organizational units, etc, recognized for demonstrating superior outreach, diversity, and equal employment opportunity accomplishments?

7.06   EEO Complaint Process

- If an employee contacted you for information on how to file an EEO complaint, who would you recommend them to contact?

- Are you familiar with the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)/mediation method as a feature in the EEO complaint process?

- If you would need to file a complaint, would you consider using the ADR/Mediation process? If not, why?

- Do you feel EEO policies and procedures are followed in accordance with laws and regulations? If not, please explain.

8.0   Extramural Agreements Program (General)

For information on the interpretation or clarification of the functional questions in this section, please contact Kim Hicks on (301) 504-1141

Reference: Extramural Agreements Manual (EAM) 208.0 dated April 1994.   Additional information is available on the EAD Web site –
http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ead/index.htm

Interview the Area ADO/Agreements Specialist to:

- Identify all Headquarters Extramural Agreements Division, Area Office, and Location/Management Unit (MU) staff involved in the agreements process, including their duties/responsibilities. (ADO/ADODRs, Program Analyst (PA), ABFO, DAD, CD/LD, AO, LSS, etc.)

Interview the Area ADO/Agreements Specialist, DAD**,** Program Analyst, ABFO, AD, and Location/MU (AO, LSS, CD/LD, ADODRs) staff involved in the agreements process to document their concerns, comments, or suggestions about the following:

- The AIMS process and requirements
- Data entry of the ARIS documents (416/417/550a/425) and turn around time for Area and NPS approvals;
- Turn around time for processing an agreement upon ARIS approval by NPS;
- Customer service response and interaction with all levels (including HQ EAD, Area ADO/Agreements Specialist, DAD, and/or Location/MU staff (CD/LD, AO, LSS, ADODRs);
- Agreement training needs for the following: ARIS, AIMS, ADODR, Agreement Type, Statement of Work and/or Budget preparation, Performance Reports, etc.;
- Improvement to the extramural agreements process, including ARIS data entry, NPS approval time, AIMS data entry, obtaining Performance Reports and Financial Reports from Cooperators, etc.
- Verify that the ADO/Agreements Specialist does not process extramural agreements outside of the AIMS.
    - o Does the Area office accept paper copies of "complete" agreement request packages from the Location?
    - o Does the Area office use any other system in place of AIMS to produce the agreement or award documents?

Interview personnel identified as being involved in the agreements process to determine whether the following assistance is provided to the ADODR**:**

Note: Include the HQ EAD and/or the Area ADO/Agreements Specialist.

- Development of the Statement of Work (SOW);
- Development of the budget; (ensure all applicable direct and indirect costs are documented);
- Assistance with timely and accurate entry of ARIS (ARS-416/417/550A/425)
  - Approved ARIS (required for all agreements)
- Assistance with complete and accurate entry of agreement information into AIMS**;**
  - Basic agreement information
  - Statement of Work (SOW) and/or Proposal
  - Budget
  - Justification for funding increase/decrease or extension of time

Note: Document the justification in the comments section of AIMS

- Verify the ADO has a written delegation of authority displayed in his/her work area. (P&P 700.0).
- Verify there are no active supplements to the MMOU, IMOUs or Standard MOUs in place. (Bulletin 03-700).
- Verify the ADO/Agreements Specialist is aware of Grants.gov procedures and determine if the Grants.gov electronic application process is utilized in the Area. (IF NOT, refer to EAD for assistance).

8.1   Research Support Agreement

Research Support Agreement (RSA) – A cost-reimbursable agreement between ARS and a State Cooperative Institution, college or university. The RSA formally documents the relationship under which the institution provides goods and/or services, including personal services, to ARS in support of research activities of mutual interest. The terms RSA and Cost Reimbursable Cooperative Agreement (CRCA) are interchangeable.

Reference: REE Bulletin 07-001, Research Support Agreement

- Determine if the RSA is used in the Area. If yes:
- Determine who serves as ADO and ADODR for the RSA(s).

- If the RSA is administered at the Location Level:
  - Verify that the Area office has provided the Location with an e-mail or letter, indicating who is responsible for negotiating the Indirect Cost Rate (ICR).

- If the RSA is administered at the Area Level:
  - Verify a copy of the approved ARS-550, Research Agreements Plan, from the ARMP is accessible for reference.
  - Verify that the ADODR has a written delegation of authority from the ADO to act as the technical representative on the RSA.
  - Interview the ADO to determine the process for preparing the RSA at the Area: Verify the following:
    - The 5-year umbrella agreement is not used.

- Task orders or Optional Forms 347 and 348 are not used to order supplies or services.
- The ADO is using the REE-451, Signature Page and Statement of Work to produce the RSA.

o Verify that ARS employees are not intervening in personnel matters between the Cooperator and its employees including, but not limited to:
- Selecting cooperator employees
- Administratively supervising cooperator employees
- Administering cooperator payrolls
- Establishing wage levels
- Entering into employment agreements with individuals
- Approving/disapproving cooperator employees' leave

- Determine if ADO is verifying the RSA pricing and/or determination of wage rates with the Cooperator.

- Determine if services requested on RSA are in accordance with ARS policy and procedures regarding the acquisition of goods and personal services. Specifically:

  o Is the ADO aware of ARS policy, which specifies a 4-year limitation on acquiring personal services for recurring requirements, i.e., a Lab Technician?
  o Is the ADO award that acquiring the services of a University employee equivalent to an ARS Category 1 and/or 4 Scientist position is limited to 90 days (Janitorial and maintenance services are excluded)?
  o Is the Location's RSA in compliance with these policies?

- Verify that the ADO is performing the following:

  o Conducting ICR negotiations with the Cooperator, as determined by the Area policy.
  o Entering into, administering, closing out and/or terminating the RSA.
  o Issuing a written delegation of authority, assigning technical oversight responsibilities to the ADODR.
  o Providing a copy of obligating documents and invoices to ARS Operations Section or their Budget and Fiscal Office (ABFO) for certification and processing.
  o Verifying the eligibility of the proposed Cooperator.
  o Verifying the presence of mutuality of interest between ARS and the Cooperator.
  o Obtaining the Cooperator's banking information and FFIS vendor code.
  o Obtaining and evaluating the Cooperator's pricing information to ensure costs are allowable, allocable, and reasonable.
  o Verifying proper use of the RSA in accordance with ARS P&P 07-001.
  o Reviewing all data fields for accuracy and completeness of the RSA information in AIMS
  o Maintaining the "official" RSA file.
  o Assisting the ADODR in monitoring the Cooperator's performance.

- Ensuring financial and performance report requirements are met, as prescribed in the terms and conditions of the agreement.
- Adjusting the RSA obligation, as needed, based on expenditures and changing program needs.
- Ensuring the ADODR reviews and approves Management Reports (MRs). Note: The ADODR must sign the MR.

- Verifying that RSA and statement of work (including amendments) includes the following:

  - Appropriate ARS Budget Object Code and Sub-Object Code Note: BOC = 2554, SUB BOCs = LG and PU. This information is required for FFIS purposes.

  - A general description and amount of supplies, materials, and/or services

  - Listing of occupational categories (title) with duties

  - Dates or a time frame for delivery of goods or performance of services

- If payment method for RSA is under HHS/Payment Management System:

  - Determine if Cooperator is providing ADO with a MR or equivalent.

  - Determine if the ADO and ADODR verify and approve the MR or equivalent based upon documentation (i.e., packing slips, payroll detail listing, delivery tickets, memoranda, etc.).

  - Verify the ADO is promptly submitting a copy of the MR to ARS Operations Section or ABFO, for comparison against disbursement activity in the Health and Human Services Payment Management System.

- If payment method for RSA is other than HHS/Payment Management System:

  - Determine if Cooperator submits an itemized invoice to ADO.

  - Determine if ADODR is certifying and ADO is verifying the receipt of goods and/or services on the invoice based upon documentation (i.e., packing slips, payroll detail listing, delivery tickets, memoranda, etc.), and approve them for payment.

  - Determine if the ADO is promptly submitting the invoices to ARS Operations or ABFO for payment.

8.2   Pre-Award Review, Documentation and Support

These requirements apply to all agreements types unless otherwise specified.

- Verify the ADO is aware of the resources, Bulletins and P&Ps referenced above.

- Verify the Area's "official" files contain:
  - Documentation to confirm the ARIS has been approved at the NPS level
  - ARS-416/417/550a (SCA, Grant Project, ATCA, NFCA)
  - ARS-425 (incoming funds less than $25K)
  - ARS-425, AD-416/417 (incoming funds more than $25K)
  - AD-700 or letter of authorization from the fund holder
  - Statement of Work or Proposal
  - Approved Budget (REE-454 or 455)
  - Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Schedule (if ARS is reimbursing indirect costs)
  - Justification for funding increases and period of performance extensions
  - Non-competitive Justification (Grants only)
  - Signed ADODR certification
  - Approved AD-672 or other documentation to support the use of soft funds on a SCA or Grant.

  Note: If the RSA is administered at the Location, the "official" file is not maintained by the Area Office.

- Does the SOW properly identify project goals/objectives, mutual interest and responsibilities?

- Has ARS properly budgeted for indirect costs on incoming agreements? (IPSC – currently 10 percent of total direct costs)

- Verify agreements do not exceed the 5-year statutory limitation.

- Verify agreements are entered into AIMS and data entry requirements are complete. Determine by whom**.**

- Determine the Cooperator's performing organization type.
  - Verify non-assistance cooperative agreements (SCAs), awarded to State Cooperative Institutions (see REE-26), under the authority of 7 U.S.C. 3318 (b), do not provide for the reimbursement of indirect costs (IDC) or tuition remission.
  - Verify non-assistance cooperative agreements (SCAs), awarded to Non-profit organizations (REE-26), limit payment of indirect costs to 10 percent of the total direct costs (REE-454, column 1).

8.3   Post Award and Administration

- Verify the ADO provides the FFIS vendor ID to the National Finance Center for obligation/payment purposes.

- Verify performance and financial reports are received and accepted by the ADO/ADODR and copies maintained in the "official" file as prescribed in the terms and conditions of the agreement.

- Verify there are procedures in place to ensure the ARIS 416/417/550a/425 start/term dates match the start/term dates on the official agreement (Form REE-451).

- Verify there are procedures in place to ensure the ARIS award date is entered, and the 416/417/550a is revised from Pending to Active as applicable, when agreements are fully executed.

- Verify all payments are processed via electronic funds transfer (includes HHS-PMS payments). If not, verify the cooperator/recipient has certified an exemption from this requirement in accordance with the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996)

8.4   Close Out

- Verify final performance and financial reports are received and accepted by the ADODR and copies maintained in the "official" file. If reports have not been received, verify the ADO has attempted to obtain the reports.

- Verify all obligated funds have been disbursed to the cooperator/recipient or deobligated by the ADO.

- Verify HHS-PMS payment type agreements are marked "closed" in the system when agreements are "officially" closed.

- Verify closed files are forwarded to the appropriate regional Records Management Center.

8.5 Agreements Information Management System (AIMS)

Interview the Area ADO/Agreements Specialist, Program Analyst, ABFO, DAD, and Location/MU (CD/LD, AO, LSS, ADODRs) staff involved in the AIMS data entry process to document their concerns, comments, and/or suggestions.

- Verify that all agreements are entered into AIMS.

- Determine the need for additional AIMS training at all levels within the Area.

- Determine if additional support from HQ/EAD and/or the AIMS Helpdesk is needed and if there are suggestions for improving the AIMS data entry processes.