

To: Gary Matlock, Emily Menashes, Nicole Mason
CC: Andrea Arnold, Shannon Louie
From: OAR's Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee (ODIAC)
Re: Addressing Affiliate inclusion in onboarding materials for all OAR employees and affiliates

Background:

OAR identifies a need to “Address feelings of exclusion due to variable interpretation and application of the CI, contractor ... rules and regulations across OAR¹” in its Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) Strategic Plan. The ODIAC has identified that many of these feelings of exclusion can be attributed to unequal application of policies concerning affiliate inclusion across OAR, as well as a lack of understanding of what these policies are and why they are in place.

In 2017, NOAA's Acquisition and Grants Office issued Acquisition Alert 17-03 on the Proper Roles of the Services Contractor (AA 17-03)². AA 17-03 establishes NOAA's acquisition policy with regards to affiliate awards, team/morale-building events and social gatherings, participation on NOAA councils, and accessing NOAA facilities. In a study commissioned by NOAA, *Benchmark Study of Service Contractor Utilization in NOAA*, imSolutions, LLC found AA 17-03 is considered a best practice across the federal government in the way it provides detailed guidance and situational examples for all affiliates, including CI employees and contractors³. However, the study also found public awareness of and dissemination of AA 17-03 within NOAA to be low, which limits its effectiveness.

Recommendation:

AA 17-03 can serve as a best practices document as it uses more accessible language than the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) and clarifies NOAA's position on several gray areas regarding affiliate engagement and inclusion. Wider sharing and knowledge of the material contained in AA 17-03 promotes a shared understanding of where the law limits full inclusion of NOAA's affiliate work force, and may help to address the feelings of exclusion identified in the OAR DEIA Strategic Plan.

To provide a shared understanding, the ODIAC makes the following recommendations for including AA-17-03 and the accompanying slides⁴ from the Acquisition and Grants Office in OAR's orientation materials:

¹ Goal 1, Objective 3 in the OAR Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Strategic Plan.

² ■ AA 17-03 Proper Roles of the Services Contractor.pdf

³ ■ 3 Benchmark Study of Contractor Utilization in NOAA 2018.pdf

⁴ ■ 2 Government and Contractor Interaction (extended version).pptx.pdf

- Within the employee resources section within OAR’s google site, create a new section titled “Understanding affiliate (including CI and contract employees) regulations across OAR” and link AA 17-03, the related powerpoint, and this memo to provide context⁵.
- Encourage the Employee Services Division (ESD) to include a link to AA 17-03 and related slides in the “New Employee Corner” of the Monthly ESD newsletter as a reminder and easy reference for supervisors who receive the newsletter.
- Encourage OAR laboratories, programs, and staff offices to include AA 17-03 and related slides in their office-specific orientation and onboarding materials for all employees.
- Encourage OAR laboratories, programs, and staff offices to post AA 17-03 and related slides on their respective diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility resource sites.
- Encourage OAR laboratories, program, and staff offices to include AA 17-03 and related slides with recipients of federal grants and awards (e.g. Cooperative Institutes and contracting firms) at the kickoff meeting at the beginning of each new agreement/award.

In implementing these recommendations, no matter what the affiliation, all federal employees and affiliates will have a shared common knowledge regarding laws and policies of a blended workforce

Signed

Lauren Koellermeier

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ODIAC Co-Chairs

⁵ <https://sites.google.com/noaa.gov/insideoar/employee-resources>