

**Agricultural
Research
Service**

**Office of the
Deputy Administrator
Administrative and Financial Management**

February 2009

CARE LOCATION QUESTIONS

**CONSOLIDATED ASSISTANCE,
REVIEW, AND EVALUATION**

CARE FUNCTIONAL REVIEW

ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT – GENERAL

1.0 Location Administrative and Financial Management

- Provide a summary of how administrative processes in general are functioning.
- How do the administrative and program personnel interact? Are monthly staff meetings conducted? If so, are they beneficial?
- Is the Location conducting any “best practices” that can be captured and shared with other Locations?

1.01 Area Administrative and Financial Management

- Provide a summary of the level of interaction between the Area and the Location.

1.02 Headquarters Administrative and Financial Management

- Describe the interaction between the Location and Headquarters.
- If the Location deals with specific Divisions, state relationship and description of service provided.

1.03 Other

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

CARE FUNCTIONAL REVIEW

ACQUISITION OF SUPPLIES, SERVICES, AND EQUIPMENT

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

We recommend that the reviewer be able to take a copy of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) to assist in performing a review of acquisitions.

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 (FY) and at orders over \$3,000.
- Verify warrant limitations (delegation of authority) for acquisition personnel at the Location. (FAR Subpart 1.602-1)

2.01 Requisitions

References:

APD Issuances - <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/acquisitions/alerts.htm>

Federal Acquisition Regulation – <http://www.acqnet.gov/far/index.html>

APD Manual 213.3M REE Purchase Card Program – <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/purchase-cards/index.htm>

Departmental Regulation 5013-6 –

http://www.da.usda.gov/procurement/ccsc/purchase_card_more.htm

AbilityOne Program – <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/acquisitions/ability-one.htm>

Acquisition Toolkit – <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/acquisitions/toolkit.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 Foundation Financial Information System (FFIS) Requisition (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 (National Finance Center (NFC) Manual Title II, Chapter 5)?
- Verify that a tracking system is in place to handle the administration of PRs, 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 Policies and Procedures (P&P's), Bulletins, etc., are readily available.
- Document the kind of random review and supervision of the purchasing function at the Location to insure efficiency and compliance with regulations. For example, does the Administrative Officer (AO) randomly review purchase order files, etc? What is the Area's involvement in this regard?
- Confirm that the Product Service Codes, NAICs, and Description of the Requirement fields, are completed in FPDS-NG for all reportable actions regardless of dollar value. (APD Alert 2008-02, February 2008)

2.02-1 Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPA's)

- Ensure that BPA's are replaced by using the purchase card when appropriate. Check BPA for frequency of use.
- Ensure that BPA's are documented on a proper form (FAR Subpart 13.307) 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)
- Check to see 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 period of performance. (FAR Subpart 13.303)
- Ensure there is a printout of the FPDS-NG action in the file for BPA calls over \$3,000. Verify the FPDS-NG action reflects the delivery order document/contract file. (FAR Subpart 4.6, <https://www.fpds.gov>)

2.02-2 Purchase/Delivery Orders

- For UNICOR purchases, ensure the file contains a comparability determination. (FAR Subpart 8.602 and APD Alert 2005-13)
- Check log books for orders just under \$100,000. Look for orders to a single vendor in close proximity to the same date. These orders may represent potential split requirements that were broken down into several purchases merely to permit the use of simplified acquisition procedures.
- Check log books for multiple orders to the same vendor/merchant broken down to remain under warrant authority.
- Check purchase orders for best value (getting the best deal) and/or price reasonableness determinations. Refer to APD 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. (APD P&P 212.16)
- Ensure that unpriced purchase 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 (<http://www.da.usda.gov/procurement/programs/biopreferred.htm>). (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 FY 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
(<http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/consERVE/tools/cpg/products/index.htm>).

- 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 www1.eere.energy.gov/femp/procurement/.
- Check to see if the purchasing agents are using required sources properly, particularly, AbilityOne (formerly Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Act Program). (FAR Subpart 8.7)
- Check to see if procurement outreach efforts are being accomplished. Is there an awareness of the procurement preference program in terms of need to locate small businesses, small disadvantaged businesses, women-owned businesses, HUBZones, and service disabled veteran-owned? (FAR Parts 13 and 19, USDA 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-owned?
- Ensure that regulations on Set-Asides for Small Business are adhered to: Open-market purchases between \$3,000 - \$100,000 must be set-aside for small business. The file should be documented in accordance with FAR Part 19.502-2 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 must document why competition was not feasible or not obtained. For non-competitive purchases exceeding \$3,000, ensure that the basis for the price reasonableness determination is included in the file. (FAR Subpart 13.106-3)
- Services over \$2,500: If subject to the Service Contract Act, wage rates should be obtained through Wage Determinations OnLine (www.wdol.gov) and incorporated in the order (FAR Subpart 22.1008-1, APD Alert 2004-04). A new wage determination should be incorporated with all exercised options.

- 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 3 workdays after contract award and that it was processed in accordance with the procedures found in the 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. (FAR Part 13)
- Defaults – In the case of Termination for Default, did the office charge the excess costs of any reprourement 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. (FAR Subpart 4.803)
- Verify that all proposed contract actions between \$10,000 and \$25,000 are displayed in a public place or placed on FEDBizOpps. (<https://www.fbo.gov>, FAR Part 5)
- Ensure that as stated in FAR Subpart 4.805, the Location 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;
 - Construction contracts of \$2,000 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.
- Confirm that purchasing agents are aware of the CCR requirements prior to 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 Local Agency Program Coordinator (LAPC). 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 is being performed.

- Ensure LAPC is maintaining a file of cardholders and their associated approving officials for the Location. Each file should contain a record of the training for the cardholder and approving official. (Departmental Regulation 5013-6)
- Check purchase card log to determine if cardholders are using AbilityOne (formerly JWOD) distributors and suppliers to obtain office supplies.
<http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/acquisitions/ability-one.htm>
- Check the purchase card log for multiple orders to the 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 purchasing agents 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 approval from the REE 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. (APD Alert 2005-4 and AGAR Advisory 58A)
- Confirm that cardholders are maintaining adequate documentation of all purchase card and convenience check transactions in the cardholders transaction file. Adequate documentation includes maintaining a purchase card log, documentation of funds availability, receipts, purchase requests, packing slips, and electronic confirmation for all

purchases made over the counter, by telephone or via the Internet. (Departmental Regulation 5013-6)

- Confirm cardholders are obtaining proper authorization prior to making a purchase. Authorization can be in the form of a written purchase request or e-mail from a responsible official that identify an official Government need, including blanket authorizations for routine purchases. (Departmental Regulation 5013-6)
- For actions over \$300, verify that someone other than the cardholder is receiving and accepting the goods/services. (Departmental Regulation 5013-6)
- Qualification and Training of LAPC
 - Verify that the LAPC is in the 1102 or 1105 series. For those not in the 1102 or 1105 series, check to see what procurement training they have received to qualify them as a Level 1B Contracting Officer. This does not mean that the LAPC has to be warranted. (APC/LAPC Program Guide and DR 5001-1)
- Reference Tools
 - Check to see what tools the LAPC is using to manage and provide oversight of the purchase card program (i.e., Discoverer, Access Online®).
- Reports
 - Check to see if LAPC has consistently submitted the required management and oversight reports on Purchase Card/Check Use and Reconciliation to the Area.
- Management and Oversight
 - Check to see if the LAPC is performing any reviews of cardholder transactions for compliance with existing procurement policies, i.e., random review of cardholder transactions. (REE Manual 213.3M Purchase Card Program)
 - Check to see if cardholder's supervisors are receiving and reviewing cardholder reports on a monthly basis in accordance with the guidance in REE Manual 213.3M Purchase Card Program.
 - Ensure that cardholder's keep a log for recording purchase card transactions. (REE Manual 213.3M Purchase Card Program)
 - What kind of random review is performed on purchases made using the purchase card?

2.02-4 Training

- 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 Federal Supply Schedule (FSS) (FAR Subpart 8.4)

- 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 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 file (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 an FSS contractor (FAR Subpart 8.405-1).

2.03 Administration

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 considered 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)
- 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.

Note: USDA is planning to replace its current personal property system PMIS/PROP with a new system, CPAIS-PP, in February 2009. To accommodate this change, since it may be pending, any reference to a personal property system will only refer to “Official Personal Property System.”

2.04-1 Organizational Structure

- The AO has delegated authority as the property management officer (PMO), with oversight from the Area PMO (APMO). List additional staff positions that are responsible for performing personal property duties and responsibilities.
- Determine whether the Area Office performs the Location’s property management duties and responsibilities.
- Determine how many designated Accountable Property Officers (APO’s) the Location has.

2.04-2 Training

- List the types of informal and formal training that members of the Location’s property staff 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 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)
 - CPAIS-PP documentation or On-Line Robo Help

- Property Management Quick Guide, dated 2004 (overview of PMO duties)
- Quick Guide to Using AAMS/GSAXcess, dated Oct 2007 (reporting and acquiring excess property)

2.04-4 File Management

- Ensure the property office 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 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 office reviews the Inventory Status Report from the Official Personal Property System. This report lists the APO name, address, inventory date, and inventory status.
- Explain how the office notifies APO’s when physical inventories are due. Determine whether the office provides APO’s with written instructions and how much advanced notice they routinely provide.
- Determine whether APO’s submit documentation supporting inventory changes such as transfers, excess, disposals, and new acquisitions before the property officer makes any 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 property office forwards a copy of the reconciled inventory to APO’s. (See REE Manual 221.1M, Section 4, Physical Inventories, and Subsection “Reconciling Physical Inventories”.)

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

2.04-6 Property Accountability and Control

- Determine whether the property office receives copies of purchase documents from the purchasing agent/contracting officer at the time of purchase for accountable property or whether the property office has to request copies after the transaction appears on the Suspense Report/Staging Area Report.
- Explain how the property office requests equipment descriptive information, serial number, etc., information from the APO, assigns the AG number, and updates new accountable property to the official personal property system. (See REE Manual 221.1M, Section 3, Accountability and Control, Subsection “Receipt Documents for Accountable Property.”)
- Explain how the 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 office ensures employees return property on loan.

2.04-7 Property Suspense/Staging Area Reports

- Determine how often the property office receives and reconciles the Suspense Report.
- Verify whether the property office reconciles transactions according to USDA policy, which requires offices to reconcile upon receipt, but no later than 60 days of appearing on Suspense. (See REE Manual 221.1M, Section 5, Suspense Listings, and APD Policy Memorandum 221.1-04, Reconciling Area Suspense Reports, dated 3/9/00.)
- Explain any problems that occur when reconciling Suspense Reports and how the property office resolves the problems.

2.04-8 Sensitive Property

- Determine whether the 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 Area or Location has declared, in writing, other types of property as sensitive. Ensure the office lists any other item declared “sensitive” on the inventory in the official personal property system.

2.04-9 Reporting Property Theft, Loss, or Damage

- Determine if the 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 the documentation contains a signature from the APO and the property office removes accountable property from the official personal property system, 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 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 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 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 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 property office accurately removes the item in the official personal property system when the trade-in involves accountable property.
- Ensure the Location reports exchange sale property via AAMs/GSAXcess, to the General Services Administration (GSA) as the official Sales Center for all sales except crops/animals. (SEE APD Alert 2008-09 dated June 2008.)
- Determine whether the office conducts sales of crops or animals. Verify that the Location maintains sales information for the annual report of crop/animal sales. Reporting requirements include gross/net sales, commodity type, and the number of days to complete the sale. (See REE Bulletin 8-220, Exchange/Sale for Qualified Personal Property, dated 8/26/08.)

2.04-11 Acceptance of Gifts

- Determine whether the office has accepted any unconditional gifts and who has the authority to accept unconditional gifts for the Location 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 Location ensures the unconditional gift is not from a prohibited source. Ensure the Location documents acceptance of the unconditional gift on behalf of ARS/USDA and updates the official personal property system 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 office determines whether excess property is available before acquiring new acquisitions (first source of supply, as applicable). Determine the methods the office uses to view available excess property.
- Determine the method APO’s use to report excess property, listing the type of documentation required, 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 property office 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 office 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 APO’s maintain accountability and control of excess property during the screening process and pending disposal. Determine how the office identifies and labels excess pending disposal and whether the office has a storage facility. (See REE Manual 221.1M, Section 10, Reporting Excess Property, Subsection “Procedures”.)
- Explain the circumstances when the property officer bypasses required screening and authorizes abandonment or destruction using form AD-112.

- Review the 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 property office resolves the problem.

2.04-13 Disposal

- Review the files to ensure that when the Location disposed of property by abandonment/destruction, the PMO 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 Location donated property in lieu of abandonment/destruction after USDA and Federal screening, the PMO authorized the action via signature, and the office donated property to a public body, which is an organization that receives Federal, State, or local funding. (Note: Non-profit organizations are not public bodies. See REE Manual 221.1M, Section 16, Abandonment and Destruction, Subsection “Donation to Public Bodies” and FMR 102-36.)
- Confirm that the property office 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.)
- Confirm that the property office does not allow employees to acquire, for personal use, any property that has been declared unserviceable, or authorized for abandonment/destruction.
- Review the files to verify that the disposal process shows a clear audit trail from reporting an asset as excess to its final disposal. A complete audit trail includes a signed excess report, proof of screening, signed transfer document or AD-112 signed by an APO and witness. (See APD Alert 2007-10 Audit Trail for Reporting Excess and the Audit Trail, dated April 2007.)
- Explain how the 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 property office resolves the problem.

2.04-14 USDA Donation Programs

- Determine whether the office 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 office 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 PMO. (See APD Alerts 2007-13, Stevenson-Wydler, dated May 2007, and 2007-14, Computers for Learning, dated July 2007.)
- Ensure the office tracks and submits reporting requirements to the Area Office 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 office is aware of the limits on passenger vehicles (sedans/station wagons).
- Explain any fleet increases and review the files to ensure the office submitted an approved justification for additions.
- Determine how the office ensures they 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. (This may be accomplished at the Area level. However, Locations are responsible for requesting replacement vehicles according to requirements listed in REE Manual 221.1M, Section 19, Motor Vehicle Management, Subsection “Replacement Standards” and FMR 102-34.)
- Explain how the office ensures there is a continued need for a vehicle before it is replaced. Verify that requests for new vehicles include the AG number or tag number of the vehicle the Location is replacing. Determine how the office ensures they report the old vehicle as excess or sale upon receipt of the new vehicle.
- Verify whether the 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 office has purchased. (EO13423)

2.04-15.2 Vehicle File Management

- Verify whether the office maintains official motor vehicle files. If the Area maintains the files, list the information that the Location sends to the Area. Review the vehicle files to ensure files contain vehicle requisition, maintenance and service records, and accident files.

2.04-15.3 Identification

- Ensure the 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 that the vehicles have form AD-651, Accident Reporting Kit, in the glove box.

2.04-15.4 Vehicle Use

- Verify the type of vehicle dispatch records/logs the office uses 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).) In FY2009, USDA revised DR 5400-6, Fleet Card Management, dated November 2008, to state vehicle use logs must include: date, driver name, odometer, use of fleet card to refuel or provide maintenance.
- Explain how the office secures vehicle keys and fleet cards when they are not in use.

2.04-15-5 Fuel/Maintenance Costs

- Explain how the office tracks vehicle cost data for Government provided fuel and maintenance and when drivers do not use the new VISA 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”. Also, EO 13423 requires strict reporting of all fuel use.)
- Explain how often the property office requests and updates Government provided fuel/maintenance costs and POOL Card data to the official personal property system. (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 how the office 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 office ensures drivers refuel flex fuel vehicles with alternative fuel when an alternative fuel station is within a 5 mile radius of the office. (See APD alert 2008-04, How to Locate Alternative Fuel, dated April 2008. This is in accordance to EPACT 2005, Section 701.)
- Determine how the office 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 office 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 property office resolves the problem.

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

- Determine whether the 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 Location/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 any oversight provided to the Location property staff by the Area Office in inventory management, use of the official personal property system, suspense/staging area reconciliation, reporting excess, fleet management, or overall property management.

CARE FUNCTIONAL REVIEW

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT, CONSTRUCTION, REAL PROPERTY AND SAFETY, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

3.0 Facilities Asset Management

Reference: Executive Order (E.O.) 13327, *Federal Real Property Asset Management*; Bulletin 09-151, ARS Capital Project and Repair Plan (CPRP); Federal Real Property Council's *Guidance for Real Property Inventory Reporting*.

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Rommy Ignacio on 301 504-1191 and Serag Wahba on 301-504-1202.

3.0-1 Long Range Facility Planning

- Determine how the Location identifies its current and long-range facilities needs? Does the Location periodically review its facilities to assess condition and needs? Does the Location have a long-range facility plan listing the current and anticipated facilities needs? Who provides direct input to the multi-year plan?
- Is the Location using the ARS Capital Project and Repair Plan (CPRP) process to guide the planning and budgeting of current and anticipated facilities needs? (Latest Bulletin on ARS CPRP).
- Is there a multi-year facilities plan developed for the Location? Is this plan updated to reflect the most current needs for the construction, restoration, acquisition, and management and disposition of Location real property assets? Is the Location aware that all facilities needs or projects costing \$25,000 or more must be reviewed and validated by the Agency and Area Asset Management Review Board? (Latest Bulletin on ARS CPRP)
- Does the Location maintain an up-to-date list of all AMRB-validated and approved facility projects at the Location?

3.0-2 Pre-approval of Building Authority Projects

- Is the Location aware that an approval from Headquarters must be obtained to use construction authorities for new small buildings or alterations to existing facilities expected to exceed \$25,000? ARS construction authorities encompass the following construction programs: Ten Small Buildings (TSB), Unlimited Small Buildings (USB), Ten Percent Alteration (TPA), and Headhouse/Greenhouse (H/G). (Latest Bulletin on Facilities Construction Authorities).
- Is the Location 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)? (Latest Bulletin on Facilities Construction Authorities).

3.0-3 Facilities Operation and Maintenance

- Determine how the Location develops its annual budget for facilities operation and maintenance (O&M) needs? How are O&M costs identified with individual buildings or structures at the Location? Determine Location methodology for distributing O&M costs to the appropriate building or structure.
- Verify if a specific Location accounting code has been established in FFIS to facilitate the capturing and reporting of O&M costs for the Location. Determine if the Location O&M cost data is being captured throughout the year for reporting purposes. (Latest Bulletin on Capturing of Operations and Maintenance Costs)
- Determine if the Location has a formal O&M Program for accomplishing preventive and routine maintenance of its buildings and facilities. Does the Location have a system for prioritizing maintenance needs uniformly throughout the Location? Determine how historical data of completed maintenance work is recorded and maintained.
- Determine if the Location 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).
- Determine if the Location uses specific performance measures to measure the effectiveness of its O&M program

3.0-4 Implementation of Project Design and Construction

- Determine Location's 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 Location project compliance with approved master plans, National Historic Preservation Act, and Threatened and Endangered Species Act.

- Determine if Location staff responsible for operating and maintaining the facility 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 Location for accomplishing maintenance task upon completion of new construction and renovation. Determine if the Location has established a facilities maintenance program that encompasses preventive and routine maintenance of building systems and equipment.
- Does the Location have a process in place for accomplishing warranty work?
- Assure property records are established 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 Location is integrating energy and water conservation and sustainability into its regular operations and maintenance activities per EO 13423, the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (EPACT 2005) and the Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA).
- Determine when an energy audit and recommissioning was last performed. Have recommended energy conservation projects been implemented or included in the Location's CPRP? Does the CPRP include future energy audits? If this is a covered facility, energy audits and recommissioning should be done every 4 years and energy projects that were recommended by the audits implemented within 2 years. (EISA)
- Determine if the Location has been evaluated for compliance with EPACT 2005, Section 103, which says by the end of FY 2012 each Federal building must have an advanced electric meter where cost effective, i.e., over 10,000 gross square feet, including advanced natural gas and steam meters where applicable by FY 2016. (EPACT 2005 and EISA)
- Ensure that the Location checks all utility bills and maintains consumption records/monitors energy consumption patterns so that any possible irregularities in utilities billing or estimating procedures can be identified quickly and corrected. (Latest P&P on Energy Management)
- Ensure that the Location maintains records of all utility consumption and cost for, as applicable, electricity, fuel oil, natural gas, LPG/propane, coal, purchased steam, purchased chilled water, renewable energy generated on Federal land including the

type and source, purchased renewable energy, water consumption including quantity and cost, and energy training including number trained and cost. (EO 13423)

- Determine if the Location uses employee incentive programs to reward exceptional performance for implementing. (EO 13423)
- Determine if the Location 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, and contractors. (EO 13423 and EPACT 2005)
- Ensure that the Location has a recycling program, where available, including paper, cardboard, cans, bottles and toner/ink cartridges. (EO 13423)
- Is the Location 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, EPACT 2005 and EISA)
- Does the Location have an Energy and Water Management Plan? (Latest P&P on Energy Management)
- Does the Location have a green team? (Latest P&P on Energy Management)
- Is the Location manager, usually the AO, aware of the energy and water conservation features of their facilities and how well they are working? Does the Facilities Manager, including the Energy Manager, understand the energy and water conservation features of their facilities and ensure that they are performing optimally? (Latest P&P on Energy Management)

3.02 Facility Accessibility for People with Disabilities

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Serag Wahba on 301-504-1202.

- Determine if the Location is aware of the requirements associated with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) in 2004 Accessibility Guidelines. Does the Location have copies of the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS) or the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) and the ABA Accessibility Guideline? Guidelines can be found at <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/index.htm>
- Are Location buildings and facilities accessible to people with disabilities? Have professional surveys been done to review and identify areas at the Location that do not meet ADA and ABA requirements? Are plans being developed to improve any

deficiencies? Are ADA and ABA requirements used as part of design process for new or renovation of facilities?

- Is there an accessible route from the public way to building entrances?
- Are there marked parking spaces and entrances for disabled individuals?
- Are there accessible paths of travel to primary workstation, conference/training room, all purpose (gathering) areas?
- Are there accessible elevators to all floors of the facility?
- Is there one accessible rest room on each floor of the facility with proper door width, toilet stall, sink basin, and path of travel?
- Are there accessible water fountains?

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 if the Location has A-E authority. If so, what is the threshold?
- Determine if the Location has any concerns with A-E services provided under Area or Headquarters contracts.
- Determine how the Location obtains A-E Services: through their own A-E contracts utilizing the procedures in FAR Part 36.6, or through Area or Headquarters contracts.
- Verify that IAS (Integrated Acquisition System) is being used.
- If the Location acquires A-E services by issuing delivery/task orders against their own or Area or Headquarters A-E contracts, verify/determine the following:
 - That the requisition(s), 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. (FAR16.505)

- 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 in accordance with FAR 4.805(b)(2).
- If the Location has A-E authority and acquires their own A-E services, verify/determine the following:
 - That the requisition(s), 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-Es SF-330's (Architect-Engineer Qualifications). (FAR 36.601-1 and 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 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 in accordance with 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) or FAR 4.805(b)(2).
- Verify that all contracts/delivery/task orders for A-E services have been entered in the FPDS-NG system. (FAR 4.603(a))
- Are invoices processed in accordance with the Prompt Payment Act (FAR 32.904-c)?

3.04 Construction Contracts

- Determine if the Location has construction authority. If so, what is the threshold?
- Verify that IAS is being used.
- Determine whether projects are being split to keep them within the Location'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 (e.g., replacement and/or 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 the requisition(s), justifications, and all other required backup documentation (Government estimate, specifications, sketches, drawings, etc.) is maintained in the file. (FAR 4.803)
- Verify that construction requirements with an estimated cost between \$10,000 and \$25,000 are posted in a public place or on the Location'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 13.302-1, 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 and includes a statement that the award amount was determined to be fair and reasonable and the basis for such a 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 4.60(3)(a))
- 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 an acceptable individual surety or from a 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) 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 acceptable individual surety or from corporate surety that is listed on the Department of Treasury Circular 570 was submitted by the successful offeror and is maintained in the file. (FAR 28.101 and FAR 28.2)
- Verify, for projects over \$100,000, that the Performance and Payment Bonds submitted by the successful offeror are from an acceptable individual surety or a corporate 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 or appointment 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 Part 42.202?
- Determine if change orders or contract modifications were properly issued (FAR 43.204). 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 and FAR 31.201-3)?
- Determine if contract performance periods are appropriately monitored. If the completion date passes, what action was taken?
- Are inspections conducted in accordance with FAR 46.1, FAR 46.2, and FAR 46.4? 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 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)?

3.05-1 Facility Security (Occupant Emergency Program, Fire Prevention, Conduct on Federal Property)

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Terry Rupe on 301-504-1224.

References: ARS Real Property Manual 245.1, Chapter 9, *Accountability and Control* and ARS Manual 230.

- Verify that the Location has an Occupant Emergency Program (OEP). Verify that the Location has records of distribution. (Each employee should have a copy.) (Federal Management Regulations, 41 CFR, Subchapter C, Part 102-74.230.)
- Verify that the Location prepares incident reports or obtain copies of such from local authorities and forward such to the Area Office.
- Verify that there is some type of fire protection/prevention system (alarms, sprinklers) in place.
- Verify that the Location is aware of the policy regarding consumption of alcoholic beverages on ARS property. Verify that the Location submits requests for exceptions for the serving of alcohol at special events to the Area Office for approval of the Area Director.
- Verify that the Location coordinates with the Information Staff regarding the use of photographs of ARS facilities?
- Determine how often the Location reviews its administrative procedures.

3.05-2 Homeland Security

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

References: 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.

- Ensure the Location is conducting physical security surveys. Does the Location perform these in conjunction with ARS Homeland Security Staff (ARSHSS)?

- Identify if Location has any Physical Security Countermeasure projects planned or under consideration. If yes, are they aware of ARSHSS design and review role?
- Does Location know to contact ARSHSS (301-504-4831) for the following: all possible OIG investigations; vandalism to, or theft of, mission critical assets; workplace violence activities; and workplace death events?
- Does the Location maintain a current roster and call list of local and Federal law enforcement contacts?
- Does the Location have any security related MOU's in place? If yes, with what agency and for what specific service?
- Is the Location aware of the ARSHSS Web site [<http://arsnet.usda.gov/HSS/>]
- Does the Location provide security awareness training (annual or other time frame)?
- Are first responders (police, fire, EMS) familiar with the Location and are they aware of hazards (bio or other) that may affect appropriate response?
- Does the Location rely on any outbound third-party security alarm monitoring and response equipment or services? If yes, who and what type?

Examples:

- Door contact alarms monitored and responded to by campus police between hours of 1800 – 0700 7 days a week.
- Greenhouse temperature alarms that automatically page a Location employee who decides on appropriate response.
- Intrusion detection systems 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 Location review its security operation?
- Is the Location issuing ID Badges in accordance with P&P 243.4?
- Does the Location have a certified Human to Human Pandemic Influenza Plan in place? Does the Location do any testing of its' Plan? If so, what kind?
- Does the Location know to contact their Area Office when they intend to host a foreign national?

- Does the Location know that a Form ARS-230 needs to be submitted for any foreign national who will be conducting any ‘hands-on’ work in the facility (no matter how short the duration)?
- Is the Location aware that it needs the ARSHSS Director’s written approval for access to any bio-containment area for anyone not already approved (in writing) for such access?
- Does the Location know that all requests for (financial) maintenance or issuance of a DS-2019 must have the Director’s written approval before FAS or the USFS will act on it?

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

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Terry Rupe on 301-504-1224.

References: ARS Real Property Manual 245.1, Chapter 1, Acquisition; 7 United States Code 2250(a).

- Verify that asset files are established and maintained at the Location for each constructed asset. There should be copies of acquisition documents, including final record of payments, purchase card transactions, deeds, leases, transfer documents, surveys, environmental support documentation, State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurrence, etc.
- Has the Location acquired land in the last 5 years? If yes, verify that the Location has a copy of the applicable appropriation or law authorizing the land acquisition within the asset file.
- Verify that newly constructed buildings and structures are identified in the Corporate Property Automated Information System (CPAIS). Secure copies of acquisition documents/contracts for newly constructed buildings and structures not in CPAIS for forwarding to the Area Property Management Office and FD.
- Verify if the Location is preparing its requests for the establishment of a Unique Asset Identifier (UAI) for all new/planned capitalized assets and forwarding to the Area Property Management Office.

3.06-1 Utilization, Accountability, and Control of Real Property

Reference: ARS Real Property Manual 245.1, Chapter 9, *Accountability and Control*; FMR 102-84.55; Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and AGPMR 110-85.55, 104-51.105, and 104-51.106.

- Verify that the Location is aware of the dollar threshold(s) for accountability (all property) and capitalization (25K). At the Location, who is responsible for monitoring utilization of land and facilities and ensuring utilization, is in accordance with Agency policies?
- Verify that the Area Office is providing copies of inventory printouts, for verification and update, every 5 years.
- Verify that changes to the physical inventory, conducted in 2007, have been updated in CPAIS.
- Verify that physical inventories are being conducted upon the death, resignation, retirement, transfer, reassignment, or extended absence of an employee charged for property on the accountable records.
- Determine if CPAIS is being used at the Location to capture space utilization, including the number of workstations, number of personnel or SYs within all space usage types as required by Federal Real Property Profile reporting.
- Verify that the Location is capturing University space covered under a Memorandum of Understanding, Special/Cooperative Agreements, etc. and the utilization of this space in CPAIS.
- Verify that records are established and maintained with the following:
 - Custodial responsibility for the real property assigned to the Location and Location worksites.
 - Physical inventories signed by the Accountable Property Officer along with documented recommendations for adjustments.
 - Identification of Historical properties/sites and related Historic Preservation Plans. Are copies provided to the Area Office and Headquarters?
 - Acquisition files containing copies of short- and long-term leases, supplemental agreements environmental surveys, property descriptions, construction-related materials including “as built” and floor plans, donation or transfer documents, and AD-107’s for formal documentation for FDMIS/CPAIS updates, etc.
 - Disposition files containing AD-107’s, AD-112’s, SF-118’s, SF-118a,b,c’s
- Verify if the Location determines that a Design/Construction project is an undertaking as defined in Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Verify that the Location contacts the SHPO with its findings as to the undertakings potential effects on historic properties, if present.

- Determine if the Location has established an Animal Damage Control and/or Hunting Program. If so, verify that the Location maintains records and files pertaining to the established program.

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

References: Real Property Manual 245.1 Chapters 1, *Acquisition*, and 3, *Long-Term Leasing*; USDA Leasing Handbook; Departmental Regulation 1620-2, USDA, Space Management Policy; 7 United States Code 2250(a)

- Verify that the Location keeps copies of space or land leases, Memorandum 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.
- Determine if procedures are in place for the periodic review of the above documents.
- Verify that the Location has not 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 the improvement as described in 7 U.S.C.2250(a).
- Determine if the Location has made any capital improvements (\$25,000 or more) to space not covered by a realty interest. If this has occurred, such actions should be immediately brought to the Area Office's attention so that a realty document can be prepared and executed.
- Determine how the Location assures 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.
- Verify that new leases contain energy efficiency and sustainability provisions. (EO 13423)

3.06-3 Grants of Easement and Revocable Permits

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

- Verify that easements and revocable permits are in place as required for use of Government property. (Provide random samples.)

- Verify that the Location screens requests for easements or permits and ensures that the request is a case of necessity and that the land or space requested does not exceed what is required.
- Verify that procedures are 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.
- Verify that inspections are performed of tenant space to ensure compliance with terms and conditions of the permit to occupy the space. (Provide inspection reports.)
- Verify that requests for the installations of antennas are evaluated and coordinated with the REWO to ensure that requests do not impact or interfere with existing research programs, future land development plan, “Referral Agencies”, human exposure limits, etc.
- Verify that the Location is 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 Chapter 7, *Quarters*; and Department of Interior Department Quarters Handbook 400 DM

- If the Location has quarters, is the Location 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 Location, verify that files contain the following documentation:
 - Documentation of annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) adjustments, any waiver or supporting 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.
 - Forms ARS-494’s, ARS-4’s, REE-16’s and/or REE-17’s.
 - Sampling results from any screening tests performed (i.e., lead, asbestos, mold, etc.)

- Lead disclosure statements provided to residents for homes constructed prior to 1970.
- Verify that rents are set by using the Quarters Management Information System.
- Determine if the Location brings any rental collection problems incurred to the attention of the REWO.
- Verify that CPI adjustments are made annually. Provide a sample notification letter. Verify that employees are provided with a minimum of 30 days advance notice of such adjustments.
- Verify that the Quarters Rental Surveys and Sample Plans that are prepared by the Department of Interior are reviewed by the Location to ensure that the information provided is correct, such as the nearest established community.
- Determine how the Location ensures the inventory and accountability of furnishings provided in quarters.
- Verify that a physical inspection is 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.
- Verify that periodic physical inspections (annual at a minimum) are performed to identify maintenance, repair and safety and health conditions that need correction. How are items identified formally documented and what tracking mechanism is in place to ensure these are corrected?

3.06-5 Disposal of Real Property

Federal Real Property Council's *Guidance for Real Property Inventory Reporting and ARS Real Property Manual 245.1*, Chapter 8, *Disposal*.

- Briefly explain the Location's approach for identifying and disposing of unneeded real property asset. Are Location personnel aware of procedures for disposing of real property assets?
- Does the Location maintain disposal data and track actual disposal actions, preparing associated paperwork and submitting through the Area REWO within a timely manner? Does the Location perform CPAIS updates or coordinate with the Area Office to ensure updates, including disposition data, are entered within CPAIS?
- Verify that the Location completes a disposal package for real property assets identified for disposal, in accordance with Manual 245.1. Verify that the disposal

package includes AD-107's, AD-112's, SF-118's, etc. which include ARS-owned buildings, lands and structures.

- Verify that these documents are forwarded to the Area Office upon completion. Are copies of completed/processed actions returned to the Location for inclusion in the asset file?
- 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.
- Verify that the following screening surveys are being addressed at the Location 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
- Verify that annual protection and maintenance costs for real property assets to be incurred during the excess/surplus/disposal process are prepared.

3.07 Safety, Health, and Environmental Management

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Terry Roark on 301-504-1248.

- Verify the Location has assigned personnel to manage and implement the Safety, Health, and Environmental Management (SHEM) program. Each Location must have an assigned Safety Representative or Collateral Duty Safety Officer and an Environmental Management System (EMS) Coordinator. (ARS Manual 230 Chapters 18 and 38)
- Verify the Location has an EMS Committee; and, if the Location has 15 or more full-time employees, a Safety Committee. The Location may choose to have a single Committee combining the requirements. (ARS Manual 230, Chapters 18 and 38)
- Verify the Committee(s) meets on a recurring basis not less than quarterly. (ARS Manual 230, Chapters 18 and 38)
- Verify the Location has written annual safety, health, and environmental goals and objectives, and, an EMS policy statement. (ARS Manual 230, Chapters 10 and 38)

- Verify the Location has 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 8)
- Verify required SHEM related materials (i.e., Poster AD-1010, USDA Safety and Health poster; CA-10, What a Federal Employee Should Do When Injured at Work; EMS Policy Statement; and OSHA Form 300A, Summary of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses (from February 1 through April 30) are posted on a bulletin board(s) in a conspicuous location(s) accessible to all employees. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 17)
- Verify safety, health, and environmental requirements are taken into consideration during the design and construction process. (ARS Manual 230.0, Chapter 19; ARS Manual 242.1, Facilities Design Standards, and ARS Manual 242.4, Major Facilities Construction)

3.07-1 Safety, Health, and Environmental Education/Training

- Verify safety, health, and environmental training is provided as part of the ARS Employee Orientation Program for new and transferred employees. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 14)
- Verify the Location 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 completed training is documented and kept in a centralized location.
- Verify that training that has not yet been completed is documented in the employee's Individual Development Plans (IDP), ARS Form 48, or equivalent. Employees should not engage in an activity until they have received appropriate training. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 14)
- Determine if the Location has an Incentive Awards Program for recognizing SHEM performance. While not required, many Locations use such methods to encourage participation in SHEM programs. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 15)

3.07-2 Safety Management

- Verify the Location provides written notification of potentially hazardous conditions to employees. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 22 and 26)

- Verify that the Location has a comprehensive SHEM Inspection Program using ARS Form 404, or equivalent. Ensure inspections have been conducted annually and reports kept on file for 5 years. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 22)
- Verify the Location has a comprehensive SHEM Abatement Program to correct deficiencies identified by employees and during annual inspections. Check to verify deficiencies are abated within 30 calendar days. If a deficiency was not abated within 30 calendar days, check to verify the facility developed a written abatement plan with milestones as well as interim steps to protect employees from injury as a result of the unsafe or unhealthful working condition. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 22)
- Verify the Location has an Accident/Illness Reporting, Investigation, and Analysis Program in place (i.e., the Location must have a file for accident reports and the ensuing investigations.) Ensure the Location has documented the measures taken to prevent recurrence of accidents/incidents. (ARS Manual 230, Chapters 11 and 20)
- Verify OSHA Form 300 is maintained. (29 CFR 1960.67)

3.07-3 Industrial Hygiene

- If chemical, biological, or radiological agents are used, verify the Location has a written Hazard Communication Program and Chemical Hygiene Plan; and, that training has been provided for these programs. (ARS Manual 230, Chapters 14, 26, and 33)
- Verify the Location maintains an inventory of chemical, biological, or radiological agents, and that the inventory is updated at least annually. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 26)
- Verify that Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) are retained and that they are orderly and easily assessable to employees who need them. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 26 and 33)
- Verify all hazardous areas and areas containing hazardous materials are clearly posted and secured. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 26)
- Verify applicable Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is available and its use mandated. Each employee's immediate supervisor is responsible for:
 - Assessing the need for PPE;
 - Providing appropriate PPE to employees;
 - Developing standard operating procedures for PPE;
 - Training employees on proper use and care; and
 - Ensuring that employees utilize the equipment.
 (ARS Manual 230, Chapters 33 and 34)

- In the absence of professional medical attention in near proximity to the workplace (i.e., 3-4 minutes), verify the Location has a person(s) trained to render first aid on all shifts and that adequate first aid supplies are on-hand. (29 CFR 1910.151 and ANSI Standard Z308.1)

3.07-4 Environmental Management

- Verify the Location considers safety, health, and environment in its procurement practices. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 49)
- Verify the Location has procedures for determining if a waste is a regulated hazardous waste and, for the satellite accumulation of hazardous waste. Verify that personnel who generate hazardous waste have been trained on these procedures. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 57 and 40 CFR 260)
- Verify the Location maintains records on the quantity and types of hazardous waste generated each month. The Location utilizes this information to determine and document their generator classification (i.e. conditionally exempt small quantity, small quantity, and large quantity). (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 57 and 40 CFR 260)
- Verify the Location has filed EPA Form 8700-12, “Notification of Hazardous Waste Activity” with the EPA or State, if applicable. The EPA does not require conditionally exempt small generators to file; however, the State may require the Location to file. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 57 and 40 CFR 260)
- Verify the Location has written procedures for the temporary storage of hazardous wastes including management, handling, and disposal. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 57 and 40 CFR 260)
- Determine if the Location maintains a log of hazardous wastes inspections. Weekly inspections of hazardous waste storage areas must be conducted for large quantity generators. Small quantity and conditionally exempt small quantity generators are not required to perform such inspections but are encouraged to do so. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 57 and 40 CFR 260)
- Verify Hazardous Waste Manifests are on file and orderly (a returned signed copy from the disposal or treatment facility receiving the waste is required). Locations that utilize university resources to dispose of waste are responsible only for documenting the types and quantities of waste (i.e., manifest copies are not required). (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 57 and 40 CFR 260)

CARE FUNCTIONAL REVIEW

HUMAN RESOURCES

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Mary Weber on 301-504-1397.

4.0 Employment

- Verify the Location'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 Location 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 Location does not retain any applications for permanent employment.

Applications for L/A and Student Positions (excepted service positions): If the AO, or other designated official, 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 Location gives "veterans preference," if applicable, to applicants.

Applications for Postdoctoral positions (excepted service positions): may be submitted to the scientist who is the mentor for the position and may be retained until a selection is made. Verify that the Location gives "veterans preference," if applicable, to applicants.

- Verify that the Location 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 each semester, 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, the Location should initiate an SF- 52 to terminate the appointment. [Reference P&P 413.8, Student & Volunteer Programs.]

If volunteers are used at the Location, verify they have a signed Volunteer Service Agreement 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.]

4.01 Time and Attendance

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Ted Nykiel on 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 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.
- 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:
 - 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.
 - 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. 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 compensatory time for travel. An employee has 26 pay periods to use or lose compensatory time for travel. If not used within 26 pay periods the timekeeper must remove the unused compensatory time travel hours, because WebTA will not.
- Verify that timekeepers are keeping track of employee’s regular compensatory time. An employee has 26 pay periods to use or receive payment for compensatory time. If not used within 26 pay periods the timekeeper must remove the unused compensatory time from the T&A system and have the employee paid through an AD-581 (Lump Sum Payment).
- Leave reconciliation/audits must be conducted when an employee has a discrepancy in leave balances between the NFC database and the WebTA database. 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 WebTA system unless a personnel action (SF-52) requesting the change has been processed.
- Review backup documents for T&A’s such as 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

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Ted Nykiel on 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 placed in the T&A folder.

- Credit hours are:
 - Hours worked in excess of an employee's basic work requirement.
 - The employee elects to work and the supervisor approves so as to vary the length of the workweek or a workday.
 - Must be earned before they can be used.
 - Cannot be earned on a holiday during the hours that correspond to the employee's regularly scheduled hours for that day.
 - 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.

- Verify that employees account for their scheduled tour of duty each work day either through time worked or with some type of leave.

4.03 Performance Management

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Theresa Bailey on 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 performance plans were signed by Rater and Reviewer prior to employees signature,
- Verify there are 3, but not more than 10 performance elements, of which 1 must be non-critical, but not all,
- Verify performance plans are accurate and relevant to the position,
- 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 Office of Scientific Quality Review (OSQR) objectives are addressed in Category 1 and Category 4 scientist performance plans,
- 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 (from the date employee signed, after rater and reviewer) 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

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Mary Oxner on 301-504-1368.

Reference the HRD Web site – topic “Awards”

Review awards and hold discussions with Location 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 Location,
- 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 monetary awards, Time-Off awards, and 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 AO/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

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Kim McGregor on 301-504-1458.

- 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. Verify that employees are accessing the New Employee Orientation Web site (<http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/eneo/>). Reference P&P 412.2, Appointment and Orientation of New Employees and the New Employee Orientation Program Guide
 - 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

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Tina Voglesong on 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 the Locations are 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. [P&P 431.1, Position Management and Position Classification, 10/02/02]

4.07 Employee Relations

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Mary Byrd on 301-504-1418.

- Verify supervisors, managers and employees understand procedures for addressing conduct and performance issues. Supervisors and Research Leaders are delegated authority to take conduct and performance actions with the stipulation that the Location keeps the Area Office apprised of all actions.

USDA Office of Ethics, Science Ethics Branch (SEB)

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Sue Sheridan on 301-504-1442.

- Verify the Location follows the USDA Supplemental Standards of Ethical Conduct, 5 CFR 8301.101-102 regarding the prior approval requirement for outside activities for those employees required to file public or confidential financial disclosure reports (SF-278 or OGE Form 450). Employees seeking to engage in activities for which advance approval is required must submit form SEB-101 to their immediate supervisor and Mission Area Ethics Advisor for approval within a reasonable time before the activity begins.
- Verify Ethics Advisor contacts (names and phone numbers) are either posted or readily available to all employees.

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,
 - (1) Verify AD-581's for lump sum payments are forwarded for processing within 2 weeks of the employee's last day of work;
 - (2) 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 Location? (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 Medical Surveillance Program, April 3, 2002)
- Determine whether all active teleworkers at the Location 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

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

5.0 AFM Systems

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the Functional questions in this section, please contact Rhonda Sampson, ARS Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) Web Branch, on 301-504-3269.

- REE Directory: Is the Location experiencing any problems updating information in the REE Directory?

The REE Directory contains information on all ARS employees. Each Location should verify personnel and locator information on <https://reedir.arsnet.usda.gov/> and submit needed updates. Contact the Location Information Technology Specialist for assistance.

5.01 Voice/Data/Video/Wireless Telecommunications

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Brenda Katulski, ARS TMACO, on 301-504-1100 or Maureen Harris, ARS/Back-up TMACO, on 301-504-1088.

- Per REE Bulletin 07-002, Locations should submit through their Area Information Technology Specialist (AITS) a draft Information Technology (IT) Acquisition Approval Request (AAR) and supporting documents for the following IT acquisitions prior to purchasing: 1) IT Acquisitions exceeding \$25,000; 2) IT Acquisitions, regardless of dollar value, related to hardware, software, and services for systems within the administrative and financial functional areas or Presidential eGovernment activities; and 3) IT Acquisitions, regardless of dollar value, for Internet access utilizing any external provider other than the USDA Universal Telecommunications Network (UTN). AITS are responsible for reviewing and forwarding for approval, if appropriate, to the ARS IT AAR Coordinator for further review and coordination with the Department. Locations should not make purchases and contracting officers should not award a contract or order of the above until they have received an approved IT AAR by the ARS IT AAR Coordinator, Gary Rich, which will include both the Department's approval and ARS/OCIO's approval. For more specifics, please contact Gary Rich at 301-504-1052 and review REE Bulletin 07-002 dated April 11, 2007.

The CARE Team should review all Location IT acquisitions as mentioned above since April 11, 2007, and confirm whether the Location received an approved ARS IT AAR via the ARS IT AAR Coordinator for any of these IT acquisitions. The CARE Team should notify the ARS IT AAR Coordinator of any violations to this policy.

- Does the Location use GSA's FTS2001 contract for the following long distance telecommunications services with VerizonBusiness: 1) intraLATA – local toll dialing; 2)

interLata - long distance dialing; 3) international dialing; 4) data circuits; 5) video circuits; 6) toll-free; 7) conferencing – audio, Web, and video; and 8) calling cards? If not, does it have an approved exception from the ARS TMACO?

Per USDA Directive DR-3300-1, the GSA FTS2001 contract must be used for these services unless the Agency TMACO grants an approved exception. Some Locations 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 Location.

The CARE Team should review monthly telecommunications bills via paper copy, TUMS, or PCMS to see whether the Location is being billed for the above long distance services under any different vendors/contracts. All GSA FTS2001 billing is thru the GSA IPAC system and totals can only be reviewed via FSIS unless the Location is receiving FTS2001 monthly reports. Some Locations do receive monthly reports and some do not. The CARE Team should note exceptions in the report with the reason the Location is not using the FTS2001 contract and whether they requested and received a written exception approval from the ARS TMACO. The CARE Team should also forward this information to the ARS TMACO for possible assistance.

- Has the Location consulted the GSA Federal Supply Schedule for wireless equipment and services prior to making new purchases or updating existing equipment/services?

Per USDA Directive DR 3300-1, the GSA Federal Supply Schedule is mandatory for consideration but not usage. Locations are required to compare the wireless carrier schedule offerings prior to ordering equipment or services off the schedule. More often than not, the GSA Federal Supply Schedule does offer better pricing and service plans.

The CARE Team should review the Locations wireless telecommunications bills via paper copy, TUMS, or PCMS and supporting documentation to see if they considered the GSA Federal Supply Schedule. The CARE Team should recommend to the Location that they contact the ARS TMACO for additional vendor support to ensure that they are maximizing their monthly wireless cost savings.

- Does the Location have any hearing or speech impaired employees? Are these employees using the GSA FedRelay contract? If not, would they benefit from using the services on this contract?

Per the USDA Directive DR 3300-1, agencies are required to use this contract for their hearing and speech impaired employees if it assists in helping their employees do their work more productively and to be able to participate in teleconferences, etc.

The CARE Team should identify any hearing and speech impaired employees and whether they are using the GSA FedRelay contract. This information should be forwarded to the ARS TMACO for further review and to work with the Location and employees to provide service if appropriate.

5.02 Radio Frequency/Secure Telephone/GETS Cards

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Maureen Harris, REE Radio Frequency Manager (RFM) and REE Secure Telephone/GETS Cards Coordinator, on 301-504-1088.

- Does the Location use radio frequencies? If so, 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 Location plan to replace/upgrade this equipment? Contact the REE RFM for assistance.

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

Due to the mandatory transition to narrowband, the NTIA requires all Government agencies using land mobile radio systems in the 162-174 MHz (VHF) and 406-420 MHz (UHF) frequency bands to operate at 12.5 KHz on either side of the assigned frequency.

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

Prior to using the radio frequency, a Location must have the Radio Frequency Authorization (RFA) in hand. Ideally, the Location should have the RFA prior to purchasing equipment. NOTE: Requests for new radio frequency assignments take at least 6 months and often much longer, so planning is important.

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 RFM.

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 REE RFM is in charge of this review and will contact Locations when respective RFAs are due for review.

Please ensure Location has RFAs in their possession for any equipment they operate as listed above.

- Does the Location have a need for secure telephone/fax or GETS cards? If yes, do 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 Locations would have no need for such items, there may be some Locations/persons (i.e., BSL-3 labs, top Area Administration) that would find them beneficial for continuity of operations in an emergency situation. USDA Directive DR3300-1, Appendices D and J, define the requirements for National security and emergency preparedness telecommunications. Contact the REE Secure Telephone/GETS Cards Coordinator for assistance.

5.03 Commercial Telecommunications Billing and NFC

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Brenda Katulski, ARS TMACO, on 301-504-1100 or Maureen Harris, ARS Back-up TMACO, on 301-504-1088.

- Per USDA AGAR Advisory 58A dated 11-01-03 and ARS Bulletin 03-001 dated 11-24-03, Locations must pay for all non-recurring commercial telecommunications purchases over \$350 via IAS or TUMS and for all recurring monthly commercial telecommunications purchases, regardless of dollar value, via TUMS. The ARS TMACO can grant exceptions for these purchases to be paid via a purchase card only if the vendor is threatening to disconnect service or the mission of the Agency necessitates an emergency.

The CARE Team should review the Location's PCMS transactions to see if this policy is being followed. If the CARE Team identifies any payments made via PCMS, the CARE Team should verify if the ARS TMACO approved these exceptions to the policy. The CARE Team should notify the ARS TMACO of any policy violations.

- Per ARS e-mail dated 5-22-08 titled "Change in NFC Billing Address for Commercial Telecom Bills - Effective June 2, 2008", NFC ordered all commercial telecommunications vendors to change the billing address for all USDA bills from either New Orleans or the agency's address to an address in St. Louis. This was the first phase of the new NFC ECM process for scanning commercial telecommunications bills into a repository for agencies to be able to review their bills in their entirety at a later date and to also ensure that all bills were making into the NFC billing system for timely payment. Phase 2 will be rolled out in February 2009 and agencies will be notified on how they can obtain access via NFC to review all of their bills that have been scanned since June 2008. The CARE Team should verify if the Location is aware of this new ECM process and if they have requested an ECM id and password and are reviewing their commercial telecommunications bills for accuracy and to request billing credits thru their vendors. If not, the CARE Team should refer the Location to the ARS TMACO for further assistance.

5.04 Information Collection from the Public

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

- Does the Location 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.

5.05 Records Management

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 (<http://www.archives.gov/frc/>)?

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: James Neal @ 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)?

- Has anyone at the Location had training in basic Records Management training?
- Is there a need at the Location for annual Records Management training?
- Is there a need for a Records Management liaison at the Location? The liaison provides assistance to the ARS Records Officer and handles routine records management functions.

5.06 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 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 Location Administrative Officers via e-mail.

- Is the Location 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 Location? If the Location 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.

5.07 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 Location encountering any problems ordering forms from the Beltsville Services Center, Beltsville, Maryland?

Any Location needing paper copies of forms can order them from the Beltsville Service Center, Beltsville Maryland. These orders may be placed either via a paper copy of AD-14 or CFPDC-1, or through the electronic ordering system. Locations should contact their Area Offices for more information.

- Are printed envelopes or letterhead ordered?
Offices that have a need for letterhead design, envelope design, etc. should contact the representative for their Location. (ARS P&P 256.2, “Printed Letterhead, Envelopes, Postcards, Mailing Labels, (ARS)” dated 05/15/06) The P&P can be found through the following link: <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ppweb/pplist.htm>.

5.08 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 Location maintain accountability records of the postage meter activity?

If the Location is 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 Location properly secure the postage meter?
- Is the postage meter inspected according to postal regulations (see above Web sites for table)?

5.09 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.

- Verify that the unit ARMP includes IT purchases planned and required for the FY, including hardware/software replacements and purchases, dedicated telecommunications acquisitions (circuits, routers, telephone systems), maintenance and support contracts, Web page development, support, etc.

The Location is required to forecast planned acquisitions of dedicated telecommunications services and equipment in its annual ARMP package (see Administrator’s ARMP “kickoff” letter). Due to special Departmental mandates for telecommunications, all such equipment, regardless of cost, must be included in the forecast. Review the Location’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 the memo from the USDA Chief Information Officer dated May 13, 2003, 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.

5.10 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 Location have a public-facing Web site?

Provide the following information for the Location'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 Location (and Mode Code)

Is this the primary organizational site for this Location?

Primary contact(s):

Name:

E-mail address:

- Technology/Platforms (such as SSI, ASP, JSP, or ColdFusion)
- Key Word Phrases (such as "Children Nutrition")

- Is the Web site compliant with USDA regulations?

ARS Policy and Procedure entitled "ARS World Wide Web Sites," Number 265.0 can be found at <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ppweb/PDF/265-0.pdf>. This contains both ARS policy as well as references to broader USDA and Federal-wide policies.

- Does the Location 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, Locations, publications, and patents approved for public disclosure. The data for these come from the ARIS and REE Directory databases. Both short and long version orientation videos are available for further information and broad dissemination at http://sp.arsnet.usda.gov/training/ars_website_short.swf and http://sp.arsnet.usda.gov/training/ars_website_long.swf respectively. For more information, send an e-mail to webmaster@ars.usda.gov.

In addition, e-mail list services (aka a 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 Location experiencing any problems getting information updated on the ARS Web site?

Each Location should verify its relevant information and submit needed updates as outlined in either the orientation video (above) or in many of the links under “Helpful Resources” of the SitePublisher main menu. E-mail webmaster@ars.usda.gov for assistance.

- Does the Location make best use of existing Collaboration/Intranet communication services rather than duplicating them?

Each Location should look to the ARSnet/SharePoint platform for its online collaboration needs. Users should contact their Location IT Specialist or e-mail sharepoint@ars.usda.gov for assistance.

5.11 e-Authentication

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Michael Witles, ARS/OCIO on 301-504-1071.

- Are employees at the Location aware of the Federal Government’s e-Authentication credentialing process and that these credentials must be established prior to accessing systems such as the AgLearn on-line training management system and the new WebTA system?

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

The data required for credentialing are available on the employee’s most recent Earnings and Leave Statement (AD-334) which is mailed by the 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 AO or their servicing human resources assistant.

The USDA e-Authentication Web site is located at <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov>. The USDA Directive 3610-001 (11/04/04), “USDA e-Authentication Services” is located at <http://www.ocio.usda.gov/directives/files/dr/DR3610-001.htm>.

- Are employees at the Location experiencing any problems getting an e-Authentication credential established?
The Frequently Asked Questions for the USDA e-Authentication are located at <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov/eauthFAQ.html>. For assistance with the employee credentialing implementation process, contact the e-Authentication Help Desk at eAuthHelpDesk@usda.gov or call toll free 1-800-457-3642. In the event the e-Authentication 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. Members of the OCIO Service Desk at Headquarters have the ability to assist with ID and Password issues accessing systems that use the e-Authentication logon process.

CARE FUNCTIONAL REVIEW

BUDGET AND FISCAL

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

6.0 Budget and Fiscal (General)

- In the interview process, determine whether Location management officials (LC, RL's and AO/T) 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 and the Area Office to manage and control Agency programs, assets, and resources.
- Ensure that all recommendations from recent audits and reviews (including CARE reviews, and financial reviews) have been resolved, and appropriate corrective action taken. If not, explain.

6.01 CRIS Accountability

- Make sure that RL's understand and correctly interpret the Agency's Current Research Information 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 Location'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 620.0)

- Determine if obligations in CRIS Allocation Tracking System (CATS) status of funds reports appear to be made to the benefiting CRIS.

In order to do so, review a representative sample of large obligation transactions and attempt to determine whether the obligations are consistent with the type of research conducted in the CRIS (i.e., it would not be consistent for a human nutrition related CRIS to purchase a tractor). If obligations do not appear to be charged to the benefiting CRIS, explain.

6.02 Research Cost

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

- Determine whether each CRIS was assessed for IRC or SRC and "All Other" fixed costs according to established Agency policy.

In order to do so, examine the ARMP CRIS Allocation Schedules (CRAS) and supporting worksheets or other documentation developed for the last ARMP. 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.

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

6.03 ARMPS Preparation/Implementation

- Inquire whether the ARMP process adequately allows the Location to prepare and update a comprehensive detailed annual operating plan for spending funds and accomplishing program objectives. Document any suggestions for improvement.
- Ensure that the Location is planning at least 4 percent of base funds on R&M as required by ARMP policy contained in the ARMS manual (unless the Location has been granted a documented exception to the policy).

In order to verify that at least 4 percent of base funds is planned for R&M spending, add amounts in object class 2530 on the Location's ARMP Annual Operating Plans (AOP's) and compare that total to the total base funds for the Location. If the total object class 2530 amount is less than 4 percent, determine what other budgeted amounts the Location considers to be R&M, and explain.

6.04 Allocations

- Ensure that official allocations are adhered to in establishing CATS financial plans at the Management Unit level and for CRIS subaccounts.

In order to do so, compare CATS financial plans to the budget documentation provided by the ABFO. MU totals can be verified against FFIS records.

6.05 Salary Estimates/Tracking

- Make sure employee salaries are being charged to CRIS subaccounts as planned on the approved ARMP. In order to do so, compare the ARMPS CRIS Resource Allocation Schedules with the SAMS Liability by CRIS report.

- Determine if any problems are encountered by the Location in using SAMS to account for salaries. If so, explain.

6.05-1 Salary Lapse Reporting

- Review salary lapse reports to determine if they accurately reflect the amount of lapse to the CRIS level. Review offsets on specific positions to validate that the offsets were appropriate (Reference Ground Rules to Salary Lapse). Ensure that the adjustment amounts are reflected on the CATS Financial Plan.

6.06 Period-End Estimates

- Determine whether the Location fully understands ARS' Year-end Closing Instructions and Procedures, including preparation of period-end estimates. Inquire whether the Location has any ideas on improving the year-end instructions and procedures.

6.07 Prior-Year Funding

- Inquire whether the Location is aware of the P&P for prior-year fund approval requests. For requests of \$1,000 or under, the approval process is not required. For requests of \$1,001 or more, a request for Prior Year Funds approval should be submitted via e-mail to the DAD, Division Director or designee (e.g. SBFO). If the request is approved, the approving official forwards the e-mail with approval to ARS Operations at NFC. For requests exceeding \$10,000, the same process applies, but prior to sending to NFC, the approving official will forward the prior year funds request to the Financial Management Division for certification of funds availability (P&P 323.8, as amended.). For requests exceeding \$25,000, FMD approval is required.

6.08 Prompt Payment

- Determine whether the Location management is aware and sensitive to the Prompt Payment Act (budget object code 4310) requirement that an interest penalty must be paid to the vendor, with the invoice amount, for invoices not paid 30 days after receipt (interest is charged directly to the fundholder's account). (Review the CARE characteristics package for information on recent interest amounts charged to the Location.)

(NOTE: In the FFIS environment, the vendor record in VEND must reflect the appropriate payment terms. If there is excessive interest, determine whether correct information is obtained from the vendor and communicated to the vendor coordinator.)

6.09 Claims for and Against the Government

- Ensure that the Location 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 by the Location 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

- 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 Location files or the Management Unit files.

- Ensure that Location 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 P&P 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 Location 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

- Determine if fundholders maintain any funds tracking records (cuff records) in addition to the CATS reports maintained by the Location support staff. If yes, explain. As stated in ARS P&P 325.1, CATS will be used by employees throughout ARS as the only Location funds control system (FFIS is the official accounting system). No other local system (either manual or automated) will be used or supported unless approved by the Financial Management Division. Fundholders and their subordinates should generally not maintain any financial records, but should rely on the information produced by CATS. The fundholder may maintain a simple pending file of outstanding documents, which could be totaled and deducted from the CATS Status of Funds report. The maintenance of additional records by research scientists and research support personnel should be strongly discouraged.

6.13 Travel

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

- Verify that Location personnel know how to access P&P's 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 Location 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, 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.

Please note, upon the implementation of GovTrip, the Department recognizes that the electronic file is the official travel record and that the electronic signature attached to the file is official for the approval of travel and reimbursement. For that reason, travel prepared in TRVL must be supported by paper documents according to the General Records Schedule and that travel prepared in GovTrip may be supported by the electronic record.

- Ensure that any authorizing official who chooses not to use GovTrip to approve travel authorizations or vouchers continue to sign **HARD COPIES** of the appropriate documents and that the travel arranger uploads these documents in the electronic file (using the attach receipt/documents function). The travel arranger who stamps the authorization and voucher must have a signed delegation from the authorizing official in accordance with REE Bulletin 08-301, GovTrip Transition, Section (f).

Ensure that anyone with access to the GovTrip system has been properly trained and has filed an AD-1143 (Nicole Coleman, OCIO will have the proper AD-1143 on file.)

6.13-1 Travel Authorizations

- 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 GovTrip Open travel authorizations are limited only to individuals whose frequent, routine, repetitive travel requirements make individual trip-by-trip authorizations unrealistic and those positions have been pre-determined by the Administrator to be issued the GovTrip Open travel authorization.

Ensure that GovTrip Open Authorizations have the appropriate restrictions to time, location, and cost.

Ensure that no GovTrip Open Authorization is used for foreign travel.

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

- Ensure that actual expense (per diem in excess of the GSA per diem rates) has been approved. Actual expense for conferences and meetings should be approved in writing by the Director, FMD, and the written approval is in the travel file. Actual expense will have an actual audit flag in the electronic authorization and voucher.

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 Travel Charge Card holders comply with REE Bulletin 04-307, Use and Management of Travel Charge Cards, and are not provided advances, except for foreign travel or when approved REE Chief Financial Officer (Director, FMD).
- 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 hardship reasons, and only with a written waiver from the REE Chief Financial Officer (Director, FMD).
- Ensure that managers are notified of outstanding travel advance balances at the Location on a regular basis. Employees performing the travel function at the Location should be performing this function. Inquire whether they are.

6.13-3 Travel Vouchers

- Interview the employees performing the travel function to determine if the Location 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.
- 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.
- Ensure that claims for reimbursement of the travel management service fee (EDS fees) is accompanied by proof of incurrance of the fee. The travel voucher file should include a fee notification e-mail from EDS or a copy of the traveler's travel card statement indicating the fee.

6.13-4 Relocation Allowances

- 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 Location's accounts maintenance records. There must be a review by accounts maintenance personnel to ensure that TRVL has properly deobligated relocation amounts.

6.13-5 Mandatory Use of Contracted Travel Management Centers

- Ensure that all tickets are being purchased through a contracted travel management center.
- Ensure that there are sufficient internal controls at the Location 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. Review GovTrip online authorizations and determine if any pre-audit flags for use of non-contract fares indeed meet the exemptions in the FTR. (41 CFR §301-10.107)
- 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 approving GovTrip authorization which then allows the issuance of tickets to travelers. Review the document signature history in GovTrip to ensure proper review.
- 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 at the Location.
- Ensure that the employees with individually billed travel cards use the GovTrip system to book hotel accommodations and are using their travel card to pay for hotel accommodations.

6.13-6 USBank CBA Account

- Review travel vouchers to ensure that only travelers without an individually billed travel card or travelers on foreign travel are authorized to use the CBA account. Travelers with an individually billed account on domestic travel should not be authorized to use the CBA.

6.13-7 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). If employee is going to another USDA agency, the travel charge card shall be transferred. If not, the card must be cancelled.

6.13-8 Foreign Travel

- Inquire whether the Location 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 Location 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.

6.14 Utility Accounts

- Ensure that the Location knows how to establish utility accounts with NFC through the use of the NFC TUMS system.
- Determine if the Location is encountering any problems with utility payments or reconciliation of accounts. If so, explain.

6.15 Agreement Accounting

6.15-1 Research Support Agreement (RSA) Expenditure Tracking

- Ensure that the ADODR or designee reconciles RSA cooperator billing data (i.e., the Monthly Management Reports or SF-1034 vouchers) with documentation submitted by the RL's (i.e., packing slips, delivery tickets, memoranda, etc.) to ensure receipt of goods and services billed for.
- Ensure that the Location maintains an adequate tracking system for comparison of actual expenditures to the Task Order obligation(s). Some Locations use CATS for this purpose; others use automated spreadsheets.

6.15-2 Trust Funds and Reimbursable Agreements

- Refer to P&P 324.1 and Bulletins 02-316, 02-314, 03-309, and 05-305.
- Ensure that any reimbursable accounts coded as Type 63 have been approved by the Director, FMD, and are being billed by the ABFO/Location in accordance with Bulletin 03-309.
- Ensure that the Location waits for receipt of authorization from ABFO before initiating research activity for the cooperator. Trust fund agreements require an up-front payment from the cooperator before work may begin.
- Ensure that the Location is aware of carry-over implications for multi-year appropriation authorities. When the ordering agency has statutory multi-year spending authority, funds provided by the agreement are available for obligation by ARS for the specified years, subject to limitations imposed by the ordering Agency. This will ordinarily result in carryover amounts from one fiscal year to another of any unobligated balance. The providing agency has the prerogative of stipulating the dollar amount that should be expended by fiscal year. (FMM Chapter 2400, Section 2415.1.2; Bulletin 03-309)

6.15-3 Sales of Assets

Refer to FMM Chapter 2400, Sections 24.15.5 and 2470; Bulletin 08-220 (Qualified Personal Property)

- Ensure that the AO/T and APO are following the required exchange/sale procedures for the applicable types of property (i.e. vehicles, qualified personal property, etc). Review the Location 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 Location 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 Location 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 Location 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 Location file 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. Attach or reference any internal procedures developed by the Location.
- 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; & 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 Location has competent and sufficient staff to carry out budget/fiscal functional responsibilities.

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

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.

References include Departmental Regulation (DR) 4300-6, Civil Rights Policy for the Department of Agriculture; DR 4230-002, Special Emphasis Programs; REE P&P 122.2, Reasonable Accommodation Procedures; USDA and ARS Policy Statements (USDA Workplace Diversity and Inclusion; ARS Diversity/EEO; Anti-Harassment; and Sexual Harassment); DR 4300-007, Processing EEO Complaints of Discrimination; DR 4300-010, Civil Rights Accountability Policy; and DR 4710-001, Alternative Dispute Resolution.

7.0 Special Emphasis Programs and EEO/Diversity Committees

- Verify how the Location initiates and conducts programs or other activities as one method to increase awareness/representation in an effort to build and maintain a diverse and highly-qualified workforce. (This includes special observance programs, display of special observance month posters, and other educational and awareness activities).
- Verify how the Location employees are informed and encouraged to attend the Special Emphasis Programs and EEO/Diversity or other Committee activities (e-mails, posters, etc.).
- Who represents the following: Area ODEO Program Manager, Area/Location Special Emphasis Programs and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) or Diversity Committee? Do you know the Chairperson and the functions and accomplishments of the Committee?

7.01 Recruitment and Outreach Efforts

- Verify recruitment and outreach efforts conducted by the Location to increase awareness of ARS programs and activities, and 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 (White House Initiative reports, etc.).
- Verify the utilization of the Area ODEO Program Manager and ODEO Outreach and Recruitment Branch when conducting recruitment and outreach activities (e-mails, posters, roster of attendance, etc.) and also to discuss options for marketing open job announcements and student opportunities. Do you utilize the Special Emphasis Program Managers or the EEO/Diversity or other Committees in recruitment and outreach efforts? If so, how?

- 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 (White House Initiative reports, etc.).
- Verify that the Careers link from the Location's Web site has links to the ARS Careers Web site (www.ars.usda.gov/careers) and the Office of Personnel and Management USAJOBS (www.usajobs.opm.gov) Web sites. **NOTE:** Encourage the Location to add a contact name and phone number/e-mail address for individuals seeking student employment at the Location.
- Verify how the Area Management Directive 715, Annual EEO Program Report is utilized to increase diversity in the workforce when recruiting for positions, i.e., does the Location receive information about the diversity of the Area and/or Location? If so, how is this distributed, i.e., charts, etc.?
- Verify the documentation of identified barriers to diversity in the workplace and the status of the plans developed to eliminate those barriers.

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 the activities that have been held to foster or make reasonable accommodations for employees, applicants, contractors, and other customers with disabilities.

7.03 Communication

- Verify that the following are displayed on all official bulletin boards/display cases:
 - Current FY ARS/Area (if applicable) policy statements for EEO/CR
 - "Discrimination in Employment is Illegal", "And Justice for All", and Cooperative Resolution Program 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):
 - ODEO Vision/Mission statement
 - Current FY USDA/ARS/Area (if applicable) EEO/CR Policy Statements

- ARS Sexual Harassment Policy Statement
 - Anti-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
 - ODEO and Area Program Manager contact information
- Verify that the commitment and support of the Area Business Plan (aligned with the ODEO Business Plan and the AFM/ODEO Strategic Plan) objectives have been communicated to all employees.
 - Verify that outreach, diversity, and equal opportunity expectations are communicated to the employees.
 - Are employees aware of the ODEO Web site (ARS and Area)? Are the Web site(s) user friendly? What additional information would be helpful?

7.04 Training

- Verify that all Location employees have completed the current mandatory EEO/Civil Rights training?
- In addition to the mandated EEO/Civil Rights training, has other training occurred on site? If so, what, when, and how was it conducted?
- 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?
- What is the process for determining who receives awards at the Location?

7.06 EEO Complaint Process including Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

- If an employee contacted you for information on how to file an EEO complaint, who would you recommend they contact?
- If you would need to file a complaint, would you consider using the ADR/Mediation process? If not, why?

- Do managers and supervisors encourage the use of ADR?
- Do you feel EEO policies and procedures are followed in accordance with laws and regulations in the day-to-day functioning of the Location? If not, please explain.

7.07 Cooperative Resolution Program

- Are you aware that the Cooperative Resolution Program (CRP) represents an early intervention (initial) point of contact for all employees who are experiencing non-EEO related issues, such as workplace conflicts, dispute or communication issues?
- Are you aware that the CRP provides the following informal services to all ARS employees: mediation; consultation; facilitation; conflict coaching; communication training, modified to suit customer needs?
- Are you aware that any employee can consult with a CRP staff member on a workplace communication issue with confidentiality? Who would you contact in CRP?
- Is the CRP Web site user-friendly? What additional information would be helpful?

CARE FUNCTIONAL REVIEW

EXTRAMURAL AGREEMENTS

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

8.0 Extramural Agreements Program (General)

Reference: EAD Web site: <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/agreements/index.htm>

Prior to conducting the interview, obtain the Active Extramural Agreements Report (AEAR) from EAD by sending an e-mail request to the AIMS Help Desk Box at **ARS-AIMSHelp@ARS.USDA.GOV**. In the request, provide (1) the name of the Location being reviewed, including Mode Code(s), (2) the dates of the CARE review, and (3) your contact information. The AEAR should be requested as close to the date of the CARE review as possible to ensure that the data is current. The AEAR will provide you with a listing of all active agreements entered into Agricultural Research Information System/Agreements Information Management System (ARIS/AIMS) for the Location.

Interview the Administrative Officer/Technician (AO/T) to identify the Location staff involved in the extramural agreements process, including the types of agreements they process and their roles, duties, and responsibilities.

Note: Typically, the Location staff involved in the agreements process is the Authorized Departmental Officers Representative (ADODR), Administrative Officer, Location Support Staff (LSS), and Center Director/Location Director (if applicable).

Interview the Location staff involved in the extramural agreements process to document their concerns, comments, and/or recommendations about the following:

- ARIS/AIMS requirements.
- Agreements processing, approval, and turnaround times.
- Training needs at the Location.
- Overall improvement(s) to the extramural agreements process.

Interview the Location staff involved in the agreements process to determine the following:

- Is the staff aware of the following resources:
 - The Short Guide “Almost Everything You Need to Know About the Agreements Process.”
 - The ARIS User Guide.

Note: If necessary, provide assistance by showing the resources to the Location staff.

- Review the Location's agreement files against the AEAR to ensure the Location is entering all agreements into ARIS/AIMS. If there is an agreement file on hand that is not listed on the AEAR, advise the AO/T to have the agreement information entered into ARIS/AIMS.

Note: The Standard Cooperative Agreement (StCA) is not entered into ARIS/AIMS.
(All other agreement types are required to be entered into ARIS/AIMS)

Interview the AO/T to determine if they provide the following assistance to the ADODR:

- Advice and guidance on the administrative requirements for extramural agreements.
- A pre-award review of all proposed agreements information entered into ARIS/AIMS.
- Development of the proposed budget to ensure costs are allowable, allocable, and reasonable.
- A pre-award review of the Statement of Work (SOW) versus the budget to ensure budgeted items correspond to the proposed level of effort.
- Conducting preliminary negotiations on proposed terms and conditions of the agreements and budget.
- Technical direction to the cooperator regarding program and administrative requirements within the scope and terms of the agreement.

Interview the appropriate LSS to determine if they provide the following assistance to the ADODR:

- Entering the appropriate information into ARIS/AIMS (ARS-416/417, Incoming/Outgoing agreement information) completely and accurately.
- If needed, requesting the Cooperator/Recipient code(s) from AIMS-Helpdesk.
- Developing the budget and ensuring all applicable and indirect costs are documented.
- Preparing justifications for funding increase/decrease and extensions of time.

Interview the ADODR to determine the following:

- The ADODR receives assistance from the AO/T and LSS as outlined above.

- The ADODR has completed Extramural Agreements Training in AgLearn.
- The ADODR has an active delegation and received a Delegation Memorandum from the Area ADO.
- The ADODR receives assistance with foreign agreements from the EAD staff.

Identify who maintains the agreement files (usually the ADODR) at the Location.

Note: Apply the following the review to Sections 8.01 thru 8.08.

Review the Location's files to insure they include the following:

- A fully executed copy of the agreement.
- A copy of the approved ARIS documents.
- The Management Report (MR) (applicable to the RSA only).
- The file may also include the following: (1) copies of amendment(s), (2) copies of correspondence, (3) copies of Financial and Performance reports, and (4) copies of internal e-mails and notes.

8.01 Research Support Agreement

Research Support Agreement (RSA) – A cost reimbursable agreement between ARS and State Cooperative Institutions or other colleges or universities, for the acquisition of goods or services, including personal services, to carry out agricultural research, extension, or teaching activities of mutual interest. There is a 4-year limitation on full-time recurring requirements and a 10 percent limitation on reimbursing the cooperator for indirect costs. The terms RSA and Cost Reimbursable Cooperative Agreement (CRCA) are interchangeable.

References: **REE Bulletin 07-001**, Research Support Agreement (Revised 2008); **Bulletin 08-700**, Agricultural Research Information System/Agreements Information Management System Data Entry Requirements for the Research Support Agreement; web site: <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ppweb/pplist-EAD.htm>

Determine if the RSA is used at the Location. If yes:

- Determine who serves as ADO for the RSA.
- Verify the Location has a copy of the approved ARS-550, Research Agreements Plan from the Annual Resources Management Plans System (ARMPS) to use the RSA.
- If the RSA is administered at the Area, end the RSA review here.

- If the RSA is administered at the Location, verify the following:
 - The ADO has a Level 1 Delegation of Authority granted by the Director, EAD to establish the RSA.
 - Is the Certificate for Delegation of Authority for Extramural Agreements displayed in an open area in their office or primary work location as required by P&P 700.0 “Delegation of Authority for Authorized Departmental Officers?”
 - The ADODR (usually the Research Leader) has a written delegation of authority from the Area ADO.
 - The Location has an e-mail or letter from the Area, indicating who is responsible for negotiating the Indirect Cost Rate (ICR) payable on the RSA.
- Ensure that the Location maintains an agreement file for each RSA in accordance with Section 8.0.
- Verify the following on the RSA:
 - The SOW, includes the following:
 - A general description and amount of supplies, materials, and/or services.
 - Listing of occupational categories (title) with duties.
 - Dates or a timeframe for delivery of goods or performance of services.
 - The 5-year umbrella agreement is not in use.
 - Task Orders or Optional Forms 347 and 348 are not used to order supplies or services.
 - The RSA does not exceed 12 months in duration.

Note: The award period can cross fiscal years.

- 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.
- Services requested on the RSA are in accordance with ARS policy and procedures regarding the acquisition of goods and personal services. Specifically:
 - Is the ADO aware of the ARS policy, which specifies that full time and part time temporary requirements for personal services is limited to 4-years (for example, a Lab Technician)?

Note: General support costs i.e., janitorial and maintenance services, etc. are excluded from the 4-year limitation.

- Is the ADO aware that acquiring the services of a university employee is equivalent to an ARS Category 1 and/or 4 Scientist position is limited to 90 days?
- The Cooperator's ICR does not exceed 10 percent of their total direct cost.
- The Cooperator is providing the ADO with a MR (or equivalent documentation.)
- The ADO and ADODR review and approve the MR based upon the following documentation (i.e., packing slips, payroll detail listing, delivery tickets, memoranda, etc.)
- Which payment method is used for the RSA:
 - **For Electronic Funds Transfer/Vendor Express Program method of payment:**
 - Verify that invoices are approved based upon documentation (i.e., packing slips, payroll detail listing, delivery tickets, memoranda, etc.).
 - Verify that copies of the approved invoices or other approved documentation are been submitted to ARS Operations Section, NFC or Area Budget and Fiscal Office (ABFO) for certification and processing.
 - **For DHHS/PMS method of payment:**

- Verify that MRs are approved based upon documentation (i.e., packing slips, payroll detail listing, delivery tickets, memoranda, etc.).
- Verify that a copy of the MR is sent to ARS Operations Section, NFC or the ABFO, for comparison against disbursement activity in the Health and Human Services Payment Management System (HHS-PMS).
- Verify the ADO is performing the following:
 - Ensuring proper use of the RSA in accordance with Bulletin 07-001.
 - Reviewing all data fields for accuracy and completeness of the RSA information in ARIS/AIMS. Specifically, entering itemized goods and services on the SOW in ARIS/AIMS for the RSA.
 - Ensuring the ADODR (usually the Research Leader) has a written delegation of authority from the Area ADO to act as the technical representative on the RSA.
 - Verifying the RSA pricing and/or determining the wage rates with the Cooperator.
 - Conducting ICR negotiations with the Cooperator, as determined by the Area policy.
 - Entering into, administering, closing out or terminating the RSA.
 - Providing a copy of obligating documents and invoices to ARS Operations, NFC or the ABFO for certification and processing.
 - Verifying the eligibility of the proposed Cooperator.
 - Verifying the presence of mutuality of interest between ARS and the Cooperator.
 - Obtaining the Cooperator's banking and Foundation Financial Information System (FFIS) vendor code information.
 - Obtaining and evaluating the Cooperator's pricing information to ensure costs are allowable, allocable, and reasonable.
 - Maintaining the "official" RSA file.
 - Monitoring the Cooperator's performance and ensuring financial and performance reporting requirements are met as prescribed in the terms and conditions of the RSA.

- Adjusting the RSA obligation, as needed, based on expenditures and changing programmatic needs.
- Ensuring the ADODR reviews and approves the MR.
- Verifying the ADODR is certifying the receipt of goods and/or services on the invoice based upon the following documentation: packing slips, payroll detail listing, delivery tickets, memoranda, etc. and approving payments.

8.02 Non-Assistance Cooperative Agreements: (Specific Cooperative Agreements (SCA), Trust Fund Cooperative Agreements (TFCA), and Reimbursable Cooperative Agreements (RCA))

SCA – describes in detail a jointly planned, executed, and funded research program or project.

TFCA – involves cooperative research between ARS and another party where ARS is paid in advance to conduct research or for the other party to share in the cost of a research project conducted by ARS.

RCA- similar to the TFCA except, that the Cooperator pays when billed by ARS for work completed.

Determine if the SCA, TFCA, and/or RCA is used at the Location. If yes:

- Ensure that the Location maintains an agreement file in accordance with Section 8.0.
- Review the Location’s SCA, TFCA and/or RCA agreement files against the AEAR to ensure the Location is entering all agreements into ARIS/AIMS. If there is an agreement file on hand that is not listed on the AEAR, advise the AO/T to have the agreement information entered into ARIS/AIMS.

8.03 Standard Cooperative Agreement (StCA)

StCA – describes a cooperative relationship between ARS and another party that defines a mutually beneficial relationship relative to the use of land, labor, equipment, facilities, livestock, or other resources. The agreement includes the Federal Tort Claims Act as the “make whole” provision.

Reference: **REE Bulletin 08-703**, Standard Cooperative Agreement;
website: <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ppweb/pplist-EAD.htm>

Determine if the StCA is used at the Location. If yes:

- Determine who serves as the ADO for the StCA. Note: The AO/T may be the ADO for the StCA.

- If the StCA is administered at the Location, verify the following:
 - The ADO has a Level 1 Delegation of Authority granted by the Director, EAD to establish the RSA.
 - Is the Certificate for Delegation of Authority for Extramural Agreements displayed in an open area in their office or primary work location as required by P&P 700.0 “Delegation of Authority for Authorized Departmental Officers?”
 - The ADODR (usually the Research Leader) has a written delegation of authority from the Area ADO.
 - Verify the Location maintains an agreement file and forwards a copy of the StCA to the Area Office.

Note: The file should include the following a fully executed copy of the agreement. The file may also include internal e-mails and notes.

- Verify that all StCAs awarded after September 16, 2008, includes the Federal Tort Claims Acts instead of the Fair Market Value Clause (FMVC) as the “make whole” provision.
- Verify that the new, standardized REE-451 and SOW is being used.
- Verify the ADO is aware the new forms are available in e-forms and on the EAD Web site.
- If the STCA is at the Area level, verify that the Location receives a copy of the agreement and maintains a file. (The Area Office maintains the “official” Agency file.)

8.04 Grants and Assistance Type Cooperative Agreement (ATCA)

Grant – transfers a thing of value (money, property, services, etc.) to the recipient to stimulate or carry out a public purpose with no substantial involvement anticipated between the agency and the recipient.

ATCA – transfers a thing of value to the recipient to stimulate or carry out a public purpose and substantial involvement is anticipated between the agency and the recipient.

Reference: Web site: <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ppweb/pplist-EAD.htm>

Determine if the Grant and/or ATCA is used at the Location. If yes:

- Ensure that the Location maintains an agreement file in accordance with Section 8.0.

- Review the Location's agreement files against the AEAR to ensure the Location is entering all agreements into ARIS/AIMS. If there is a Grant or ATCA agreement file on hand that is not listed on the AEAR, advise the AO/T to have the agreement information entered into ARIS/AIMS.

Does the AO/T understand the difference between a Grant and ATCA? Does the AO/T understand the requirement to document substantial involvement on the ATCA? If not, direct them to the EAD Web site at <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/agreements/agreement-types.htm> for additional information.

8.05 Supplements to the Master Memorandum of Understanding (MMOU)

Supplements to the MMOU - further defines cooperative research related to the MMOU. Used prior to August 14, 2003. **Supplements have been replaced by Non-Funded Cooperative Agreements.**

Determine if there are active Supplements. If yes:

- Advise the Location to work with the Area Office to terminate all active Supplements and convert those still needed to NFCAs.

8.06 Standard Memorandum of Understanding (SMOU)

SMOU - describes a cooperative relationship between ARS and another party that defines a mutually beneficial relationship relative to the use of land, labor, equipment, facilities, livestock, or other resources. The agreement does not include a "make whole" provision. Used prior to August 14, 2003. **SMOUs have been replaced by Non-Funded Cooperative Agreements.**

Determine if there are active SMOUs. If yes:

- Advise the Location to work with the Area Office to terminate all SMOUs and convert those still needed to NFCAs.

8.07 Individual Memorandum of Understanding (IMOU)

IMOU - describes a cooperative program or project between ARS and another party when there was no Master MOU to supplement. Used prior to August 14, 2003. IMOUs have been replaced by NFCAs.

Determine if there are active IMOUs. If yes:

- Advise the Location to work with the Area Office to terminate all IMOUs and convert those still needed to NFCAs.

8.08 Non-Funded Cooperative Agreement (NFCA)

NFCAs - describes in detail a jointly planned and executed project of mutual interest. All parties

contribute resources and benefit independently in the outcome of the project. There is no direct transfer of funding from one party to the other. NFCA replaces the Individual Memorandum of Understanding (IMOU), Supplements to the MMOU and the Standard Memorandum of Understanding.

Reference: **REE Bulletin 03-700**, Memoranda of Understanding and Non-Funded Cooperative Agreements; Web site: <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ppweb/pplist-EAD.htm>

Determine if the NFCA is used at the Location. If yes:

- Ensure that the Location maintains an agreement file in accordance with Section 8.0 for each NFCA. Review the Location's agreement files against the AEAR to ensure the Location is entering all agreements into ARIS/AIMS. If there is an agreement file on hand that is not listed on the AEAR, advise the AO/T to have the agreement information entered into ARIS/AIMS.